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## COMMENTARIES

# EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

**ACTS**

*by John Gill*

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;  
that it may be displayed because of the truth*  
— Psalm 60:4

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# ACTS

## INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ACTS

This book, in some copies, is called, “The Acts of the holy Apostles”. It contains an history of the ministry and miracles of the apostles of Christ, and is a sort of a journal of their actions, from whence it takes its name. It begins at the ascension of Christ, and reaches to the imprisonment of the Apostle Paul at Rome; and is a history of upwards of thirty years: it gives an account of the first Gospel church at Jerusalem, and of the progress of the Gospel there, and in Judea, by the means of all the apostles, and particularly Peter, the minister of the circumcision, and who also first opened the door of faith to the Gentiles: it shows how the Gospel went forth from Jerusalem, and was spread in the Gentile world, especially by the Apostle Paul, whose companion Luke was, that was the writer of this book; for that it was written by him is very evident from the beginning of it, it being dedicated to the same person his Gospel is, and of which he makes mention; and in the Complutensian edition the book is called, “The Acts of the Apostles of Saint Luke the Evangelist”; and so the title of it in the Syriac version is, “the Book of the Acts: that is, the history of the blessed apostles, which my Lord Luke the Evangelist collected for the saints”. It was by him written in the Greek language; and we are told<sup>f1</sup>, that there was a version of it into the Hebrew language, and which was laid up in the library of the Jews at Tiberias; and is cited by R. Azarias<sup>f2</sup> under the name of **twl w[ph**, “the Acts”: of the authority of this book there has been no doubt, among the ancients, only Cerinthus the heretic endeavoured to discredit it; and it was not received by another sort of heretics called Severiani, from Severus, a disciple of Tatian<sup>f3</sup>. It is a most excellent and useful work, showing the first planting of Christianity, and of Christian churches, both among the Jews and Gentiles; the spread and progress of the Gospel in several parts of the world; what sufferings the apostles endured for the sake of it; and with what patience and courage they bore them; and what success attended them; and is a standing proof and confirmation of the Christian religion.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 1

**Ver. 1.** *The former treatise have I made*, etc.] Meaning the Gospel written by him the Evangelist Luke, for from that he makes a transition to this, beginning here where he there left off; namely, at the ascension of Christ; (see ~~251~~ Luke 24:51).

*O Theophilus*; (See Gill on "~~208~~ Luke 1:3")

*of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.* This is a summary of his former treatise, his Gospel, which gave an account of what Christ began to do, and did; not of the common and private actions of his life; or of what was done, either in public, or private, throughout the whole of his life; for excepting that of his disputing with the doctors at twelve years of age, no account is given by him of what he did, till he was about thirty years of age; but of his extraordinary actions, of the miracles he wrought; and these not all, and everyone of them; but many of them, and which were sufficient to prove him the Messiah; and particularly of all things he did relating to the salvation of his people; of the whole of his obedience; of his compliance with the ceremonial law; of his submission to baptism; of his holy life and conversation, and entire conformity to the law; of his sufferings and death, how that thereby he made full atonement for sin, brought in an everlasting righteousness, and obtained eternal redemption for his people: and not only Luke, in his Gospel, gave an account of these his actions, but also of many of his excellent discourses, his parables, and his sermons, whether delivered to the people in common, or to his own disciples: and now, as this was the subject of his former book, he intended in this latter to treat, as he does, of what the apostles of Christ began to do and teach.

**Ver. 2.** *Until the day in which he was taken up*, etc.] That is, into heaven. The historian suggests, that his former treatise took in the main and principal things Jesus did and taught, until such time that he ascended to heaven:

*after that he, through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles, whom he had chosen*: our Lord having chosen twelve of his own

free grace and goodness, and not according to their worth and merit, to be his apostles, a little before his ascension to heaven, gave them more express and explicit commands and orders where they should go, into all the world, to all nations; and what they should preach, the whole Gospel, salvation by faith in him, and particularly repentance and remission of sins; and what ordinances they should require believers to attend to; and how they themselves should conduct and behave in their work: the phrase, “through the Holy Ghost”, may either be read in connection with “had given commandments”, as the Vulgate and Arabic versions read, and as we do; and the sense be, that these commands which Christ gave to his apostles, were not merely his orders, as man, but were what the Holy Ghost was equally concerned in with him, and were from him as God, and so carried a divine authority with them; and at the same time that he gave them to them, he breathed into them the Holy Ghost, whereby they had a more clear view of his doctrines and ordinances, and were more qualified to minister them; and besides, had an intimation given them, that they might expect still greater gifts of the Holy Ghost: or it may be read with the latter clause, “whom he had chosen”; as in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; and then the meaning is, that just before his being taken up to heaven, he gave some special orders and directions to his apostles, whom he had chosen to that office through the Holy Ghost, and not through human affection in him, or according to any desert of theirs; but as under the influence of the Holy Spirit, with which, as man, he was anointed without measure; and whose gifts and graces he communicated to his disciples, to fit them for the service to which they were appointed: or with the apostles; they being sent by the Holy Ghost, as well as by Christ.

**Ver. 3.** *To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion*, etc.] That is, after his sufferings and death; for that he suffered many things, and at last death itself, is certain from the acknowledgment of the Jews themselves, who own, that they put him to death on the passover eve<sup>f4</sup>; as well as from the accounts of the evangelists; and from the soldiers not breaking his legs, when the rest that were crucified with him were broken, because he was already dead; and from his “ricardium” being pierced with a spear, from whence blood and water sprung, after which it was impossible he should be alive; and from the testimony of the centurion who watched him, to whom Pilate sent to know if he was dead, and how long he had been dead; and from his being buried, and lying in the grave so long as he did: and yet after, and not withstanding this, “he showed himself

alive”; he raised himself from the dead, and hereby declared himself to be the Son of God with power, which cannot be said of others; there were others that were alive after death, but not by their own power; as the widow of Sarepta’s son, the daughter of Jairus, Lazarus, and the widow of Nain’s son; but these did not “show themselves alive”, as Christ did, who appeared often to his apostles: for after he had first appeared to Mary Magdalene, he showed himself to the two disciples going to Emmaus; then to ten of them, Thomas being absent; after that to them all, Thomas being present, when he convinced him of the truth of his resurrection; after that he appeared to seven of the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and then to all the apostles; and to five hundred brethren at once on a mountain in Galilee; and once to James alone, and to them all again when he was parted from them and went up to heaven; and so they must be proper and sufficient witnesses of his resurrection: and this evidence of his being alive, he gave to them, by many infallible proofs; or by many signs and tokens, and which were most sure and unquestionable arguments of his being alive; as his eating and drinking with them, walking and talking with them in a free and familiar manner, showing them his hands and his feet, and side, that they might see the scars which the nails and spear had made; and which were not only a proof that he was risen again, but risen again in the same body in which he suffered; and that they might feel and handle him, and know that he was not a spirit, a phantom, a mere apparition, but was really risen and alive: being seen of them forty days; not that he was seen by them for forty days together continually, but at certain times, within the space of forty days; for between his first and last appearance, many others intervening, such a length of time run out; so that it was not a single and sudden appearance that surprised them; but there were many of them, and a distance between them, and this for a considerable term of time; hence they had opportunity of reflecting upon these appearances, and of satisfying themselves of the truth of things. This number of “forty days” is a remarkable one in Scripture. The flood was forty days upon the earth; and so long Moses was in the mount with God; such a number of days the spies were searching the land of Canaan; so many days Goliath presented himself to the armies of Israel; and so long a time Elijah went in the strength of the meat the angel provided for him; and for such a length of time the prophet Ezekiel was to bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; and such a term of time was given out by Jonah for the destruction of Nineveh; and so many days Christ fasted, and was tempted in the wilderness. The Jews pretend<sup>f5</sup>, that forty days before Jesus was put to death he was led forth, and a crier

went before him, declaring, that whoever would, had liberty to testify to his innocence if they could, but no man appeared for him: but this is false; the truth of the matter is, that for forty days after his resurrection he showed himself to his disciples, and by proving the truth of his resurrection, he proved his own innocence and uprightness. If the testimony of Rabbenu Hakadosh, as cited by Galatinus, could be depended on, the Jews had a notion of this forty days' conversation of the Messiah with his disciples, after his resurrection; who say <sup>f6</sup>,

“the Messiah, after his resurrection, shall converse with the righteous, and they shall hear his precepts “forty days”, answerable to those forty days in which he shall be in the wilderness to afflict his soul, before they shall kill him; and these being finished, he shall ascend to heaven, and sit at the right hand of God, as it is said, (~~1301~~ Psalm 110:1).”

But this seems rather to be the pious fraud of some Christian, than the words of a Jew: however, they do say <sup>f7</sup>, that

“the days of the Messiah are “forty days”, as it is said, (~~1950~~ Psalm 95:10) “forty years long was I grieved”; or, as they interpret it, “shall I be grieved with this generation”.”

intimating, that the generation of the Messiah, and of the wilderness, would be much alike, and equally grieving to God, and reckoning a day for a year, as the Lord did with that generation, (~~0443~~ Numbers 14:33,34). These forty days Christ was with his disciples, may be an emblem of the forty years which were to run out from his death, to his coming again to take vengeance on the Jewish nation; for so long time was there from thence to the destruction of Jerusalem. And Christ was not only seen of the disciples at certain seasons during this space of time, but he was also heard by them: for it follows,

*and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God*; the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation; concerning the doctrines of the Gospel they were to preach, and the ordinances of it they were to administer; concerning the church of God, the nature, order, and officers of it, and the laws and rules by which it should be governed; concerning the kingdom of grace, what it consists of, and wherein it lies; and of the kingdom of glory, of meetness for it, his own grace, and of the right unto it, his own justifying righteousness: some of these things they might have

before but very little knowledge of; and may be these are the things he had to say to them, and which, till now, they could not bear; and being no more to be with them in person, he instructs them in them.

**Ver. 4.** *And being assembled together with them*, etc.] At their last meeting at Bethany, or Mount Olivet, which was by appointment: some render the words, as the Vulgate Latin, “and eating with them”; which was one of the proofs he gave of his being alive; and so the Syriac version renders it, “and when he had ate bread with them”, and the Ethiopic version, “and dining with them”, which he might do more than once; (see <sup><4212></sup>John 21:12,15) this was the last time, when he

*commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem*; which does not necessarily infer, that they were then at Jerusalem; for they might be, and they seem rather to be at Bethany, or on the Mount of Olives, from whence they afterwards returned to Jerusalem; and from thence they had orders not to depart, where the blood of Christ had been shed, and where were his greatest enemies, and where the disciples might have no inclination to have gone, and much less to abide, but so it must be, partly for the glorifying of Christ by the effusion of his Spirit on the apostles in the place where he had suffered the most reproach; and partly because the Gospel, the word of the Lord, was to go out of this place, according to the prophecy in (<sup><2128></sup>Isaiah 2:3) as also because a Gospel church was to be fixed there, and a very large number of souls to be converted, and added to it: wherefore they were bid to go thither, and not stir from thence,

*but wait for the promise of the Father*; that is, the pouring forth of the Spirit, which God the Father of Christ; and of his people, had promised should be in the last days, (<sup><2128></sup>Joel 2:28) and which Christ had promised his disciples from the Father, (<sup><4146></sup>John 14:16, 15:26, 16:7).

*which, saith he, ye have heard of me*; or “by”, or “out of my mouth”, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and Beza’s most ancient copy read; referring to the above passages, or to what follows: and which he the rather mentions, to assure them of its accomplishment, since it was both a promise of the Father, all whose promises are yea and amen; and he had also told them of it, neither of whose words could possibly fall to the ground.

**Ver. 5.** *For John truly baptized with water*, etc.] Or “in water”, as he himself says, (<sup><4011></sup>Matthew 3:11) John’s baptism was water baptism, an

immersion of persons in water: he was the first administrator of it, and therefore is here mentioned by name; and his, and the baptism of the Spirit, are opposed; for there were others, as the disciples of Christ, that baptized in water as well as John: and these words are not to be understood of the words of the Lord, by the mouth of John, which the disciples heard, for they were not then called when John spoke the words in (<sup><40B1></sup>Matthew 3:11) nor indeed are they the same with these; but these are the words of Christ himself, and which the apostles heard from his own mouth, as is clear from (<sup><4116></sup>Acts 11:16) though they are not recorded by any of the evangelists; and these are not the only words which Luke repeats, that the evangelists are silent about; (see <sup><40B></sup>Acts 20:35)

*but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost*; that is, by himself; for it is Christ's prerogative to baptize with the Spirit, as John foretold of him, and it designs such an extraordinary and plentiful donation of the gifts of the Spirit, as may be expressed by a baptism; in which the apostles, on the day of "Pentecost", were, as it were, to be immersed, and with them covered; as Cyril of Jerusalem<sup>f8</sup> observes,

"as he, **ο ενδυνων εν τοις υδασι**, "who is plunged in water, and baptized", is encompassed by the water on every side, so are they that are wholly baptized by the Spirit."

*Not many days hence*; within ten days, for this was on the fortieth day from his death, which was at the passover, these words were said; and on the fiftieth day from thence was the feast of Pentecost, when this had its fulfilment.

**Ver. 6.** *When they therefore were come together*, etc.] That is, Christ, and his eleven apostles; for not the hundred and twenty disciples hereafter mentioned, nor the five hundred brethren Christ appeared to at once, are here intended, but the apostles, as appears from (<sup><40C></sup>Acts 1:2-4)

*they asked of him, saying, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?* The kingdom had been for some time taken away from the Jews, Judea was reduced to a Roman province, and was now actually under the power of a Roman governor. And the nation in general was in great expectation, that upon the Messiah's coming they should be delivered from the yoke of the Romans, and that the son of David would be king over them. The disciples of Christ had imbibed the same notions, and were in the same expectation of a temporal kingdom to be set up by their master,



as is evident from (ⲁⲓⲓⲓ Matthew 20:21) and though his sufferings and death had greatly damped their spirits, and almost destroyed their hopes, (see ⲁⲓⲓⲓ Luke 24:21) yet his resurrection from the dead, and his discoursing with them about the kingdom of God, and ordering them to wait at Jerusalem, the metropolis of that nation, for some thing extraordinary, revived their hopes, and emboldened them to put this question to him: and this general expectation of the Jews is expressed by them in the same language as here;

“the days of the Messiah will be the time when **l arçyl twkl mh bwçtç**, “the kingdom shall return”, or “be restored to Israel”; and they shall return to the land of Israel, and that king shall be exceeding great, and the house of his kingdom shall be in Zion, and his name shall be magnified, and his fame shall fill the Gentiles more than King Solomon; all nations shall be at peace with him, and all lands shall serve him, because of his great righteousness, and the wonderful things which shall be done by him; and whoever rises up against him God will destroy, and he shall deliver him into his hands; and all the passages of Scripture testify of his and our prosperity with him; and there shall be no difference in anything from what it is now, only “the kingdom shall return to Israel”<sup>f9</sup>.”

**Ver. 7.** *And he said unto them*, etc.] To his disciples,

*it is not for you to know the times or the seasons*; meaning, not the times that are past from Adam to Christ; as how long the world stood; when the flood came; when Sodom and Gomorrha were burned to ashes; when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, and the law was given to them; when the kingdom of Israel began, and when the Jews were carried captive, and when they returned; when the sceptre departed from Judah, and Daniel’s weeks had an end: or the particular seasons of the year, and the times for planting, ploughing, sowing, reaping, etc. but when should be the time, the day, and hour of the coming of the son of man, when he shall set up his kingdom in a more glorious manner, and the kingdoms of this world shall become his; or when the kingdom shall be restored to Israel. This, by the Jews, is said to be one of the seven things hid from men<sup>f10</sup>:

“seven things are hid from the children of men, and these are they; the day of death, and the day of consolation, and the depth of judgment, and a man knows not what is in the heart of his neighbour, nor with what he shall be rewarded, and “when the

kingdom of the house of David shall return”, and when the kingdom of Persia shall fall.”

*Which the Father hath put in his own power*; and not in the power of a creature, no, not of the angels; (see <sup><4B6></sup>Matthew 24:36) wherefore it is vain and sinful, as well as fruitless, to indulge a curious inquiry into these things, or into the times and seasons of what is future; as of the time of a man’s death, of the end of the world, of the second coming of Christ; only those things should be looked into which God has revealed, and put into the power of man to know by diligent search and inquiry. Says R. Simeon <sup>f11</sup>,

“flesh and blood, (i.e. man), which knows not wy[grw wyt], “its times and its moments”, (and so the Vulgate Latin renders the words here), ought to add a void space to the blessed God, who knows the times and moments.”

**Ver. 8.** *But ye shall receive power*, etc.] From on high, with which they were to be endured, (<sup><249></sup>Luke 24:49) meaning the power of the Holy Ghost, strength from him to preach the Gospel, and work miracles in confirmation of it, and courage and greatness of mind, amidst all reproaches and persecutions, to face and oppose their enemies, profess the name of Christ, abide by his truths and ordinances, make their way through all opposition and difficulties, and spread the Gospel all over the world; for intend of enjoying worldly ease, honour, wealth, and riches, they were looking for, our Lord gives them to understand that they must expect labour, service, afflictions, and trials, which would require power and strength, and which they should have:

*after that the Holy Ghost shall come upon you*; from above, from heaven, as he did, and sat upon them in the form of cloven tongues, and of fire; upon which they were filled with knowledge and zeal, with strength and courage, and with all gifts and abilities necessary for their work:

*and ye shall be witnesses unto me*; of the person of Christ, of his deity and sonship, of his incarnation, his ministry, and his miracles, of his suffering and death, of his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension to heaven. This was to be their work, and what belong to them, and not to enquire about a temporal kingdom, and the setting up of that, and the times and seasons of it; their business was to testify of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that followed, and to preach a crucified Jesus, as the only Saviour of lost sinners: and this

*both in Jerusalem*, the “metropolis” of the nation, and there, in the first place, where such dwelt who had been concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, many of whom were to be called by grace, and converted through their ministry:

*and in all Judea*; that part of the land of Israel which was distinct from Samaria and Galilee, and from beyond Jordan; where churches were to be planted, as afterwards they were; (see ~~<418>~~ Acts 9:31).

*And in Samaria*; where Christ had before forbid his disciples to go; but now their commission is enlarged, and they are sent there; and here Philip went upon the persecution raised against the church at Jerusalem, and preached Christ with great success, to the conversion of many; and hither Peter and John went to lay their hands on them, and confirm them; (see ~~<418>~~ Acts 8:5,14)

*and unto the uttermost part of the earth*; throughout the whole world, whither the sound of the apostles, and their words went, ( ~~<518>~~ Romans 10:18).

**Ver. 9.** *And when he had spoken these things*, etc.] That the times and seasons were not to be known by them, but to be kept a secret by the Father: that they should tarry at Jerusalem, and in a few days be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and receive such power, abilities, strength, and courage thereby, as to bear a noble testimony for Christ, not only there, but in all the world; and when he had given them a fresh commission, and told them where they should go, what they should preach, and what miracles they should perform, and blessed them.

*While they be held*; all the Oriental versions, add, “him”; that is Christ, while they looked wistly at him, being attentive to what he said to them, so that they were not asleep; nor did Christ become invisible to them, or disappear before his ascension, but was visible to them in it; hence they were eyewitnesses of it:

*he was taken up*. Luke in his Gospel says, “carried up”: very likely by angels, since these not only attended him in his ascension, but are the chariots of the Lord, in which he went up to heaven; (see ~~<19817>~~ Psalm 68:17,18) nor is this at all inconsistent with his proper deity, or that divine power he had of elevating himself, which he could do without the assistance of others; but this makes for the glory of his majesty.

*And a cloud received him out of their sight*; which was done partly for the same purpose, to add to the grandeur and magnificence of Christ's ascension; and partly to check the curiosity of the disciples, and prevent their gazing any more at him: and it may be that this, cloud was no other than a number of angels that appeared in this form; just as Elijah was taken up to heaven by angels, who appeared in the form of horses and chariots of fire; and the rather this may be the sense here, since it is certain, that there was a large number of angels which attended Christ at his ascension; and by whom he was then seen, (<sup><19817></sup>Psalm 68:17,18, <sup><4015></sup>John 1:51, <sup><5416></sup>1 Timothy 3:16) whereas, if these are not intended by the cloud, no more than two are here taken notice of, and these not as going along with Christ, but staying behind to converse with his disciples; to which may be added, that Christ was "received" by this cloud which descended to meet him, and joining him, escorted him to heaven: at least it may be thought, if it was a real cloud, that there was a multitude of angels in it, which accompanied him to the heavenly regions; for it can hardly be thought that a multitude of the heavenly host should descend at his birth, and sing glory to God upon his coming into this world; and not as large a number attend him with shouts and acclamations, at his going out of it, when he had done his work he came about, and was ascending to his God and Father, to take his place at his right hand on his throne; (see <sup><19475></sup>Psalm 47:5). The Ethiopic version adds, "and he ascended to heaven".

**Ver. 10.** *And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven*, etc.] For though he was taken out of their sight by the cloud, they kept looking upwards, and after him, if they could see him again, or any more of him:

*as he went up*; they looked up to heaven after him, as he went up from the earth, before the cloud took him out of their sight; and still they continued looking, as the cloud carried him up, until it was out of the reach of their sight, being willing to see the last of him in this way:

*behold, two men stood by them in white apparel*; that is, two angels in the form of men; it being usual with them to appear in human form: these on a sudden appeared and stood on the earth just by them; though the Ethiopic version renders it, "they stood above them", as if they were in the air over their heads; and they appeared in white apparel, as the angel at the sepulchre in (<sup><4181></sup>Matthew 28:2,3) which was a symbol both of their purity and holiness, and of their lustre and glory. The Ethiopic version renders it, "they were clothed with lightning"; they appeared in such a dazzling form,

that it looked as if they were covered with lightning; as the angel that appeared at Christ's resurrection, his countenance is said to be as lightning; which must at once fix the attention of the disciples to them, and strike them with surprise: hence a "behold" is prefixed to this: and hereby they knew that they were not common and ordinary men, or mere men, but angels in such a form.

**Ver. 11.** *Which also said, ye men of Galilee,* etc.] And which was said by them, not to reproach them with their country, but partly to let them know that they knew them, who they were, and from whence they came; and partly to observe the rich and distinguishing grace of God in choosing such mean and contemptible persons to be the apostles of Christ, and eyewitnesses of his majesty:

*why stand ye gazing up into heaven?* reproving them for their curiosity in looking after Christ with their bodily eyes, who was no more in common to be seen this way, but with an eye of faith; and for their desire after his corporeal presence, which they were not to look for; and as if they expected he would return again immediately, whereas his return will not be till the end of the world: and besides, they were not to remain on that spot, or stand gazing there; they were to go to Jerusalem, and abide there, as Christ had ordered, till they should receive the Holy Spirit in an extraordinary way; and then they were to preach a crucified Christ, and declare that he was risen from the dead, and was gone to heaven, and was ordained to be the Judge of quick and dead.

*This same Jesus;* and not another; the same in person, in body and soul:

*which is taken up from you into heaven;* who was taken up in a cloud out of their sight, and received into heaven, where he will be till the times of the restitution of all things; and which might be matter of grief to them, because of the loss of his bodily presence; though it should have been rather joyful to them, since he was gone to the Father, and as their forerunner, to prepare a place, and make intercession for them:

*shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven;* he shall come in the same flesh, in the same human nature; he shall come in the clouds of heaven, and shall be attended with his mighty angels, as he now was; he shall descend himself in person, as he now ascended in person; and as he went up with a shout, and with the sound of a trumpet, (see <sup>1945</sup> Psalm 47:5) so he shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and

the trump of God; and, it may be, he shall descend upon the very spot from whence he ascended; (see <sup><384b></sup>Zechariah 14:4) and it is a notion of the Jews, that the resurrection of the Israelites will be there: they say <sup>f12</sup>, that

“when the dead shall live, the Mount of Olives shall be cleaved asunder, and all the dead of Israel shall come out from under it; yea, even the righteous which die in captivity shall pass through a subterranean cavern, and come out from under the Mount of Olives.”

**Ver. 12.** *Then returned they unto Jerusalem*, etc.] With great joy, after the angels had told them that he should come again in like manner:

*from the mount called Olivet*; which was on the east side of Jerusalem, a mountain Christ much frequented, and from whence he ascended to heaven. This is the hill which in (<sup><411b></sup>1 Kings 11:7) is said to be “before Jerusalem”; and accordingly Jarchi interprets it of the Mount of Olives; and in (<sup><384b></sup>Zechariah 14:4) it is expressly said to be “before Jerusalem on the east”; hence, when our Lord sat upon it, he is said to be over against the temple, (<sup><411b></sup>Mark 13:3). It has its name from the multitude of olive trees which grew upon it: it is by the Jewish writers sometimes called **pytyzh rh**, “the Mount of Olives” <sup>f13</sup>, as in (<sup><384b></sup>Zechariah 14:4) and sometimes **hj ̇mh rh** <sup>f14</sup>, and **aj ̇m rwj** <sup>f15</sup>, “the Mount of Oil”; i.e. of olive oil, which was made out of the olives that grew upon it. It is said, that in an old edition of the Latin version of this text it is called “the Mountain of Three Lights”; and this reason is given for it, because on the west side it was enlightened in the night by the continual fire of the altar in the temple; and on the east side it had the first beams of the sun before the city was enlightened with them; and it produced plenty of olives, by which the light is maintained in the lamps. Josephus <sup>f16</sup> relates, that in the earthquake in the times of Uzziah, half part of this mountain, which was to the west, was divided from it, and was rolled four furlongs to the eastern part of it, so that the ways and king’s gardens were stopped up.

*Which, is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.* The Syriac version renders it, “about seven furlongs”, or near a mile; though Josephus <sup>f17</sup> writes, that the Mount of Olives was but five furlongs from Jerusalem: perhaps this may be a mistake in the present copies of Josephus, since Chrysostom on this place cites this passage of Josephus, and reads seven furlongs; which exactly agrees with the Syriac version. A sabbath day’s

journey, according to the Jews, was two thousand cubits from any city or town, and which they often called, **תבֿצֿ מִשְׁבֿת**, “the bound of the sabbath”<sup>f18</sup>; and which they collect partly from (~~Q1804~~ Numbers 35:4,5) which they understand thus<sup>f19</sup>:

“a thousand cubits are the suburbs (of the city), and two thousand cubits the bounds of the sabbath.”

And these were so many middling paces; for so they say<sup>f20</sup>,

“a walk of two thousand middling paces, this is the bound of the sabbath.”

And that this was the proper space they also gather from (~~Q1804~~ Joshua 3:4) it being the distance between the ark and the people when they marched; and though this was not fixed by the law, yet being a tradition of the elders, was strictly observed by them: so when Ruth desired to become a proselytess, the Targumist on (~~Q1816~~ Ruth 1:16) introduces Naomi thus speaking to her;

“says Naomi, we are commanded to keep the sabbaths, and the good days, (or feasts,) and not to walk above “two thousand cubits”;;”

i.e. on those days; for to go further was reckoned a profanation of them: so it is said<sup>f21</sup>,

“the sabbath day is profaned with the hands by work, and with the feet by walking more than “two thousand cubits”.”

Yea, this was punishable with beatings<sup>f22</sup>:

“a man might go on the sabbath without the city two thousand cubits on every side — but if he went beyond two thousand cubits, they beat him with the beating of rebels,”

or in the same manner a rebellious son was beaten. Nay, not only they might not go out of a city or town where they were, further than this, but from whatsoever place they happened to be, as appears by these following rules<sup>f23</sup>;

“if anyone falls asleep in the way (or on the road), and he does not know that it was dark (and so that the sabbath is begun), he has two thousand cubits (allowed him) on every side. — Whoever is on

a journey, and it is dark, and he knows a tree, or a hedge, and says, let my sabbath (or sabbatical seat) be under it, he says nothing; but if he says, let my sabbath be at the root of it, then he may go from the place of his feet, and to the root of it, two thousand cubits, and from the root of it to his house two thousand cubits; by which means he may go four thousand cubits after it is dark. But if he does not know (any), and is not expert in walking, and says, let my sabbath be in my place, (i.e. in which he stands,) then from his place he has two thousand cubits on every side.”

Hence, in some copies it is here inserted, “such being the distance that the Jews could walk”; that is, were allowed to walk by their canons. They call two thousand cubits a mile <sup>f24</sup>; and if the Mount of Olives was seven furlongs from Jerusalem, it was pretty near a mile; but if but five furlongs, it was little more than half a mile: perhaps the true distance might be six furlongs, since Josephus says <sup>f25</sup>, the tenth legion was ordered to encamp six furlongs from Jerusalem, at the Mount of Olives, which was over against the city to the east; agreeably to which Epiphanius <sup>f26</sup>, who had been a Jew, and was born in Palestine, says,

“it was not lawful to go on the sabbath day beyond six furlongs,”

which were three quarters of a mile.

**Ver. 13.** *And when they were come in*, etc.] “Into it”, as the Arabic version reads; that is, into the city of Jerusalem, and into some house in that city; but what house it was is needless to inquire, since it cannot be known. Some think it was the house of John the Evangelist, whither he had taken Mary the mother of our Lord, (~~4197~~ John 19:27) which is not improbable: others, that it was the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where the disciples met for prayer when Peter was put into prison, (~~4121~~ Acts 12:12) others, that it was the house of Simon the leper; but his house was not at Jerusalem, but in Bethany, (~~4106~~ Matthew 26:6). Some have thought it was the house of Nicodemus, or of Joseph of Arimathea; but after all it seems most likely, that it was not any private house, but the temple into which the disciples immediately went, and where they continued; (see ~~4262~~ Luke 24:52,53) and (~~4126~~ Acts 2:46).

*they went up into an upper room*; which, if in a private house, they might choose for retirement and secrecy; and might be the same in which they had eaten the passover; and so a Syriac scholiast, in manuscript, on the



place, says it was the same. It was usual to meet in upper rooms for devotion and religious conversation; (See Gill on “~~4004~~ Mark 2:4”) though this upper room might be one of the chambers in the temple; for not only from the scriptural account of the temple, there were chambers round about it, and upper chambers; (see ~~1006~~ 1 Kings 6:5, ~~1381~~ 1 Chronicles 28:11, ~~489~~ 2 Chronicles 3:9) and one of these is called the chamber of Gemariah, in which Baruch read the prophecies of Jeremiah, (~~2830~~ Jeremiah 36:10) but also from the Jewish writings, in which frequent mention is made of the chamber Palhedrin, where the high priest was brought seven days before the day of atonement <sup>f27</sup>; and the chamber of the counsellors <sup>f28</sup>; and the chamber Gazith, where the sanhedrim sat; and the chamber of the house of Abtines <sup>f29</sup>; and the chamber of wood; and the chamber of the lepers; and the chamber of the house of oil <sup>f30</sup>; and the chamber of salt; and the chamber of Parvah; and the chamber of them that wash, besides others <sup>f31</sup>. And into a chamber, or upper room in the temple they might be let by Joses Barnabas, a Levite, one of their own company, (~~4006~~ Acts 4:36) who might have the care of it, for they are said to be continually in the temple, (~~4253~~ Luke 24:53).

*Where abode both Peter, and James, and John.* The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, “Peter, and John, and James”; and so the Alexandrian copy. These were the three favourite disciples of Christ, and are often mentioned together, as here first;

*and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew.* The Syriac and Ethiopic versions put Matthew before Bartholomew.

*James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas, the brother of James;* all the Oriental versions read, “Judas the son of James”: of the names of the apostles, (see Gill on “~~4002~~ Matthew 10:2”), (see Gill on “~~4003~~ Matthew 10:3”), (see Gill on “~~4004~~ Matthew 10:4”). They are all here mentioned but Judas the betrayer, who was dead, to show, that though one had disbelieved the resurrection of Christ, another had denied him, and all of them had forsook him, and fled; yet they were got together again, and were firm and steadfast in the faith of Christ, waiting for the pouring forth of the Spirit.

**Ver. 14.** *These all continued, with one accord, in prayer and supplication,* etc.] For the promise of the Spirit Christ had given them reason to expect; and that they might be preserved from their enemies, and kept faithful to their Lord; and be abundantly qualified for the preaching of the Gospel,

and succeeded in it; and that their hearts might be comforted, and knit together in love: and they were unanimous in their requests, and so were under the promise of being heard; and in this work they were constant, and assiduous, and followed it with importunity. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions leave out the last clause, “and supplication”; and so likewise the Alexandrian copy: “with the women”; that followed Christ from Galilee, and were at his cross, and at his grave; among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Salome the wife of Zebedee. Some render the words, “with their wives”; the wives of the apostles; and as many as had wives, no doubt but they were with them; and it was necessary they should be, that they might be strengthened and confirmed in the faith of Christ. Beza’s most ancient copy adds, “and children”;

*and Mary the mother of Jesus.* This is the last we hear of her; how long she lived after this, is not certain: her continuance with the apostles of Christ shows her religion and piety, and was both for the increase of her faith, and spiritual comfort:

*and with his brethren;* (See Gill on “~~4155~~ Matthew 13:55”).

**Ver. 15.** *And in those days Peter stood up*, etc.] That is, in one of the days after Christ’s ascension, and before the day of Pentecost, whilst the disciples were waiting for the promise of the Spirit. The Ethiopic version reads, “on that day”; as if it was the same day they came first into Jerusalem, and went into the upper room; and which is likely enough; for no time was to be lost in choosing one in the room of Judas; when Peter, not only as a forward person, and who had been used to be the first mover and actor in any affair; but as willing to show his zeal for Christ, whom he had so lately denied, and as being the senior man in company, as well as the minister of the circumcision, rises, and stands up, as persons used to do, when about to make an oration, and in respect and reverence to the persons addressed:

*in the midst of the disciples;* not only the other ten, but the whole hundred and twenty. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, “in the midst of the brethren”, and so reads the Vulgate Latin version; and the Ethiopic version, “in the midst of his own brethren”;

*and he said* what is expressed in the following verses, which before the historian relates, he inserts in a parenthesis this clause,

*the number of the names*; that is, of persons; (see <sup>f113</sup>Revelation 11:13). Some copies read, “of the men”, and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; who

*together*, all put together in one sum, or as meeting together in one and the same place, or as agreeing in the same faith and judgment, so the Arabic version, “and there was there a company whose names and wills agreed in this same opinion”; they were all in one place, and of the same mind; and the sum of them

*were about an hundred and twenty*; among whom were the eleven apostles, and seventy disciples, which made eighty one; so that there were thirty nine persons more in this company: not that it is to be thought that these were all that were in Jerusalem that believed in Christ; but these were the number of the persons that met and embodied together in a church state, and who not only gave themselves to the Lord, but to one another, by the will of God; and their names being taken and registered, the historian calls the account of them, the number of the names, and not persons; though he means persons. This was a number pretty famous among the Jews; the sanhedrim of Ezra, called the men of the great synagogue, consisted of an “hundred and twenty elders”; the last of which was Simeon the just, and he comprehended the hundred and twenty <sup>f32</sup>. And such a number was requisite for a sanhedrim in any place; it is asked,

“how many must there be in a city, that it may be fit for a sanhedrim? “an hundred and twenty”; R. Nehemiah says two hundred and thirty <sup>f33</sup>.”

but the decision is according to the former: hence they say <sup>f34</sup>, that

“they fix in every city in Israel, where there is an “hundred and twenty”, or more, a lesser sanhedrim. — -A city in which there is not an hundred and twenty, they place three judges, for there is no sanhedrim less than three.”

**Ver. 16.** *Men and brethren*, etc.] Which is said not so much by Peter to express his modesty, and humility, and his brotherly love; or on account of the spiritual relation that subsisted between him and the persons he speaks to, as it was a common form used in addresses; (see <sup>401B</sup>Acts 7:2, 15:7, 22:1, 23:1) it should seem, that the women, were not reckoned into the number of the hundred and twenty here addressed; and the Syriac version

calls that number, “the number of men”, unless they are supposed to be included in them:

*this Scripture must needs have been fulfilled*; or “must needs be fulfilled”: referring either to (<sup><3940></sup>Psalm 41:9) or rather to the passages after cited out of (<sup><3925></sup>Psalm 69:25, 109:8). There was a necessity of the fulfilling of it, consistent with the prescience of God, his counsel, and decree, and the veracity of the Scripture; which necessity does not at all excuse the sin of Judas, who acted freely from the wickedness of his own heart, and not from any force that this laid upon him: and the apostle might observe this also, to make the minds of the disciples easy, under this awful providence, since it was no other than what was predicted: and

*which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake before*; even many hundreds of years before the event; and which shows the omniscience, and so the deity of the Holy Ghost, and the divine authority of David’s Psalms; as well as the honour that was put upon him to be the instrument by which the Holy Ghost speaks, and to be his amanuensis: the particular referred to, is, “concerning” Judas; who is sometimes called Iscariot, to distinguish him from another apostle of the same name; and what is hereafter said sufficiently does that; or

*concerning that Judas*, as the Syriac version renders it:

*which was a guide to them that took Jesus*; to the band of soldiers and officers, who came with swords and staves, as to take a thief, or a robber; before these Judas went and showed them, not only the place where he was, but gave them a sign by which they should know him, and also advice to take him and hold him fast, and lead him away safely; so that he was not only a guide as to the way, but was a director, and conductor, and manager of the whole affair. And it may be observed, that though Peter did not conceal, but declares the sin of Judas; yet not in a rough manner, aggravating it, but with much softness and tenderness; though with no design to lessen it, as appears by what follows, and which may be instructive to us in speaking of other men’s sins.

**Ver. 17.** *For he was numbered with us*, etc.] He was chosen an apostle with: the rest, and was ordained into that office when they were, and was always reckoned one of the twelve, and stands in the catalogue when they are mentioned:

*and had obtained part of this ministry*; by lot, as the word signifies; the providence of God so ordering it, according to his eternal purpose and decree, that he was not only called an apostle, and enrolled among them, but he really had a part in that ministry; he preached, and baptized, and wrought miracles; and besides all this, carried the bag, was the treasurer, and a sort of a steward in Christ's family, and provided for it.

**Ver. 18.** *Now this man purchased a field*, etc.] This verse, with the following, seem to be the words of Luke the historian, which should be read in a parenthesis; for there was no need to have acquainted the disciples with the manner of Judas's death, which was so well known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem; nor would Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, be mentioned with that propriety by Peter, when he, and those he spoke of, were upon the spot; nor could there be any necessity of his explaining a word in their own tongue, which they understood, and that in a language unknown unto them; nor does it seem likely, that in so short a time as five or six weeks, the field should have obtained the name of "Aceldama", and be commonly known by it. The Ethiopic version calls this field, "a vineyard"; and so it might be, and yet the potter's field too. It is somewhat difficult, that Judas should be said to purchase it, when Matthew says the chief priests bought it, (<sup>4270</sup>Matthew 27:7). Both are true; Judas having received his money of the chief priests two days ago, might not only intend to purchase, but might really strike a bargain with the potter for his field; but repenting of his sin, instead of carrying the money to make good the agreement, went and threw it to the chief priests, and then hanged himself; when they, by a secret providence, might be directed to make a purchase of the same field with his money; or he may be said to purchase it, because it was purchased with his money. The Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions render it, "he possessed" it; not in person, unless he was buried there, as he might be; and so all that he got by his wretched bargain, was only so much ground as to be buried in; or the sense may be, "he caused it to be possessed"; by returning the money which the chief priests used this way;

*with the reward of his iniquity*; that is, with the thirty pieces of silver, given him as a reward for that vile action of his betraying of his Lord and master: so the reward of divination, or what Balsam got by soothsaying, which was an iniquitous and wicked practice, is called, "the wages of unrighteousness", (<sup>61215</sup>2 Peter 2:15)

*and falling headlong he burst in the midst*; either falling from the gallows, or tree on which he hanged himself, the rope breaking, upon a stone, or stump, his belly was broke, and burst; or falling from the air, whither he was violently snatched up by Satan, who was in him, and by whom he was thrown down to the earth, and who went out of him by a rupture made in his belly; or being in deep melancholy, he was strangled with the squinancy, and fell down on his face to the ground, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it,

*and burst asunder: and all his bowels gushed out*; through the rupture that was made. So we read of a man that fell from the roof of a house, **hynny[ m qypnw hysrk hy[ qp**, “and his belly burst, and his bowels came out”<sup>f35</sup>. And this was the miserable end of Judas. The death of Arius, as related by Athanasius<sup>f36</sup>, from Macarius the presbyter, who was present, was much after the same manner; who reports, that having swore to the orthodox faith, and being about to be introduced into the church at Constantinople, after the prayer of Alexander, the bishop of it, he went out to the seat, to ease nature; when he, on a sudden, fell down headlong, and burst in the middle, and immediately expired: and Epiphanius<sup>f37</sup> compares his exit with this of Judas, who observes, that he went out in the night to the vault, as before related, and burst asunder, as Judas of old did; and came to his end in a filthy and unclean place. Ruffinus says<sup>f38</sup>, that as he sat, his entrails, and all his bowels, came from him into the vault; and so he died in such a place, a death worthy of his blasphemous and corrupt mind. As to the seeming difference between the Evangelist Matthew and the Apostle Peter, it may be reconciled by either of the ways before mentioned; (See Gill on “<sup>4176</sup>Matthew 27:5”) though it seems most likely, that Judas not being able to bear the torments of his mind, he hanged himself, as Achitophel did, and was not strangled by the devil, or by any disease; and that he fell down from the tree on which he hung, either the rope breaking, or the tree falling; and so the things happened to him which are recorded: or he might fall from hence, either through a violent strong wind which blew him down; or through the rushing of wild beasts against the gallows, on which he hung; or by the devil himself, who might throw him down from hence after he had dispatched himself, as some have conjectured: or, which seems best of all, he might be cast down from hence by men, either of themselves, or by the order of the civil magistrates, not enduring such a sight, that one that had destroyed himself should hang long there; and which, according to the law, was not to be admitted; and these not taking him down, in a gentle

manner, but using some violence, or cutting the rope, the body fell, and burst asunder, as is here said: and it should be observed, that the Evangelist Matthew speaks of the death of Judas, in which he himself was concerned; and the Apostle Peter reports what befell his carcass after his death, and in which others were concerned. The Vulgate Latin renders it, and being hanged, he burst in the middle; as if this happened to him upon the gallows, without falling.

**Ver. 19.** *And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem*, etc.] As that he betrayed Jesus of Nazareth into the hands of the chief priests, for thirty pieces of silver; that this was the reward of his iniquity; and that with this a field was purchased for the burying of strangers in; and that he died in such a miserable way: there was scarce an inhabitant in Jerusalem but knew all this,

*insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue*; or “in their own dialect”, the “Jerusalem dialect”, Which was now Chaldee, or Syriac; and such is the word that follows, “Aceldama; that is to say, the field of blood”: because it was bought with the price of Christ’s blood: and if, as some say, Judas hanged him self here, or was thrown headlong here by Satan, and that this was the place where his bowels gushed out; then it may be likewise so called, because it was sprinkled with his blood. It is called in the Alexandrian copy “Acheldamach”; and often by Jerom<sup>f39</sup> “Acheldemach”, but very wrongly; for not “Demach”, but “Dema”, in the Syriac and Chaldee dialect, signifies “blood”; which Peter calls the dialect of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, being now spoken by them, in distinction from the Galilean dialect used by him; which, it is plain, was different from the Jerusalem dialect by what is said, (<sup><4140></sup>Mark 14:70). This field, as it is reported by some, was by the appointment of the Empress Helena compassed about with four walls, in the manner of a tower, upon the top of which are seven distinct doors, like windows, by which the dead bodies of Christians are let down into it; and that it is fifty feet wide, and seventy two long: it stands not far from the valley of Himom, and is upon the south side of Mount Zion, where, as Jerom says<sup>f40</sup>, it was showed in his time. Masius<sup>f41</sup> affirms, there was a very high mountain near Jerusalem, called Mount Aceldema, from the adjacent field, which was bought with the price of Christ’s blood, to bury strangers in.



**Ver. 20.** *For it is written in the book of Psalms, etc.*] In (<sup>3925</sup>Psalm 69:25). These are the words of Peter, citing the Scripture he had said must be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost, by David, had spoke concerning Judas:

*let his habitation be desolate.* The Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, “his city”; meaning, perhaps, the city of Jerusalem; and which afterwards did become desolate, and was utterly destroyed:

*and let no man dwell therein;* in his habitation. The psalm, out of which these words are cited, is a psalm concerning the Messiah, and there are many passages cited out of it in the New Testament, and applied to him, or referred unto; (see <sup>4307</sup>John 2:17 15:25 19:28 <sup>4513</sup>Romans 15:3) compared with (<sup>3904</sup>Psalm 69:4,9,21) and what the psalmist says of the enemies of the Messiah in general, is applied by the apostle to Judas in particular. In the Hebrew text, in (<sup>3925</sup>Psalm 69:25) the words are in the plural number, “let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents”; and refer to all the enemies of Christ, the chief priests, elders of the people, Scribes and Pharisees, who covenanted with Judas to give him so much money to betray Christ into their hands; and who delivered him to the Roman governor, by whom, at their instigation, he was crucified; and particularly may well be thought to include Judas, who betrayed him to them; and therefore are very fitly interpreted of him: though not to be understood to the exclusion of the others, whose house was to be left desolate, and was left desolate, as our Lord predicted, (<sup>4238</sup>Matthew 23:38). The first word in the Hebrew text rendered “habitation”, signifies a very magnificent dwelling; it is sometimes translated a “castle”, (<sup>01216</sup>Genesis 25:16, <sup>06110</sup>Numbers 31:10, <sup>13164</sup>1 Chronicles 6:54) and sometimes a “palace”, Cant. 8:9, (<sup>3254</sup>Ezekiel 25:4) and it is interpreted by *wmra*, “a palace”, here, by several Jewish writers <sup>f42</sup>; and so may intend the dwelling places of the richer sort of Christ’s enemies, as the palaces of the high priest, and of the prince, or president of the sanhedrim, and the stately houses of the members of it, of the chief priests and elders of the people, and of the Scribes and Pharisees; all which became desolate at the destruction of Jerusalem: the other word, rendered “tents”, may design the cottages of the meaner sort of people, who, with united voices, cried aloud for the crucifixion of Christ; and which also shared the same fate when Jerusalem was destroyed: now inasmuch as Judas was of the meaner sort, the apostle here makes use of a word which signifies but a poor and mean habitation, though it is sometimes used of grander ones, and which seems to answer to the latter; for as there are two words in the original text expressive of



habitation, he might choose which he would, and did choose that which was most pertinent in the application of the passage to Judas. However, a Jew has no reason to find fault with this version, since the Targum renders both words by “habitation”, thus;

*let their habitation be desolate, and in their habitations let no one dwell:* where Judas’s habitation was is not certain; but that he might have one as well as the Apostle John, is not at all improbable, and from hence seems evident:

*and his bishopric let another take;* which passage stands in (<sup><1940B></sup>Psalm 109:8) and is fitly applied to Judas, and was verified in him, who not only died a violent and infamous death, by which he was in consequence stripped of his office, as a bishop, or overseer; but another was to be put into it, invested with it, and exercise it; and therefore very pertinently does Peter produce it, his intention being to move the disciples to choose another in his room. These words are produced by the apostle, as if they were to be found in the same place with the preceding; whereas they stand in another psalm, as has been observed: and this is no unusual thing with the writers of the New Testament, to put several passages of Scripture together, as if they were in one place, when they are to be sought for in different places; an instance of this, among many, that might be mentioned, is in (<sup><1940></sup>Romans 3:10-18) and this is a very common way of citing Scripture with the Jews. Surenhusius <sup>f43</sup> has given a variety of instances, in proof of this, out of their writings, as in the margin <sup>f44</sup>, which the learned reader may consult and compare at leisure. The psalm, out of which this passage is cited, is not to be understood of David literally, and of what he met with from his enemies, and of his imprecations upon them, either Doeg the Edomite, as Kimchi interprets it, or Ahithophel, as others, but of the Messiah, with whom the whole agrees; against whom the mouth of the wicked Jews, and particularly of the deceitful Pharisees, were opened; and against whom the false witnesses spoke with lying tongues; and who, all of them, compassed him with words of hatred to take away his life, and acted a most ungenerous and ungrateful part; opposed him without a cause, and became his enemies for his love showed to them, both to soul and body, preaching the Gospel, and healing diseases, (<sup><1940B></sup>Psalm 109:2-5). The poverty and distress he submitted to; the griefs and sorrows which he bore; the fatigues he underwent at his examination; and the weakness of body he was then reduced to, as well as the reproach cast upon him on the cross, when his enemies shook their heads at him, are in a very lively manner

described, (<sup>49422</sup>Psalm 109:22-25) and whereas one of his enemies particularly is singled out from the rest, what is said concerning him, by way of imprecation, suits with Judas, and had its accomplishment in him, (<sup>49406</sup>Psalm 109:6-8) who had a wicked man set over him, as over the rest of the Jews, Pilate, the Roman governor, a very wicked man; and at whose right hand Satan stood, as one of his council, as Aben Ezra interprets it, and put it into his heart to betray his master, and prompted him to it, and then accused him of it, and brought him to black despair for it; and who, when this affair was brought home to his own conscience, and there arraigned for it, was convicted and self-condemned, as he also will be at the general judgment; and as he found no place of mercy then, whatever prayers or entreaties he might make, so neither will he hereafter: his days were but few, being cut off in the prime of them, as may be concluded from the many years which some of his fellow apostles lived after him; and his bishopric, or office, as an apostle, was taken by another, even by Matthias, who was chosen in his room, of which we have an account in the following part of this chapter; for this is to be understood neither of his money, nor of his wife, nor of his own soul committed to his trust, as some of the Jewish writers <sup>f45</sup> explain it; but of his apostleship, with which he was invested by Christ. The word signifies an oversight, care, or charge; and so the Hebrew word **hdwqp** is rendered in (<sup>4082</sup>Numbers 3:32, 36) and designs any office, as the office of the priests and Levites in the house of God; (see <sup>4046</sup>Numbers 4:16). Jarchi interprets it here by **wtl wdg**, “his greatness”, or “dignity”; and explains it by the Spanish word “provostia”, an office of honour and authority, as this of being an apostle of Christ was; than which, a greater external dignity could not be enjoyed in the church of God, in which he has set first apostles, (<sup>4628</sup>1 Corinthians 12:28). That this psalm refers to Judas Iscariot, and to his affair, was so clear a point with the ancients, that they used to call it the Iscariotic Psalm. I lay no stress upon the observation some have made, that thirty curses are contained in it, the number of the pieces of silver for which he betrayed his master, since this may be thought to be too curious.

**Ver. 21.** *Wherefore of these men which have companied with us*, etc.] Seeing there was such an imprecation, which carried in it the nature of a prophecy, that another should take the bishopric of Judas, or be made an apostle in his room, it was absolutely necessary that one should be immediately chosen to that office; and this is the force of the illative particle, wherefore; and it was highly proper that this choice should be of

one among the men, and not the women; whom it did not become to bear any office, and exercise any authority in the church; hence it is said, “of these men”, to the exclusion of women: and it was exceeding right, and a very good notion, that the choice should be of one from among themselves, and who was known unto them; with whose abilities, integrity, wisdom, and holy conversation, they were acquainted: and therefore it is added, “which have companied with us”; one of our own company, and not a stranger; with whom we have familiarly conversed, and whose character is well known to us: a rule which ought to be attended to, in the choice of inferior officers, as pastors and deacons; who ought to be of the body and community, among whom they are chosen to an office; and their qualifications for it be well known, and that for some time past, as follows:

*all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us*; that is, ever since Christ called them to be his disciples and followers; and conversed with them, and discharged his office among them, governed, directed, taught, and instructed them; for it was not proper that a novice, a new plant, or one that was lately become a disciple, should be put into such an office; and the same holds good in proportion in other offices; men called to office should be of some standing, as well as of superior gifts.

**Ver. 22.** *Beginning from the baptism of John*, etc.] Not from the time that John first administered the ordinance of baptism; for Christ was not so soon made known, or had followers; but from the time of the administration of it by John, to Christ, when he was made known to Israel; and quickly upon this, he called his disciples, and entered on his public ministry: now Peter moves, that one who had been so early a follower of Christ, who had heard his excellent discourses, and seen his miracles, and who had steadfastly and constantly adhered to him, might be chosen in the room of Judas; one whose faith in Christ, love to him, and firmness of mind to abide by him, had been sufficiently tried and proved; who had continued with Christ and his apostles, from the beginning of his ministry, to that time: or as Peter adds,

*unto the same day that he was taken up from us*; by angels, and received by a cloud, and carried up to heaven; or “he ascended from us”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; or “lifted up himself from us”, as the Arabic version; for as he raised himself from the dead by his own power, by the same he could raise himself up from earth to heaven; the sense is, to the

time of his ascension to heaven, whether by himself, or by the ministry of angels:

*must one be ordained*; there was a necessity of this, partly on the account of the above prophecy, and partly to keep up the number of the twelve apostles, Christ had thought fit to pitch upon; answering to the twelve tribes of Israel, and to the twelve gates, and twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem: and this choice or ordination was moved to be made, and was made, not by the other eleven apostles, but by the whole company of an hundred and twenty; for these are the persons addressed by the apostle, and to whom he said, as the Arabic version renders it, “one of these men ye must choose”: and if the choice and ordination of such an extraordinary officer was made by the whole community, then much more ought the choice and ordination of inferior officers be by them: the end of this choice was,

*to be a witness with us of his resurrection*; the resurrection of Christ from the dead, which supposes his incarnation and life, and so his obedience, ministry, and miracles in it; and also his sufferings and death, with all the benefits and advantages thereof; and is particularly mentioned, because it not only supposes and includes the above things, but is the principal article, basis, and foundation of the Christian religion; and the sign which Christ gave to the Jews, of the truth of his being the Messiah; and was what the disciples were chosen to be witnesses of; and a principal part of their ministry was to testify it to men: and since this was their work and business, it was necessary that one should be chosen, and joined with them, who had been with them, and with Jesus, from the beginning, to the time of his ascension; and who was an eyewitness of his resurrection, that he might join with the apostles in their testimony.

**Ver. 23.** *And they appointed two*, etc.] The motion made by Peter was attended to by the whole company; they approved of it, and accordingly proposed two persons by name; one of which was to be chosen, not by the apostles, but by the whole assembly. The Arabic version reads, “he appointed two”, as if Peter singly did this: contrary to all copies, and other versions, and to the context; which shows, that the whole body of the people were concerned in this affair, who prayed and gave forth their lots and suffrages: the persons nominated were,

*Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.* The former of these has three names; in one ancient copy of Beza’s he is called

Joses; and by some thought to be the same with Joses, surnamed Barnabas, in (<sup><4085></sup>Acts 4:36) partly because in one copy, and in the Syriac version there, that Joses is called Joseph; and partly, because of the nearness in sound between Barsabas and Barnabas: hence the Ethiopic version here reads, “Joseph, who was called Barnabas”, and so Beza’s most ancient copy; but though Joses is here meant for Jose, or Joses is, with the Jews, an abbreviation of Joseph; yet not Joses the Levite, who was of the country of Cyprus, but Joses of Galilee, the son of Alphaeus and Mary; and who had two brothers, James and Jude, already apostles; (see <sup><0135></sup>Matthew 13:55, <sup><4150></sup>Mark 15:40). Moreover, though the two names, Barnabas and Barsabas, differ little in sound, yet much in sense: the former is interpreted “the son of consolation”, (<sup><4085></sup>Acts 4:36) but the latter signifies much the same with Bathsbeba; as that may be interpreted “the daughter”, this “the son of an oath”; or as others, “a son of wisdom”; and by others, “the son of fulness”; I should choose to take it to be the same name with *abs rb*, and interpret it, “the son of an old man”; as Alphaeus might be, when Joses, or Joseph was born, and he be the younger brother of James and Jude; as for his surname Justus, this was a name not only in use among the Grecians and Romans, especially the latter, but among the Jews: hence we often read of Rabbi *aj swy*, “Justa”, and sometimes, *yj swy*, “Justi”, and at other times, *yaj swy* “Justai”<sup>f46</sup> whether he had this surname from his being a very just man, as Aristides was called Aristides the just; and so Simeon the high priest, the last of Ezra’s great synagogue, was called Simeon the just<sup>f47</sup>; and so James the brother of this Joseph, or Joses, was called by the Jews<sup>f48</sup>; and it may be, that he himself might have his name from the patriarch Joseph, who used to be called by them, Joseph, *qydxh*, “the just”<sup>f49</sup>: for Matthias, his name is Jewish, and he was no doubt a Jew; hence we read *aytm ybr*, “Rabbi Matthia ben Charash”<sup>f50</sup>; his name signifying the same as Nathanael does, namely, the gift of God, made Dr. Lightfoot conjecture they might be the same; but this agrees not with another conjecture that learned man, who elsewhere thinks, that Bartholomew and Nathanael were the same; and if so, he must have been an apostle already; Clemens of Alexandria was of opinion, that this Matthias was Zacchaeus<sup>f51</sup>.

**Ver. 24.** *And they prayed and said*, etc.] Having proposed the above two persons, and not well knowing which to pitch upon, they being both very agreeable and fit for such service; they chose not to determine the affair

without seeking to God for direction; a method to be taken in all cases, and especially in matters of importance: and the substance of their petition, though perhaps not in just the same words, was,

*thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men*; which is a character peculiar to the one only living, and true God; for none knows the hearts of men, but God, who is the Maker of them; and he knows all the thoughts, counsels, and purposes of them, and the good or bad that is in them:

*shew whether of these two thou hast chosen*; being desirous of having their choice directed by the choice God had made, in his eternal mind; and which they desired might be signified and pointed out to them, in some way or another, that they might be certain of the mind and will of God, and act according to it.

**Ver. 25.** *That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship*, etc.] Of the ministry of the apostles, or of the apostolical ministration; which lay in preaching the Gospel, administering ordinances, planting churches, and working miracles; and which part, lot, or inheritance, Judas had; (see <sup><4017></sup>Acts 1:17).

*And from which Judas by transgression fell*; by betraying his Lord, whose apostle he was, he was turned out of his office, and had no longer part in the apostolical ministry:

*that he might go to his own place*; which may be understood of Judas, and of his going to hell, as the just punishment of his sin; which is commonly so called by the Jews, who often explain this phrase, “his place”, by hell; as when it is said of Laban, (<sup><0135></sup>Genesis 31:55) that he “returned to his place”, it intimates, say they <sup>f52</sup>, that he returned to his place, which was prepared for him in hell; and so likewise when it is said of Balaam, (<sup><0125></sup>Numbers 24:25) that he “returned to his place”, they observe <sup>f53</sup>, that

“he did not return from his evil way, but returned to his place; and so intimates by saying, to his place, that which was prepared for him in hell, as the Rabbins of blessed memory say <sup>f54</sup>; “they came everyone from his own place”, (<sup><0121></sup>Job 2:11) a man from his house, a man from his country it is not written, but a man from his place, which was prepared for him in hell; and because they came to show mercy to Job, they were delivered from hell, and became worthy of the world to come; and so here, and “he

returned to his place”,  $\mu\nu\eta\gamma b\ wl\ \acute{\wedge}kwmh$ , “which was prepared for him in hell”.”

And another of their writers <sup>f55</sup>, on the same passage, has this remark, and he returned to his place, and he does not say,

“he went on his way, for he was driven out of his way, and went down to hell.”

And agreeably to what is said of Job’s friends, the Targumist on (~~Job~~ Job 2:11) paraphrases the words thus;

“and there came a man, or everyone from his place, and by this merit they were delivered from the place, prepared for them in hell.”

And which place the same Targumist on (~~Job~~ Job 8:4) calls  $\acute{\wedge}whydr m\ r\ ta$ , “the place of their rebellion”; that is, procured by it: and so Judas’s own place was what he had merited by his sin, and was righteously appointed for him; and though it was not peculiar to him, but common to all impenitent sinners, yet very proper for him, as a betrayer; for it is a settled point with the Jews <sup>f56</sup>, that

“he that betrays an Israelite into the hands of the Gentiles (so Judas betrayed his master), whether in his body, or in his substance, has no part in the world to come.”

This clause is by some understood not of Judas, but of Matthias, or of him that was to come in the room of Judas; and by “his own place” it is thought is meant, the “part of the ministry and apostleship”, in the former clause, and which the Alexandrian copy reads, “the place of this ministry”, he was to take; and now Judas by his iniquity falling from it, made way for another, for Matthias to go to his own place, which God had in his counsel and purposes designed for him; or “into his place”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, into the place of Judas, to take his place among the apostles, in his room and stead: the Alexandrian copy reads, “into that righteous place”.

**Ver. 26.** *And they gave forth their lots*, etc.] Or “gave forth lots for them”, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; for Joseph and Matthias; some for one, and some for another; and which were cast into a man’s lap, or into a vessel, and was no other than balloting for them; and so he that had



the majority upon casting them up, when taken out, was declared the person chosen; or “they cast their lots”; that is, into an urn, or vessel; which lots had the names of the two persons on them; and into another vessel, as is thought, were put two other lots; the one had the name of “apostle” upon it, and the other nothing; and these being taken out by persons appointed for that purpose, the lot with Matthias’s name on it, was taken out against that which had the name of apostle on it, upon which he was declared to be the apostle: it may be that this was done in the same manner, as the goats on the day of atonement had lots cast on them, (<sup>(R16)</sup>Leviticus 16:8) which the Jews say was thus performed: there was a vessel which they call “Kalphi”, set in the court, into which two lots, which were made of wood, or stone, or metal, were put; the one had written on it, for Jehovah, and on the other was written, “for the scapegoat”; the two goats being, the one at the right hand of the priest, and the other at the left; the priest shook the vessel, and with his two hands took out the two lots, and laid the lots on the two goats; the right on that which was at his right hand, and the left on that which was at his left <sup>f57</sup>; and so the goat which had the lot put upon him, on which was written, “for the Lord”, was killed; and that which had the other lot, on which was written, for the scapegoat, was presented alive; so the lot here is said to fall upon Matthias: or the lots being cast into the vessel, as above related, these two drew them out themselves; and Matthias taking out that which had the word apostle on it, the lot fell on him: the manner of Moses’s choosing the seventy elders, is said to be this <sup>f58</sup>:

“Moses took seventy two papers, and on seventy of them he wrote,  $\hat{q}z$ , “an elder”; and upon two,  $q|j$ , “a part”; and he chose six out of every tribe, and there were seventy two; he said unto them, take your papers out of the vessel; he into whose hand came up “an elder” (i.e. the paper on which it was so written) he was sanctified (or set apart to the office); and he, in whose hand came up “a part” (the paper that had that on it), to him he said, the Lord does not delight in thee.”

*And the lot fell upon Matthias*; that is, either he had the largest number for him, their minds being so disposed by the providence of God; and it may be, contrary to the first thoughts and general sense of the body; since Joseph is mentioned first, and was a man of great character, and of many names and titles; but God, who knows the hearts: of men, and can turn them as he pleases, and to whom they sought for direction, inclined their



minds to vote for the latter; or it was so ordered by divine providence, that in the casting or drawing the lots, the lot of the apostleship should fall on him:

*and he was numbered with the eleven apostles*; either chosen by the common suffrages of the people, as the word used signifies; or rather, he took his place among the apostles; he was registered among them, and ever after was reckoned one of them; Beza's ancient copy reads, "with the twelve apostles", their number being now complete.

# CHAPTER 2

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 2

**Ver. 1.** *And when the day of Pentecost was fully come*, etc.] Or “was come”, was begun and entered upon; for it was not over, or ended, it being but the third hour of the day, or nine of the clock in the morning, when Peter began his sermon; (see <sup><4025></sup>Acts 2:15). The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, “when the days of Pentecost were fulfilled”; not that there were more days than one, kept at this festival; for though the feasts of passover and tabernacles were observed each of them seven days, according to the law, and eight days according to the Scribes, yet the feast of Pentecost was kept but one day; and hence it is often said by the Jews, that Atzereth, which is one of the names they call this feast by, is but one day <sup>f59</sup>; in the captivity they kept two days <sup>f60</sup>, as they did for the beginning of the year, because of the uncertainty of calculations; but the sense is, when the whole fifty days from the passover to this time were fully come, or fulfilled, when the fiftieth day from thence, which was properly the day of Pentecost, was come: on the second day of the passover, on the sixteenth of Nisan, the sheaf of the first fruits was offered up; after which, and not before, it was lawful to reap the corn, (<sup><0230></sup>Leviticus 23:10,11) from this time the Jews reckoned their feast of weeks, or seven weeks, or fifty days; (see <sup><0242></sup>Exodus 34:22, <sup><0540></sup>Deuteronomy 16:9) (<sup><0235></sup>Leviticus 23:15,16) which measured out the time of their harvest. Now the last of these fifty days was the day of Pentecost, on which day was offered the two wave loaves, as a thanksgiving that their harvest was ended. Josephus calls <sup>f61</sup> this feast by the same name that Luke here does; and says <sup>f62</sup>, the Jews so call it, from the number of the days, that is fifty; and so R. Sol Jarchi <sup>f63</sup> calls this day, **μϋϘymj μwy**, “the fiftieth day”: on this day, the Jews say <sup>f64</sup>, the law was given; and observe <sup>f65</sup>, that

“from the day that Israel went out of Egypt, unto the day that the law was given, were fifty days.”

And on this day, and which was the first day of the week, the Spirit was poured forth upon the disciples; the Gospel began to be preached to all nations, and a harvest of souls was gathered in:

*they were all with one accord in one place*; in two ancient copies of Beza's, and in some others it is read, "all the apostles"; Matthias, and the eleven, with whom he was numbered, who are last spoken of, in (~~401b~~ Acts 1:26). Though this need not be restrained to the twelve apostles, but may be understood of the hundred and twenty, on whom, as well as on the apostles, the Holy Ghost might be poured forth, that so they might speak with tongues; since among these were many ministers of the Gospel, as the seventy disciples, and it may be more; and that his extraordinary gifts should be bestowed on others, is but what was afterwards done; (see ~~487~~ Acts 8:17, 10:14, 11:15) and though there were so many of them together, they were very unanimous and peaceable; there were no jars nor contentions among them; they were of the same mind and judgment in faith and practice, and of one heart and soul, and had a cordial affection for one another; and were all in one place, which seems to be the temple; (see ~~486~~ Acts 2:46). And indeed, no other place or house could hold so many as came to hear them, of which number three thousand were converted.

**Ver. 2.** *And suddenly there came a sound from heaven*, etc.] Which is expressive of the original of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, which come from above, from heaven, from the Father of lights; and of the freeness of them, being unmerited; and so come suddenly, at an unawares, being unthought of, undesired, and unexpected, and so certainly undeserved; and may be a symbol of the sound of the Gospel, which from hence was to go forth into all the earth; and may likewise express the rise of that, and the freeness of the grace of God in it, and its sudden spread throughout the world:

*as of a rushing mighty wind*; it was not a wind, but like one; and the noise it made, was like the rushing noise of a strong and boisterous wind, that carries all before it: the Spirit of God is sometimes compared to the wind, because of the freeness of his operations; as that blows where it listeth, so he works when and where, and on whom he pleases; and also because of the power and efficacy of his grace, which is mighty and irresistible, and works with great energy upon the minds of men; and as the wind is secret and invisible, so the operations of the Spirit are in a manner secret and imperceptible unto men: this may likewise be applied to the Gospel, when

it comes with the Holy Ghost, and with power; it makes its way into the heart, and throws down the strong holds of sin and Satan; there it works effectually, though secretly, and is the power of God to salvation:

*and it filled all the house where they were sitting*; which was the temple, or the upper room or chamber in it, where they were assembled; so in the Ethiopic confession of faith <sup>f66</sup> it is said,

“the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles, in the upper room of Zion;”

this may be a symbol of the Gospel filling the whole world.

**Ver. 3.** *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire*, etc.]

An emblem of the various tongues and languages, in which they were to preach the Gospel; these appearances were like flames of fire parted, and these parted flames looked like tongues; so, a flame of fire is with, the Jews called, *çà wçl*, “a tongue of fire”, (<sup><2164></sup>Isaiah 5:24) hence the Apostle James compares a tongue to fire, (<sup><3006></sup>James 3:6) this was the baptism with fire, John the Baptist speaks of, (See Gill on “<sup><4081></sup>Matthew 3:11”); and the Jews say <sup>f67</sup>,

“the holy blessed God baptizeth with fire, and the wise shall understand.”

Through this baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire, the apostles became more knowing, and had a greater understanding of the mysteries of the Gospel, and were more qualified to preach it to people of all nations and languages. The Holy Spirit, in his gifts and graces, is compared to fire, because of its purity, light, and heat, as well as consuming nature; the Spirit sanctifies, and makes men pure and holy, purges from the dross of sin, error and superstition; and enlightens the minds of men, and gives them knowledge of divine and spiritual things; and fills them with zeal and fervour for the glory of God and Christ, and the good of his church and interest, and for the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; as well as fortifies them against their enemies, whom he consumes, according to (<sup><3005></sup>Zechariah 2:5) a passage of Scripture the Jews make use of in an uncommon sense; for they say <sup>f68</sup>, that as

“Jerusalem was destroyed by fire, “by fire it shall be built again”; as it is said, (<sup><3005></sup>Zechariah 2:5) “For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about”.”

The pouring forth of the Spirit upon the apostles, in this form of cloven tongues, as of fire, was indeed the means of rebuilding Jerusalem, in a spiritual sense; or of founding the Gospel church state in the world:

*and it sat upon each of them*; the fire, or the Holy Ghost in the appearance of fire. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, “and they sat upon each of them”; and so Beza’s most ancient copy; that is, the cloven tongues sat on them; either one upon one of them and another upon another, or many upon each of them: where they sat, whether on their lips, or on their heads, it not certain, probably on the latter; nor how long they sat; however, their sitting upon them may denote the continuance of the gifts and graces of the Spirit with them. These cloven tongues cannot but bring to mind the division and confusion of the tongues or languages at Babel; which gave rise to different nations, and different religions; but these divided tongues gave rise to the spreading of the Gospel, and settling the true religion among the nations of the world. The Jews<sup>f69</sup> seem to have respect to this account, when they tell us of

“lights from above, that came forth and dwelt in the synagogues,  
 ܘܗܝܥܝܪܒ, “on the heads” of those that prayed, and the lights  
 ܝܓܠ ܡܬܡ, “were divided” upon their heads.”

**Ver. 4.** *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*, etc.] With the gifts of the Holy Spirit; they had received the Spirit before, as a Spirit of grace, and were endowed with great gifts; but now they had great plenty of them, a large abundance; they were like vessels filled to the brim; they were as it were covered with them; there was an overflow of them upon them; and now it was, that they were baptized with him; (See Gill on “<4005>Acts 1:5”). Not only the twelve apostles, but the seventy disciples; and it may be all the hundred and twenty, that were together, even women as well as men: (<4027>Acts 2:17,18).

*And began to speak with other tongues*; besides, and different from that in which they were born and brought up, and usually spake; they spake divers languages, one spoke one language, and another, another; and the same person spoke with various tongues, sometimes one language, and sometimes another. These are the new tongues, Christ told them they should speak with, (<4167>Mark 16:17) such as they had never heard, learned, nor known before:

*as the Spirit gave them utterance*; they did not utter anything of themselves, and what came into their minds, things of little or no importance; nor in a confused and disorderly manner; but they were wise and weighty sentences they delivered, as the word signifies; even the wonderful works of God, (<sup><411></sup>Acts 2:11) the great doctrines of the Gospel; and though in different languages, yet in a very orderly and distinct manner, so as to be heard and understood by the people. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “as the Holy Spirit”, etc.

**Ver. 5.** *And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “proselytes”; but they were not all such, as appears from the following account of them; many, and it seems the most of them were of Jewish extract and descent, and others were proselytes to the Jewish religion: these were not natives of Jerusalem, but such as were born in other countries, (<sup><411></sup>Acts 2:8) but were come to Jerusalem, either to learn the Hebrew language, which was necessary to their reading and understanding the books of Moses, and the prophets written in it; or for an increase of spiritual knowledge and piety; or, as is generally thought, to keep the feast of Pentecost; or rather, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, they were come hither in great numbers from all parts, in expectation of the Messiah and his kingdom; the time being up, according to Daniel’s weeks, and other prophecies, that he should appear: and these were

*devout men*; men of religion and piety, of faith and holiness; and as the Syriac version renders it, “who feared God”; for in these worst of times, among this wicked generation of men, there were some who had the fear of God before their eyes, and on their hearts; and these were collected from different quarters, to be witnesses of this amazing dispensation: for they came

*out of every nation under heaven*; that is, wherever the Jews were dispersed; being the descendants of those that were carried captive at different times, and into different places; as by Salmanezar, Nebuchadnezzar, Ptolomy Lagus, Antiochus, and in other lesser dispersions.

**Ver. 6.** *Now when this was noised abroad*, etc.] Or “when this voice was made”; referring either to the sound, as of a mighty rushing wind, which came from heaven; and might not only be heard by those in the house, into which it came, but by the inhabitants of the city, as it came down from heaven; so the Arabic version renders it, “when the aforesaid sound was

made”: or else to the apostles’ voice, and their speaking with divers tongues; which being heard by some, was told to others, and a rumour of it being made through the city,

*the multitude came together*; to the house, or temple, where the disciples were; and this multitude did not consist only of the devout Jews, before mentioned; but of others who scoffed and mocked at the apostles, and who had been concerned in the crucifying of Christ:

*and were confounded*; or “confused”; they ran and came together in a disorderly and tumultuous manner; the whole city was in an uproar, the assembly on this occasion was a perfect mob; their numbers were so large, that they were ready to thrust each other down, and trample one another under foot: the Vulgate Latin adds, “in mind”; they did not know what to think of things, they were so astonished at what they heard, that they were scarcely themselves; they were as persons stupid and senseless; being filled partly with shame and confusion, and partly with wonder and amazement, that these illiterate men, the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whose disciples they had in so much contempt, should have such extraordinary gifts bestowed on them:

*because that every man heard them speak in his own language*; which shows, what has been before observed, that one spake in one language, and another in another language; or the same person sometimes spoke one language, and sometimes another; so that in course, all languages were spoken by them; whence it appears, that it was not one language only which was spoken by the apostles, which men of different languages heard and understood, as if it was their own; for then the miracle must have been in the hearers, and not in the speakers; and the cloven tongues, as of fire, should rather have sat on them, than on the disciples; and these men be said to be filled with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, rather than they.

**Ver. 7.** *And they were all amazed, and marvelled*, etc.] They were struck with surprise, they were as it were out of themselves, like persons in an ecstasy, not knowing what could be the cause or meaning of this:

*saying one to another*; the phrase “one to another”, is left out in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and so it is in the Alexandrian copy:

*behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?* rude, unpolished, and unlearned men; who had never been brought up in any school of learning, and had never learned any language but their mother tongue; and that they

pronounced with an ill grace, and in a very odd manner; and which made the thing the more astonishing to them. The apostles were inhabitants of Galilee, and so very likely were the greatest part of those that were with them: hence the Christians afterwards, by way of contempt, were called Galilaeans; as they are by Julian<sup>f70</sup> the apostate, and others<sup>f71</sup>.

**Ver. 8.** *And how hear we every man in our own tongue*, etc.] Them speaking, as the Ethiopic version reads; that is, we everyone of us hear one or another, speak in the same language,

*wherein we were born*; our native language; for though these men were Jews by descent, yet were born and brought up in other countries, which language they spake; and not the Hebrew, or Syriac, or Chaldee.

**Ver. 9.** *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites*, etc.] These are the words of the men continued, and not of the historian, as appears from (<sup><4120></sup>Acts 2:10) and so the Arabic version reads, “of us Persians, Parthians, and Medes”; that is, we hear them speak in the language of everyone of us: the order in this version is inverted, otherwise the same persons are intended; for the Elamites and Persians are the same: by the Parthians are meant, Jews that were born in Parthia, and had dwelt there, and who spoke the language of that country; and that there were Jews, in those parts, is clear from Josephus<sup>f72</sup>, who speaks of them together with the Jews of other nations. Many of the Parthian Jews were afterwards converted to the Christian faith; to whom the Apostle John is thought, by some, to have written his first epistle; and which, by some of the ancients, is called the epistle to the Parthians. The kingdom of Parthia, according to Pliny<sup>f73</sup>, Ptolomy<sup>f74</sup>, and Solinus<sup>f75</sup>, had Media on the west, Hyrcania on the north, Aria, or Ariana, on the east, and the desert of Carmania on the south; the metropolis of it was Hecatompylos, so called from the hundred gates that belonged to it; and which, it is thought, stood on the same spot of ground that Ispahan does now, the seat of the Sophies of Persia. And by the Medes are intended the Jews that were natives of Media: so called from “Madai”, one of the sons of Japhet, (<sup><0102></sup>Genesis 10:2) and this, according to Ptolomy<sup>f76</sup>, has on the north the Hyrcanian, or Gasptan sea, on the west Armenia Major and Assyria, and on the east Hyrcania and Parthia, and on the south Parthia. The Elamites are so called, from Elam the son of Shem, (<sup><0102></sup>Genesis 10:22) and these, according to Josephus<sup>f77</sup>, were the founders of the Persians, or from whom they sprung; and so we find Elam and Media, and the kings of Elam, and the kings of the Medes, mentioned



together in Scripture, (<sup><291D></sup>Isaiah 21:2, <sup><2525></sup>Jeremiah 25:25). And certain it is, that Elam was at least a part of the empire of Persia, in Daniel's time; for Shushan, where the kings of Persia then kept their palace, was in the province of Elam, (<sup><278D></sup>Daniel 8:2) and it is evident, that hither the Jews were carried captive, (<sup><2311B></sup>Isaiah 11:11, <sup><2448A></sup>Jeremiah 49:34-39). So that there might be some remaining in those parts, that were their descendants; and from hence also were people brought by Asnapper, into the cities of Samaria, to supply the room of those who were carried captive, and are called Elamites, (<sup><1509></sup>Ezra 4:9) And that there were Elamite Jews, may be concluded from the writings of the Jews; for so they say <sup>f78</sup>, that

“the Hagiographa, or holy writings, which were written in the Coptic, Median, Hebrew, **tyml y[**, “Elamite”, and Greek tongues; though they did not read in them (on the sabbath day in time of service) they delivered them from the fire,”

when in danger of being burned: so the Megilla, or book of Esther, might not be read in the Coptic, Hebrew, Elamite, Median, and Greek languages; but it might be read in Coptic to Coptites, in Hebrew to Hebrews, **μyml y[ I tyml y[**, in “Elamite” to the “Elamites”, and in Greek to the Greeks <sup>f79</sup>; and such sort of Jews as the Elamite ones, were these in the text: the Syriac version reads Elanites; and so R. Benjamin in his Itinerary <sup>f80</sup>, makes mention of a country called, **hynl a**, “Alania”, and of a people called, **al a**, “Alan”; and whom he speaks of in company with Babylon, Persia, Choresan, Sheba, and Mesopotamia; and may intend the same people as here: now these Parthian, Median, and Elamite Jews were such who descended from the captives of the ten tribes, carried away by Shalmaneser king of Assyria, whom he placed in Halah and Habor, and in the cities of the Medes, (<sup><1276></sup>2 Kings 17:6, 18:11). But besides these, there were also at Jerusalem, at this time, those who are next mentioned:

*and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia;* who came not quite so far off as the former:

Mesopotamia is the same with what is called in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, Aram Naharaim, or Syria between the two rivers; that is, Tigris and Euphrates; the former was on the east of it, and the latter on the west, and Babylon was on the south, and Caucasus on the north; and so the Greek word Mesopotamia signifies a place between two rivers; (see <sup><0240></sup>Genesis 24:10, <sup><0520A></sup>Deuteronomy 23:4, <sup><0708B></sup>Judges 3:8, 10, <sup><1366></sup>1 Chronicles 19:6). And the Jews have adopted it into their own language,

calling it, **aymj wpsm**, “Mesopotamia”<sup>f81</sup>; and the same name obtains with other writers<sup>f82</sup>, and it has since been called Azania and Halopin; it belonged to that part of Assyria, called Chaldea; and these Mesopotamian Jews were the remains of those who were carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and though the Chaldean, or Syriac language was now spoken by the Jews, yet in a different manner than it was in Chaldea and Syria: and there were also the dwellers in Judea; by which is meant, that part of the land of Israel, which was distinct from Galilee, and where they used a different dialect from the Galilean Jews; and there were others, who were born, and had lived in Cappadocia. This was a country in Asia, in which were many famous cities; as Archalais, where Claudius Caesar put a Roman colony; and Neo Caesarea (the birth place of Gregory Thaumaturgus); and Melita, built by Semiramis; and Mazaca<sup>f83</sup>, which was the chief city; and so called from Meshech, the son of Japhet, since called Caesarea. The inhabitants of this country, Herodotus says<sup>f84</sup>,

“were by the Greeks called Syrians, and they were Syrians; and before the Persians had the government, they were subject to the Medea, and then to Cyrus.”

And by Pliny<sup>f85</sup> they are called, Leucosyrians. This country, according to Ptolomy<sup>f86</sup>, had Galatia, and part of Pamphylia on the west, and on the south Cilicia, and part of Syria, and on the east Armenia the great, and on the north, part of the Euxine Pontus; it is now called Amasia, or Almasin: here were many Jews scattered abroad, some of which were afterwards believers in Christ, to whom Peter sent his epistles, (~~<0100>~~1 Peter 1:1). It had its former name from the river Cappadox, which, as Pliny<sup>f87</sup> says, divided the Galatians and Leucosyrians, and this indeed is the reason of its name; in the Syriac language it is called, **Ædpq**, “Capdac”, which comes from **dpq**; which signifies to “cut off”, or “divide”, as this river did the above people from one another; and hence the country was called Cappadocia, and the inhabitants Cappadocians: in the Jewish writings it is called, **ayqj wpq**, Capotakia; and which Maimonides<sup>f88</sup> says, is the same with Caphtor; and in the Arabic language, is called Tamiati; and so Caphtor is rendered Cappadocia, and the Caphtorim Cappadocians, in the Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, and Jerusalem, in (~~<0104>~~Genesis 10:14, ~~<0123>~~Deuteronomy 2:23, ~~<0470>~~Jeremiah 47:4, ~~<0307>~~Amos 9:7) and so in the Septuagint version of (~~<0123>~~Deuteronomy 2:23, ~~<0307>~~Amos 9:7). This country was near the land of

Israel, and in it dwelt many Jews; they had schools of learning here, and had traditions peculiarly relating to it: as for instance,

“if a man married a wife in the land of Israel, and divorced her in Cappadocia, he must give her (her dowry) of the money of the land of Israel; and if he marries a wife in Cappadocia, and divorces her in the land of Israel, he may give her of the money of the land of Israel; Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel says, he must give her of the money of Cappadocia <sup>f89</sup>;”

for it seems the Cappadocian money was larger, and weighed more than that in the land of Israel: however,

“if a man marries a wife in Cappadocia, and divorces her in Cappadocia, he must give her of the money of Cappadocia.”

And so R. Akiba speaks <sup>f90</sup> of one, that he saw shipwrecked at sea; and when, says he, I came to the province of Cappadocia, he came and sat, and judged before me in the constitutions and traditions of the elders: from whence it is manifest, that here were people of the Jewish nation that dwelt in this country, and so at this time. As also in Pontus; hence the first epistle of Peter is sometimes called the epistle to the Pontians; that is, to the Jews of Pontus, then become Christians; Pontus was a country in lesser Asia, and according to Ptolomy <sup>f91</sup>, it had on the west the mouth of Pontus, and the Thracian Bosphorus, and part of Propontis, on the north, part of the Euxine sea, and on the south the country which is properly called Asia, and on the east Galatia by Paphlagonia; it was the birth place of Marcion the heretic, of which Tertullian gives a most dismal account <sup>f92</sup>: Asia here intends, neither Asia the greater, nor the less, but Asia properly so called; which had Lycia and Phrygia on the east, the Aegean shores on the west, the Egyptian sea on the south, and Paphlagonia on the north <sup>f93</sup>; in which were Ephesus the chief city, and Smyrna and Pergamus, and where were many Jews; these might be the remains of those that were carried captive, and dispersed by Ptolomy Lagus; those who dwelt in the three last places spoke the Greek language.

**Ver. 10.** *Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt*, etc.] Phrygia was a country in Asia, and had part of Galatia on the north, Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Mygdonia on the south, and on the east Cappadocia <sup>f94</sup>; here the Apostle Paul afterwards travelled, and strengthened the Christians; (see ~~4406~~ Acts 16:6, 18:23). Pamphylia, now called Setilia, is another country in Asia,

formerly called Mopsopia <sup>f95</sup>; which had on the west Lycia, and part of Asia, on the north Galatia, on the east Cilicia, and part of Cappadocia, and on the south the sea of Pamphylia <sup>f96</sup>, of which mention is made in (~~427~~Acts 27:5). The chief city in it was Perga, where was a temple of Diana <sup>f97</sup>, and here the Apostle Paul also was; (see ~~443~~Acts 13:13, 14:24,25, 15:38). Others of these sojourning Jews lived in Egypt, which was a large country in Africa; which had on the east the deserts of Arabia, on the west Libya, on the south Ethiopia, and on the north the Mediterranean sea; hither many Jews were carried captive by Ptolomy Lagus, and these spoke the Egyptian language:

*and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene*; there were others at Jerusalem, which came from hence, The Arabic version reads this clause, “and in the parts of Africa, which is our country”; and Pliny says <sup>f98</sup>, the Greeks call Africa, Libya. The Jews say <sup>f99</sup>, Libya in Egypt; and for proselytes from Libya, they wait three generations; that is, before they receive them: Cyrene, or Cyreniaca, which is no other than upper Libya, is called by Pliny <sup>f100</sup>, the Pentapolitan country, from the five cities in it; Berenice, Arsinoe, Ptolemais, Apollonia, and Cyrene: to these are added,

*and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes*; that is, as the Syriac version renders it, “those that came from Rome”; to which the Arabic agrees: they were natives and inhabitants of the city of Rome, though now they were at Jerusalem; and some of these were Jews by birth, and lineal descent, though born at Rome; and others were such as were proselytes of righteousness, who were originally Gentiles, but were now circumcised, and had embraced the Jewish religion; concerning such, (See Gill on ~~423~~Matthew 23:15”). These doubtless spoke in the Roman, or Latin tongue.

**Ver. 11.** *Cretes and Arabians*, etc.] The former are either the same with the Cretians, (~~301~~Titus 1:12) the inhabitants of the island of Crete, (~~427~~Acts 27:7) now called Candia or Candy, which has on the north the Aegean sea, on the south the Libyan or African sea, on the west the Adriatic sea, and on the east the Carpathian sea. In it were an hundred cities; the most famous of which were, Gnosos, Cortyna, Lyctos, Lycastos, Holopixos, Phaestos, Cydon, Manethusa, Dycynna <sup>f101</sup>, and others; these spoke the Greek language; yet not the Attic, for the Cretian and Attic speech are distinguished <sup>f102</sup>: or else, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, these were the same with the Cherethim or Cherethites, in (~~356~~Ezekiel 25:16,

☞ Zephaniah 2:5) whom the Septuagint interpreters call Cretes, as here; since these are mentioned with the Philistines, to whose land Arabia joined; the inhabitants of which are next mentioned here. There were three Arabias; Arabia Petraea, which had on the west part of Egypt, and on the north Judea, and part of Syria, on the south the Red sea, and on the east Arabia Felix. The second was called Arabia Deserta, and had on the north part of Mesopotamia, and on the east Babylonia, on the south Arabia Felix, and on the west, part of Syria and Arabia Petraea. The third was called Arabia Felix, and had on the north the south sides of Petraea and Arabia Deserta, and the more southern part of the Persian gulf, on the west the gulf of Arabia, and on the south the Red sea, and on the east, part of the Persian gulf<sup>f103</sup>; and here dwelt Jews who spoke the Arabic language. Now these Jews, of different nations, declared concerning the apostles, saying,

*we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God*; not the works of creation and providence, though these are great and wonderful; but of redemption, pardon, atonement, justification, and salvation, by the Messiah, by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and also of his resurrection from the dead; things which struck them with amazement, and the more, that such illiterate persons should have such knowledge of them, and should be able to speak of them in such a clear, distinct, and powerful manner; and still the more, that they should speak of them in their several tongues in which they were born, and to which they were used, and which the apostles had never learned: and this they heard with their own ears, and were fully satisfied that they did speak divers languages.

**Ver. 12.** *And they were all amazed*, etc.] That is, all these devout men, Jews and proselytes, which came from other nations before mentioned:

*and were in doubt*; not whether the apostles spoke in various languages, nor about the sense of their words; for they not only heard them with their ears, and were assured of the facts, but they seem also to understand what was said, since they call the things delivered, the great or wonderful things of God; but they were at a loss in their minds what should be the cause of this, or the reason of such a dispensation,

*saying, one to another, what meaneth this?* from whence is it? what is the design of it? or what the end to be answered by it? or what will follow upon it? surely something considerable.

**Ver. 13.** *Others mocking, said,* etc.] These were the native inhabitants of Jerusalem, the common people; and it may be also the Scribes and Pharisees, who did not understand the languages in which the apostles spake, and therefore derided them both by words and gestures:

*these men are full of new wine;* the Syriac, version adds, “and are drunk”; a very foolish and impertinent cavil this; there was, at this time of the year, no new wine, just pressed, or in the fat; and if there had been any, and they were full of it, it could never have furnished them with a faculty of speaking with many tongues; men generally lose their tongues by intemperance. They were indeed filled with wine, but not with wine, the juice of the grape, either new or old; but with spiritual wine, with the gifts of the Spirit of God, by which they spake with divers tongues. They might hope this insinuation, that they were drunk with wine, would take and be received, since it was a feasting time, the feast of Pentecost; though, as Peter afterwards observes; it was too early in the day to imagine this to be their case.

**Ver. 14.** *But Peter standing up with the eleven,* etc.] Apostles; their number being now complete, Matthias being chosen in the room of Judas. These all at once rose up, as abhorring the fact they were charged with, and to show the falsehood of it, and to vindicate themselves; when Peter, as their mouth, stood “in the midst” of them, as the Ethiopic version reads, with great courage, boldness, and intrepidity of mind: and “lift up his voice”; that he might be heard by the whole multitude, that was gathered together, as well as to show his zeal and fervour of spirit, and fortitude of mind; for being endued with the Spirit from on high, he was fearless of men, who but a little while ago was frightened by a servant maid.

*And said unto them, ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem;* which shows that they were the natives and citizens of Jerusalem that mocked and scoffed; for to these the apostle addresses himself.

*Be this known unto you, and hearken to my words;* as follows.

**Ver. 15.** *For these are not drunken,* etc.] Meaning not only the eleven apostles, but the rest of the hundred and twenty, on whom also the Spirit was poured forth, and who were endowed with his extraordinary gifts:

*as ye suppose;* and had given out that they were: and this shows the sense of being filled with new wine; that they meant that they were really drunk, and which they believed, or at least would have had others believe it; the

unreasonableness of which supposition and suggestion the apostle argues from the time of day:

*seeing it is but the third hour of the day*; or nine of the clock in the morning: for till this time it was not usual with the Jews, if men of any sobriety or religion, so much as to taste anything: the rules are these <sup>f104</sup>,

“it is forbidden a man to taste anything, or do any work after break of day, until he has prayed the morning prayer.”

Now

“the morning prayer, the precept concerning it is, that a man should begin to pray as soon as the sun shines out; and its time is until the end of the fourth hour, which is the third part of the day <sup>f105</sup>.”

So that a man might not taste anything, either of eatables or drinkables, until the fourth hour, or ten o’clock in the morning: hence it is said <sup>f106</sup>, that

“after they offered the daily sacrifice they ate bread, ך[ç [bra םzb, “at the time of four hours”:]”

or on the fourth hour, and sooner than this it was not lawful to eat, even ever so little; and whoever did, was not reckoned fit to be conversed with.

“Says R. Isaac <sup>f107</sup>, whoever eats a green or herb before the fourth hour, it is forbidden to converse with him; and the same says, it is unlawful to eat a raw herb before the fourth hour. Amemar, and Mar Zutra, and Rab Ashe were sitting, and they brought before them a raw herb before the fourth hour. Amemar and Rab Ashe ate, and Mar Zutra did not eat: they said to him, what is thy meaning? (he replied) that R. Isaac said, whoever eats a herb before the fourth hour, it is forbidden to converse with him.”

The time for taking food by persons of different characters, is thus expressed by them:

“the first hour is the time of eating for the Lydians, the second for thieves, the third for heirs, the fourth for labourers, the fifth for every man; is it not so? Saith R. Papa, the fourth is the time of repast for every man; but (the truth is) the fourth is the time of eating for every man, the fifth for labourers, and the sixth for the disciples of the wise men <sup>f108</sup>.”

Hence that advice <sup>f109</sup>,

““at the fourth hour”, go into a cook’s shop, (or tavern,) if thou seest a man drinking wine, and holding the cup in his hands, and slumbering, inquire about him, if he is one of the wise doctors, etc.”

The “gloss” upon it is,

“at the fourth hour, for that is the time of eating, when all go into the shops (or taverns) to eat.”

Now whereas they that are drunken are drunken in the night, and not in the day, and much less so soon in the day, when it was not usual, at least with religious men, to have tasted anything by this time; and whereas the apostles, and their company, were sober and religious men, and had never done thing to forfeit their character, it was unreasonable to suppose anything of this kind in them.

**Ver. 16.** *But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.*] This affair, which is a matter of wonder and amazement with some, and of speculation with others, and of ridicule and contempt with the most, not the effect of wine, but the fulfilment of a prophecy in (~~2028~~ Joel 2:28-32) and is that effusion of the Spirit there foretold; and this prophecy is by the Jews themselves allowed to belong to the world to come, or to the times of the Messiah. Some of their commentators <sup>f110</sup> say, that it refers *dyt [l]*, “to time to come”; by which they frequently mean the times of the Messiah; and another says <sup>f111</sup> expressly, that they belong *j ycmh tymyl*, “to the days of the Messiah”; and in one of their Midrashes <sup>f112</sup> it is observed, that

“the holy blessed God says in this world they prophesy single, (particular persons,) but “in the world to come” all “Israel” shall become prophets, as it is said, (~~2028~~ Joel 2:28) “and it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your old men”, etc. So expounds R. Tanchums with R. Aba.”

**Ver. 17.** *And it shall come to pass in the last days,* etc.] In Joel it is, “afterwards”; instead of which Peter puts, “in the last days”; the sense is the same: and so R. David Kimchi, a celebrated commentator with the Jews, observes, that “afterwards” is the same “as in the last days”, and which design the times of the Messiah; for according to a rule given by the



same writer on (<sup><230D></sup>Isaiah 2:2) wherever the last days are mentioned, the days of the Messiah are intended.

*Saith God*, or “the Lord”, as the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read. This clause is added by Peter, and is not in Joel; and very rightly, since what follow are the words of God speaking in his own person:

*I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh*; not “upon every animal”, as the Ethiopic version renders it: this is extending the sense too far, as the interpretation the above named Jewish writer gives, limits it too much, restraining it to the people of Israel. It being a maxim with them, that the Shekinah does not dwell but in the land of Israel; and also that prophecy, or a spirit of prophecy, does not dwell on any but in the holy land<sup>f113</sup>. For though as it regards the first times of the Gospel, it may chiefly respect some persons among the Jews, yet not to the exclusion of the Gentiles; and it designs all sorts of persons of every age, sex, state, and condition, as the distribution afterwards shows. Jarchi’s note upon it is,

“upon everyone whose heart is made as tender as flesh; as for example, “and I will give an heart of flesh”, (<sup><263B></sup>Ezekiel 36:26).”

By the Spirit is meant the gifts of the Spirit, the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, of understanding the mysteries of the Gospel, of explaining the Scriptures, and of speaking with tongues; and by the pouring of it out, is intended the abundance and great plenty of the gifts and graces of the Spirit bestowed; but yet not all of him, or all his gifts and grace in the large extent of them: therefore it is said, not “my Spirit”, but “of my Spirit”, or “out of it”; as out of an unfathomable, immeasurable, and inexhaustible fountain and fulness:

*and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy*: or foretell things to come, as Agabus, and the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist, (<sup><420></sup>Acts 21:9,10)

*and your young men shall see visions*; as Ananias, (<sup><419D></sup>Acts 9:10), and Peter, (<sup><410T></sup>Acts 10:17) and Paul when a young man, (<sup><427T></sup>Acts 22:17, 26:19) and John, the youngest of the apostles, (<sup><4010></sup>Revelation 1:10) though he was in years, when he saw the visions in the Revelations:

*and your old men shall dream dreams*; or shall have night visions, as Paul at Troas, (<sup><440D></sup>Acts 16:9) and in his voyage when at sea, (<sup><427B></sup>Acts 27:23). The order of the words is inverted, this last clause stands first in Joel;

perhaps the change is made, because the apostles were young men, on whom the Spirit was poured; and the thing was the more wonderful that so it should be, than if they had been old men.

**Ver. 18.** *And on my servants, and on my handmaidens*, etc.] In Joel it is only the servants and the handmaids; and which Kimchi interprets of strangers that should stand in the land of Israel, and serve the Israelites. But these phrases do not seem so much to describe the civil state and condition of those persons, as their religious character, being such as were brought, by the power of divine grace, to yield a cheerful obedience to the will of God; though it may also regard the former, and show, that with God there is no distinction and difference of bond or free, of rich or poor; contrary to a maxim of the Jews<sup>f114</sup>, that the Shekinah does not dwell but upon a wise man, a mighty man, and a rich man.

*I will pour out, in those days, of my Spirit, and they shall prophesy*; see the note on the preceding verse, from whence this clause, “and they shall prophesy”, is repeated; for it is not in the text in Joel; which is done to point at the end and effect of the Spirit being poured down upon them.

**Ver. 19.** *And I will show wonders in heaven above*, etc.] The word above is not in Joel, nor in the Syriac version here, as neither the word “beneath”, in the next clause. This may refer either to the appearance of angels, and of an extraordinary star at the birth of Christ; or rather to comets and blazing stars, and particularly to that comet which, in the form of a flaming sword, hung over Jerusalem, and the forms of armies in the heavens engaged together, which were seen before, and portended the destruction of that city<sup>f115</sup>:

*and signs in the earth beneath*; meaning either the miracles done by Christ, and his apostles, on earth; or those surprising events in Judea and in Jerusalem, a flame was seen in the temple, the doors of it opened of themselves, and a voice was heard in it, saying, let us go hence; and an idiot went about several years together, saying, woe to the people, woe to the city, etc.

*blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke*: by blood is meant not the blood of Christ, either his bloody sweat in the garden, or what he shed on the cross, but the blood of the Jews, shed in war, and in internal seditions and murders: and by “fire” is designed not the Holy Ghost, who now appeared in cloven tongues, as of fire, but the conflagration of the city and temple of

Jerusalem, and of many other towns and villages. And by “vapours of smoke”; or, as in the Hebrew text, “pillars of smoke”, ascending in upright columns, like palm trees, are intended literally, the vast quantities of smoke that would arise from such burnings; so that the very heavens would be clouded and darkened with them, and sun and moon appear in the following form.

**Ver. 20.** *The sun shall be turned into darkness*, etc.] As at the death of Christ, by a total eclipse of it:

*and the moon into blood*; as at the opening of the sixth seal, (<sup>4112</sup>Revelation 6:12)

*before that great and notable day of the Lord come*; when he shall come in power and great glory, as he did in a few years after this, to take vengeance on the Jews, and destroy their nation, city, and temple; in which there was a display of his greatness, and power, and which was awful and “terrible” to them, as in Joel it is called; (See Gill on “<sup>4129</sup>Matthew 24:29”).

**Ver. 21.** *And it shall come to pass*, etc.] Even at that time, when these signs shall appear, and the destruction is hastening on, that

*whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord*; shall believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with the heart, and shall confess him with the mouth, and shall worship him in Spirit and in truth, and submit to all his ordinances and commands; for invocation of the Lord includes the whole of worship, internal and external:

*shall be saved*; or delivered from that temporal destruction which came upon the Jews, as the Christians were by removing from Jerusalem to Pella, as they were directed <sup>f116</sup>; and shall be saved with a spiritual and everlasting salvation by Jesus Christ; (See Gill on “<sup>4103</sup>Romans 10:13”).

**Ver. 22.** *Ye men of Israel hear these words*, etc.] The Arabic version prefaces this passage with these words, “in those days Peter stood and said unto the people”; as if it was not on the same day, and the following oration was a new one, and not a continued discourse with the former; whereas it was delivered at the same time, and is in connection with what goes before. Only the apostle having finished the vindication of his brethren, and the whole society, and set that matter in a clear light; and being willing to take this opportunity of preaching Christ to the Jews, addresses them under another character in a new form of words, though to

the same sense as in (~~4014~~ Acts 2:14) in order to soften their minds, and raise their attention, and proceeds to describe the person, the subject of his following discourse:

*Jesus of Nazareth*; first by his name Jesus, which the angel gave him before his birth; and that for this reason, because he is the Saviour of his people from their sins, and which his name signifies; and next by the place, not where he was born, for that was Bethlehem, but where he was educated and brought up, and where he lived the greatest part of his life, Nazareth, a city in Galilee; whence he was so called, generally by way of contempt, and not so much to distinguish him from any of the same name:

*a man approved of God*; he was truly and really a man, who in his incarnation assumed a true body, and a reasonable soul; but he was not a mere man, and much less a common and ordinary man: he was the famous son of man the Scriptures speak of; the man of God's right hand, the man his fellow, a great, mighty, and wonderful man: "approved by God"; or shown, declared, and demonstrated by him, to be sent by him in human nature, to be the true Messiah and Saviour of the world, who was the chosen of God, loved and honoured by him, whom he sealed, and bore a testimony to; and that not privately, but openly and publicly:

*among you*; in the face of all the people in Jerusalem, and in the temple, and at the time of public feasts:

*by miracles, and wonders, and signs*; by dispossessing devils, cleansing lepers, restoring sight to the blind, causing the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk, and by raising the dead:

*which God did by him in the midst of you*; not but that he did the miracles himself, as and the Son of God; but as he was man, God did them, by his human nature, as the instrument: the meaning is, that his miracles were wrought by a divine power, and not by a diabolical influence, by Beelzebub the prince of devils, as the Pharisees blasphemously said of him; and these were done, not in a corner, but in the midst of them:

*as ye yourselves also know*; for they must be sensible and convicted in their own consciences, not only that these things were done by him, but that they could not be done by him, unless God was with him, or he was from God; and so were testimonies both of the divine approbation of him, and of his deity and Messiahship.

**Ver. 23.** *Him being delivered*, etc.] By himself, according to his own will, for he gave, or delivered himself for his people; and by his Father, who spared him not, but delivered him up for us all; and by Judas, one of his disciples, who, for a sum of money, delivered him into the hands of the Jews; and by them he was delivered up to Pilate, the Roman governor; and by him back again to the Jews, and to the soldiers, to crucify him: and all this

*by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*; God not only foreknew that it would be, but determined that it should be, who does all things after the counsel of his own will; and this for the salvation of his people, and for the glorifying of his divine perfections: though this fixed resolution, settled purpose, and wise determination of God, did not in the least excuse the sin of Judas in betraying him, or of Pilate in condemning him, or of the Jews in crucifying him; nor did it at all infringe the liberty of their wills in acting, who did what they did, not by force, but voluntarily:

*ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain*; they took him in the garden, and bound him, and had him first before the high priest, then before Pilate, the Roman governor, and cried out with one voice, in a most vehement manner, for the crucifying of him, which, at their importunity, was granted, though no fault was found in him; and therefore are justly charged with slaying, or murdering him.

**Ver. 24.** *Whom God raised up*, etc.] From the dead; for though his life was taken away by men, he was raised to life again by God the Father, to whom the resurrection of Christ is generally ascribed, though not to the exclusion of Christ himself, and the blessed Spirit; and this being what the apostles were witnesses of, and the Jews endeavoured to stifle as much as they could, it being the sign Christ gave them of the truth of his Messiahship; and this being also a fundamental article of the Christian religion, the apostle enlarges upon it:

*having loosed the pains of death*; this may be understood either of what Christ had done for his people by dying for them; he had abolished death; he had took away its sting, and delivered them from the curse of it, having fulfilled the law, satisfied justice, and made full atonement for their sin; so that though they die, death is not a penal evil to them, nor shall they always continue under the power of it: or of what God did in raising Christ from the dead; he delivered him from the power of death, by which he was held in the grave, and which is expressed by a word which signifies pains and

sorrows, even those of a woman in travail; which though he felt not now, he had gone through them; his low state in the grave was the effect of them; and these are said to be loosed when he was raised up, he being so entirely delivered from them, as that they should never come upon him more: and it is to be observed, that the same word in the Hebrew language, and so in the Chaldee and Syriac, in which Peter might speak, signifies both cords and sorrows; and we often read in Talmudic and Rabbinic<sup>f117</sup> writings, of **י צמ ל צ ול ב** , “the sorrows”, or “pains” of the Messiah.

The death which Christ died, being the death of the cross, was a very painful one: he endured great pains in his body, smote with rods, and buffeted with the hands of men; by being scourged and whipped, and having a crown of thorns platted on his head; but the pains of the cross were still greater, his body being stretched out upon it, and fastened to it by nails drove through his hands and feet, and then reared up, and jogged in the earth, where he hung upon it in extreme agony, till he expired: and these pains he endured, not through want of love to him in his Father, who, as he does not willingly grieve and afflict the children of men, so neither would he his own Son; nor was it on account of any sin of his, for he knew none, nor did he commit any; but he was wounded, and bruised, and endured these sorrows and pains for the sins of his people: as he was their surety, it was necessary he should die, because the wages of sin is death, and the justice and veracity of God required it; and it was proper he should die the painful death of the cross, because of the types and prophecies of it, and chiefly that he might appear to be made a curse for his people: though more must be meant here than the pains he endured in the moment and article of death, since they ceased at death, and he was then freed from them; whereas the text speaks of a loosing him from them at his resurrection, which supposes that they continued on him until that time; wherefore these pains of death also signify the power and dominion death had over him, and continued to have over him in the grave; with the cords of which he was bound and held, till he was loosed by raising him from the dead. Dr. Goodwin is of opinion, that these words are to be understood, not of the resurrection of Christ’s body from the pains and power of death, but at least chiefly of the recovery and revival of his soul from those spiritual agonies which attended him, and from which he was loosed and delivered before his death; and the rather, because as before observed, at death the pains of it are gone, the bitterness of it is over, and nothing is felt in the grave; besides, the word here used signifies the pains of a woman in travail, (~~1~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:3) and seems best to agree with those inward

sufferings of Christ, which are called “the travail of his soul”, (<sup><2531></sup>Isaiah 53:11) and which, like the pangs of a woman in labour, came upon him gradually: four or five days before his death he said, “now is my soul troubled”, (<sup><3127></sup>John 12:27). The night in which he was betrayed, when he came into the garden, he began to be sorrowful, and heavy, and sore amazed; and at length he breaks out, and says, “my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death”, (<sup><4137></sup>Matthew 26:37,38) and after some time his pains increase, and being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, (<sup><4244></sup>Luke 22:44) but the sharpest pains were yet to come, and which he endured when on the cross, being forsaken by his God and Father, (<sup><4746></sup>Matthew 27:46) and which arose partly from the sins of his people, the filth and guilt of them laid upon him, which must be very distressing to his pure and holy mind; and from the wrath of God, and curse of the law, which he sustained as the punishment for them; and it was necessary he should bear the whole punishment due to sin, the punishment of sense, or feel the wrath of God, and the strokes of divine justice, and the punishment of loss, or be deprived of the divine presence; and these sorrows of soul may be well called the pains or sorrows of death, because they were unto death, and issued in it; a corporeal death followed upon them; and when he was in the garden, and on the cross, it might be truly said, “the sorrows of death compassed him about”, (<sup><5934></sup>Psalms 18:4) but from these he was loosed just before his death, when he said, “it is finished”; the darkness was over; the light of God’s countenance broke out upon him; he heard his cry, and helped him in the acceptable time, in the day of salvation; his anger, as a judge, was turned away from him, justice being entirely satisfied; and therefore it was not possible he should be held any longer with these cords and sorrows of death; for he being an infinite person, was able to bear all the wrath of God at once, which was due to sin, and therefore did not bring on him an eternal death as on the wicked, he sustaining and satisfying for all at once; and, like another Samson, broke asunder these cords like threads, and was loosed from them. But after all, though these are very great truths; yet, according to the order in which these words lie, being placed after the account of the crucifixion and death of Christ, they seem rather to respect the resurrection of his body, and the loosing it from the power and dominion of death; and in such sense as never to return to it, or any more feel the pains of it. One of Stephen’s copies reads, “the pains of Hades”, or the invisible state; and the Vulgate Latin version, “the pains of hell”; as in (<sup><5935></sup>Psalms 18:5) where the grave is meant; and the Syriac version, **I waçd**



hyl bj , “the pains”, or “cords of the grave”: the word “cords”, or “bands”, best agrees with the word “loosing”; and the Ethiopic version renders it, “the bands of death”.

*Because it was not possible he should be holden of it:* of death, and under the power of it; partly, because of the power and dignity of his person, as the Son of God, he being still the Prince of life, and who by dying abolished death, and him that had the power of it; and partly, because as the surety of his people, he had made full satisfaction for sin, and had brought in an everlasting righteousness, and therefore ought in justice to be discharged, and detained a prisoner no longer; as also because of the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning his resurrection, which must be fulfilled, as follows.

**Ver. 25.** *For David speaketh concerning him,* etc.] The Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, in (<sup><9168></sup>Psalm 16:8-11). The whole psalm belongs to the Messiah, and everything concerning the person in it agrees with him; such as his trust in God, (<sup><9161></sup>Psalm 16:1) as he was man and Mediator; his very great regard to the saints, and delight in them, (<sup><9162></sup>Psalm 16:2,3) his disregard to others who were hastening after another God, or another Saviour, whose sacrifices, as an high priest, he would not offer up, nor make intercession for them, (<sup><9164></sup>Psalm 16:4) his exceeding great satisfaction in having the God of Israel for his portion, and in having his lot cast among his peculiar people, who were a delightful inheritance to him, (<sup><9165></sup>Psalm 16:5,6) his thankfulness for advice and direction in the time of his sorrows and sufferings; and his dependence on the almighty power of God to support and protect him, (<sup><9167></sup>Psalm 16:7,8) and the joy and comfort he was filled with in the view of his resurrection from the dead, and his enjoyment of the heavenly glory, (<sup><9169></sup>Psalm 16:9-11),

*I foresaw the Lord always before my face;* Christ always had Jehovah in view throughout the whole of his life; and in his last moments he had respect unto the glory of his perfections, as the ultimate end of his obedience and sufferings; and to his purposes, council, and covenant, which were to be accomplished by him; and to his will and command in preaching the Gospel, working miracles, going about to do good, in obeying the precept, and bearing the penalty of the law; as well as to his promises, and his power to assist, support, and preserve him, as man and Mediator:



*for he is on my right hand*; which expresses his nearness to him, his presence with him, his readiness to assist him, and his protection of him; as if he was his second that stood by him, to take his part, and, if need be, to take up his cause, and defend him from his enemies; (see <sup><1948></sup>Psalm 109:31, 110:5)

*that I should not be moved*; from his station, place, and duty; from the cause he was engaged in, so as to relinquish it; or with the fear of men, or fury of devils, or wrath of God, whilst he was doing and suffering, according to the will of God.

**Ver. 26.** *Therefore did my heart rejoice*, etc.] Because that he had always the truth, faithfulness, and power of God in his view, and the presence and protection of God with him; and which are sufficient to make the hearts of his people, as well as of him, to rejoice:

*and my tongue was glad*: in the Hebrew text it is, “my glory”; and so the Syriac version renders it here; which Kimchi explains of the soul, because that is the glory of the body; but our apostle rightly interprets it of the tongue, which is so called, (<sup><1812></sup>Psalm 30:12) and (<sup><1878></sup>Psalm 57:8) and (<sup><1848></sup>Psalm 108:1) because it is both the glory of man, for that being endowed with the faculty of speaking, gives him a glory above the brute creatures; and because it is that by which he glorifies God, by ascribing greatness to him, speaking of his marvellous works, and singing his praises, as Christ did, in the great congregation, among his apostles, a little before his death.

*Moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope*, or “safely”; meaning, that his body should lie quietly in the grave, as in its resting place from all toil and labour, pains and sorrows, and be secure from worms, or any corruption. Or this may be understood of his person being in a quiet, firm, and full hope of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal life and glory.

**Ver. 27.** *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell*, etc.] This is an apostrophe, or an address to his Father, who he believed would not leave his soul, as separate from his body, in Hades, in the invisible world of souls, in the place where the souls of departed saints are, but would quickly return it to its body, and reunite them; or else, that he would not leave his dead body, for so **çpn** sometimes signifies; (see <sup><1818></sup>Leviticus 19:28, 21:1 <sup><1810></sup>Numbers 9:10, 19:11,13) in the grave; which is no unusual sense of

l waç; (see <sup><0428></sup>Genesis 42:38, <sup><27318></sup>Isaiah 38:18) that is, so long as to be corrupted and putrefy, as the next clause shows:

*neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.* The character of an “Holy One” well agrees with Christ, both as God, or with respect to his divine nature, holiness being a perfection in it, and in which he is glorious; and as man, he being holy in his nature, harmless in his life and conversation: all his doctrines were pure and holy, and so were all his works; and all his administrations in the discharge of every of his office; and he is the efficient cause and lain of all the holiness of his people; they are sanctified in him, and by him, and have all their sanctification from him. The word may be rendered, “thy merciful”, or “bountiful one”; and such Christ is, a merciful, as well as faithful high priest; and who has shown great compassion both to the bodies and souls of men, and has been very beneficent and liberal in the distributions of his grace and goodness. Now, though he died, and was laid in the grave, and buried, yet God would not suffer him to lie there so long as to be corrupted and putrefied, which is the sense of seeing corruption: and so the Jews themselves explain the last clause of the preceding verse, in connection with this, “my flesh shall rest in hope”, that no worm or maggot should have power over it, or corrupt it.

“Seven fathers (they say <sup>f118</sup>) dwell in eternal glory, and there is no h[lwtw hmr, “worm or maggot”, rules over them; and these are they, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and Aaron, and Amram their father; and there are that say also David, as it is said, (<sup><3961></sup>Psalm 16:1-11), “therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth, my flesh also shall rest in hope”.”

And which sense also is mentioned by one of their commentators of note <sup>f119</sup>, who thus paraphrases the words:

“whilst I am alive it shall rest safely, for thou wilt deliver me from all hurt; and in the mystical sense, or according to the Midrash, after death; intimating, that no maggot or worm should have power over him;”

which was not true of David, but is of the Messiah.

**Ver. 28.** *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life*, etc.] That is, thou hast raised me from the dead. When God raised Christ from the dead, he showed him, or made him to know experimentally the way of life, or the

way of the resurrection from death to life; and this path of life, or of the resurrection to an immortal and eternal life, was first shown to Christ, who is the first fruits of them that slept, and the first begotten from the dead.

*Thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance*; or glorious presence, in which is fulness of joy; which Christ, as man, is in, and fully possessed of, being exalted at the right hand of God, and crowned with glory and honour, and has all the joy that was set before him in his sufferings and death.

**Ver. 29.** *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you*, etc.] The apostle calls the Jews, brethren, whom he before only styled men of Judea, and men of Israel, because they were his brethren according to the flesh, as many of them afterwards were in a spiritual relation; and the rather he adds this affectionate appellation to soften their minds, and prepare them to receive the account he was about to give of David, and of his prophecy of the Messiah, and his resurrection; in which he used much freedom of speech, consistent with truth, good sense, and strong reasoning; which he thought might be allowed to take, and they would not be displeased at, in discoursing to them

*of the patriarch David*; who was a “head of the fathers”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; a prince of the tribes of Israel; one of the greatest kings the tribes of Israel ever had; and therefore this name well becomes him; though it is more commonly given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the heads of the twelve tribes:

*that he is both dead, and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day*; it is a plain case, and a certain matter of fact, which nobody disputes or denies, that David really died, and was laid in the grave, and that his monument, or tomb, was still extant, so that he was not risen from the dead; and therefore the above citation could not respect him, but another, even the Messiah, and had been literally fulfilled in Jesus. The Jews say<sup>f120</sup>, that David died on the day of Pentecost; which was the very day on which Peter was now preaching; he was buried in Jerusalem, and his sepulchral monument was in being when Peter said these words. And Josephus relates<sup>f121</sup>, that the sepulchre of David was opened by Hyrcanus, who took out of it three thousand talents; and that it was afterwards opened by Herod<sup>f122</sup>: which, if true, may serve to render credible what Peter says concerning its continuance to that day. Though it may be questioned whether any such treasure was ever in it, or taken out of it; and still less credible is the

account which R. Benjamin <sup>f123</sup> gives of two men in his time, who, under the wall of Zion, found a cave, which led them to a large palace built on pillars of marble, and covered with gold and silver; and within it was a table, and a golden sceptre, and a crown of gold; and this, says the author, was the sepulchre of David, king of Israel.

**Ver. 30.** *Therefore being a prophet*, etc.] Who could foretell things to come, as he did many things concerning the sufferings and death of Christ, and the circumstances attending it, concerning his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God. So the title of his “Psalms”, in the Syriac version, runs thus; the “Book of the Psalms of David, King and Prophet”: and in the Arabic version, “the First Book of the Psalms of David the Prophet, King of the Children of Israel”. Though the Jews <sup>f124</sup> will not allow him, nor Solomon, nor Daniel, to be strictly and properly prophets, they make a difference between prophecy, and the Holy Spirit. They own, that the book of Psalms was written under the influence of the Holy Spirit, but not by prophecy; and therefore they place it among the Hagiographa, or holy writings, but not among the Prophets: though after all, Kimchi allows David to be a prophet, since he is called a man of God; for he says this name is not said of any but *aybn* I [ , “of a prophet” <sup>f125</sup>; and Peter is right in calling him so:

*and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him*; as he did in (<sup><49D1></sup>Psalm 132:11).

*that of the fruit of his loins*; of one that should be of his seed, that should spring from him, even the Virgin Mary, who was of the house and lineage of David:

*according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ*; would send him forth, according to the human nature; for this phrase respects not his resurrection from the dead, but his incarnation or exhibition in the flesh, as in (<sup><44B6></sup>Acts 3:26, 13:23). This clause is wanting in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy, and should be read in a parenthesis; since it is not in the text in (<sup><49D1></sup>Psalm 132:11).

*to sit on his throne*; on the throne of David his father; (See Gill on <sup><40E2></sup>Luke 1:32”).

**Ver. 31.** *He seeing this before*, etc.] Or by a spirit of prophecy foreseeing it, that according to God’s promise and oath, the Messiah would be raised

up, and spring from his seed; and also by the same Spirit foresaw that he would suffer and die, and be laid in the grave, the pit of corruption:

*spake of the resurrection of Christ*; from the dead, to the sense of the following words, in (<sup><9160></sup>Psalm 16:10).

*that his soul was not left in hell*: neither his separate soul in Hades, nor his body in the grave;

*neither his flesh did see corruption*; or his body, or his “carcass”, as the Syriac version renders it, did not lie so long in the grave as to rot and putrefy.

**Ver. 32.** *This Jesus hath God raised up*, etc.] That is, from the dead,

*whereof we are all witnesses*; namely, of his resurrection, they having seen him, and heard him, and ate, and drank, and conversed with him since his resurrection; and which was true, not of the twelve apostles only, but of the whole company: or “we are all his witnesses”; either of God, who raised Christ from the dead; or of Christ who was raised by him; and indeed, they bore testimony to the whole of this, to Christ, and to his resurrection, and to its being done by God the Father.

**Ver. 33.** *Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted*, etc.] After his resurrection he ascended to heaven, and was exalted in human nature; “to the right hand of God”, as the Ethiopic version; and the Arabic version used by Deuteronomy Dieu read; an honour that never was conferred on any creature, angels or men, besides: or he was exalted and raised to the high honour and dignity of a Prince and Saviour, of Lord, Head, and King, so as to have a name, dominion, and authority over all, by the mighty power of God, which is sometimes called his right hand; (see <sup><9815></sup>Psalm 118:15,16).

*and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost*; which the Father had promised to pour forth in the last days, (<sup><2343></sup>Isaiah 44:3, <sup><9128></sup>Joel 2:28) and which Christ had promised to send from the Father, (<sup><9146></sup>John 14:16,26, 15:26, 16:7) and which, upon his ascension and exaltation, he received as Mediator from him; (see <sup><9818></sup>Psalm 68:18) compared with (<sup><9018></sup>Ephesians 4:8)

*he hath shed forth this*; this Holy Spirit, or promised Spirit, these gifts of his; and so the Syriac version renders it, “he hath shed forth this gift”;

which expresses both the plenty and abundance of the gifts bestowed, and the liberality of Christ in the donation of them: it is added,

*which ye now see and hear*; meaning the cloven tongues, as of fire, which they saw sitting on the disciples, and the various languages which they heard them speak. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word “now”: and the Syriac, in the room of it, reads, “behold”.

**Ver. 34.** *For David is not ascended into the heavens*, etc.] In his body, that being still in the grave, in his sepulchre, which remained to that day, though in his soul he was ascended to heaven; his Spirit had returned to God that gave it, and was among the spirits of just men made perfect: but he saith himself, in (~~4301~~ Psalm 110:1) “the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand”; (See Gill on “~~4124~~ Matthew 22:44”).

**Ver. 35.** *Until I make thy foes thy footstool.*] (See Gill on “~~4124~~ Matthew 22:44”).

**Ver. 36.** *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly*, etc.] “With certain knowledge”, as the Arabic version renders it; with full assurance of it: this is a case that is plain and clear, a matter of fact that may be depended on; which all the people of Israel, called “the house of Israel”, a phrase frequently used of that people in the Old Testament, which every individual of that body of men might be assured of:

*that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ*; that is, that God the Father had not only constituted and appointed Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, the Lord of lords, and King of kings, and had invested him with that office, power, and authority, but he had made him manifest to be so by the Holy Spirit which he had received, and now poured forth the same, and not another; even him whom they had rejected with so much contempt; whom they had treated in such a scornful and brutish manner; had spit upon, buffeted, and scourged, and at last crucified; and yet, now, even he had all power in heaven, and in earth, given him, and was exalted above every name; that in his name every knee should bow. The phrase of “making a Messiah”, or “Christ”, is used in the Talmudic writings <sup>f126</sup>.

“The holy blessed God sought to make Hezekiah the Messiah, or Christ, and Sennacherib Gog and Magog; the property or attribute of justice said before the holy blessed God, Lord of the world, and

what was David, the king of Israel, who said so many songs and hymns before thee, and thou didst not make him Christ? Hezekiah, for whom thou hast done all these wonders, and he hath not said a song before thee, wilt thou make him the Messiah, or Christ? wherefore his mouth was shut up; and the earth opened, and said a song before him; Lord of the world, I have said a song before thee, for this righteous one, *j yçm whç [w*, and he made him Messiah, or Christ.”

**Ver. 37.** *Now when they heard this*, etc.] Or “him”, as the Arabic version; that is, Peter speaking these things, describing the character of Jesus of Nazareth; opening the prophecies concerning him; asserting his resurrection from the dead, and exaltation at the right hand of God; ascribing this wonderful affair, of speaking with divers tongues, to his effusion of the Spirit; and charging them home with the iniquity of crucifying him:

*they were pricked in their hearts*; the word of God entered into them, and was as a sharp sword in them, which cut and laid open their hearts, and the sin and wickedness of them; they saw themselves guilty of the crime laid to their charge, and were filled with remorse of conscience for it; they felt pain at their hearts, and much uneasiness, and were seized with horror and trembling; they were wounded in their spirits, being hewn and cut down by the prophets and apostles of the Lord, and slain by the words of his mouth; they were as dead men in their own apprehension; and indeed, a prick, a cut, or wound in the heart is mortal:

*and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do?* the persons they before mocked at, they are glad to advise with, what should be done in this their sad and wretched case; what they should do to obtain the favour of God, the forgiveness of their sins, and everlasting salvation. Convinced, awakened sinners, are generally at first upon a covenant of works; are for doing something to atone for their past crimes, to set themselves right in the sight of God, to ingratiate themselves into his favour, and procure the pardon of their sins, and the inheritance of eternal life. And they seem also to be at a loss about the way of salvation, what is to be done to attain it, or how, and by what means it is to be come at; and are almost ready to despair of it, their sin appearing in so dreadful a light, and attended with such aggravating circumstances.

Beza's ancient copy reads, "some of them said to Peter", etc. not all that heard, but those that were pricked to the heart.

**Ver. 38.** *Then Peter said unto them,* etc.] Being the mouth of the apostles, and being ready to give advice, and speak a word of comfort to their distressed minds:

*repent:* change your minds, entertain other thoughts, and a different opinion of Jesus of Nazareth, than you have done; consider him, and believe in him, as the true Messiah and Saviour of the world; look upon him, not any more as an impostor, and a blasphemer, but as sent of God, and the only Redeemer of Israel; change your voice and way of speaking of him, and your conduct towards his disciples and followers; a change of mind will produce a change of actions in life and conversation: bring forth fruits meet for repentance; and make an open and hearty profession of repentance for this your sin. And this the apostle said, to distinguish between a legal and an evangelical repentance; the former is expressed in their being pricked to the heart, on which they were not to depend; the latter he was desirous they might have, and show forth; which springs from the love of God, is attended with views, or at least hopes of pardoning grace and mercy, and with faith in Christ Jesus: it lies in a true sight and sense of sin, under the illuminations and convictions of the Spirit of God; in a sorrow for it, after a godly sort, and because it is committed against a God of love, grace, and mercy, and it shows itself in loathing sin, and in shame for it, in an ingenuous acknowledgement of it, and in forsaking it: and this is moreover urged, to show the necessity of it, as to salvation, for such that God would not have perish, he will have come to repentance; so to their admission to the ordinance of baptism, to which repentance is a pre-requisite; and to which the apostle next advises:

*and be baptized everyone of you;* that repents and believes; that is, in water, in which John administered the ordinance of baptism; in which Christ himself was baptized, and in which the apostles of Christ administered it; in this Philip baptized the eunuch; and in this were the persons baptized that were converted in Cornelius's house; and it is distinguished from the baptism of the Spirit, or with fire, the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit mentioned in the last clause of this verse; and which ordinance of water baptism was administered by immersion, as the places, Jordan and Aenon, where John performed it, and the instances of it particularly in Christ, and in the eunuch, and the end of it, which is to



represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, as well as the primary signification of the word, show. And this is to be done,

*in the name of Jesus Christ*; not to the exclusion of the Father, and of the Spirit, in whose name also this ordinance is to be administered, (<sup><4189></sup>Matthew 28:19) but the name of Jesus Christ is particularly mentioned, because of these Jews, who had before rejected and denied him as the Messiah; but now, upon their repentance and faith, they are to be baptized in his name, by his authority, according to his command; professing their faith in him, devoting themselves to him, and calling on his name. The end for which this was to be submitted to, is,

*for the remission of sins*; not that forgiveness of sin could be procured either by repentance, or by baptism; for this is only obtained by the blood of Christ; but the apostle advises these awakened, sensible, repenting, and believing souls, to submit to baptism, that by it their faith might be led to Christ, who suffered and died for their sins, who left them buried in his grave, and who rose again for their justification from them; all which is, in a most lively manner, represented in the ordinance of baptism by immersion: the encouragement to it follows,

*and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost*: not the grace of the Spirit, as a regenerator and sanctifier; for that they had already; and is necessary, as previous to baptism; unless it should mean confirmation of that grace, and stability in it, as it appears from (<sup><4182></sup>Acts 2:42) they afterwards had; but rather the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, particularly the gift of speaking with tongues, which Christ had received from the Father, and had now shed on his apostles; (see <sup><4185></sup>Acts 19:5-6).

Ver. 39 *For the promise is unto you*, etc.] Either of the Messiah, and salvation by him, which was particularly given forth to the people of the Jews; or of the remission of sins, which was a branch of the covenant made with the house of Israel, in a spiritual sense, even the whole household of God; or of the pouring forth of the Spirit: and this promise was not only to them, but to theirs, even to as many of them as belonged to the election of grace; and whom the Lord their God would effectually call by his grace, as the last and limiting clause of the text, and which is to be connected with every part of it, shows:

*and to your children*: this is rather mentioned, because these awakened, and converted souls, were not only in great concern about themselves, for

their sin of crucifying Christ, but were in great distress about their children, on whom they had imprecated the guilt of Christ's blood, as upon themselves; the thought of which cut them to the heart, and made their hearts bleed, within them: wherefore to relieve them, and administer comfort to them in this their distress, the apostle informs them, that the promise of Christ, and of his grace, was not only to them, who were now called, but it was also to their children; to as many of them as the Lord God should call; and who are the children of the promise, which all the children of the flesh were not, ( <sup>4906</sup>Romans 9:6) and to these the promise should be applied, notwithstanding this dreadful imprecation of theirs:

*and to all that are afar off*; either in place, as those that were dispersed, among the several nations of the world; and so carried in it a comfortable aspect on the multitude of Jews, that were of every nation under heaven; or in time, who should live in ages to come; or else the Gentiles are intended, who were afar off from God and Christ, and the way of life and salvation by him; (see <sup>4902</sup>Ephesians 2:12-13,17) even as many as the Lord our God shall call: not externally only, by the ministry of the word, but internally, by his grace and Spirit; with that calling, which is according to the purpose and grace of God, and is inseparably connected with eternal glory; the promise is to all such, and is made good to all such, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, fathers, or children, greater or lesser sinners. The Syriac version reads, "whom God himself shall call".

**Ver. 40.** *And with many other words did he testify and exhort*, etc.] For Luke does not give the sermons of the apostles at length, but a compendium, or specimen of them, and some of the more remarkable things in them; and which, it seems, lay partly in testifying concerning Christ, his person, office, grace, righteousness, and salvation; and against sins and errors, and false doctrine; and in "exhorting" to the exercise of grace, and the discharge of duty; or in comforting distressed minds: for the word used signifies to comfort as well as to exhort; though it seems to have the latter sense here, since it follows:

*saying, save yourselves from this untoward generation*: meaning, the chief priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and elders of the people, chiefly, who were a perverse generation of men; and upon whom, for their impenitence and unbelief, for their rejection of the Messiah, and their evil treatment of him, wrath and ruin would come upon them, to the uttermost, very quickly; wherefore the apostle exhorts to separate from them, and not partake of

their sins, lest they should also of their plagues; but come out from among them, and so, in a temporal sense, save themselves from the destruction that would quickly come on their nation, city, and temple; and so the Arabic version renders it, “escape from this rough generation”.

**Ver. 41.** *Then they that gladly received his word*, etc.] The Syriac version adds, “and believed”; what Peter said concerning repentance and baptism, and especially concerning remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost; and concerning the promise of Christ, and salvation by him, of the pardon of sin, and of the Holy Spirit; which doctrine they received with great joy and gladness, it being suitable to their case; and very “readily”, and “willingly”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; for they were now made a willing people in the day of God’s power, and now that promise, or prophecy, in (~~EBB~~ Psalm 110:3) had a remarkable accomplishment; these converts were the dew of Christ’s youth, as well as instances of his powerful and efficacious grace: not all that heard this sermon of Peter’s received his doctrine in this manner, only some; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render the words, “and some of them readily received”, etc. which shows the distinguishing grace of God in this instance. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the word “gladly”, which should not be omitted: and as soon as they had received the word, and were comforted by it, they

*were baptized*; in water, by immersion, for which there was great conveniency in Jerusalem, and in the temple, where the apostles now were: in the city of Jerusalem, in private houses, they had their baths for purifications, by immersion, as in the case of menstruous, gonorrhoeas, and other defilements, by touching unclean persons, and things, which were very frequent; so that a digger of cisterns, for such uses, and others, was a business in Jerusalem.

“Says Simeon Sicana <sup>f127</sup>, who was a digger of cisterns, ditches, and caves, in Jerusalem, to R. Jochanan ben Zaccai, I am as great a man as thou art; he made answer to him, why? (or your reason for it;) he replied to him, because I am employed in the necessary affairs of many, (or of the public,) as you are; for says he, if a man comes to you for judgment, or to ask a question, you say to him, drink out of this cistern, whose waters are pure, and cold; or, if a woman asks thee concerning her monstrous, you say to her, *yl bj*, dip in this cistern, whose waters purify.”

And in the temple there was an apartment, called **hl ybj tyb**, “the dipping place”, or “room”, where the high priest dipped himself on the day of atonement <sup>f128</sup>: and besides, there were ten lavers of brass, made by Solomon; and every laver held forty baths of water, and each was four cubits broad and long, sufficient for immersion of the whole body of a man; and to these Herbanus <sup>f129</sup> the Jew seems to have respect, when he says, that in the outer part of Solomon’s temple, there were **λουτηρης**, “lavers”, in every side, (or all around,) which were free, or open, for the use of all; to which, he thinks, the prophet Isaiah has respect, in (<sup><2016></sup>Isaiah 1:16). Those were for the priests, both to wash their hands and feet at, and also to wash the burnt offerings; (see <sup><2018></sup>Exodus 30:18-19 <sup><4016></sup>2 Chronicles 4:6) <sup>f130</sup>: and who were likewise obliged, very often, to bathe, or dip their whole bodies in water; for if a priest went out of the temple for a little while to speak with a friend, **hl ybj wlj**, “he was obliged to dipping”: and if he nodded, he was obliged to wash his hands and his feet; but if he slept, he was obliged to dip himself; yea, a man might not go into the court, or to service, even though he was clean, **l bwj awħç d[**, “until he dip himself” <sup>f131</sup>. Add to this, that there was the molten sea also for the priests to wash in, (<sup><4016></sup>2 Chronicles 4:6) which was done by immersion; on which one of the Jewish commentators <sup>f132</sup> has these words:

“the sea was **tl ybj l**, “for the dipping” of the priests; for in the midst of it, they dipped themselves from their uncleanness; but in the Jerusalem Talmud <sup>f133</sup> there is an objection, is it not a vessel? as if it was said, how can they “dip” in it, for is it not a vessel? and there is no “dipping” in vessels: R. Joshua ben Levi replied, a pipe of water was laid to it from the fountain of Etam, and the feet of the oxen, (which were under the molten sea,) were open at the pomegranates; so that it was as if it was from under the earth, and the waters came to it, and entered, and ascended, by the way of the feet of the oxen, which were open beneath them, and bored.”

The reason of the objection is, because bathing, or dipping for purification, was not made in vessels, but in gatherings, or pools of water upon the ground; and which objection is removed, by observing, that a pipe was laid from the fountain of Etam, which supplied it with spring, or running water; so that the molten sea, and the lavers, were looked upon all one as pools of water, or springs of water, and as fit for immersion. This sea was ten cubits from brim to brim, and five cubits high, and held two thousand baths, (<sup><1073></sup>1

Kings 7:23,26). Yea, three thousand, as in (~~406~~2 Chronicles 6:5) and every laver held forty baths, (~~407~~1 Kings 7:38) and every bath held four gallons and a half, and between seven and eight gallons of wine measure. And it may be observed, that there were also in Jerusalem the pool of Bethesda, into which persons went down at certain times, (~~408~~John 5:1) and the pool of Siloam, where persons bathed, and dipped themselves, on certain occasions; *See Gill* "~~409~~John 9:7". So that there were conveniences enough for baptism by immersion in this place: and the same day there were added; unto them, or to the church, as in (~~410~~Acts 2:47) the whole company of the hundred and twenty disciples; the Arabic version supplies, "among the believers": the number of those, that were added to them, were about three thousand souls; or persons, men, and women; and their number is no objection to their being baptized by immersion. As for convenient places to baptize in, there were enough, as we have seen already; and there were administrators sufficient for this work: had there been no more than the twelve apostles, it was but two hundred and fifty men apiece; and there were twelve separate places in the temple, where they might be baptizing at the same time; there were the ten lavers, the molten sea, and the dipping room, so that the work was not so very heavy nor difficult; but besides, there were seventy disciples, who, as they were preachers of the word, were administrators of this ordinance; and supposing them all employed, as they might be, at the same time, either in the temple, or at the pools in Jerusalem, or at the baths, and cisterns, in private houses; they would not have more than six or seven and thirty persons apiece to baptize; and there was time enough in the day for it; it was but the third hour, or nine o'clock in the morning, when Peter began his sermon; and allowing an hour for that, there were eight hours more in the day, according to the Jewish reckoning of twelve hours in a day; so that the business might be done without any hurry, or great fatigue; and indeed, the objection, as to time, would equally lie against sprinkling, or pouring, as dipping; at least the difference is very inconsiderable; for the same form of words must be pronounced in administering the ordinance by the one, as by the other; and a person being ready, is very near as soon dipped into water, as water can be taken, and sprinkled, or poured on the face. Besides, after all, though these persons were added to the church the same day, it does not necessarily follow from the text, that they were all baptized in one day; the words do not oblige us to such a sense: I own, I am of opinion, that they were all baptized in one day; and that on the same day they were baptized, they were joined to the church; and that day was the day of Pentecost, the

day on which the law was given on Mount Sinai, and on which now the Gospel was published to men of all nations under the heavens; the day on which the firstfruits were offered to the Lord, and on which now the firstfruits of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ were brought in to him. Let the order be observed, they were first baptized, and then added to the church.

**Ver. 42.** *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine,* etc.] And which is the same with the doctrine of Christ, of which he is the author, preacher, and subject; the substance of which is peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him: this the apostles received from Christ, and constantly taught in their ministry; for which reason, it is called theirs; and this these young converts had embraced gladly; and were not only believers of it, but persevering believers; they were constant hearers of it; they continually attended on the ministry of the apostles, and held fast the form of sound words they had received from them; and stood fast in the faith of the Gospel, notwithstanding all the reproach cast upon it, and the afflictions they endured for it:

*and fellowship;* with the apostles and other saints, in spiritual conversation with them, in private, and in communion with them at the Lord's table in public: and so the Vulgate Latin reads this clause, in connection with the next, thus, "in the communication of breaking of bread"; to which agrees the Syriac version, and "they communicated in prayer, and in breaking of the eucharist"; though it seems better to understand this of a distinct branch of fellowship, or communication, and may rather intend liberality and beneficence, in which sense it is used, (~~4515~~Romans 15:26 ~~4700~~2 Corinthians 8:9 ~~3836~~Hebrews 13:16) and so expresses their constant contributions towards the support of the apostles, as ministers of the word and of the poor members of the church; a duty which, in both its branches, is incumbent on those who have it in their power to perform, and which these first Christians were remarkable for:

*and in breaking of bread;* or "of the eucharist": as the Syriac version renders it, which was an usual name with the ancients for the Lord's supper; and which seems to be intended here, and not eating common bread, or a common meal; seeing it is here mentioned with religious exercises: and though the Jews used to begin their meals with breaking of bread, yet the whole repast, or meal, is never by them called by that name; and for what reason these saints should be commended for keeping their

common meals, cannot be said, unless to show their sociableness, agreement, and brotherly love in eating together; and which is not hinted at here, but in (~~406~~Acts 2:46) where it is mentioned as something distinct from this: it seems rather therefore to design, that they were constant at the Lord's table, kept their places there, and duly attended whenever the ordinance was administered:

*and in prayers*: not only in their closets, and in their families, but in the church; in the public prayers of the church, they observed all opportunities of this kind, and gladly embraced them.

**Ver. 43.** *And fear came upon every soul*, etc.] Upon every inhabitant of Jerusalem, at least upon a great many of them; and upon all, or the greater part of them that saw, and heard these things; that heard the apostles speak with divers tongues, and Peter preach in the awful manner he did, and saw so many thousands at once embrace the Gospel of Christ, and profess his name, when it now, by reason of his crucifixion but a few weeks ago, lay under the greatest reproach and scandal; and such a number baptized in water; and also because of the miracles done by the apostles, after mentioned. The Ethiopic version is very odd, "and all animals feared the apostles": as if the very brute creatures stood in awe of them:

*and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles*: the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions add, "in Jerusalem"; such as casting out devils, healing the sick, causing the lame to walk, etc. which were promised by Christ should be done by them; and which were necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel, and of the apostles' mission to preach it. The Vulgate Latin version adds another clause, much like the first part of the text, "and great fear was upon all": and the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, "in Jerusalem, there was great fear upon all."

**Ver. 44.** *And all that believed were together*, etc.] Not in one place, for no one house could hold them all, their number was now so large; but they "agreed together", as the Arabic version renders it: all these believers were of one mind and judgment, as to doctrines, they agreed in their sentiments and principles of religion; and they were of one heart and soul, were cordially affected to each other, and mutually were assisting to one another in temporals, as well as in spirituals:

*and had all things common*: that is, their worldly goods, their possessions and estates; no man called anything peculiarly his own; and whatever he



had, his brother was welcome to, and might as freely take, and use it, as if it was his own.

**Ver. 45.** *And sold their possessions and goods.* etc.] Their houses and lands, their fields and vineyards, their goods, moveable or immoveable:

*and parted them to all men;* that were of their society, not to others:

*as every man had need:* the rich sold their estates, and divided them among the poor, or gave them such a portion thereof as their present exigencies required. This was done by Jews, and by Jews only; who, when they embraced the Gospel of Christ, were informed that the destruction of their city, and nation, was at hand; and therefore they sold their estates before hand, and put them to this use; which was necessary to be done, both for the support of the Gospel in Judea, and for the carrying and spreading of it among the Gentiles: but is not to be drawn into a precedent, or an example in after times; nor is ever any such thing proposed to the Christian churches, or exhorted to by any of the apostles.

**Ver. 46.** *And they continued daily with one accord in the temple,* etc.]

Every day they went up to the temple, at the time of prayer, or whenever any religious service was to be performed; this was their constant practice, and in this they agreed:

*and breaking bread from house to house;* either administering the Lord's supper in private houses, as the Jews kept their passover, sometimes administering it at one house, and sometimes at another; or because their number was so large, that one house could not hold them, they divided themselves into lesser bodies; and some met, and had the ordinance administered to them in one house, and some in another: or this may be understood of their common meals, which they ate together at one another's houses in great love and friendship; for

*they did eat their meat with gladness;* with great thankfulness to the God of their mercies for their daily food, acknowledging that all came from him, and that they were undeserving of it, and with much cheerfulness and affability one among another, without murmuring and repining at their lot, or envying each other, or grudging what each other partook of:

*and singleness of heart;* without deceit and hypocrisy; either in their thanksgivings to God, or in their welcome and entertainment of each other; and with great sincerity, openness, and frankness before God, and one



another. The Syriac version joins this clause with the beginning of the next verse, “with singleness of heart, praising God”.

**Ver. 47.** *Praising God*, etc.] Not only for their temporal mercies and enjoyments of life, which they partook of in so delightful and comfortable a manner; but for their spiritual mercies, that the Lord had been pleased to call them by his grace, and reveal Christ to them, and pardon them who had been such vile sinners, give them a name, and a place in his house, and favour them with the ordinances of it, and such agreeable and delightful company as the saints were, they had fellowship with:

*having favour with all the people*; they not only behaved with such true and sincere love towards one another in their church state, but with so much wisdom, courteousness, and affability towards them that were without, and walked so becoming the profession they made, that they gained the good will of the generality of the people:

*and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved*: partly by the conversation of these young converts, and chiefly by the ministry of the word, many souls were won and gained to Christ, were wrought upon, and converted, whose hearts the Lord inclined to give up themselves to the church, and walk with them in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord; and these were such whom God had chosen to salvation by Jesus Christ, and whom he had redeemed by his precious blood, and who were now regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and so should certainly be saved; which is not always the case of persons added to churches, many of whom have not the root of the matter in them, and so fall away; but is of those who are added by the Lord, for there is a difference between being added by the Lord, and being added by men.

# CHAPTER 3

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 3

**Ver. 1.** *Now Peter and John went up together into the temple*, etc.] These two disciples were intimate companions, and great lovers of each other; they were often together: they are thought, by some, to have been together in the high priest's palace at the trial of Christ; and they ran together to his sepulchre, (<sup><4315></sup>John 18:15,16 20:2-4) and they now went together to the temple, not to attend the daily sacrifice, which was now abolished by the sacrifice of Christ, but to attend to the duty of prayer, which was still in force, and that they might have an opportunity of preaching Christ, where there was a number of people together:

*at the hour of prayer; being the ninth hour*, or three o'clock in the afternoon. This was one of their hours of prayer; it was customary with the Jews to pray three times a day, (<sup><2760></sup>Daniel 6:10) which, according to the Psalmist in (<sup><4357></sup>Psalm 55:17) were evening, morning, and at noon; to which seems to answer the three times that are taken notice of by Luke in this history: that in the morning was at the third hour, as in (<sup><4415></sup>Acts 2:15) or nine o'clock in the morning; that at noon was at the sixth hour, as in (<sup><4409></sup>Acts 10:9) or twelve o'clock at noon; and that in the evening at the ninth hour, as here, or three o'clock in the afternoon. Not that these were times of divine appointment. The Jews <sup>f134</sup> themselves say,

“there is no number of prayers from the law, and there is no repetition of this or that prayer from the law, and there is no [wbq  
^mz, “fixed time” for prayer from the law.”

But according to the traditions of the elders,

“the morning prayer was to the end of the fourth hour, which is the third part of the day — the prayer of the “Minchah”, (or evening prayer,) they fixed the time of it to answer to the evening daily sacrifice; and because the daily sacrifice was offered up every day from the ninth hour and a half, they ordered the time of it to be from the ninth hour and a half, and it is called the lesser “Minchah”;

and because in the evening of the passover, which falls upon the evening of the sabbath, they slay the daily sacrifice at the sixth hour and a half, they say, that he that prays after the sixth hour and a half is excused; and after this time is come, the time to which he is obliged is come, and this is called the great “Minchah” — -lo, you learn, that the time of the great “Minchah” is from the sixth hour and a half, to the ninth hour and a half; and the time of the lesser “Minchah” is from the ninth hour and a half, until there remains of the day an hour and a quarter; and it is lawful to pray it until the sun sets.”

So that it was at the time of the lesser “Minchah” that Peter and John went up to the temple; which seems to be not on the same day of Pentecost, but on some day, or days after; it may be the sabbath following, when there was a great number of people got together.

**Ver. 2.** *And a certain man, lame from his mother’s womb*, etc.] He was born so; his lameness came not through any disease or fall, or any external hurt, but from a defect in nature, in one of his limbs, or more; which made the after miracle the more extraordinary: and he was so lame that he

*was carried*; he could not walk of himself, or go, being led, but they were obliged to carry him:

*whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple*; it had been a common usage, it may be, for years past, to bring him every day, at prayer time, and lay him at the gate of the temple where the people went in; hence he was well known by the people, and to have been of a long time lame, even ever since he was born; so that there could be no imposture in this case: and it was at the gate of the temple he lay,

*which is called beautiful*; which some think was the gate Shushan, which was the eastern gate of the mountain of the house, or the outmost wall, and was so called, because Shushan, the metropolis of Persia, was pourtrayed upon it<sup>f135</sup>, which made it look very beautiful. The reason commonly given by the Jewish commentators<sup>f136</sup> why this was done, is this; when the Jews returned from captivity, the king of Persia commanded that they should make a figure of the palace of Shushan upon one of the gates of the temple, that they might fear the king, and not rebel against him; and accordingly they drew one upon the eastern gate: but some say<sup>f137</sup>, that the children of the captivity did this (upon their return) that they might

remember the wonder of Purim, (their deliverance from Haman,) which was done in Shushan; moreover, it might be so called from the word Shushan, which signifies joy and gladness: but this does not bid so fair to be the gate here meant, since it was lower than all the rest; for as the eastern wall was lower than the rest of the walls, that when the high priest burnt the red heifer on the top of Mount Olivet, he might see the gate of the temple at the time of the sprinkling of the blood; so the gate itself was four cubits lower than the others <sup>f138</sup>, and therefore could not look so grand and beautiful as the rest. Indeed, concerning this eastern gate of the mountain of the house, it is said <sup>f139</sup>, that

“in the time when the sanctuary stood, when they prayed on the mountain of the house, they went in by the way of the eastern gate.”

And as this was now the hour of prayer, and the people were going to the temple to pray, whose entrance was at the east gate; here it might be thought, in all probability, was laid the lame man: though it seems rather to be the eastern gate of the court of the women, which was made of Corinthian brass, and looked brighter than gold itself; of which Josephus <sup>f140</sup> thus speaks:

“nine of the gates were covered all over with gold and silver, likewise the side posts and lintels; but there was one, without the temple, of Corinthian brass, which in dignity greatly exceeded the silver and golden ones.”

And since at this gate was the greatest frequency of persons, both men and women entering here; it is most likely, that here lay the lame man a begging: this is thought, by some, to be the higher gate of the house of the Lord; said to be built by Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, (<sup><del>255</del></sup>2 Kings 15:35) upon which text, a Jewish commentator of great note <sup>f141</sup> has this remark,

“observe it is said of Jotham, that he built it, because he made a building on it, **l wdgw dbkn** “more glorious and great” than it had been.”

and this is also called the new gate of the house of the Lord, (<sup><del>260</del></sup>Jeremiah 26:10) and which both the Targum and Kimchi on the place say is the eastern gate.

*To ask alms of them that entered into the temple*; who going to religious exercises, might be thought to be more disposed to acts of liberality and charity: and besides, these were known to be Jews, of whom only alms were to be asked and taken; for so run their canons <sup>f142</sup>,

“it is forbidden to take alms of Gentiles publicly, except a man cannot live by the alms of Israelites; and if a king, or a prince of the Gentiles, should send money to an Israelite for alms, he must not return it, because of the peace of the kingdom, but must take it of him, and give it to the poor of the Gentiles secretly, that the king may not hear.”

**Ver. 3.** *Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple*, etc.] Just as they were entering through the gate at which he lay, he looked at them; and though they were strangers to him, he concluded they were Israelites by their going into the temple at that time:

*asked an alms*; of them; prayed them to give him something for his relief and support.

**Ver. 4.** *And Peter fastening his eyes upon him*, etc.] Or looking very wistly and intently at him, being, no doubt, under some uncommon impulse of the Spirit of God to take notice of him, and cure him of his disease:

*with John*; who was also under a like impulse at the same time; and who was equally concerned in this cure, as appears by the notice the man, when healed, took of the one, as well as the other; and by Peter’s declaration, (<sup><4811></sup> Acts 3:11,12) as also by the following words:

*said, look on us*; which was said to raise his attention to them, to put him upon observing what manner of men they were, and how unlikely to perform the following cure, and to take notice of the manner in which it would be done. The Jews speak of a supernatural cure effected in such a manner, using such words; and which perhaps is told, with a view to lessen the glory of this <sup>f143</sup>.

“Elias appeared to one in the likeness of R. Chiyah Rabbah; he said to him, how does my Lord do? he replied to him, a certain tooth distresses me; he said to him, *yl ymj*, “look on me”; and he looked on him, and put his finger on it, and he was well.”

**Ver. 5.** *And he gave heed unto them*, etc.] Or “he looked at them”, as the Syriac version renders it, as they bid him: he was not only attentive to them in his mind, but he directed his eyes towards them, and looked wistly at them. This clause is left out in the Ethiopic version.

*Expecting to receive something of them*; not a cure for his lameness, which he little thought of, but some money, as an alms.

**Ver. 6.** *Then Peter said, silver and gold have I none*, etc.] The Ethiopic version reads, “we have none”; and so it reads the next clause in the first person plural; that is, they had no money either of gold or silver coin; they had none about them, nor any of their own perhaps any where; none but what was brought to them, and put into their hands as a common stock for the whole church, or the poor of it: nor indeed might any money be carried in a purse into the temple; (See Gill on “<sup><400></sup>Matthew 10:9”), (see Gill on “<sup><4116></sup>Mark 11:16”) though doubtless they might carry it in their hands, or otherwise, for the offerings, or for the poor, or this man would not have lain here for alms.

*But such as I have, give I thee*; meaning the gift of healing; not that he communicated that to him, but exercised the gift upon him, by curing him of his lameness; and which was much preferable to large quantities of gold and silver, had he had them to give unto him:

*in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*: signifying, that it was by the command of Christ he said what follows; and by his power he wrought the cure which commenced upon it; even by the authority and virtue of him, who was treated with so much contempt by the Jews, and had lately been crucified by them: in his name he bid him

*rise up and walk*; without making use of any medicines, or applying anything to him; but believing that power would go along with the words, and strength would be communicated to him, by him in whose name he spoke, he said these words: and herein lies the difference between the miracles wrought by Christ, and by his disciples; those that were done by him were done in his own name, and by his own power; those that were performed by his disciples, were done in the name of Christ, and by his power alone; and the Jews themselves own, that the disciples performed cures ⲱϥϥ ⲥⲏⲙϥⲃ, “in the name of Jesus”<sup>f144</sup>.

**Ver. 7.** *And he took him by the right hand*, etc.] In imitation of Christ, whom he had often seen using the same action on such occasions:

*and lift him up*; believing he was cured, and that it might be manifest. The word *him* is expressed in the Alexandrian copy, and in some others, and in the Oriental versions, which is a supplement in our translation:

*and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength*; where, it seems, his lameness lay. The Vulgate Latin renders it, his bases and soles, which may include his legs and thighs, as well as feet; and the Syriac version, “his feet and soles”; and the Arabic version, “his soles, and the muscles adjoining to his heels”; and the Ethiopic version furthest off of all, “he was strengthened in his feet, and in his loins”; his disorder might be of the paralytic kind.

**Ver. 8.** *And he leaping up*, etc.] From off the bed or couch, or ground on which he lay:

*stood and walked*; stood firm and strong upon his feet, and walked about; by which it was abundantly manifest to himself and others, that he had a perfect cure. The Ethiopic version is a very ridiculous one, “and he went with them catching fishes”; as if upon this, before they went into the temple, he and the apostles went a fishing together, which has not the least foundation in the text:

*and entered with them into the temple*; to join with them in divine worship, to acknowledge the goodness of God to him, and to show respect to the instruments he made use of in his cure:

*and leaping*; for joy of the mercy, and that it might appear to all that he was thoroughly cured of his lameness: and thus the prophecy in (<sup>2386</sup> Isaiah 35:6) “then shall the lame man leap as an hart”, was literally fulfilled:

*and praising God*; and not the apostles; for he knew that this was owing to the power of God, and could never have been done by man; though he might not be ungrateful to the instruments.

**Ver. 9.** *And all the people*, etc.] That were in the temple,

*saw him walking*; who before lay on a couch, or on the ground, and was so lame, that he was obliged to be carried;

*and praising God*; for this miraculous cure. The Arabic version renders it, “saw him walking to praise God”: that is, entering into the temple with the apostles, in order to offer up the sacrifice of praise to God there.

**Ver. 10.** *And they knew it was he that sat for alms*, etc.] The Syriac version renders it, “they knew him to be that beggar that sat daily and asked alms”. As he was daily brought thither, and had, for many years, it is very likely, sat there to ask alms of the people as they went into the temple; he was well known by them, and they had but just now passed him, and observed him in the same condition he had for a long time been, and knew him to be the same. It was a clear and indisputable point with them.

*At the beautiful gate of the temple* (See Gill on “~~4RXD~~Acts 3:2”).

*And they were all filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him*; that he should have a cure so suddenly, and in such an extraordinary manner; they wondered at the power of God, which was seen in it, and that he should make use of such mean and contemptible persons as the apostles were.

**Ver. 11.** *And as the lame man which was healed*, etc.] This is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and in the Alexandrian copy, which only read, and as he

*held Peter and John*; by their clothes or arms, either through fear, lest his lameness should return on their leaving him; or rather out of affection to them for the favour he had received, and therefore hung about them, and was loath to part with them; unless it was to make them known, and point them out as the authors of his cure, that they might be taken notice of by others, and the miracle be ascribed unto them:

*all the people ran together unto them*; to the man that was healed, and to Peter and John, when they saw him standing, walking, and leaping, and clinging about the apostles; who were

*in the porch that is called Solomon’s*; (See Gill on “~~4XQD~~John 10:23”)

*greatly wondering*; at the man that was cured; at the cure that was wrought upon him; and still more at the persons who did it, and the manner in which it was done.

**Ver. 12.** *And when Peter saw it*, etc.] That the people ran to them, and looked wistly upon them, and wondered at what was done:



*he answered unto the people, ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this?* either at this man, who was cured of his lameness, or at the cure itself:

*or why look ye so earnestly on us;* suggesting, that they ought to look to God, and observe his divine power, and to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they had crucified, whose apostles they were, and in whose name, and by whose power they had wrought this miracle; which shows that they were not self-seeking and vain glorious men, but discovers great sincerity and integrity, much love to Christ, and great regard to his honour, and to the glory of God:

*as though by our own power and holiness we had made this man to walk?* as if it was any natural power of theirs; or for any merit of theirs, because of their strict religion and piety; or “laudable conversation”, as the Arabic version; because they were mightier in themselves and holier than others, that they had such a faculty of curing lame persons; all which they utterly reject, and place it to a right account in the next verse. Instead of “holiness”, the Syriac version reads “authority”; and to the same, or like sense, the Vulgate Latin, which seems most agreeable.

**Ver. 13.** *The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob,* etc.] These titles and epithets of God, which are used in the Old Testament, (<sup>(~~ORR6~~)</sup>Exodus 3:6,15,16 4:5) the apostle chooses to retain, partly to distinguish him from the gods of the Gentiles, and partly to show his regard to the God of Israel, the one, only true, and living God; and that, though he and his fellow apostles were preachers of Christ, yet they were not setters forth of another, or a strange God, but believed in the same God their forefathers did, and to whom they ascribe the glory of this miracle:

*the God hath glorified his Son Jesus;* by raising him from the dead, setting him at his own right hand, and giving him the gifts of the Spirit for men; which he having bestowed on the apostles, by virtue of this they wrought this miracle, which was a means of setting forth the glory of Christ, and of putting men upon glorifying him, or ascribing honour and glory to him. And in order to awaken their minds, to convict them of their sin, ingratitude, and folly, the apostle adds,

*whom ye delivered up;* to Pilate, the Roman governor; having first seized him as a thief, bound him as a malefactor, and arraigned, and condemned him to death in the high priest’s palace as a blasphemers:

*and denied him in the presence of Pilate*; or “to”, or “against the face of Pilate”; contrary to his sense of things, who more than once called him the King of the Jews, and wrote this as the superscription over him, when they denied him to be their King Messiah, and the Son of God, saying, they had no king but Caesar:

*when he was determined to let him go*; or release him; that is, “when he judged it right that he should be released”, as the Syriac version renders it; for he never came to a point, to a resolution to let him go; though he thought it was but just and equitable that he should be dismissed, being, in his apprehension, an innocent man; and therefore pressed it on the people to agree to release him, to which he was himself strongly inclined.

**Ver. 14.** *But ye denied the Holy One, and the just*, etc.] Who is “holy” both in his divine and human nature, and the fountain of holiness to his people; (see <sup><big></sup>Psalm 16:10) and who is “just” or “righteous”, both in his person, and in the discharge of his office, and has wrought a righteousness for his people, which is imputed to them. These characters may have a particular regard to the purity of Christ, as man, and to the innocence of his life, and the harmlessness of his actions, in opposition to the unjust charges of his enemies, and the base treatment he met with from them who denied him to be the Christ, the Redeemer and Saviour:

*and desired a murderer to be granted unto you*; when it was put to their choice, who they would have released, Christ or Barabbas; they requested it as a favour, and desired they might be gratified in having Barabbas, a thief, and a robber, who, with others, had raised an insurrection, and committed murder in it, released, and Christ crucified. They desired an act of grace for him, and a sentence of condemnation to a most shameful and painful death on Christ.

**Ver. 15.** *And killed the Prince of life*, etc.] Or author of life, natural, spiritual, and eternal; who not only is the living God, and has life in himself; and as man, had such a power over his own life, as no man ever had; but he is the author of a spiritual resurrection from the death of sin, to a life of grace, and has procured eternal life for his people, and gives it to them. Now this Lord of life and glory they crucified. His death is laid to them because it was at their request, and through their instigation, and at their earnest solicitations, that Pilate condemned him, and delivered, him to his soldiers to crucify him.

*Whom God hath raised from the dead*; notwithstanding all their spite and malice; so that they had not their whole will, and all their end, not being able to retain him under the power of death, and under the shame and reproach of the cross; and this the apostle the rather mentions, as being the reason why such gifts, and such power were bestowed on them to do the miracles they did.

*Whereof we are witnesses*; either of Christ, for it may be rendered, “whose witnesses we are”; they testifying of his person, office, grace, and righteousness; or of the resurrection of Christ, of which they were eyewitnesses; and of which they had the fullest proof, and were capable of bearing a sufficient testimony, and for which they were chosen and appointed.

**Ver. 16.** *And his name, through faith in his name*, etc.] That is, the name of Christ, or the power of Christ, through the faith of the apostles in him, while they made use of his name, and said, “in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth”, etc. (<sup>44R6</sup>Acts 3:6) or Christ, through the faith of the lame man in him; and when his name was used in this manner by the apostles; not that either their faith, or his, had any causal influence on the cure, but was the way and means in which they, glorifying Christ, he was pleased to effect this cure:

*hath made this man strong*; who was before exceeding weak; strengthened the parts that were infirm, his feet and ankles, and consolidated them, so that he could use them, and walk with them:

*whom ye see and know*; they knew him before, when he was lame, and now knew him to be the same man, and whom they saw now perfectly well; so that they could be appealed to that there was no fraud or imposture in the case:

*yea, the faith which is by him*; by Christ, of which he is the object, and the author, and finisher: this is repeated out of affection to Christ, and a passionate concern for the glory of his name; or because that faith, in one clause, may regard the faith of the apostles, and in the other, the faith of the man that was cured:

*hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all*: he had perfect soundness both in body and mind; though the former may chiefly be designed, it being that which was only visible to these persons; and which

was done, not in a corner, but publicly, before them all, at the gate of the temple, where the multitude passed to and fro.

**Ver. 17.** *And now, brethren*, etc.] He calls them brethren, because they were so according to the flesh; and to testify his cordial love and affection for them.

*I wot*, or “I know”,

*that through ignorance ye did it*; delivered up Jesus into the hands of Pilate; denied him to be the Messiah before him; preferred a murderer to him, and put him to death.

*As did also your rulers*; the members of the sanhedrim, some of them; (see ~~418~~1 Corinthians 2:8) for others of them knew him to be the Messiah, to be sent of God, by the miracles he did, and yet blasphemously ascribed them to Satan; and so sinning against light and knowledge, in such a malicious manner, sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, to which ignorance is here opposed; and which did not excuse from sin: nor was it itself without sin; nor is it opposed to any sin, but to this now mentioned.

**Ver. 18.** *But those things which God before had showed*, etc.] In the Scriptures of the Old Testament, concerning the betraying of the Messiah, and his sufferings and death, with the various causes, concomitants, and circumstances of them:

*by the mouths of all his prophets*; which were since the world began; some pointing out one thing or circumstance, and some another:

*that Christ should suffer*. The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, “that his Christ should suffer”; but then they leave out the word “his” in the preceding clause, which they put into this; and this entire clause is omitted in the Alexandrian copy:

*he hath so fulfilled*; in the manner he has, so exactly, so perfectly agreeable to the predictions of them, and yet were unknown to the persons by whom they were fulfilled. So wisely and surprisingly are things ordered and overruled by the wise providence of God, who is a God of knowledge, and by whom all actions are weighed.

**Ver. 19.** *Repent ye therefore*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “and be baptized”, (See Gill on ~~4128~~Acts 2:38”),

*and be converted.* The apostle's sense is, repent of the sin of crucifying Christ, which is what he had been charging them with, and turn unto him, and acknowledge him as the Messiah; receive his doctrines, and submit to his ordinances; externally reform in life and conversation, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, such as will show it to be true and genuine:

*that your sins may be blotted out;* or forgiven, (see <sup><1510></sup>Psalm 51:9) (<sup><2425></sup>Isaiah 43:25, 44:22). Not that repentance and reformation procure the pardon of sin, or are the causes of it, for forgiveness is entirely owing to the free grace of God, and blood of Christ; but inasmuch as that is only manifested and applied to repenting and converted sinners; and who are encouraged to repent, and turn to the Lord from the promise of pardon; it is incumbent on them, and is their interest so to do, that they may have a discovery of the remission of their sins by the blood of Christ. Though no other repentance and conversion may be here meant than an external one; and the blotting out of sin, and forgiveness of it, may intend no other than the removing a present calamity, or the averting a threatened judgment, or the deliverance of persons from national ruin, (<sup><1232></sup>Exodus 32:32, <sup><1084></sup>1 Kings 8:34-39). These Jews had crucified the Lord of glory, and for this sin were threatened with miserable destruction; the apostle therefore exhorteth them to repentance for it, and to a conversion to the Messiah, that so when ruin should come upon their nation, they might be delivered from the general calamity; when it would be terrible times to the unbelieving and impenitent Jews, but times of refreshment, ease, peace, and rest from persecution, to the believers, as is next expressed.

*When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;* or “that the times of refreshing may come”, as the Syriac version; either seasons of spiritual refreshment, joy, and peace, through the great and precious promises of the Gospel, and by the application of the blood and righteousness of Christ, to such penitent and converted sinners; which refreshment and comfort come from the Lord, and are accompanied with his gracious presence: or else seasons of rest, and deliverance from the violent heat of persecution; which was the case of the saints at the destruction of Jerusalem; they were not only saved from that ruin, but delivered from the wrath of their most implacable enemies. The Ethiopic version renders it, “and the day of mercy shall come from the presence of the Lord”, repenting sinners find mercy; and a discovery of pardon is a time of mercy; and when God grants this, he affords his presence. The Jews call the world to come a time of refreshment; and say <sup>f145</sup>,

“better is one hour *j wr trwq l ç*, “of refreshment”, in the world to come, than the whole life of this world.”

**Ver. 20.** *And he shall send Jesus Christ*, etc.] Or “that he may send Jesus Christ”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it: not in person, for this regards neither his first, nor his second coming, both which might be terrible to the awakened Jews; the former, because he had been sent, and was come, and was gone again; and therefore might fear there was no hope for them, who had denied him, and crucified him; the latter, because they might conclude he would be sent, and come to take vengeance on them, when they should look upon him whom they had pierced with horror and trembling; but here it regards his being sent, and his coming in the ministration of the word, and by his Spirit, to the comfort of their souls:

*which before was preached unto you*; in the writings of the Old Testament, in the books of Moses, and of the Prophets, (<sup><41R2></sup>Acts 3:22,24) or, as it is read in the Alexandrian copy, and in other copies, and in the Complutensian edition, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions, who was “predetermined” or “prepared for you”; that is, in the purposes, council, and covenant of God. The Ethiopic version reads, “whom he before anointed”; to be prophet, priest, and King; and from each of these considerations much comfort might be drawn by sensible sinners.

**Ver. 21.** *Whom the heaven must receive*, etc.] Hold and retain in his human nature; and which does not at all hinder or confront his mission, and coming to his people, in the mean while, in a spiritual way and manner, to their joy and comfort: or, “who must receive heaven”; the kingdom, and glory, and reign there:

*until the times of the restitution of all things*: not of all created beings to their original estate, which there is no reason to believe ever will be; or of the churches of Christ to purity of doctrine, discipline, and conversation, which is to be hoped for, and will be in the spiritual reign of Christ; but of the accomplishment of all promises and prophecies concerning the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, and so the gathering in all the elect of God; and concerning all the glorious things spoken of the church of Christ in the latter day; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

*which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began*: ever since the world was, God has had more or less holy

men, set apart and sanctified by him, and on whom he bestowed the spirit of prophecy; and by the mouth of everyone of these he has spoken one thing or another concerning his church and people, and the filling up of the number of them, or the gathering of them all in; and till this is done, Christ will remain in heaven and reign there: and this sense is further confirmed by the Syriac and Arabic versions, the former rendering the words, “until the filling or fulfilling of the times of all things”; and the latter, “until the times which will confirm the perfection of all the words which God hath spoken”, etc. and from the sense of the word used, which some lexicographers explain by *τελειωσις*, “perfection” or “fulfilling”.

**Ver. 22.** *For Moses truly said unto the fathers*, etc.] The Jewish fathers, the Israelites in the times of Moses. The Ethiopic version reads, “our fathers”. This phrase, “unto the fathers”, is left out in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, and in the Alexandrian copy: the passages referred to are in (<sup>45815</sup>Deuteronomy 18:15,19)

*a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you*: which is not to be understood of a succession of prophets, as some of the Jewish writers <sup>f146</sup> think; for the Jews never had a constant succession of prophets, and those they had, were not like to Moses: but of a single prophet, and so the Targums or Onkelos and Jonathan understood it; but not to be applied to Joshua, as some <sup>f147</sup>, or to Jeremiah <sup>f148</sup> as others, or to David <sup>f149</sup>; but to the Messiah, and which is the Lord Jesus Christ, who answers to all the characters: he was a prophet in every sense, who brought a revelation of the divine will, taught the way, and explained the Scriptures of truth perfectly, and foretold things to come; he was raised up by the Lord God of Israel, and was anointed by his Spirit, and sent by him, and that to the people of the Jews, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; he was the minister of the circumcision:

*of your brethren*; in the Hebrew text in (<sup>45815</sup>Deuteronomy 18:15) it is also said, “out of the midst of thee”; but as these phrases are synonymous, the apostle here only retains one of them, which suggests that this prophet, the Messiah, should be of Jewish extract; as Jesus was, of the seed of David, and a son of Abraham:

*like unto me*; that is, to Moses, who is, the person speaking, between whom and Christ there is an agreement; the law was given by Moses, and the Gospel came by Christ; Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and Christ is the Mediator between God and men; Moses,

under God, was an instrument of redeeming the people of Israel out of Egypt, and Christ, he is the Redeemer of his people from sin, Satan, and the law, and all their enemies: the Jews <sup>f150</sup> have a common saying,

“as was the first Redeemer, so shall be the last Redeemer;”

and they moreover observe <sup>f151</sup>, that,

“as Israel was redeemed in the month Nisan, so they shall be redeemed in the month Nisan;”

in the future redemption by the Messiah: let the Jews abide by this; the Messiah Jesus suffered in the month Nisan, and obtained eternal redemption for his people: one of their <sup>f152</sup> writers has a notion, that when the Messiah comes, there will be the same disposition of the constellations, as when Moses brought the people out of Egypt, and gave them the law; and that the conjunction will be of Jupiter and Saturn, in the constellation Pisces: there was likewise between Moses and Christ, an agreement in the miracles they wrought, and in other things:

*him shall ye hear in all things, whatsoever he shall say unto you:* all his doctrines are to be believed, embraced, and professed; and all his commands are to be obeyed, and all his ordinances submitted to; and this is hearing, or hearkening, to him in all things, delivered or enjoined by him.

**Ver. 23.** *And it shall come to pass, that every soul,* etc.] Every person, man or woman:

*which will not hear that prophet;* neither believe what he says, nor do what he commands; or as it is in (<sup>f153</sup>Deuteronomy 18:19) “will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name”: for he that hears not him, hearkens not to God, in whose name he speaks, and whose word he delivers,

*shall be destroyed from among the people;* in the Hebrew text it is, “I will require it of him”; the Hebrew word, **wm** [ **m**, there used, by having different points, may be rendered “of him”, or “from his people”, which seems to be the reason of this difference: and requiring often intends punishment, or a cutting off; or as Aben Ezra explains it here,

“death by the hand of heaven;”



that is, immediate destruction from God; and so Maimonides says<sup>f153</sup>, he that transgresses the words of that prophet, is guilty of death by the hand of heaven; and which was remarkably fulfilled in the Jewish nation, for their rejection of Jesus as the true Messiah, and that prophet.

**Ver. 24.** *Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel*, etc.] Who was, as the Jews call him, **μyaybn l ç`br**, “the master of the prophets”<sup>f154</sup>; and they say, that Samuel the prophet is **ˆwçarh aybnh**, “the first prophet” in the chain of the Kabbala<sup>f155</sup>; and therefore is here particularly mentioned, as at the head of the prophets, and next to Moses; there being but very few prophets between him and Moses, when there were many after him; and in his days, the schools of the prophets were set up: now not only Moses spoke of Christ, but all the prophets from the time of Samuel; in the books that bear his name, stands a famous prophecy concerning Christ, (~~1073~~2 Samuel 7:13,14,16).

*And those that follow after*; in order, as David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.

*and as many as have spoken*; anything by way of prophecy:

*have likewise foretold of these days*; of the days of the Messiah, of his person, office, incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, the pouring down of the Spirit, the times of refreshing, the Gospel dispensation, the conversion of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, and the gathering in all the elect of God.

**Ver. 25.** *Ye are the children of the prophets*, etc.] Of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are called prophets, (~~1945~~Psalm 105:15) being lineally and naturally descended from them; to them belonged the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, and the promises of him; they were heirs of them;

*and of the covenant which God made with our fathers*; so the phrase **tyrb ynb**, “children of the covenant”, is used by the Jews, as peculiar to themselves; (See Gill on “~~4108~~Romans 9:8”) and so **ˆyyrwa rb**, “a son of the law”<sup>f156</sup>, is also used by them in a like sense; the law, the covenant, and the promises, externally belonging to them:

*saying unto Abraham*, (~~1028~~Genesis 22:18)

*and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed*; meaning the Messiah, that sprung from him, and is called the son of Abraham; in whom, not only all Abraham's spiritual seed among the Jews, or the elect of God in that nation, and who were truly the children of Abraham, and of the promise, but even all the chosen of God among the Gentiles, in every nation, and of every kindred and family among them, are blessed in Christ, with all spiritual blessings; with peace, pardon, righteousness, redemption, and salvation: for this is not a form of blessing the Gentiles would use, when they blessed themselves, or others; saying, God bless thee, as he blessed Abraham's seed; for no one instance can be produced, when the Gentiles ever used such a form of blessing as this; but a prophecy of the calling of the Gentiles by the Messiah, and of their being blessed in him; (see <sup><41816></sup>Galatians 3:16) and though this sense is departed from by modern Jews, it was what the ancient synagogue gave into <sup>f157</sup>.

**Ver. 26.** *Unto you first, God having raised his Son Jesus*, etc.] Which may be understood, either of the incarnation of Christ, and his exhibition in the flesh; which is sometimes expressed by raising him up, and is no other than the mission, or manifestation of him in human nature, as in (<sup><41169></sup>Luke 1:69, <sup><41123></sup>Acts 13:23). Or of the resurrection of him from the dead, and the exaltation of him at the right hand of God:

*sent him to bless you*; in person, according to the former sense; for he was indeed sent only to the people of Israel, and to them he preached; many of whom were blessed with converting grace under his ministry; but according to the latter sense, and which seems most agreeable, he was sent in the ministry of the word, and came by his Spirit, first to the Jews, among whom the Gospel was first preached for a while, and was blessed to the conversion of many thousands among them, both in Judea, and in the nations of the world, where they were dispersed:

*in turning away everyone of you from his iniquities*; in this the blessing lay, and is rightly in our version ascribed to Christ, and to the power of his grace, in the ministration of the Gospel and not to themselves, as in many other versions; as the Syriac version, "if ye convert yourselves, and turn from your evils"; making it both their own act, and the condition of their being blessed; and the Arabic version likewise, "so that everyone of you departs from his wickedness"; but that work is Christ's, and this is the blessing of grace he himself bestows, and is a fruit of redemption by his blood, (<sup><41214></sup>Titus 2:14).

# CHAPTER 4

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 4

**Ver. 1.** *And as they spake unto the people*, etc.] For though only mention is made of Peter's preaching in the preceding chapter, yet doubtless John preached as well as he; either in turn, or to a part of the people at some distance: and this shows their diligence, faithfulness, and integrity, in the ministration of the word; and it is recorded to their honour, that whilst they were about their master's business, and discharging the duty of their office, *the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them*; by agreement, with great violence, and at unawares: the "priests" might be those who kept the watch in the temple; for

"in three places the priests kept watch, in the house of the sanctuary; in the house of Abtines, in the house of Nitsots, and in the house of Moked, and the Levites in one and twenty places <sup>f158</sup>."

And it now being eventide, they might be about to take their stands; "and the captain of the temple" might be he, whom they call, **tyb rh çya**, "the man of the mountain of the house"; who was **rç**, a ruler, or governor, and **hnwmm**, a president over all the wards <sup>f159</sup>; he is sometimes called **rmçm çar**, "the head of the ward" <sup>f160</sup>; and of him it is said <sup>f161</sup>,

"the man of the mountain of the house goes his round through every ward, with burning torches before him; and every ward that does not stand (is not on his feet), the man of the mountain of the house, says to him, peace be to thee; and if he observes that he is asleep, he strikes him with his staff, and he has power to burn his garments."

The Vulgate Latin and the Oriental versions read in the plural number, as in (see Gill on "~~4224~~ Luke 22:4"), (see Gill on "~~4250~~ Luke 22:52"). The Sadducees were a sect among the Jews, that denied the resurrection of the dead; of their rise, name, and tenets, (See Gill on "~~4187~~ Matthew 3:7").

**Ver. 2.** *Being grieved that they taught the people*, etc.] Any doctrine, and especially that which follows, and which particularly gave uneasiness to the Sadducees, they were exceedingly distressed by it; it pained them to the very heart, and they were filled with wrath and indignation:

*and preached through, or in Jesus, the resurrection of the dead*; they not only preached the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead in general, but gave an instance and proof of it in the resurrection of Christ, affirming that he was risen from the dead; and they also preached up the resurrection of the dead in his name, and asserted, that he would be the author of it, and it would be erected by his power: so that their doctrine was equally disagreeable to the Pharisees and Sadducees; to the Sadducees, who denied that there was, or would be any resurrection of the dead; and to the Pharisees, who though they believed it, yet were highly offended that it should be said, that Jesus was risen from the dead; and that the general resurrection of the dead should be attributed to him.

**Ver. 3.** *And they laid hands on them*, etc.] The Arabic version renders it, “on both”; on Peter and John; seized them by force, and drew them out of the temple:

*and put them in hold unto the next day*; not in the common public prison, as in (~~445B~~ Acts 5:18) but they put them into the hands, and under the care and custody of a set of men, to keep and guard them; that they might not go away, until they had an opportunity of bringing them before the sanhedrim, to be examined and punished by them:

*for it was now eventide*; it was at the ninth hour, or about three o’clock in the afternoon, when Peter and John went up to the temple, where they healed the lame man; after which, both of them preached to the people; so that it must now be evening; at least, as the Syriac version renders it, “the evening was near”, or was drawing on.

**Ver. 4.** *Howbeit, many of them which heard the word*, etc.] The doctrine of the Gospel, preached by Peter and John:

*believed*; the report of it, and in Christ, as risen from the dead, which was the sum and substance of it: and this they did, notwithstanding the opposition made by the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, and the violence they used to the apostles; for though they kept their persons in hold, they could not stop the free course of the word, which ran and was glorified:

*and the number of the men was about five thousand*; or “was five thousand”, as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read; that is the number, not of the hearers, but “of them that believed”, was so many; and so read the Arabic and Ethiopic versions: there were so many persons converted at this time; for this number does not include the three thousand that were converted under the first sermon, but regards those who now became true believers, and were added to the church; so that there were now eight thousand persons added to it; a great increase indeed! now had Christ the dew of his youth, and now were these fishermen fishers of men indeed: that our Lord’s feeding five thousand men with five barley loaves and two fishes, should have any regard to the conversion of these five thousand men, is but a conceit.

**Ver. 5.** *And it came to pass on the morrow*, etc.] The disciples being kept in custody all night:

*that their rulers, and elders, and Scribes*; that is, their ecclesiastical rulers; the chief priests, who, with the Scribes, and elders of the people, made up the great council at Jerusalem, consisting of seventy one persons, so they are called in (<sup>ARB</sup>Matthew 26:3,57 27:1 <sup>ARB</sup>Mark 14:53 15:1).

**Ver. 6.** *And Annas the high priest*, etc.] So called, either because he had been an high priest, though he was not now, but Caiaphas his son-in-law; or because he was the Sagan of the high priest, and had all the other priests under his government; and is mentioned first, because he was father-in-law to Caiaphas; (see Gill on “<sup>ARB</sup>Luke 3:2”) he could not be called so, because he was *ayçn*, “prince”, or president of the council; for not he, but Gamaliel, was president at this time. And

*Caiaphas*; who was properly high priest, and continued so for three years after the death of Christ:

*and John*; who is thought by Dr. Lightfoot to be the same with Jochanan, or John ben Zaccai; a famous Jewish Rabbi, who lived at this time, and until, and after the destruction of Jerusalem: this Rabbi was *ḥk*, “a priest”<sup>f162</sup>, as this John was, of the kindred of the high priest; he lived also at Jerusalem; for it is said of him<sup>f163</sup>, that he sat in the shadow of the temple, and expounded all the whole day; and a very remarkable story is told of him, which happened just about this time<sup>f164</sup>; which is, that

“forty years before the destruction of the temple — the doors of the temple opened of themselves, when Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai reproved them, saying, O temple, temple, wherefore dost thou fright thyself? I know thee, that thine end shall be, to be destroyed; for so prophesied of thee Zechariah, the son of Iddo, (~~310B~~ Zechariah 11:1). “Open thy doors, O Lebanon”, etc.”

The chief objection to him, as that learned writer observes, is, that he lived and died a Pharisee, whereas this John seems to have been a Sadducee; (see ~~4157~~ Acts 5:17). This puts me in mind of John the high priest, who ministered in the high priesthood fourscore years, and at last became a Sadducee <sup>f165</sup>: Beza’s ancient copy reads “Jonathan: and Alexander”; whose surname was Lysimachus, and had the title of “Alabarcha”; he was a very rich man <sup>f166</sup>: after Alexander the great had been at Jerusalem, this name became frequent among the Jews; and it is said <sup>f167</sup> to be promised him, and was fulfilled, that every son that was born to the priests that year he entered Jerusalem, should be called Alexander; and therefore it is no wonder to hear of an Alexander among the kindred of the high priest; frequent mention is made of *yrdnski a ybr*, “Rabbi Alexander”, in the Jewish writings <sup>f168</sup>:

*and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest*; by whose means they were become members of the sanhedrim:

*were gathered together at Jerusalem*; where the great council only sat, until the destruction of it; it seems by this, that some of the members of it lived in the country; it may be in some of the villages adjacent, where they might be easily and quickly sent for, upon any occasion, as they very likely now were; the Syriac version leaves out the words “at Jerusalem”.

**Ver. 7.** *And when they had set them in the midst*, etc.] Of the assembly, as the Ethiopic version adds; in the middle of the sanhedrim, which sat in a semicircular form; or as the Jews express it, as the half of a round corn floor, or as a half moon, and not in a perfect circle; because it was necessary that the contending parties, and the witnesses, might go in and speak before them all <sup>f169</sup>; so that those that were set before them, were placed in the middle of them: and here Peter and John were set; so the Arabic version renders it, “when they set both”: they sent for them out of the hold, or custody, where they had been all night, and ordered them to be brought before them, to be examined about their doctrine and practice:

*they asked, by what power, or by what name have ye done this?* they inquired of them, whether it was by a natural, or by a divine, or by a diabolical power, that they had wrought the cure upon the lame man? whether it was by the use of medicine, or by the help of magic art, and the assistance of the devil, which they were very ready to charge Christ and his disciples with? or whether they pretended to a divine and supernatural aid? and also what name they had made use of, and by whose authority they acted?

**Ver. 8.** *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost,* etc.] At that very instant, having received a fresh measure of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, besides what he had poured forth upon him at the day of Pentecost; so that he had great courage and presence of mind, and freedom of speech, as Christ had promised his disciples they should have, when they were brought before governors and magistrates, (~~1008~~ Matthew 10:18,19,30, ~~2214~~ Luke 21:14,15). The case was much altered with Peter, he who but a little while ago was frightened by a servant maid, now stands before the Jewish sanhedrim, with undaunted courage and resolution:

*and said unto them, ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel;* he addresses them in a very handsome manner, and gives them their proper titles as magistrates; which ought to be done by men and Christians; honour should be given, to whom honour is due: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, add “hear”, which seems very necessary; he called for audience, or desired to be heard a few words, in the defence of himself and fellow apostle, and in answer to their questions.

**Ver. 9.** *If we this day be examined of the good deed,* etc.] Or “seeing” we are; for it was not a matter of doubt, but a clear case, that they were brought into court, and were passing under an examination, about the cure of the lame man; which the apostle rightly calls a

*good deed,* it being done in faith, and to the glory of God, and for the good of the man; and hereby tacitly suggests, that they were dealt very hardly with, to be seized and kept in custody, and be called in question, for doing an action so beneficent and kind, as this was, which was

*done to the impotent man;* who could not help himself, nor get his bread any other way, than by begging:

*by what means he is made whole*; restored to perfect health, and the proper use of his limbs; that is, by what power, and in what name this was done; the answer is ready, and it is as follows.

**Ver. 10.** *Be it known unto you all*, etc.] The members of the sanhedrim:

*and to all the people of Israel*; who might hear of this affair; for the apostle was not ashamed of what he had done, nor of the person in whose name he had done it:

*that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth*; by calling, on that name, and by making use of it, and by the power and authority of Jesus Christ, who by way of contempt was called the

*Nazarene: whom ye crucified*; for though Pilate delivered him to be crucified, and the Roman soldiers did crucify him, yet this was at the request and instigation of the chief priests, Scribes, and elders; and therefore it is ascribed to them, who were bent upon his death; and no other would satisfy them, but the shameful and painful death of the cross:

*whom God raised from the dead*; of which the apostles were witnesses, having seen him and conversed with him after his resurrection; and this was the doctrine they were sent to publish, and for which they were apprehended and detained in custody; but this did not deter them from preaching it, no, not before the sanhedrim; which was an instance of great courage and faithfulness: and this is the rather mentioned; to show, that it was not by the name of one that was dead, but of one that was alive, that this cure was performed; as well as to observe to them, that their efforts against Christ were vain and fruitless:

*even by him doth this man stand here before you whole*; from whence it appears, as well as from (<sup>4018</sup>Acts 4:18) that the man that was healed, was now present: and either he was laid hold on, and detained in custody with the apostles, in hope to discover fraud if they could; or hearing that the apostles were before the sanhedrim, and examining on his account, might come of himself, in order to attest and prove the matter of fact, and to vindicate them.

**Ver. 11.** *This is the stone*, etc.] That is, this Jesus of Nazareth, by whose name the lame man was made whole, is that stone spoken of in (<sup>4180</sup>Psalm 118:22) by whom is meant the true Messiah, comparable to a stone, for his



strength and duration, and usefulness, as a foundation and corner stone, in the spiritual building of the church; and yet notwithstanding is the stone

*which was set at nought of you builders:* the priests, elders, and Scribes; who were fond of being called builders, but made miserable work of it; despising and rejecting the stone of Israel, and instead of him as a foundation, built themselves, and others, on the traditions of the elders, and their own righteousness: but though Christ was rejected by them, both in person and in doctrine, and was ignominiously treated, and at last put to death, yet he was raised from the dead, and exalted at the right hand of God; and is the stone,

*which is become the head of the corner;* or the chief corner stone, that adorns, strengthens, knits, and keeps together, the whole building; in which Jews and Gentiles, saints in all ages and places, even all the elect of God, are united together; (See Gill on “<sup>421D</sup>Matthew 21:42”).

**Ver. 12.** *Neither is there salvation in any other,* etc.] Meaning not corporeal healing, but spiritual and eternal salvation; the Syriac version renders it, neither is there **anqrwp**, “redemption in any other”: Christ is the only Saviour and Redeemer, who was promised and prophesied of as such; who has saved and redeemed his people from the law, sin, and Satan; nor is salvation to be sought and hoped for from any other; not in a man’s self, nor in any other creature, angels or men; not in and by his own works, and legal righteousness; not by obedience to the law of Moses, moral or ceremonial; nor by the light of nature, much less by an observance of the traditions of the elders:

*for there is none other name;* thing or person, be it ever so great, or whatever show of power and strength, of holiness and religion, it makes; as the name of kings, princes, and the great men in the world; or of ministers and preachers in the church; or even of Christians and believers, which may be only a name to live; none but the name of Jesus, his person, blood, and righteousness:

*under heaven:* throughout the whole earth, in all the nations and kingdoms of it; nor even in heaven itself, among all the mighty angels there, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; none but the Father and the Spirit, who are one with Christ: there is none but he

*given among men*; and he has been freely given by his Father, as an instance of his matchless love to the world; and also freely given by himself, to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people; and is freely preached among men, as the only Saviour of them; for there is no other,

*whereby we must be saved*: God resolved in his purposes and decrees, in his council and covenant, upon the salvation of his chosen people; and he appointed his Son to be the salvation of them, and determined he would save them by him, and by no other, and in no other way; wherefore, whoever are saved, must be saved by him, (see ~~2XIII~~ Hosea 1:7) the Arabic version adds, “unless by him only”.

**Ver. 13.** *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John*, etc.] With what courage and intrepidity they stood before them, the presence of mind they had, and the freedom of speech they used, as the word properly signifies: they observed their elocution, the justness of their diction, the propriety of their language, and the strength and nervousness of their reasoning; as well as their great resolution, constancy, and firmness of mind; not being afraid to profess the name of Christ, or to charge them with the murder of him; and that they seemed to be determined to abide by him, at all events; to assert him to be the true Messiah, though rejected by the Jewish builders; and that he was risen from the dead; and not only to ascribe unto him the miracle now wrought, but the salvation of men; and to declare, that there was none in any other but him: the Syriac version renders it, “when they heard the word of Simeon and John, which they spoke openly”: and freely, without any reserve: they answered readily to the question, that it was by the name of Jesus of Nazareth that they had done this miracle; they dealt freely with the Jewish sanhedrim, and told them in so many words, that they were the crucifiers of Christ, and the rejecters of that stone, which God had made the head of the corner, and that there was no salvation for them in any other: it appears from hence, that John spoke as well as Peter, though his words are not recorded:

*and perceived that they were unlearned ignorant men*; not by what they now said, but by what they heard and understood of them before: they were informed that they were “unlearned” men, or who did not understand letters; not but that they had learned their mother tongue, and could read the Scriptures; but they had not had a liberal education; they had not been brought up at the feet of any of the doctors, in any of the schools and universities of the Jews; they were not trained up in, and conversant with,

the nice distinctions, subtle argumentations, and decisions of the learned doctors, in the interpretation of the law of Moses, and the traditions of the elders: and understood that they were also “ignorant” men, **ιδιωται**, “idiots”, or private men; for men might be unlearned, and yet not be such; it seems the high priests themselves were sometimes unlearned men: hence, on the day of atonement,

“they used to read before him, in the order of the day, and say to him, Lord high priest, read thou with thine own mouth; perhaps thou hast forgot, or it may be, **tdml al**, “thou hast not learned”  
f170 „

The Jews have adopted the word here used into their language; and express by it, sometimes a man that is mean, abject, and contemptible: thus instead of “children of base men”, or “without a name”, the Targumist on (~~Job~~ Job 30:8) reads, **^yj wydh ynb**, “the children of idiots”, or “private men”: and in the Targum on (~~1 Samuel~~ 1 Samuel 18:23 24:14) it is used for one lightly esteemed, and comparable to a flea: it sometimes designs persons in a private life, though men of learning and knowledge, in distinction from those that are in office; so we read<sup>f171</sup>, that

“three kings, and four **twj wydh**, “private” persons, have no part in the world to come; the three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh; the four “idiots”, or private men, are Balaam, Doeg, Ahithophel, and Gehazi.”

And so a bench of idiots, or private men, is distinguished from a bench of authorized and approved judges<sup>f172</sup>; and sometimes the word is used of such, as are distinguished from doctors, or wise men; so when it is said<sup>f173</sup>,

“the command of plucking off the shoe, is done before three judges, and though the three are “idiots”;

the note of Maimonides upon it is,

“not wise men, but that know how to read the language,”

the Hebrew language: and such were the disciples, in every sense of the word; they were mean and abject, poor fishermen, men of no name and figure, that were in no office, and exalted station of life, nor versed in Jewish learning, but common private men: so that

*they marvelled*; the sanheddrim were astonished to hear them talk with so much fluency and pertinence:

*and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus*; looking wistly upon them, they knew them again, and remembered that; they were persons that were the disciples of Jesus, and whom they had seen in company with him; not in the high priest's palace, when Jesus was arraigned, examined, and condemned there; though Peter, and some think John was there at that time, yet not to be observed and taken notice of by the sanheddrim; but in the temple where Jesus taught, and where the chief priests, Scribes, and elders came, and disputed with him about his authority, and cavilled at him, (<sup>f175</sup>Matthew 21:15,23).

**Ver. 14.** *And beholding the man which was healed*, etc.] Who either was taken into custody, and brought before the sanheddrim, along with the apostles; or rather, who came here of his own accord to be witness for them: for he was

*standing with them*; in company with them, and close by them, and on their side; and so they could, and did point and appeal unto him, who was ready to justify, that it was not by the use of medicine, or of magic art, or in the name of Satan or Beelzebub, but by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, that his cure was wrought:

*they could say nothing against it*; they could not gainsay the fact, for the man was before them, perfectly well, whom they personally knew, by his lying so long at the gate of the temple; they knew that he had been lame from his mother's womb, who was now above forty years of age; and they could say nothing against the manner of his cure, who was present to attest it; nor could they say anything against them; the apostles, as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; they could not blame them for doing it, it being a good deed, nor charge them with fraud and imposture.

**Ver. 15.** *But when they had commanded them*, etc.] That is, when the sanheddrim had ordered the apostles; or "commanded that both", as the Arabic version reads, both Peter and John; and, it may be, the man that was healed too:

*to go aside out of the council*; or place where the council, or sanheddrim sat; which, whether it was in the chamber "Gazith", in the temple where they used to sit <sup>f174</sup>, or in the shops, or in the city, whither they removed, is not certain. We are told <sup>f175</sup>, that

“the sanhedrim removed from the chamber Gazith, to the shops, and from the shops to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Jabneh;”

that is, after the destruction of the city. And the first remove was much about this time; for it is said <sup>f176</sup>, that

“forty years before the destruction of the temple, the sanhedrim removed, and sat in the shops.”

Not in the shops where things were sold for the use of the temple, but in a court adjoining to them, which took its name from them.

*They conferred among themselves*; what was proper to be done, the apostles being withdrawn.

**Ver. 16.** *Saying, what shall we do to these men?* etc.] Whether they should punish them by scourging them, or detain them longer in custody, or commit them to prison, or dismiss them:

*for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them*: they were convicted that a miracle was wrought; that it was a clear case, a well known thing, of which there was no room to doubt, and that it was done by the apostles; but this was not all the difficulty, had it been a thing only within their knowledge, and which they could have concealed, it would have given them no uneasiness; but, as they observe,

*it is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem*: for the man having been so long lame, and had lain so long at the temple, where all the inhabitants frequently went, he was known and took notice of by them; and his cure being wrought so openly, and in such a miraculous way, it was the common talk of the city: so that there was no smothering it:

*and we cannot deny it*; the fact is so certain and evident; nor hide it, as the Ethiopic version renders it, it being so notorious and public.

**Ver. 17.** *But that it spread no further among the people*, etc.] Meaning not in Jerusalem; for the fame of this miracle was spread among all the inhabitants of that city; but in other parts of the nation:

*let us straitly threaten them*; or “in threatening threaten them”; that is, severely threaten them with imprisonment, or with the scourging of forty stripes save one, or with death itself.

*That they speak henceforth to no man in this name*; which through indignation and contempt they do not mention, but mean the name of Jesus: and their sense is, that the apostles, from this time forward, should not teach, or preach the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, or any other doctrine of the Gospel, in the name of Jesus, to any man, Jew or Gentile; or perform any miracle in his name, or call upon his name, and make use of it, for the healing of any person, or doing any miraculous work. The Ethiopic version is a very odd one, and quite contrary to the sense of the sanhedrim, “that they should not speak any more but in the name of the man Jesus”.

**Ver. 18.** *And they called them*, etc.] From the apartment where they were; or ordered their servants to call them in to them:

*and commanded them not to speak at all*; either privately or publicly, in the ministry of the word, or in working of miracles, in the city, or in the country:

*nor teach in the name of Jesus*; any doctrine whatever; or “the name of Jesus”, as the Arabic version reads; that is, the doctrine of Jesus, that which respects his person, his carnation, his offices, his sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead.

**Ver. 19.** *But Peter and John answered and said unto them*, etc.] With great boldness and courage, and without any fear of man, but in the true fear of God

*whether it be right in the sight of God*; who is omniscient, and sees, and knows all things, all the actions of men, and the springs of them; who is holy, just, and true, and sits and judges among the gods, that which is right:

*to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye*: it is not denied that magistrates are to be hearkened to, and obeyed: but not more than God, or in things that are contrary to his nature, will, law, honour, and glory: whatever is agreeable to the law and will of God, commanded by magistrates, should be attended to, and cheerfully obeyed; but what is not should be disregarded, whatever follows upon it: and this was so just and reasonable, that the apostles appeal to the sanhedrim, or council itself, to determine.

**Ver. 20.** *For we cannot but speak*, etc.] It was not physically, but morally impossible; or it was not lawful, and therefore they would not speak any other, and they could not avoid speaking, say they,

*the things which we have seen and heard*; as the miracles and doctrines of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, of which they were eye and ear witnesses. This shows their great fidelity and integrity, their inviolable attachment to Christ, and their fearlessness of the displeasure and wrath of men.

**Ver. 21.** *So when they had further threatened them*, etc.] Either repeated the same, as before; or added some more severe ones, to terrify them, if possible; not being able to answer their arguments, or invalidate their reasoning:

*they let them go*; they did not acquit them as innocent persons, but dismissed them from custody:

*finding nothing how they might punish them*; not being able, though they sought most diligently for it, to fix anything upon them, which might be a cause, or occasion, or pretence of inflicting any punishment upon them:

*because of the people*: they would not have stuck at the injustice of it, or have been under any concern about offending God; but they were afraid of the people, of losing their credit among them, and lest they should rise up against them, and on the side of the apostles:

*for all men glorified God for that which was done*; they saw the hand of God in it, and ascribed it to his mercy, goodness, and power, and gave him the glory of it; and therefore to punish the instruments of so great and good a work, would have been esteemed barbarous and wicked, and would have been highly resented by them; since, on the contrary, they judged them worthy of great honour and respect.

**Ver. 22.** *For the man was above forty years old*, etc.] So that the miracle was the greater, that a man born lame, and who had been so above forty years, should have a cure; and he was the more known to the people, and his testimony met with more credit:

*on whom this miracle of healing was showed*; both for the good of men, for the glory of God, and for the confirmation of the Gospel of Christ.

**Ver. 23.** *And being let go*, etc.] Or dismissed from custody, by the order of the sanhedrim:

*they went to their own company*; or “to their own men”, as the Ethiopic version reads; or “to their own brethren”, as the Syriac; either to the other ten apostles; or to the hundred and twenty, who first met together; or the whole multitude of them that believed, (~~40E~~Acts 4:32) the eight thousand that had been added to them, the whole church. Saints love to be together, and delight in the company of each other; and especially when they have anything to communicate, that may be for their mutual good, or for the honour of God:

*and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them*; what commands and injunctions they had lain upon them, and what threatenings they had given them, and, no doubt likewise, what answers they had returned to them.

**Ver. 24.** *And when they heard that*, etc.] The whole of the report the apostles made; and which they heard with patience, and without making any unworthy reflections upon the sanhedrim; and being, on the one hand, not over much terrified, and cast down, and, on the other hand, not sluggish, careless, and secure; they betake themselves, not to plots, conspiracies, and seditions; nor to arms to defend and avenge themselves, though their numbers were large; but to prayer, that they might not be deterred by threatenings, from speaking boldly the word of the Lord:

*they lift up their voice to God with one accord*; being inspired by the Holy Ghost, they not only agreed in the matter of their petitions, which agreement is of great avail with God; for whatever two or more agree in to ask of God, shall be given to them; but also in the very words which were vocally expressed by them, and that in a very loud and sonorous way, to signify the vehemency and ardour of their minds and affections:

*and said, Lord, thou art God*; or, as in one of Beza’s copies, “Lord our God”; or, as in the Ethiopic version, “Lord, thou art our God”; addressing God, the Father of Christ, as appears from (~~40E~~Acts 4:27) as their own God, their covenant God and Father in Christ, from whom they might hope for help, and in whom they might expect safety, and every supply of grace:

*which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is*; and which is a full proof of the omnipotence of God; an attribute of singular use to the saints in distressed circumstances; for what is it he



cannot do, who made all things that are? and what is it he will not do for his saints, for the accomplishment of his purposes, the making good of his covenant and promises, the fulfilment of prophecies; the good of his people, and the glory of his name?

**Ver. 25.** *Who by the mouth of thy servant David has said*, etc.] In (<sup><9111></sup>Psalm 2:1,2) from whence we learn, that that psalm, though it is without a title, and does not bear David's name, yet is one of his and so Kimchi says, that David composed it at the beginning of his reign; though Aben Ezra thinks, that it was composed by one of the singers for him, on the day he was anointed; yet he afterwards seems to doubt of it, and on (<sup><9111></sup>Psalm 2:7) says, they are the words of David, or the words of the singer. And certain it is, that in the apostles' time this psalm was reckoned to be David's by the Jews in common; and therefore they speak of it as such: and it was the sense of the ancient doctors of the synagogue, that this psalm is to be understood of the Messiah. Jarchi says, our Rabbins expound the business (of this psalm) concerning the King Messiah; and Kimchi observes, that there are some that interpret this psalm of Gog and Magog<sup>f177</sup>, and the Messiah, or anointed, that is the King Messiah; though one of these writers was of opinion, that it is best to understand it of David himself; and Aben Ezra says, that it was composed either for David, or for the Messiah, and to understand it of the Messiah, the thing is more clear. The verses (<sup><9111></sup>Psalm 2:7,8) are particularly applied to the Messiah in some of their most ancient writings<sup>f178</sup>, and also in modern ones<sup>f179</sup>, as is (<sup><9111></sup>Psalm 2:2) to Messiah ben Joseph<sup>f180</sup>: and indeed the whole psalm belongs to the Messiah, as appears from the express mention of him, and the vain attempts of the kings of the earth against him; from the decree and resolution of God to make and declare him king of Zion, notwithstanding their utmost efforts; from his having the Gentiles for his inheritance, which is true of no other; and especially from that reverence, adoration, and worship, which were to be given to him, and that trust and confidence to be placed in him, which can by no means agree with David, nor with any mere creature. The Syriac version reads, "who in the Holy Ghost, by the mouth", etc. and so read Beza's most ancient copy, and five other manuscripts of his; and the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, read, "who in the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David", etc. and the Alexandrian copy, but does not seem to be a genuine reading; since the Jews were not used to call David, but Abraham, their father; nor is it, with

propriety, expressed, that God the Father said in, or by the Spirit, what follows,

*why did the Heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?* that is, the Gentiles, and the people of the Jews, Pilate, and his council, with the Roman soldiers, and the Jewish sanhedrim, with the common people; who raged against Christ, seized him in a furious manner, led him as a malefactor, and hurried him from bar to bar, in a tumultuous way, and with great noise and clamour urged the crucifixion of him; nor did their rage cease until they had put him to death: yet it was a vain thing in them to imagine he should be held under the power of death; or that this would put a stop to the spread of his doctrine, and the enlargement of his kingdom and interest; since he rose from the dead, as a triumphant conqueror, over all his enemies, and pouring forth his Spirit, in an extraordinary way, he spread his Gospel, and his glory throughout the earth.

**Ver. 26.** *The kings of the earth stood up*, etc.] Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, sometimes called a king, (<sup>4064</sup>Mark 6:14) and Pilate the Roman governor, who represented his master Caesar; these stood, or rose up in an hostile manner, and set themselves against, and opposed themselves to the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth:

*and the rulers were gathered together*; the Jewish rulers, Annas, Caiaphas, and the rest of the members of the sanhedrim, who met together more than once; and particularly at the high priest's palace, to consult how they should take Jesus and put him to death; and who also gathered together at the same place, when he was taken, to arraign, examine, and condemn him. And this opposition, and these conspiracies and consultations, were

*against the Lord*: Jehovah, the Father of Christ, who sent him, and anointed him; so that what was done against Christ, was done against the Lord, their views and designs, their interest and glory, being the same:

*and against his Christ*; or anointed one, who was anointed by him, with the Holy Ghost, from his birth, and at his baptism, to be prophet, priest, and King.

**Ver. 27.** *For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus*, etc.] This is the interpretation of the above passages in (<sup>4000</sup>Psalm 2:1,2) and the application of them to Jesus; who is called the "child" of God, because the human nature of Christ was taken into union with the second person, who is the Son of God: unless the word should rather be rendered "servant", as it is in

(<sup><40C5></sup>Acts 4:25) and which is a character that belongs to Christ, and is often given him as Mediator, who, as such, is God's righteous servant; and he is called "holy", because he was so in his conception and birth, and in his life and conversation, being free both from original sin, and actual transgression; and which is an aggravation of the sin and guilt of these men, that they should rise up, and gather together against him; and yet it was a clear case, a notorious fact, a certain truth, that could not be denied: and for the further aggravation of their crime, as well as for the sake of explaining the phrase "his, Christ", it is added,

*whom thou hast anointed*; with the oil of gladness, above his fellows. Christ was, in some sense, anointed to be prophet, priest, and King, from eternity, being so early set up as Mediator, or called unto, and invested with that office; (see <sup><31K2></sup>Proverbs 8:22, 2:6) and he was anointed in time, both at his incarnation and baptism, having the Spirit without measure given unto him, which is that anointing, that teacheth all things.

*Both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.* This Herod was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the great, and who beheaded John the Baptist; and Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea, at the time of Christ's death; the Gentiles were those of Pilate's council, and the Roman soldiers;

*and the people of Israel,* were the Jews, both the rulers, and the common people; the Syriac version renders it, "the synagogue of Israel": and these, though they were of different nations, and of different interests, yea enemies to one another, as the Jews and Gentiles in general were; and as were Herod and Pontius Pilate in particular; yet all gathered, consented, and agreed together to mock, scourge, and crucify this innocent and holy person. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions add, "in this city"; and so the above copies of Beza's, and others; meaning, in the city of Jerusalem, where the apostles now were, and where the above persons met together, and from whence a prophet could only perish. The Alexandrian copy reads, "in this thy city": which was called the city of God, and the holy city; and yet in this was this wicked convention, and all this wickedness done.

**Ver. 28.** *For to do whatsoever thy hand,* etc.] It was not the end of their gathering together against Christ, or it was not their intention and design, to fulfil the purposes and decrees of God, but to fulfil their own lusts, and satiate their rage and malice against him; but it was so in the event,

according to the wise disposal of providence, that by their gathering together, by their consultations and conspiracies, they brought about what God in his everlasting council had decreed. By “the hand” of the Lord here is not meant, the grace and favour of God; or the power and providence of God; or his word of precept, his revealed will; but his secret will, the counsel of his will, the hidden purpose of his heart, the wise consultation of his mind, which is formed according to his infinite wisdom: so in (~~1049~~2 Samuel 14:19) it is said, “is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?” that is, the head of Joab, the wise counsel of Joab; and so the Jewish writers interpret it, **wṭx** [ , “his counsel”<sup>f181</sup> : and so the word is explained here immediately; for it follows,

*and thy counsel determined before to be done*: God’s decrees are from eternity; there is nothing comes to pass in time but what he has beforetime determined should be done, either by effecting it himself, or doing it by others, or suffering it to be done, as in the case here. Whatever was done to Christ, either by Jews or Gentiles, by Herod or Pontius Pilate, was according to the secret will of God, the covenant he made with Christ, and the council of peace that was between them both: what they wickedly did, God designed for good, and hereby brought about the redemption and salvation of his people: this neither makes God the author of sin, nor excuses the sinful actions of men, or infringes the liberty of their wills in acting.

**Ver. 29.** *And now, Lord, behold their threatenings*, etc.] Meaning not with his eye of omniscience, which he could not but do; but that he would so take notice of them, as in his providence to rebuke them for them, or restrain them, or make them fearless of them:

*and grant unto thy servants*; the apostles, and all the ministers of the word, who are the servants of the most high God, and who serve him in the Gospel of his Son, with great cheerfulness and faithfulness:

*that with all boldness they may speak thy word*; and not their own, or another’s; the Gospel, which is God’s speech, or a word, a message of grace and mercy from him to sinful creatures. The request of the whole church is, that the ministers of the word might not be intimidated by the menaces of the sanhedrim; but go on to declare it with all freedom of expression, with all boldness, courage, and intrepidity of mind, and all openness and faithfulness, and in the most public manner. And such a

petition shows, that as it is gift of God to speak his word, or preach his Gospel, so it also is, to speak it freely, boldly, and faithfully, as it should be spoken.

**Ver. 30.** *By stretching forth thine hand to heal*, etc.] That is, by exerting his power in healing sicknesses, diseases, and lameness, as in the above instance, by the hands of the apostles; which, as it would be contrary to the schemes of the Jewish sanhedrim, and would confirm the doctrines of the Gospel; so it would animate the preachers of the word to preach it with more readiness, cheerfulness, and firmness of mind;

*and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus*; as had been done already, and by whose name particularly the lame man at the temple had received a cure, and in whose name the sanhedrim had forbid the apostles to preach, or to make use of it, in doing any other miracle.

**Ver. 31.** *And when they had prayed*, etc.] Either while they were praying, or as soon as they had done; for sometimes, as here, prayer is immediately heard, and an answer is returned, whilst the saints are speaking, or as soon as prayer is ended:

*the place was shaken where they were assembled together*; which, whether it was a private house, or the temple, is not certain: the latter seems more probable, because their number was so great, that no private house could hold them; and since this was the place where they used to assemble; this was now shaken with a rushing mighty wind, as on the day of Pentecost, and was a symbol of the divine presence, and a token that their prayers were heard, and an emblem of the shaking of the world by the ministry of the apostles:

*and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost*; with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, even with extraordinary ones, such as speaking with divers tongues, as before on the day of Pentecost; (see ~~Act~~ Acts 2:4) and this was the case not only of the apostles, but of the other ministers of the word, and it may be of the whole church:

*and they spoke the word of God with all boldness*; that is, the apostles, and preachers of the Gospel, spoke it with great freedom, and without fear, not only privately, in their community, but publicly, in the temple: this was what was particularly prayed for, and in which they had a remarkable answer.

**Ver. 32.** *And the multitude of them that believed,* etc.] The Gospel, and in Christ, the substance of it; and a multitude they were, for they were now about eight thousand persons. And though their number was so great, they

*were of one heart and of one soul;* there was an entire consent and agreement in doctrine, in matters of faith they were all of one mind and judgment, and there was a perfect harmony in their practice, they all performed the same duties, and observed the same commands and ordinances; and all pursued the same interest, and had the same ends and views; and there was a strict union of their affections to each other; their souls were knit to one another; so that there was, but as it were, one soul in this large body of Christians. Aristotle, being asked what a friend was, answered, one soul dwelling in two bodies<sup>f182</sup>: and so the Jews say, it is fit and proper that lovers or friends should be *dj a çyak dj a bl b*, “of one heart, as one man”<sup>f183</sup>; and such friends and hearty lovers were these.

*Neither said any of them, that ought of the things which he possessed was his own;* though he had a peculiar right unto them, yet he did not claim that right, nor insist on it, nor so much as speak of it, nor make use of his substance as if it was his own, reserving it for himself, or even disposing of it himself; but exposed it to the free use of the whole body, to enjoy it equally with himself:

*but they had all things common;* which was what they were not obliged to, but it was a free and voluntary action of their own, and so is not binding on others; nor indeed is their practice to be imitated, in the direct manner in which they did it, for their case was peculiar. They were not only every day liable to persecutions and to have their possessions seized, and their goods confiscated; but they also knew, that in process of time, Jerusalem would be destroyed, and they could not tell how soon; and therefore judged it right to sell off their possessions, and throw the money into one common stock, for their mutual support, and for the carrying on the common cause of Christ.

**Ver. 33.** *And with great power,* etc.] Either in a very powerful way, with great fervency of spirit, and ardour of mind, and uncommon zeal; or with great efficacy on the souls of men; or with many miracles, and powerful operations in healing the sick, casting out devils, etc.

*gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus;* which they were chosen to be witnesses, and were eyewitnesses of; and which is a

fundamental article of the Gospel, and was what the Sadducees were particularly disturbed at, and on account of which they forbade them to preach any more in Christ's name.

*And great grace was upon them all*; not only upon the apostles and ministers, but upon the whole church: and which may be understood either of the large gifts of the Spirit of God, which were poured out upon them, and plentifully bestowed on them; or of the gracious protection of God over them, preserving them from the rage and malice of men; or of that grace and favour which they had among thee people in common; or of that charity, liberality and beneficence, which were among them, which sense is confirmed by what follows; though it may be all these senses may be taken in.

**Ver. 34.** *Neither was there any among them that lacked*, etc.] Bread to eat, or clothes to wear, or any of the necessaries of life; which shows their great charity, and gives a reason why they were in so much favour with the people, because they took so much care of their poor; and this flowed from the grace of God bestowed upon them:

*for as many as were possessors of lands and houses*; or “vineyards”, as the Ethiopic version reads, whether in Jerusalem or elsewhere;

*sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold*; whether lands, houses, or vineyards.

**Ver. 35.** *And laid them down at the apostles' feet*, etc.] Showing great veneration and respect to the apostles, and a sort of neglect and contempt of their worldly substance; and signifying that they entirely delivered them to the apostles, and subjected them to their disposal:

*and distribution was made unto every man, according as he had need*; though they had all things in common, yet there was an order observed; a man might not go to the common stock and take out of it what he would; but as all was committed to the care of the apostles, and was in their power; the distribution was made by them, to every man, to the original proprietors, as well as to others, and that not as much as a man would have, or he might crave; but as much as he needed, for the present, of which the apostles were the judges.

**Ver. 36.** *And Joses*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read “Joseph”, and so do Beza's most ancient copy, and two of his



manuscripts, and the Alexandrian copy, and others; for “Jose”, or “Joses”, is only an abbreviation or contraction of “Joseph”; though according to others it is the same with “Josiah”: there is one of this name, who was the sort of Alphaeus, and brother to two of the apostles, James and Jude, (<sup><4135></sup>Matthew 13:55) and another called “Joses Barsabas”; and it may be to distinguish the one from the other this is called “Joses Barnabas”; for so it follows,

*who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas*: his name before his conversion was “Joses”, or “Joseph”, or “Josiah”; and afterwards, or at least after he came to be acquainted with the apostles, and to be in their company, they called him “Barnabas”; The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, “who was of the apostles”; and so Barnabas is spoken of as if he was an apostle, (<sup><4095></sup>1 Corinthians 9:5,6)

*which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation*; or “of exhortation”; from the excellent gift and talent he had at exhorting; (see <sup><4112></sup>Acts 11:23 14:22) and from the use he was of for the comforting of distressed minds; for *abn*, “Naba, to prophesy”, includes both exhortation and comfort; and he having the gift of prophecy or preaching the Gospel, was called *abnr b*, “Barnabas”, a son of comfort, or a comforter, or an exhorter: and so Jerom<sup>f184</sup> interprets it, “the son of a prophet”. Drusius conjectures that his right name was *amj n rb*, “Bar Nachama”, and by contraction “Barnama”, and with a Greek termination “Barnamas”; which properly signifies, in the Chaldee and Syriac languages, “the son of consolation”, as it is here interpreted; and he observes, that the letters “M” and “B” are sometimes used one for an other: thus one and the same man is called “Berodach” and “Merodach”, (<sup><12012></sup>2 Kings 20:12, <sup><2391></sup>Isaiah 39:1) and the same river is called “Abana”, (<sup><11512></sup>2 Kings 5:12) and in the margent “Amana”; but others think he had his name from the same word that Noah had his, and which signifies rest and comfort, as appears from the reason of his name. “This same shall comfort us”, etc. And so the name of this man in the Chaldee or Syriac language was *aba j n rb*, which may be literally rendered “the son of the fathers’ rest”, or “comfort”. And this man is said to be

*a Levite*; of the tribe of Levi, and of the priestly race:

*and of the country of Cyprus*; or “by birth”, or “nation, a Cyprian”; for though he was a Jew, as is clear from his being of the tribe of Levi, and was born of Jewish parents, yet in Cyprus, and so was a native of that



place. The Ethiopic version renders it, “of the city of Cyprus”; but Cyprus was not a city, but a country; wherefore the Syriac version renders it, “of the place, or country of Cyprus”, as we do: it was an island in the further part of the Mediterranean sea; it had its name from the plant Cyprus, and is now by the Turks called “Kibris”. According to Pliny<sup>f185</sup>, it lay to the east and west of Cilicia, and was opposite Syria, and was formerly the seat of nine kingdoms; its circumference was three hundred and seventy miles, and had been called by various names; as Acamantis, Cerastis, Aspella, Amathusia, Macaria, Crypton, and Colinia; in it were fifteen towns or cities, which were Paphos, Palsepaphos, Curias, Citium, Corineum, Salamis, Amethus, Lapethos, Solce, Tamaseus, Epidarum, Chytri, Arsinoe, Carpasium, and Golgi. According to the same writer<sup>f186</sup>, it was by an earthquake divided from Syria; and that part of it which lay to the east from Syria, is said to be less than a hundred miles distant from it. And according to Mela<sup>f187</sup>, its chief cities were Salamis and Paphos, mentioned in (~~4135~~ Acts 13:5,6). And according to Ptolomy<sup>f188</sup>, it had on the west Pamphylia, on the south the Egyptian and Syrian seas, and on the east the Syrian sea, and on the north the straits of Cilicia: it was inhabited by people of various nations, and, among the rest, by Jews; and R. Benjamin makes mention of Jewish Rubbans in Cyprus, in his time<sup>f189</sup>.

**Ver. 37.** *Having land, sold it*, etc.] Whether this was in Cyprus, or in Judea, is not certain; nor how he came by it, whether he had bought it, as the priests and Levites might, and as Jeremiah, who was of the priests, bought a field at Anathoth, (~~2309~~ Jeremiah 32:9) or, whether it was his wife’s dowry; for the Levites had nothing by inheritance: they had forty two cities, and the six cities of refuge to dwell in, and the field of the suburbs of these cities; which field or land was never to be sold, but to be a perpetual possession, (~~0234~~ Leviticus 25:34) but now the ceremonial law was abolished, and this precept was not attended to, if the land was of this sort. Moreover, the Jewish doctors interpret the above law otherwise; and understand it only of changing, and not of selling, which they allow of; one of their canons runs thus<sup>f190</sup>,

“the priests and Levites, *μῦρκωμ*, “sell” always, and redeem always, as it is said, (~~0232~~ Leviticus 25:32), “the Levites may redeem at any time”.”

Upon which canon, one of their commentators<sup>f191</sup> says,

“they sell always; and not as an Israelite, who cannot sell less than two years before the jubilee; — but these “sell” even near the jubilee; “and they redeem always”: if they sell houses in walled towns, they are not confirmed at the end of the year, as the houses in the walled towns of Israelites; and if “they sell fields”, it is not necessary that they should remain in the hands of the buyer two years, but they may redeem them immediately, if they will.”

And another of them <sup>f192</sup> has this observation,

“all agree that the Levites may not change a city, or suburb, or field, which are theirs, because it is said, (~~Leviticus~~ Leviticus 25:34) “but the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold”; and the wise men of blessed memory say, the meaning of it is, it shall not be changed, for they do not change anything from what it was before.”

And agreeably to this is what Maimonides <sup>f193</sup> elsewhere says,

“they do not make in the cities of the Levites a city a suburb, or a suburb a city, or a suburb a field, or a field a suburb, as it is said, (~~Leviticus~~ Leviticus 25:34) “but the field of the suburbs of their cities shall not be sold”; from report (or tradition) we learn, that that is said, “shall not be sold”, means, shall not be changed; but the field, suburbs, and city, everyone of these three shall be as they are for ever. Priests and Levites who “sell” a field, of the fields of their cities, or an house of any of the houses of their walled towns, do not redeem according to this order (i.e. as the other Israelites), but “they sell fields”; and even near to the jubilee, and redeem them immediately.”

So that if this land of Barnabas lay in Judea, as is most likely, it might be sold, and much more, if in Cyprus. But, be it what and where it will, he sold it:

*and brought the money*; from Cyprus or Judea, or that part of the land of Canaan where it lay, and where he had sold it:

*and laid it at the apostles’ feet*; perhaps he might be the first person that did so, and set an example which was universally followed; however, he is particularly mentioned, being a man of note among the apostles, and of great usefulness in after times, and of whom frequent mention is made in other places.

# CHAPTER 5

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 5

**Ver. 1.** *But a certain man named Ananias*, etc.] A name common among the Jews, the same with Hananiah, (<sup><280></sup>Jeremiah 28:1, <sup><490></sup>Acts 9:10, 23:2) it signifies not the humility of the Lord, or the affliction of the Lord, or the answer of the Lord, as say some, as if it was derived from **hn**[ ; but the grace of the Lord, or the Lord's gracious one, coming from **^nj** : there is no dependence on names; though this man's name signified one that was in the grace and favour of God; he was not so, but a graceless person, as appears by what follows. It is very likely he was a minister of the word, since the account of him follows upon that of Barnabas, and is opposed to it; it may be he was one of the hundred and twenty, on whom the Holy Ghost fell on the day of Pentecost; and yet, though he had great gifts, had no grace. This shows there are hypocrites among men of the greatest names and characters, and in the purest churches; this first and pure church, which, in the preceding chapter, has such large encomiums, was not free from them:

*with Sapphira his wife*; whether this is the same name with "Shiphrah", (<sup><0015></sup>Exodus 1:15) or "Zipporah", (<sup><0121></sup>Exodus 2:21) both which are by the Septuagint called "Sephora", or whether another, and may signify "beautiful", is not very material. Jerom<sup>f194</sup> says, in the Syriac language this name signifies "beautiful"; though he first gives other explanations of it, as "narrantem, literatam, sive librariam", as though it was derived from the Hebrew word **rps**. The precious stone called sapphire seems to come from the same root as this, and to be so called because of its beautiful azure colour. The name "Sappho", which was the name of a famous poetess, the inventress of a kind of verse called "Sapphic" verse, is said to be the diminutive of this name "Sapphira". Drusius observes, it may be read **arypx**, "Tzephira"; which comes near to "Zipporah", and among other things signifies a "she goat"; and it was usual to give women names taken from such creatures. So "Rachel", a "sheep", and "Tabitha", or

“Dorcas”, a “doe”. But whatever her name or person were, her actions were disagreeable:

*sold a possession*; which was their own. So the Arabic and Syriac versions read, “their own field”, or “farm”; find the Ethiopic version, “their own vineyard”: it might be his wife’s dowry or jointure, and so her consent was necessary; or they might be jointly concerned in this sale, to show not only their concord and harmony among themselves; but that they agreed in their devotion and religious actions, and that being both filled with zeal for God, and love to the brethren, sold their estate to support the common cause.

**Ver. 2.** *And kept back part of the price*, etc.] At which the possession was sold; he reserved it for his own use, after he had given out that he sold it for the service of the church:

*his wife also being privy to it*; to this private reserve:

*and brought a certain part*; whether the greater part, or an equal part, half of it, or a lesser part; some little part of it, so the phrase seems to signify, is not certain:

*and laid it at the apostles’ feet*; as the rest did, thereby to make a show of charity, and cover the deceit.

**Ver. 3.** *But Peter said, Ananias*, etc.] Peter, by divine revelation, or by a spirit of discerning, such as Elisha had, who knew what his servant Gehazi had done, knowing what a reserve Ananias had made, calls him by his name, and says to him,

*why hath Satan filled thine heart?* or emboldened thee, given thee so much spirit and courage to act in such an impudent and audacious manner; so the phrase is used in (<sup><7006></sup>Esther 7:5 <sup><2081></sup>Ecclesiastes 8:11) see the Septuagint there, and often in Talmudic writings.

“Says R. Joshua, I never *ybl ynal m*, “filled my heart”; or my heart never filled me to say to a man, go and take the change of these three things, etc. <sup>f195</sup>.”

And says another Rabbi <sup>f196</sup>,

“though I say so, *ybl ynal m al*, “I never filled my heart”, or my heart never filled me to transgress the words of the companions;”

that is, I never durst do so. And again <sup>f197</sup>, it being observed, that Isaiah should say, “hear, O heavens!” it is said,

“who, or what is this, who **wbl wal m**, “hath filled his heart”, or whose heart has filled him to call to the heavens to hear.”

But this instance of Ananias was such, that none but Satan could have put him upon, or emboldened him to have done; who from hence appeared to have the power over him, and to have possessed him, to have great access to him, even to his heart, and great influence upon it, so as to prompt him

*to lie to the Holy Ghost*; who was in the apostles, and by whom they were acted, and to whom he had given a discerning of spirits; so that it was a daring action, and downright madness, to go about to deceive them: or he pretended he had an impulse from the Spirit of God to sell his estate, and give the whole price of it to the apostles, and yet kept back part of it; which was acting contrary to that Spirit he pretended to be influenced by.

*And to keep back part of the price of the land*: that is, he lied against the Holy Ghost, by keeping back part of the price the land was sold for; when he had declared he sold it with this view, to give the whole for charitable uses, and affirmed that what he brought was the whole.

**Ver. 4.** *Whiles it remained, was it not thine own*, etc.] Before it was sold, it was his own proper estate; he had the sole propriety in it, and could have kept it, or disposed of it as he pleased: he was not obliged to sell it, he might have kept it as his own property; for selling of possessions at this time was a voluntary thing; it was what no man was forced to; it was a pure act of liberality, and what was not enjoined by the apostles; every man was left to his liberty.

*And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?* that is, the price for which it was sold: before he had declared that he sold it, in order to give the whole of it to the church, had brought it to the apostles as the whole; it was in his own power to dispose of, as he pleased, whether to give the whole, or a part of it, or it. He might have kept it all if he had thought fit, or have given what portion he pleased.

*Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart?* for though Satan had an hand in it, and greatly solicited him to it, and spirited him up to do it, yet in conjunction with his own heart; and perhaps it began there, which Satan helped forward. It was not so of Satan as to excuse the wickedness of his

heart. It was owing partly to the sin of covetousness, which reigned in him, and partly to a desire of vain glory, and being thought a very religious man, that he acted such a part, and was so notoriously guilty of lying and hypocrisy.

*Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God*; that is, not to men only, for he had lied to the apostles; but to God also, to the Holy Ghost, who is truly and properly God, of which this passage is a full proof; and it was owing to his omniscience, which is a peculiar attribute of deity, that this wicked man, and this fraud of his, were discovered.

**Ver. 5.** *And Ananias hearing these words*, etc.] Of Peter's; by which he found his sin was detected, and by which he was convicted of it: and which set forth the evil nature of it, with its aggravated circumstances; and such power went along with them, and they cut so deep, as that immediately

*he fell down and gave up the ghost*; which is an instance of what the Jews call death by the hand of heaven: and this was done either by an angel; or rather by an extraordinary gift bestowed on Peter, being such an one as the Apostle Paul had, and used, when he smote Elymas the sorcerer with blindness, and delivered the incestuous person, and Alexander and Hymeneus to Satan.

*And great fear came upon all them that heard these things*; both upon the members of the church, and so was of service to make them careful of their words and actions, and cautious and circumspect in their lives and conversations; and upon those that were without, and might be a means of making them fearful of speaking against them, or mocking at them, or of joining themselves to them, without being thoroughly satisfied that they should, and had a right, and were meet for it.

**Ver. 6.** *And the young men arose*, etc.] The younger brethren of the church, who were robust, and strong, and fit for the following service: these rose up from their seats at once, not willing that such an awful spectacle should lie long before them:

*and wound him up*; in linen clothes, as was the manner of the Jews:

*and carried him out*: of the house where they were, and out of the city; for the burying places of the Jews were without the city:

*and buried him*; which was all done in a very short time, as appears by what follows.

**Ver. 7.** *And it was about the space of three hours after*, etc.] The death of Ananias. So much time was taken up in burying of him; and in less time it could not well be, since the burying places of the Jews were without the city, as before observed: and if they were as distant from other cities, as they were from the cities of the Levites, they were, as Dr. Lightfoot shows from Maimonides<sup>f198</sup>, above a mile and half off: though there is a Jewish canon which runs thus<sup>f199</sup>;

“they put carcasses, graves, and tanners, fifty cubits from a city.”

So that to go thither, open the grave, inter the dead, and return, must take up so much time; and so much time his wife had to reflect upon what she and her husband had done, but seems not to have had any thought about it, at least not any remorse of conscience for it:

*when his wife, not knowing what was done*; she knew that her husband kept back part of the price of the land, and how much it was, and what he brought to the apostles; but she did not know that the fraud was detected, nor what followed; as that her husband was immediately struck dead, and was carried out and buried; which it is pretty much she should not in this time, when the thing was awful and shocking, the news of which must fly apace all over the city: but it looks as if the company of the saints was not broke up all this while, and that no one went out to carry it abroad, but the young men that went to bury him. Sapphira therefore, being ignorant of the whole affair,

*came in*; to the temple or house where the apostles were, expecting to see her husband among the apostles, and chief men, in great honour and esteem for what he had done; and that he would be on equal foot with Barnabas and others, who had sold all they had, and brought the whole price of their possessions into the common stock.

**Ver. 8.** *And Peter answered unto her*, etc.] Who might be inquiring for her husband; though such a way of speaking was common with the Jews, when nothing goes before to which the answer is made; of which there are frequent instances in the sacred writings:

*tell me whether ye sold the land for so much*; naming the sum of money which Ananias had brought; though the historian does not mention it. The

Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “tell me, O woman”, etc. not calling her by her name, as he did her husband, (~~48B~~ Acts 5:3)

*yea, she said for so much*; just that sum, and no more.

**Ver. 9.** *Then Peter said unto her, how is it that ye have agreed together*, etc.] For husband and wife to agree together in what is good, in things civil, honest, and lawful, and in religious matters, is very commendable; but to agree in a fraud, in a lie, is very dreadful:

*to tempt the Spirit of the Lord*; to try whether the apostles had the Spirit of the Lord, or not; and whether the Spirit of the Lord that was in them was omniscient and omnipotent, would take any notice of it, and inflict punishment for it:

*behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door*; which Peter knew either by hearing the sound of their feet, as Ahijah the prophet heard the sound of the feet of Jeroboam’s wife, as she came in at the door, (~~114B~~ 1 Kings 14:6) or by the same spirit as Elisha knew that Gehazi ran after Naaman, and received money and garments from him, (~~128B~~ 2 Kings 5:26) and shall carry thee out; of this house dead, and bury thee, as they have thy husband.

**Ver. 10.** *Then fell she down straightway at his feet*, etc.] In like manner, and by the same hand of God as her husband before:

*and yielded up the ghost*; died directly:

*and the young men came in and found her dead*; the young men who had been to inter her husband came into the house at that instant, and found her dead upon the floor, at the feet of the Apostle Peter:

*and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband*; as it was usual with the Jews to do. So they say <sup>f200</sup>, that in the cave of Machpelah were buried Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah.

**Ver. 11.** *And great fear came upon all the church*, etc.] Which was still more increased by this instance of Sapphira’s death:

*and upon as many as heard these things*; who were not of the church; (See Gill on “~~408B~~ Acts 5:5”).



**Ver. 12.** *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought*, etc.] That is, by their means, or by them as instruments, or through the imposition of their hands on persons, many miraculous and wonderful cures, as well as other extraordinary actions, were performed:

*among the people*; the common people, who attended in great numbers on their ministry, when the chief men and rulers of the nation despised them.

*And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch*; which is to be understood not of the whole church, nor of the hundred and twenty disciples, but of the twelve apostles, who met in this place to preach the Gospel to the people; and they were agreed in their doctrine and practice, and were united in their affections to one another. Of Solomon's porch, (See Gill on "~~48023~~ John 10:23"). These words, with what follow to the 15th verse, are to be read in a parenthesis.

**Ver. 13.** *And of the rest durst no man join himself to them*, etc.] By the rest are meant, either those that were without the church, and those either the profane and persecuting sort, who durst not come nigh the apostles to touch them, or say one word to them, for fear of being struck dead; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, "and then there was no more any man that durst restrain them", or go about to hinder them from preaching: or the better sort, such who attended on the word, and were either real believers or hypocrites, who durst not, one nor the other, join themselves to them, because of what happened to Ananias and Sapphira; which not only deterred hypocrites from coming into the church, but also kept off such who were really converted persons; but this sense seems to be contradicted in the following verse. Rather therefore by them are meant those within the church, and not only the private members of it, but the ministers of the word, of which number Ananias might have been; these, the rest of them, durst not come nigh the apostles, or familiarly converse with them, much less put themselves upon an equal foot with them, but with great reverence of them kept their distance from them:

*but the people magnified them*; both the ministers of the word, as Barnabas and others, who showed such a respect to the apostles, they having extraordinary gifts, and extraordinary things also being done by them, and especially the twelve apostles; these the people in general spoke well of, praised and cried up as marvellous men, because of what was done by them.

**Ver. 14.** *And believers were the more added to the Lord*, etc.] That is, to the church, as in (~~41B1~~ Acts 2:47) over which Christ was Lord and head; for they were added to the Lord before, by believing in him, when they gave up themselves to him, to be saved by him; and now to the apostles, and the church by the will of God; and this case of Ananias and Sapphira was so far from hindering persons from coming into the church, that there were greater additions made to it than before, even of such as were true believers in Christ. The Ethiopic version reads, “and many were added who believed in our Lord”; the Arabic version, “they that believed in the Lord increased”; the Syriac version, “and they more increased who believed in the Lord”; and so the Vulgate Latin version, “but the multitude of them that believe in the Lord were the more increased”; all of them reading the phrase, “the Lord”, not in construction with the word “added”, but with “believers: multitudes both of men and women”; the weaker sex were not intimidated any more than the men, such power went along with the word, and such grace was bestowed upon them. This church must now be prodigiously numerous, for before these additions, eight thousand had been added to the hundred and twenty; such success the Gospel had, and such progress it made in the hands of such mean and contemptible persons, notwithstanding the opposition of the chief men of the nation to it.

**Ver. 15.** Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, etc.] These words are to be read in connection with the former part of the twelfth verse. Such miraculous cures being wrought by the apostles, the people who had sick persons in their houses, hearing of it brought them out; either “into the streets”, as we render it, and as the Alexandrian copy reads; or “in every street” in Jerusalem, waiting for the apostles as they came, to receive a cure from them:

*and laid them on beds and couches*; for the better conveniency of carrying them to the apostles, or for their lying upon them until they came by that way:

*that at the least, the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow some of them.* The Vulgate Latin version adds, “and be delivered from their infirmities”; but this is not supported by any copy, nor is it in any other version. Peter is only mentioned because he was most known, he being the chief speaker and actor. Who these were that fancied there was such a virtue in Peter’s shadow, and whether any were cured by it, is not certain. However, it is a vain thing in the Papists to conclude from hence the

primacy of Peter, the worshipping of images, and that the Pope is Peter's shadow, and has his power.

**Ver. 16.** *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about,* etc.] The fame of the apostles' miracles spread in the cities round about Jerusalem; those that were at some distance as well as near, and large numbers of people came from thence,

*unto Jerusalem;* where the apostles were: the Syriac version adds, "unto them", that is, to the apostles; and the Arabic version, "with them"; along with those of the city of Jerusalem, who brought out their infirm persons into the streets to be cured:

*bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits;* with devils, by whom they were not only possessed, but greatly harassed and afflicted: sometimes tearing and convulsing them, and sometimes throwing them on the ground, and bruising them; or into fire and water, of which there are some instances in the evangelists:

*and they were healed everyone;* none went without a cure, which served greatly to confirm the Gospel preached by the apostles, and to irritate and provoke their enemies, as appears by what follows.

**Ver. 17.** *Then the high priest rose up,* etc.] *Annas, or rather Caiaphas;* (See Gill on "~~400B~~ Acts 4:6") he having heard what miracles were wrought by the apostles, and what additions were made to them, rose up from his seat and went out of the sanhedrim, in great haste, and in much wrath and passion:

*and all they that were with him;* in council, that were of his kindred or his party, as John and Alexander, and others, (~~400B~~ Acts 4:6)

*which is the sect of the Sadducees;* who denied the resurrection of the dead; which doctrine the apostles preached; and this made the high priest and his party very uneasy; whence it seems that the then high priest was a Sadducee, and also the sanhedrim at that time, and which was sometimes the case. Great care indeed was taken of an high priest, that he should not be a Sadducee; on the eve of the day of atonement they always swore the high priest, lest he should be a Sadducee, that he would make no innovation in what was ordered him; and particularly that he would not put the incense upon the fire without, and then carry it in a censor into the most holy place, as the Sadducees understood <sup>f201</sup>, (~~400B~~ Leviticus 16:3). But

notwithstanding all their care, sometimes they had a Sadducee for an high priest; we read of one John, an high priest, who ministered in that office fourscore years, and at last became a Sadducee<sup>f202</sup>. And sometimes a sanhedrim consisted only of Sadducees: hence we read of *yqwd[ I ç `yd tyb*, “a sanhedrim of Sadducees”<sup>f203</sup>; and such an one was this; and therefore it is not to be wondered at what follows,

*and they were filled with indignation*; or “zeal”, for Sadducism; and which was a blind zeal, and not according to knowledge: or “with envy” at the apostles for the miracles done by them, and because of the success that attended them; fearing lest, should they go on at this rate, their religion and authority would come to nothing. Sadducism now seemed greatly to prevail among men in power; and the Jews say<sup>f204</sup>,

“the son of David will not come until the whole government is turned to the opinion of the Sadducees.”

**Ver. 18.** *And laid their hands on the apostles*, etc.] That is, laid hold on them, and took them, and carried them away; at least their servants did so, by their orders:

*and put them in the common prison*; where malefactors were put; and this both for greater security, and for greater disgrace.

**Ver. 19.** *But the angel of the Lord*, etc.] Or “of God”, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, whether Michael, as some have thought, or Gabriel, or what particular angel, is not material to know. However, it was a good angel, an elect angel, one of those ministering spirits sent by God to minister to the heirs of promise; one of those angels that excel in strength, as appears by what he did: for he

*by night opened the prison doors*; where the apostles were put, and which had more doors than one, and these strong and close shut, and guarded by keepers; but were easily opened by the angel. It was very likely at, or towards the evening, when the apostles were taken, and therefore they were committed to prison, there to lie all night, till next morning, when the sanhedrim would meet together to consult what to do with them:

*and brought them forth*; out of the prison, leading them out at the doors he had opened for them:

*and said*; the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions add, “to them”; that is, to the apostles, as follows.

**Ver. 20.** *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people*, etc.] They were not delivered out of prison, in order to go and secure themselves from danger; but to go about the work they were called to, to preach the Gospel “in the temple”, the place of worship; and a proper place to meet with persons to preach to, being a public place, whither the Jews always resorted; and there they were to stand, and continue with courage and intrepidity, not fearing the reproach and wrath of men, seeing they had both Christ and truth on their side; and there declare it “to the people”, the common people, the multitude, even all that came to hear: the Gospel is to be preached to all; the Spirit of God makes it effectual to some, and others are rendered inexcusable: the substance of what they were to speak follows,

*all the words of this life*; all the doctrines of the Gospel; none of them are to be dropped or concealed, but to be spoken out, fully, freely, and faithfully, with all boldness and constancy; though they cannot be comprehended by reason, and are rejected by learned men, and the majority of the people; though charged with novelty and licentiousness, and attended with reproach and persecution: and these may be called, “the words of life”, even of eternal life, as in (~~¶~~ John 6:68) because they show the nature of it, and point out the way unto it; not by the law, and obedience to that, but by Christ and his righteousness; and are the means of quickening dead sinners, of reviving drooping saints, and of nourishing them up unto eternal life: and also the words of “this” life; not of this present frail, mortal, and sinful life; but of life by Christ, which is begun to be enjoyed now, and will be perfectly enjoyed hereafter: and particularly the doctrine of the resurrection unto life may be intended; in opposition to the Sadducees, who denied it, and were the men that, being filled with indignation against them for preaching it, had seized them, and put them into prison; and being now delivered from prison, they are bid to go and preach this same doctrine again, in the most public manner: though some think there is an hypallage in the words; and so the Syriac version renders them, “all these words of life”; and the Ethiopic version, “this word of life”; meaning the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, they had in commission to preach, and for which they were reproached and persecuted.

**Ver. 21.** *And when they heard that*, etc.] Or “his word”, as the Arabic version supplies; that is, the word of the angel, the orders enjoined them by him, to go to the temple, and there preach the Gospel; this clause is left out in the Syriac version:

*they entered into the temple early in the morning*; they were obedient to the command of the angel, believing him to be a messenger of God, who declared his will, which they readily complied with, and were indeed eager of doing it; and therefore early in the morning, as soon as ever the temple doors were opened, and there were any people got together, they went in:

*and taught*; as the Ethiopic version adds, “the people, this word of life”; the doctrine or doctrines of the Gospel which the angel had bid them teach:

*but the high priest came, and they that were with him*: as before, to the place where the sanhedrim used to meet; either the chamber Gazith, or the shops, or some other place in Jerusalem; (See Gill on “<sup><4015></sup>Acts 4:15”).

*and called the council together*; the sanhedrim, consisting of seventy one, which usually met at the time of the morning daily sacrifice; perhaps on this occasion they might be called together sooner, and everyone of them summoned to attend; for otherwise it was not necessary that every particular member should be present, but when there was any business of importance which required it, they were all gathered together <sup>f205</sup>:

*and all the senate of the children of Israel*; or the elders, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, the rest of the elders of the city, besides those of the great sanhedrim. Dr. Lightfoot thinks, that the two other sanhedrim, or courts of judicature in Jerusalem, which consisted of twenty three persons apiece, are designed; and who, as he rightly observes from Maimonides <sup>f206</sup>, sat the one in the gate of the court, the other in the gate of the mountain of the house; so that all the courts in Jerusalem were called together at this time; and if they all met, they made up a hundred and seventeen men:

*and sent to the prison to have them brought*; that is, “the apostles”, as the Syriac version reads. The sense is, that the high priest, and those that were with him at the same time that they convened all the courts of judicature in Jerusalem together, sent their officers to the prison, to fetch the apostles; or else the sanhedrim, and senate of Israel being met, they ordered their officers to go to the common jail, and bring the apostles before them, to be examined, tried, and judged by them.

**Ver. 22.** *But when the officers came*, etc.] The Arabic version adds, “to it”; that is, to the prison;

*and found them not in the prison.* The Vulgate Latin version reads, “the prison being opened they found them not”; when they came to the prison, they opened the doors of it, or the keepers for them; for though the angel had opened them for the apostles, yet he shut them again, as he brought them out; for these men found the doors shut, as the following verse shows, and who upon opening them and searching the prison, for the apostles, could find none of them in it; wherefore they returned; the Arabic version reads, “to them”; to the sanhedrim:

*and told*; that is, them, as both the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read.

**Ver. 23.** *Saying, the prison truly found we shut with all safety*, etc.] Locked, barred and bolted;

*and the keepers standing without before the doors*; both inner and outer in their proper places, diligently discharging their office:

*but when we had opened we found no man within*; that is, none of the apostles, for there might be other prisoners in it, who were not released by this means.

**Ver. 24.** *Now when the high priest*, etc.] Or “the priests”, as it is read in most copies; the Complutensian edition reads, “the high priest”; and he is certainly designed, since he is distinguished from the chief priests after mentioned: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, leave out this word; as does also the Alexandrian copy:

*and the captain of the temple*; the same versions read in the plural number; (See Gill on “<sup><<22:4>></sup>Luke 22:4”), (See Gill on “<sup><<22:52>></sup>Luke 22:52”), (See Gill on “<sup><<4:1>></sup>Acts 4:1”).

*and the chief priests heard these things*; which the officers related, that the prison doors were shut and sure, and the keepers upon their watch, and yet the apostles gone:

*they doubted of them, whereunto this would grow*; they did not doubt of the truth of the things their officers told them, but they were amazed at them, and hesitated in their minds about them, and were anxiously thoughtful; what this would, or should be, or how this should be done; that the prison doors should be shut, and yet the prisoners gone; they were in

suspense and anxiety of mind, what to impute it to; whether to a divine and supernatural power, or to magic art; and were uneasy in their minds what would be the issue of so strange and surprising an event.

**Ver. 25.** *Then came one and told them, saying,* etc.] Who this man was, is of no consequence to know; it can hardly be thought that he was one of the number of the disciples, or a member of the church, or a professor of the Christian religion; but rather an enemy, and one that sought his own interest, and to obtain the favour and affection of the chief priests and elders, and therefore very officiously came to them, and reported as follows:

*behold, the men whom ye put in prison,* last night,

*are standing in the temple;* openly and publicly, and without fear;

*and teaching the people;* in the name of Jesus, which the sanhedrim had forbid them to do.

**Ver. 26.** *Then went the captain with the officers,* etc.] That is, the captain of the temple, who had the command of it; he went thither attended with the officers and servants of the chief priests, the same that had been sent to the prison, to fetch the apostles:

*and brought them without violence;* they did not lay hold upon them, and drag them away in a violent manner; but gave them good words, and allured them, and entreated them to go along with them, and perhaps promised them, that no hurt should come to them, and that they should have full liberty to speak for themselves; the Ethiopic version renders it, “they brought them, behaving themselves mildly towards them”; they used no forcible, but gentle methods; they did not seize them in a violent way, and bind them, and carry them away by force:

*for they feared the people;* who had them in great esteem, because of the miracles done by them, and the benefit they received from them, both for their souls and bodies:

*lest they should have been stoned;* by the populace, who had they used them in a severe and cruel manner, would have risen upon them, and stoned them to death; the Ethiopic version renders it, “because they feared the people, they did not stone them”; as if the captain of the temple, and



the officers would have stoned the apostles, but that they were afraid of the people.

**Ver. 27.** *And when they had brought them*, etc.] From the temple, to the place where the sanhedrim sat, which, by this, seems to have been not in the room Gazith, nor in the shops, which were both in the temple, but in some part of the city of Jerusalem:

*they set them before the council*; whereby was fulfilled what Christ had foretold, (<sup><D007></sup>Matthew 10:17) “they will deliver you up to the councils”; they placed them before the whole sanhedrim; in the midst of it, (see Gill on “<sup><A007></sup>Acts 4:7”); and as the Ethiopic version here reads:

*and the high priest asked them*; though he was not president of the council, but Gamaliel, after mentioned; yet being in so high an office, and a principal member of the council, took upon him the examination of the apostles.

**Ver. 28.** *Saying, did not we straitly command you*, etc.] Or give you strict orders, with severe threatenings,

*that you should not teach in this name?* the Ethiopic version reads, “in the name of Jesus”; which is what is meant, but was not expressed by the sanhedrim; (see <sup><A007></sup>Acts 4:17)

*and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine*; they disregarded the council, and its orders, its commands and threatenings, and preached the doctrines of the Gospel; and particularly that concerning the resurrection of Christ, and through him the resurrection of all the dead; and with such success, that great part of the inhabitants of Jerusalem received it; at least there were great numbers in all parts of the city which attended to it, and embraced it: and this they represent as a novel doctrine, devised by the apostles, and peculiarly theirs; and which Moses, and the prophets, were strangers to:

*and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us*; by charging us with the murder of him, and representing us as guilty of shedding innocent blood, and so stirring up the people, and the Romans against us, to take vengeance on us for it: this, as if they should say, seems to be the intention and design of your ministry, particularly in asserting, that Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, is now risen from the dead, and was a holy, innocent, and righteous person, as his resurrection shows; and therefore, as

we have been guilty in shedding his blood, the punishment of it will, one day or other, be inflicted on us; as it accordingly was, and as they themselves imprecated in (~~4175~~ Matthew 27:25). It is to be observed, that they do not mention the name of Jesus, only by way of contempt, call him “this man”, as it is usual with the Jews to do, when they speak of him. So a commentator <sup>f207</sup> on (~~0273~~ Genesis 27:39) says of some,

“they believed in a man whom they set up for God; and Rome believed, in the days of Constantine, who renewed all that religion, and put upon his banner the form **awhh çyah**, “of that man”.”

and so another of their writers <sup>f208</sup> uses the phrase several times in a few words. Judah ben Tabai fled to Alexandria,

“that they might not make him president, and in the way, with one disciple; as it happened to Joshua ben Perachiah, with **çyah wtwa**, “that man”; and ye may receive it for a truth, that “that man” was his disciple — and the truth is, that “that man” was born in the fourth year of the kingdom of Jannai the Second.”

So an heretic is said to be one that confesses “that man”; and heretics are the disciples of “that man”, who turned to evil the words of the living God <sup>f209</sup>. Thus blasphemously and contemptuously do they speak of Christ.

**Ver. 29.** *Then Peter, and the other apostles, answered and said,* etc.]

Peter began, as the mouth of the apostles, being the eldest man, and very bold and zealous; and the rest followed, or joined, with him in what he said:

*we ought to obey God rather than men*; this is said in answer to the charge of disobedience to the orders and commands of the council: men, civil magistrates, and ecclesiastical rulers, are to be obeyed in things which are not repugnant to the will of God; but in things that are, God is to be obeyed, and not men. God had commanded by an angel, that the apostles should go to the temple, and there preach the doctrines of the Gospel; the sanhedrim had forbid them to speak and teach in the name of Christ; who were now to be obeyed? God, and not men: from whence it appears that the apostles were to be justified in disregarding the council, and neglecting its orders; and which is no ways contrary to that obedience and submission, that is to be yielded to those that are in authority, in things civil and lawful.

**Ver. 30.** *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus*, etc.] Not from the dead, though this was true; but called him to the work and office of a Saviour, inverted him with that office, and sent him to perform that work; so that this refers rather to the incarnation of Christ, in consequence of the ancient council and covenant of grace: and this the apostles attribute to God the Father, under the character of “the God of our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”, as in (<sup>4013</sup>Acts 3:13), to show that they did not bring in and worship any strange God; nor introduce any novel doctrine; or speak of any other Saviour or Redeemer, than he whom the God of their fathers had appointed, and who was made known to them, whom they looked for and believed in, and were justified and saved by:

*whom ye slew and hanged on a tree*; this is said in defence of themselves, being charged that they intended to bring this man’s blood upon them; they therefore insist upon it that they had slain Jesus whom God raised up, inasmuch as they had condemned him to death in their sanhedrim, and had urged and importuned Pilate to crucify him, and had imprecated his blood upon them and on their children; and were not content to put him to any kind of death, but insisted on his being crucified, or hanged on a tree; that is, stretched out upon the cross, which was both a painful and shameful death, to which they were manifestly accessory, and therefore justly charged with it.

**Ver. 31.** *Him hath God exalted with his right hand*, etc.] Not at his right hand, though he is exalted to it, and is set down at it, but with, or by his right hand; that is, by his power: for being by him raised from the dead, he was exalted to the highest heavens, and placed in human nature at the right hand of God, on the same throne with him, crowned with glory and honour; and having a name above every name, and all power and authority both in heaven and in earth given him,

*to be a Prince and a Saviour*: being made and declared both Lord and Christ, Lord of lords, and Prince of the kings of the earth, the Prince of life and peace, the Head of the church, and over all things for the sake of it, and the Saviour of his body the church, of all the elect of God; not with a temporal, but a spiritual and eternal salvation, of which he is become the author by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and is an able and willing, a suitable and an only Saviour: and some of the branches of his power and grace are

*for to give repentance to Israel*; to the Israel whom God has chosen for himself, and Christ has redeemed by his blood, and whom the Spirit calls by his grace: these being sinners, as well as others, stand in need of repentance; and whereas this is not in any man's power, but is the free gift of God's grace; for though he should give men time and space to repent, and afford them the means of it, yet if he does not give them grace to repent, they never will, such is the hardness of man's heart; Christ is appointed to give this grace to the chosen ones, which he does by sending his Spirit to convince of sin, and to take away the stony heart, and give an heart of flesh:

*and forgiveness of sins*; free and full forgiveness of all sins; which being obtained by his blood, is applied by his Spirit to all that truly repent of them; for these two always go together; where he gives the one, he also gives the other: the manifestations and applications of pardoning grace are only made to repenting sinners; and there are none that truly, and in an evangelical way, repent of sin, but who have some views, or, at least, hopes of pardoning grace; and none ever mourn more over sin, than those that see it in the glass of forgiving love.

**Ver. 32.** *And we are his witnesses of these things*, etc.] Of the incarnation of Christ, of his crucifixion and death, of his resurrection from the dead, of his exaltation by the right hand of God, and of his offices as a Prince and a Saviour, and of the influences of his grace, in giving repentance and remission of sins to his people; and even to many of the Jews, who had been his crucifiers, and who were now converted under the ministry of the apostles:

*and so is also the Holy Ghost*; in his descent upon the apostles, through the miraculous gifts bestowed upon them, and the wonderful works done by them, and the mighty power accompanying their ministry to the conversion of sinners:

*whom God hath given to them that obey him*; that hearken to his Gospel, and believe in Christ, even to all private Christians, as well as ministers of the word; if not in his extraordinary gifts, yet in the ordinary measures of his grace.

**Ver. 33.** *When they heard that*, etc.] This defence of the apostles, in which they still insisted upon it, that they had been the crucifiers of Christ, and yet

that he was raised from the dead, and exalted in heaven, and was a spiritual Saviour of men:

*they were cut; to the heart*, as if they had been cut asunder with a saw; the Ethiopic version renders it, “they were angry”, and “gnashed with their teeth”, as if a saw was drawn to and fro; they were filled with rage and madness:

*and took counsel to slay them*; not in a legal and judicial way, but in a private manner, or by force; stirring up the zealots to rise up against them, and dispatch them at once, as blasphemers and heretics.

**Ver. 34.** *Then stood there up one in the council*, etc.] Or “in the sanhedrim”, which the high priest had called together; this phrase is left out in the Syriac version: yet certain it is, that the great council was now assembled, and the disciples were now before them, and this man, who was one of the members of it, stood up in it; for it seems to have been the custom, that though they usually sat, yet when anyone had anything to say, or made a speech, he rose up from his seat.

*A Pharisee named Gamaliel*; he is described by his sect of religion, a Pharisee; of which, (See Gill on “<sup><4187></sup>Matthew 3:7”) and by his name Gamaliel: he was the son of Rabban Simeon, the son of Hillel the great; which Simeon is, by some, thought to be the same that took Christ into his arms, (<sup><4125></sup>Luke 2:25) and this Gamaliel was also the master of the Apostle Paul, (<sup><4121></sup>Acts 22:3). This was a very ancient name in Israel; the prince of the children of Manasseh, that offered at the dedication of the tabernacle, was of this name, (<sup><4074></sup>Numbers 7:54) and perhaps this man might be of the same tribe. He is further described by his profession,

*a doctor of law*; he was one of the Misnic doctors, one of the fathers of tradition, that received the oral law from those before him, and handed it down to others; and was the five and thirtieth of this sort, as the Jews say <sup>f210</sup>, from the giving of the law at Mount Sinai; or, as others <sup>f211</sup>, the thirty first:

*had in reputation among all the people*; and therefore his advice was the more likely to take place, without giving offence, or exposing to danger, seeing he was highly esteemed, not only in the sanhedrim, but among the common people; and that not only because he was a Pharisee, and a very strict one, the glory of that sect, insomuch that it is said <sup>f212</sup>, that

“when he died, the glory of the law ceased, and purity and pharisaism died;”

that but because of his years, dignity, and place also; he is called commonly Gamaliel, <sup>^qzh</sup>, “the elder”, because he lived to a great age <sup>f213</sup>. He died eighteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem <sup>f214</sup>, and was had in veneration to the last. It is said of him <sup>f215</sup>,

“he ordered, before his death, that they should carry him to his grave in linen; for before this time they used to carry out the dead in silk; and this was more grievous to his relations than his death itself;”

because they thought he was not interred honourably enough. And it is also reported, that Onkelos, the proselyte, at his death, burnt as much for him in goods and spices, as came to seventy Tyrian pounds <sup>f216</sup>. He was also commonly called by the name of Rabban, which was a more honourable title than that of Rabbi or Rab; and his father Simeon was the first that had it <sup>f217</sup>; and he was now president of the sanhedrim: and hence he used that authority which is expressed in the next words,

*and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space*; he ordered the apostles to be put out of the sanhedrim for a little while, that they might not hear what he had to say, and take encouragement from it; and that he might more freely speak his mind without giving them any countenance. The Alexandrian copy reads, “the men”, instead of “the apostles”; and so the Vulgate Latin version.

**Ver. 35.** *And said unto them, ye men of Israel*, etc.] This he said after the apostles were put out, when the council was by themselves; and he addressed them as “men of Israel”; not as distinct from the priests and Levites in the council, but because they were all of the stock of Israel; for this council did not consist of Israelites only, as distinct from priests and Levites, as appears from (<sup><del>4152</del></sup> Acts 5:21,27). A sanhedrim commonly consisted of each of these; though if only of Israelites it was a lawful one. Maimonides says <sup>f218</sup>,

“they did not use to appoint any in the sanhedrim, but priests, Levites, and Israelites, that were genealogized and fit to be married into the priesthood — -and that it was a command, that in the great sanhedrim there should be priests and Levites; as it is said, “thou

shalt go to the priests and Levites”; but if they are not found, if they are all Israelites, lo, this is lawful,”

or a proper sanhedrim. His speech to them follows,

*take heed to yourselves*; consider well, do not act a rash and precipitant part; do not give way to passion and wrath, and hastily lay hands on these men, and destroy them; lest ye bring yourselves into disgrace and danger, and bring upon yourselves the ill-will and resentment of men, and the wrath of God: take time to consider of the matter, and deliberately consult

*what ye intend to do as touching these men*; what punishment to inflict upon them, whether imprisonment, scourging, or death; do nothing rashly.

**Ver. 36.** *For before these days rose up Theudas*, etc.]. There is one of this name Josephus<sup>f219</sup> speaks of, who set up for a prophet, and drew a large number of people after him; pretending, that if they would follow him to the river Jordan, and take their goods along with them, he would but give the word, and the waters would divide and leave them passage to go over dryfoot; but Cuspius Fadus, who then had the administration of Judea, sent out some troops of horse, before they were aware, and killed many of them, and took divers others, and brought them in triumph to Jerusalem, with the head of Theudas. This account agrees with this instance of Gamaliel, only differs in chronology; since, according to Gamaliel’s account, this case of Theudas was some time ago, and must have been before now, or he could not have mentioned it; whereas the story Josephus relates, as being in the times of Cuspius Fadus, was several years after this. Some think Josephus is mistaken in his chronology, and then all is right. Others, that another Theudas is intended; who, as Origen says<sup>f220</sup>, was before the birth of Christ, since he was before Judas of Galilee, who rose up in the days of the taxing, at which time Christ was born: and the phrase, before these days, seems to design a good while ago. This name was in use among the Jews, and is either the same with **hdwt**, “Thuda”, or “Thoda”, so the Syriac version reads; one of the disciples of Christ was so called by the Jews<sup>f221</sup>, whose name was Thaddeus: or with **swdwt**, “Thodus”; one of this name, said<sup>f222</sup> to be a man of Rome, is frequently mentioned in the Talmud; and another also that was a physician<sup>f223</sup>; but both different from this “Theodas”. The Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions read, Theodas; and some take it to be a contraction of Theodotus, Theodorus, or Theodosius. Just as Theucharis is put for Theocharis, and Theudasia for Theodosia: but

it seems rather to be an Hebrew name; and so Jerom<sup>f224</sup> took it to be, who renders it “praise”: but who the man was is not certain; however, he rose up, as Gamaliel says, and made an insurrection,

*boasting himself to be some body*, or “some great one”, as the Alexandrian copy, and three of Beza’s copies read, and two of Stephens’s, and the Complutensian edition; and as read also the Syriac and Arabic versions; just as Simon Magus did afterwards, (~~488~~ Acts 8:9) and so Josephus’s Theudas gave out, that he was a prophet, and promised great things to the people, as to divide the waters of Jordan for them, by a word speaking and lead them through it as on dry land:

*to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves*; who believing what he said, put themselves under his command, and set him at the head of them:

*who was slain*: so Josephus’s Theudas had his head cut off by the troops of Cuspius Fadus, the Roman governor:

*and as many as obeyed him were scattered and brought to nought*; some killed, and others taken; and so the faction was quelled, and came to nothing. This instance Gamaliel produces, to show that impostors and seditious persons, such as the apostles were thought to be, seldom succeeded, but generally failed in their attempts, and were blasted; and with the same view he mentions the following one.

**Ver. 37.** *After this man rose up, Judas of Galilee*, etc.] Of whom Josephus thus says<sup>f225</sup>:

“there was a man of Galilee, by name Judas, who led his countrymen into rebellion, declaring it an evil, should they suffer tribute to be paid to the Romans, and introduce mortal rulers after God.”

And not unlike this is what another Jewish writer says<sup>f226</sup> of Judas the Galilean, and his party:

“these were the cause of the Jews rebelling against the Romans, for they said, it was not fit that any should rule over men but God alone; and that no one should be called Lord, but the blessed God.”

And this insurrection was “in the days of the taxing”; which was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria; and the reason of it was, because he



and his party would not pay that tax, for the reasons suggested in the above citations: and this is what Josephus refers to, when he says <sup>f227</sup>,

“Cyrenius came to Syria, sent from Caesar as judge of the nation, and appraiser of their estates; upon which Judas, the Gaulonite, (the same with Judas of Galilee,) rebelled, and Saddochus with him; saying, that this appraisment brought nothing else but servitude upon them; and therefore exhorted the nation to vindicate their liberty.”

And his exhortations and arguments prevailed with the people: wherefore it follows here,

*and drew away much people after him*; perhaps a much larger number than Theudas did, since they are not expressly mentioned how many they were:

*he also perished*; being killed in the insurrection, or taken and put to death by the Romans. So Origen says <sup>f228</sup>, that he was punished, and his doctrine was destroyed, and remained only among a few contemptible persons:

*and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed*; were forced to fly, some one way, and some another, and could make nothing of it: and as this instance was after the other before mentioned; and was so early as under the government of Cyrenius, and at the time of the taxing under him; it shows that Theudas could not be the Theudas of Josephus, unless the words should be rendered as see choose to do, “besides this man rose up Judas”, etc. And others observe, that “after him”, is the same as “before him”; and which, however, at first hearing, may seem very absurd, yet is justified by instances, as being a very proper way of speaking, seeing, when an account proceeds from the last as nearest, the first must be last, and the last first. Some, in order to reconcile this passage, think, that there is a transposition in the words of Luke, and that they should be read thus, “for before those days rose up Judas of Galilee”, etc. and then, “after this man rose up Theudas”, etc. so making Judas of Galilee more ancient than Theudas, as he must be, if he is the same Theudas Josephus speaks of: but still it is a difficulty how he could be the same, when that fact of his, the above historian speaks of, was seven, or eight, or ten, and, as some say, twelve years after this speech of Gamaliel’s. To remove this, it is proposed, that what is said concerning Theudas is to be put into a parenthesis, and to be considered not as the words of Gamaliel saying them in the sanhedrim, but as the words of Luke the historian, who wrote after this fact was done;

and because of the agreement of it with that of Judas, mentioned by Gamaliel, he inserts it; here, and joins it with it <sup>f229</sup>. And yet, after all, it looks as if it was another Theudas that is here spoken of, who was before Judas; and that he that Josephus speaks of, might be, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, one of his posterity, who was of, the same name, and trod in his steps, and. was guilty of sedition as his ancestor was, and as the sons of Judas were, mentioned by the same historian in the same place.

**Ver. 38.** *And now I say unto you*, etc.] This is the sum of my advice upon the observation of these and other instances:

*refrain from these men, and let them alone*; keep your hands off of them, do not attempt to take away their lives, but dismiss them quietly, nor go about to hinder them, in what they are concerned:

*for if this counsel, or this work be of men*; if the doctrine these men preach is an human device; or this business they are engaged in is only an human affair, projected by men, and carried on upon selfish principles, and worldly views, seeking only themselves, and their secular interests, and not the glory of God:

*it will come to nought*; as did the designs of Theudas and Judas.

**Ver. 39.** *But if it be of God*, etc.] If it is according to the counsel of his will; if it is a scheme of his forming, and a work to which he has called these men, and they proceed in it on good principles, and with a view to the honour and glory of God:

*ye cannot overthrow it*; it will proceed and get ground, and stand, maugre all the opposition of hell and earth; therefore do nothing to them, or hinder them from going on. Some copies read, “ye cannot overthrow them”; and add, “neither you, nor kings, nor tyrants; wherefore refrain from these men”; so Beza’s Cambridge copy.

*Lest haply ye be found even to fight against God*; which to do is downright madness, and which no man in his senses can expect to succeed in. There are some sayings of the Jewish doctors which seem to agree with these reasonings of Gamaliel <sup>f230</sup>.

“Says R. Jochanan the shoemaker, every congregation, which is for the name of heaven (or God) at length shall be established, but that

which is not for the glory of God shall not be established in the end.”

Which one of the commentators <sup>f231</sup> interprets in words still nearer to Gamaliel’s language, thus:

“it shall be that that counsel which is for God shall stand and prosper, but that which is not for God shall cease.”

And in another place it is said <sup>f232</sup>,

“all contention (or dispute) which is for God, at length shall be established, but that which is not for God shall not in the end be established: what is contention that is for God? the contention of Hillel and Shammai, (two famous doctors among the Jews,) but that which is not for God is the contention of Korah, and his whole company.”

Some have thought from this advice of Gamaliel, that he was a Christian, or greatly inclined to Christianity; but when it is considered what respect was shown him at his death by the Jews, before observed on (~~Acts~~ Acts 5:34) it will appear that he died a Pharisee; and especially it cannot be thought he had any favourable sentiments of the Christians, since a little before his death he ordered a prayer to be made against them. Maimonides says <sup>f233</sup>, that

“in the days of Rabban Gamaliel, the Epicureans (so the Amsterdam edition reads, but former editions read **μυνυμ**, “heretics”, by whom are meant Christians) increased in Israel; and they distressed the Israelites, and seduced them to turn aside from God; and when he saw that this was greater than all the necessities of the children of men, he stood up, and his council or sanhedrim, and composed another prayer, in which there was a request to God to destroy the Epicureans,”

or heretics, meaning the Christians: and though this prayer is sometimes ascribed to Samuel the little, yet it was composed by him at the hint and instigation of Gamaliel; for so it is said <sup>f234</sup>, R. Gamaliel said to the wise men,

“is there no man that knows how to compose a prayer for the Sadducees? (R. Asher reads “heretics”;) Samuel the little stood up and composed one.”

And it is also said <sup>f235</sup>, that

“Samuel the little composed, *^ynym tkrb*, “the prayer for the heretics”, before, or in the presence of Gamaliel the elder.”

He made it when he was present, assisting, dictating, directing, and approving. The prayer was this <sup>f236</sup>,

“let there be no hope for apostates, and may all heretics perish in a moment, and all the enemies of thy people be quickly cut off: root out the kingdom of pride, and break, destroy, and subdue them in haste in our days.”

In some forms it is added,

“blessed art thou, O Lord, that breakest the wicked in pieces, and humblest the proud.”

Upon the whole, Gamaliel does not seem to have been a Christian, or to have favoured the Christian religion; but he was, as he is said, (~~Acts~~ Acts 5:34) to be, a Pharisee: and this council, or sanhedrim, were, for the greater part of them, Sadducees, as seems from (~~Acts~~ Acts 5:17) who, as the Jews say, were wicked and base men, men of very ill manners, whereas the Pharisees were *^ynmj r*, “merciful men” <sup>f237</sup>; and such an one was Gamaliel: he was a religious man in his way; a man of humanity, a mild and moderate man, that had compassion and pity for his fellow creatures; and could not give in to any schemes of cruelty and persecution, which the Sadducees were forward to; and upon these principles he acted, and upon these he gave this advice.

**Ver. 40.** *And to him they agreed*, etc.] They were convinced and persuaded by his reasonings, approved of his advice, and agreed to follow it:

*and when they had called the apostles*; into the council again, having sent their servants for them, or ordered them to be brought in:

*and beaten them*; or scourged and whipped them with forty stripes save one, whereby was fulfilled what Christ had foretold, (~~Matthew~~ Matthew 10:17)

*they commanded they should not speak in the name of Jesus*; as they had strictly commanded them before, (<sup><408></sup>Acts 4:18). Perhaps both in this, as well as in bearing the apostles, they did not closely attend to Gamaliel's counsel, who advised them to keep their hands off of them, and not hinder them, but let them alone in what they were about: but this might be thought by them not to their reputation, nor sufficiently asserting their authority, to dismiss them, without saying or doing anything to them:

*and let them go*; from the council to their own company: they released them, and loosed them from their bonds; they set them at liberty, and let them go where they would; and so far they followed Gamaliel's advice.

**Ver. 41.** *And they departed from the presence of the council*, etc.] Having been threatened and beaten by them:

*rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*; Beza's ancient copy, and others; the Vulgate Latin, and Arabic versions read, "for the name of Jesus"; in which name they were forbid to speak, and for speaking in it they were beaten; the Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac version read, "for the name": that is, for God, for the glory of God, and in the cause of God; **μϥη**, "the name", is often used in Jewish writings for God: the shame they suffered for him was by being scourged with forty stripes save one; which was reckoned an infamous and ignominious punishment, and which was inflicted on persons guilty of very scandalous crimes<sup>f238</sup>: but this gave the innocent minds of the apostles no uneasiness; they accounted it an honour conferred on them to be called to suffering for the sake of God and Christ, and in so good a cause; they did what Christ exhorted them to, (<sup><411></sup>Matthew 5:11) which shows they had much of the presence of God, and large measures of grace communicated to them, by which they were supported; and thus cheerfully bore all indignity and reproach, for the name of Christ, which was exceeding dear and precious to them.

**Ver. 42.** *And daily in the temple, and in every house*, etc.] Every day, with great constancy and assiduity, both publicly and privately; in the temple, the place of public worship, where the Jews resorted on that account; and in each of their private houses, as often as they had opportunity:

*they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ*, that he is the Son of God, truly and properly God, the only Saviour of sinners: they preached up the dignity of his person, the grace of his incarnation, the obedience of his

life, the benefits of his sufferings and death; they preached his resurrection from the dead, and the resurrection of the dead through him; they declared his ascension to heaven, his session at the right hand of God, and intercession for his people; they preached peace and pardon by his blood, atonement of sin by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and complete redemption and salvation by him. And this they did without ceasing, not regarding the orders and threats of the sanhedrim; they waxed bolder and bolder in the ministry of the word, and were more constant and assiduous in it; their reproaches and persecutions increased their zeal for Christ, and his cause.

# CHAPTER 6

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 6

**Ver. 1.** *And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied*, etc.] From an hundred and twenty to three thousand more, from thence to five thousand more, and after that a multitude of men and women were added, and still they were increasing; (see <sup><4015></sup>Acts 1:15) (<sup><4124></sup>Acts 2:41 4:4 5:14). This increase of the disciples agrees with what Maimonides says <sup>f239</sup>, before observed, that

“in the days of Gamaliel, *μυνυμ wbr*, “the heretics were multiplied in Israel”.”

The word “disciples” was a common name to all Christians, to all that believed in Christ, and was the name they went by, before they were called Christians, (<sup><4126></sup>Acts 11:26)

*there arose a murmuring of the Grecians, or Hellenists, against the Hebrews*; by the Hebrews are meant the Jews that dwelt in Judea, and were the inhabitants of that country, and chiefly of Jerusalem, who spoke the Hebrew, or rather the Syriac language; and by the Grecians, or Hellenists, are meant, not the Greeks that were proselyted to the Jewish religion, though there might be some few among them; but Jews who were born, and had dwelt, in some parts of Greece, and spoke the Greek language, and used the Septuagint version of the Bible; between these two a murmuring arose, a complaint was made by one against the other: so that, as it appears from the instance of Ananias and Sapphira, that this first and pure Gospel church was not free from hypocrites; it is also manifest, that though they were at first so united and harmonious in their affections and judgments, yet they were not always clear of feuds, animosities, and contentions; Satan bestirred himself, and got footing among them, as he commonly does where the Gospel is preached, and there is an increase of it: the reason of this uneasiness was,

*because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration*; that is, they had not that distributed which was necessary for them, nor so much as the

Hebrew widows; they complained of partiality, as if because the Hebrew widows were the natives of the country, and might be nearly related to many of the community, that therefore they were more regarded and better supplied every day, than their widows were, whose husbands had dwelt in foreign lands, and were not so well known, and had fewer acquaintance and relations; for it seems the ministration or distribution was made every day: and such a practice obtained among the Jews in common, who used to collect every day for the poor, and give it daily to them. Maimonides<sup>f240</sup> speaks of it in this manner;

“they appoint collectors, who receive “every day”, from every court, a piece of bread, or any sort of food, or fruit, or money, from whomsoever that offers freely for the time; and they divide that which is collected, “in the evening”, among the poor, and they give to every poor person of it “his daily sustenance”; and this is called *ywj mt*, “Tamchui”, or “the alms dish”.”

And from hence the apostles might take up this custom, and follow it. The Ethiopic version renders it, “because they saw their widows minister”, or “employed daily”; as if the complaint was, that their widows were too much made use of, and obliged to more frequent and to harder service in taking care of the poor, the sick, and helpless, than the other widows were, who had not their share of labour with them, but lived more at ease. Though others rather think the murmur was, because the Grecian widows were not taken into the number, and employed in taking care of the poor, as the Hebrew widows were; but the sense first given, of not having so good a share in the distribution, seems to be the best.

**Ver. 2.** *Then the twelve*, etc.] The twelve apostles, as the Syriac version reads; for their number was now complete, Matthias being chosen in the room of Judas: these being informed of the murmur there was between the two sorts of believers, the Hebrew and the Hellenistic Jews,

*called the multitude of the disciples unto them*; either the hundred and twenty, the original members of the church, which first formed it, and on whom the Holy Ghost descended on the day of Pentecost; or rather the whole body of the church: for what the apostles had to say concerned them all; and they all had an equal right to chose their officers, that should minister unto them; and when they were convened together, they addressed them after this manner:



*and said, it is not reason*; or “it is not pleasing”, neither to God, nor to us; so the Arabic version reads, “this does not please us”; nor could it be pleasing to the church itself:

*that we should leave the word of God* the study of the word, meditation upon it, and preaching it: not that they did relinquish either of these; but they were sometimes obliged to omit them, or not so frequently attend them; the care of the poor taking up more of their time, than the work of the ministry, or preaching of the Gospel would admit of; and therefore thought it not so right and proper, or so acceptable a thing to God and man, that they should in the least neglect a work of so great importance to the souls of men, and cause it to give way to that which only regarded their bodies:

*and serve tables*; the tables of the poor, collect for them, inspect into their several cases, and circumstances, and distribute accordingly to them; which required a good deal of time, care, thought, and circumspection, especially in such a church, where the numbers were so large. From hence we learn what is the business of deacons, who were afterwards appointed to take this part of the apostles’ work off of their hands, and attend to it; which is to serve tables: the table of the Lord, by providing the bread and wine for it; receiving both from the minister, when blessed, and distributing them to the members; and collecting from them for the poor, and the defraying the charge; and observing what members are missing at the ordinance, whom they are to admonish; and if their admonitions are not regarded, to report it to the church: and they are likewise to serve the minister’s table, by taking care that he has a sufficient competency for his support; and it belongs to them to stir up the members of the church to their duty in communicating to him; and what they receive of them, they are to apply to his use: and also, they are to serve the poor’s table; to whom they are to distribute of the church’s stock, with all impartiality, simplicity, cheerfulness, and sympathy.

**Ver. 3.** *Wherefore brethren look ye out among you*, etc.] Or “choose out among you”, as the Syriac version adds, and as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it; which shows that this sort of officers, deacons, must be members of the church, and of the same church to which they are ordained deacons; and that they must be chosen to that office by the whole community, or by the common suffrages and votes of the people. So the <sup>f241</sup>  
Jews

“did not appoint *snrp*, (which may be rendered) “an overseer of the poor”, in a congregation, without consulting the congregation;”

which officer seems pretty much to answer to a deacon.

*Seven men, of honest report*; why the number seven is fixed upon, perhaps no other solid reason is to be given, but that that number was judged sufficient for the care of the poor in that church, and at that time; nor is it obligatory on other churches to have just so many, neither more nor fewer; for such officers are to be chosen as the church requires: perhaps some regard might be had to *ry[h ybwj h[bc*, “the seven good men of the <sup>f242</sup> city” among the Jews, who had great authority in their synagogues, and who had power to sell them, when old and useless; and who seem, according to Maimonides <sup>f243</sup>, to be the elders of the people. It is necessary that this sort of officers in the church should be men “of honest report”; that have a good testimony both from within the church and without, of their honesty and fidelity; since they are intrusted with the church’s stock, and have the care of many devolved upon them: so the collectors of alms among the Jews were to be men *μynmanw μy[wdy*, “known and faithful” <sup>f244</sup>; men of known probity and integrity: and, besides this good and honest report they were to have from others, they were also to be men

*full of the Holy Ghost, of wisdom*; they were to be men, not only that had the Spirit of God in them, but who were eminent for their rich experiences of grace; and who had superior gifts of the Spirit, whereby they were capable both of defending the truth against opposers, and of speaking a word of exhortation to duty, or of comfort under distress, or of reproof to members, as circumstances required; and it may be at this time when the church consisted of some of all nations, as seems from (~~411~~) Acts 2:9-11) it might be necessary that they should have the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, especially that of speaking with divers tongues, that they might be able to converse with persons of different languages: and “wisdom” is highly requisite in them, that they may be good economists of the church’s stock, and dispose of it in the most prudent manner: and conduct themselves agreeably to the different tempers and spirits of men they have to do with, and especially in composing differences among members.

*Whom we may appoint over this business*; assign or make over that part of their office to them, which hitherto they had exercised, and install them into it, and invest them with it.

**Ver. 4.** *But we will give ourselves continually to prayer*, etc.] Both in private for themselves, and the church; and in the houses and families of the saints, with the sick and distressed; and in public, in the temple, or in whatsoever place they met for public worship:

*and to the ministry of the word*; the preaching of the Gospel, to which prayer is absolutely prerequisite, and with which it is always to be joined. These two, prayer and preaching, are the principal employment of a Gospel minister, and are what he ought to be concerned in, not only now and then, but what he should give himself up unto wholly, that his profiting might appear; and what he should be continually exercised and employed in: and if parting with that branch of the ministerial function, the care of the secular affairs of the church, and of the poor of it, was necessary in the apostles, that they might be more at leisure to attend to the more important and useful duties of prayer and preaching; it therefore seems necessary that those who are called to labour in the word and doctrine, if possible, should be exempt from all worldly business and employment; that of the ministry being sufficient to engross all a man's time and thoughts.

**Ver. 5.** *And the saying pleased the whole multitude*, etc.] The speech the apostles made took with them; all things they proposed were universally approved of; the whole body of the church came into it at once unanimously; they all judged it highly reasonable, that the apostles should be eased of the burden in taking care of the poor, and that it should be transferred to some other persons, and they fixed on the following:

*and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost*; he was a man eminent for his faith in Christ, and his faithfulness to him, and in everything he was concerned, and for his courage and boldness in the cause of Christ and for other gifts and graces of the Spirit, with which he was filled; he was, it is very likely, the most eminent person of all the seven, and is therefore named first; he is afterwards taken notice of, and was the first that suffered martyrdom for Christ, with which he was crowned, answerable to his name, which signifies a crown:

*and Philip*; who was also an evangelist, and had four daughters that prophesied; and perhaps is the same that went down to Samaria, and preached Christ there with great success, and after that baptized the Ethiopian eunuch;

*and Prochorus*; of this and the rest, no other mention is made in the sacred writings. He is said by some to be a nephew of Stephen's, and first bishop of Nicomedia; but these are things not certain; and as for the life of the Apostle John, said to be written by him, it is a spurious and fabulous piece.

*And Nicanor*; of this man we have no other certain account; for that he suffered martyrdom with "Stephen" is not to be depended on. It is a Grecian name; there is one of this name who was a general in Demetrius's army, who was sent by him against the Jews,

"Then the king sent Nicanor, one of his honourable princes, a man that bare deadly hate unto Israel, with commandment to destroy the people." (1Mac 7:26)

and there was a gate of the temple, which was called the gate, of Nicanor:

*and Timon*; he is said to be afterwards bishop of Bersea; though others make him bishop, of Bostra; but with what truth cannot be asserted:

*and Parmenus*; of him no other account is given, than in the Roman martyrology, which is not to be depended upon, that he suffered martyrdom under Trajan:

*and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch*; who was first a Greek or Gentile, and then became a Jew, a proselyte of righteousness, and then a Christian, and now made a deacon. Some think, that from this man sprung the sect of the Nicolaitanes, spoken of in the Revelations; though others think, that that wicked set of men only covered themselves with his name, or that they abused some words of his, and perverted the right meaning of them; though was it certain he did turn out a wicked man, it is not to be wondered at, that since there was a devil among the twelve apostles, there should be a hypocrite and a vicious man among the first seven deacons. It is observable, that the names of all these deacons are Greek names; from whence, it seems, that they were of the Grecian or Hellenistic Jews; so that the church thought fit to chose men out of that part of them which made the complaint, in order to make them easy; which is an instance of prudence and condescension, and shows of what excellent spirits they were of.

**Ver. 6.** *Whom they set before the apostles*, etc.] They did not barely nominate and propose them to them, but they brought them into their

presence, and placed them before them, as the persons whom they had chosen, in order to be ordained by them.

*And when they had prayed*; for these seven men set before them, that they might appear to be richly qualified for this office, and might honourably and faithfully discharge it, to the peace of themselves, the advantage of the church, and the glory of God:

*they laid their hands on them*; that is, they ordained them, they installed them into their office, and invested them with it, using the rite or ceremony of laying on of hands, which was used by the apostles for the conferring of gifts, and in benedictions, and at the ordination of officers; and seems to be borrowed from the Jews, who used, it at the creation of doctors among them, and at the promotion of them to that dignity; and which they call **hkym**s, or ordination by imposition of hands; though that rite was not looked upon to be essentially necessary: for so they say <sup>f245</sup>,

“ordination or promotion to doctorship is not necessarily done, **dyb**, “by the hand”, as Moses did to Joshua, but even **rwbydb**, “by word” only; it was enough to say, I ordain thee, or be thou ordained or promoted.”

**Ver. 7.** *And the word of God increased*, etc.] This stratagem of Satan did not succeed to divide the church, but issued in the better decorum and discipline of it, and in the spread and success of the Gospel; God thus making all things to work together for good;

*and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly*; where Christ was crucified, the apostles were scourged, and treated with the utmost contempt, the sanhedrim and rulers of the Jews dwelt, who used all their power and craft to crush the Gospel, and hinder the progress of it, but in vain, there the word increased; which it may be said to do, when saints are edified by it, and sinners are converted under it; and in this last sense it is chiefly to be understood here: the instances of conversion were very numerous; how large must this church now be!

*and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith*; that is, to the Gospel, which contains things to be believed, articles of faith; proposes Christ the great object of faith; and is the means of producing faith, and which is of no profit, unless it is mixed with faith: and to obey this is cordially to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel, and cheerfully to submit

to the ordinances of it. And that the priests, and a large number of them, should do this, is very marvellous; since they were the most inveterate enemies of the Gospel, and persecutors of the saints; but what is it that efficacious grace cannot do? the Syriac version instead of “priests” reads “Jews”, but unsupported by any copy.

**Ver. 8.** *And Stephen, full of faith and power*, etc.] The historian proceeds to give a narrative of Stephen particularly, the first of the seven deacons; of his faith and miracles, of his elocution and wisdom, of his courage and intrepidity, of his constancy, and of his suffering martyrdom. He is said to be full of faith, as before, (~~405~~ Acts 6:5) the Alexandrian copy, and four of Beza’s copies read, “full of grace”; and so do the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; the Ethiopic version reads, “full of the grace of God”: he had an uncommon share of it; it was exceeding abundant in him; he had a sufficiency of it for the service and sufferings he was called to: and he was full of power to preach the Gospel, and teach it the people, which he did with authority; to defend it, and oppose the adversaries of it; to bear reproach and indignities for it, and even death itself; and to do miraculous works for the confirmation of it, as follows:

*did great wonders and miracles among the people*; openly before them, such as speaking with divers tongues, healing diseases, casting out devils, etc.

**Ver. 9.** *Then there arose certain of the synagogue*, etc.] Being filled with indignation at the doctrine of Stephen, and with envy at his miracles, they rose up in great wrath, and warmly opposed him: and they be longed to that synagogue

*which is called the synagogue of the libertines*; or free men: it is a Roman name, and signifies the sons of free men; and these were either the sons of such Jews, who of servants, or slaves, had been made μυρρη ωσμ, “free men”; or rather such Jews whose parents were born free, or had obtained their freedom at Rome, or in some free city under the Roman government, as Paul at Tarsus; since it is not so easy to account for it, that there should be a peculiar synagogue for the former, whereas there might be for the latter, seeing they could not speak the language of the native Jews. The Arabic version reads, “of the Corinthians”, as if they were the Jews from Corinth: and some have thought the word “Libertines” to be the name of a

nation or people, as well as the names that follow; and some think it designs the Lybians or Lybistines in Africa; but neither of these is likely:

*and Cyrenians*: natives of the city or country of Cyrene, from whence were many Jews; (see <sup><4120></sup>Acts 2:10 11:20) such as Simon the Cyrenian, the father of Alexander, and Rufus, who carried the cross of Christ after him, (<sup><4152></sup>Mark 15:21) these, with those that follow, either belonged to the same synagogue with the Libertines, or rather they severally had distinct synagogues: and this will not seem strange, when it is said <sup>f246</sup>, that there were in Jerusalem four hundred and eighty synagogues; though it is elsewhere said <sup>f247</sup> four hundred and sixty:

*and Alexandrians*; for that there were a peculiar synagogue of these at Jerusalem is certain; for there is express mention made of it in Jewish writings <sup>f248</sup>.

“It happened to R. Eleazar bar Tzadok, that he bought **tsnkh tyb pyrdnski a l ç** “the synagogue of the Alexandrians”, which was at Jerusalem, and he did with it whatever he pleased.”

And that they should have a synagogue at Jerusalem need not be wondered at, when there was such an intercourse and correspondence between Jerusalem and Alexandria: it is said <sup>f249</sup>,

“the house of Garmu were expert in making of the shewbread, and they would not teach it; the wise men sent and fetched workmen from Alexandria in Egypt, and they knew how to bake as well as they. — — The house or family of Abtines were expert in the business of the incense, and they would not teach it; the wise men sent and fetched workmen from Alexandria in Egypt, and they knew how to mix the spices as well as they.”

Again it is said <sup>f250</sup>,

“there was a brass cymbal in the sanctuary, and it was cracked, and the wise men sent and brought workmen from Alexandria in Egypt, and they mended it — -and there was a mortar in which they beat spices, and it was cracked, and the wise men sent and fetched workmen from Alexandria, and they mended it.”

Hence many of them doubtless settled here, and had a synagogue of their own:

*and of them of Cilicia*; the metropolis of which country was Tarsus, (<sup><4213></sup>Acts 21:39 22:3). I make no doubt of it, that Saul of Tarsus was among them, or belonged to this synagogue, and was one of the fierce disputants with Stephen; at least violently opposed him, since he afterwards held the clothes of those that stoned him; we read <sup>f251</sup> of **μυςρj l ç tsnkh tyb**, which I should be tempted to render, the “synagogue of the Tarsians”, the same with the Cilicians here; but that it is elsewhere said <sup>f252</sup>, that

“it happened to the synagogue of the Tursians, which was at Jerusalem, that they sold it to R. Eliezer, and he did all his business in it.”

Where the gloss explains the word “Tursians” by “brass founders”; and it seems to design the same synagogue with that of the Alexandrians, who may be so called, because many of them wrought in brass, as appears from a citation above. There was a synagogue of these Tarsians at Lud, or Lydda <sup>f253</sup>: it is added, and of Asia; that is, the less; which joined to Cilicia, and in which were great numbers of Jews; (see <sup><4217></sup>Acts 21:27) this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy: at Jerusalem, there were synagogues for the Jews of different nations; as here in London, are places of worship for protestants of several countries; as French, Dutch, Germans, Danes, Swedes, etc. Now several persons out of these synagogues, met together in a body,

*disputing with Stephen*; about the doctrine he preached, and the miracles he wrought, and by what authority he did these things.

**Ver. 10.** *And they were not able to resist the wisdom*, etc.] In Beza’s most ancient copy, and in another manuscript it is added, “which was in him”; that divine wisdom, which the Spirit of wisdom gave him; they were not a match for him with respect to the knowledge of divine things; they could not answer the wise arguments he made use of, fetched out of the Scriptures of truth, in which he was well versed, and had a large knowledge of:

*and the Spirit by which he spake*; that is, the Holy Spirit, as the above exemplars of Beza, and the Ethiopic version read; the meaning is, they could not resist the Holy Spirit, by which Stephen spake, so as to overcome him, or put Stephen to silence, or confute him; otherwise they did resist him, or oppose themselves to him, but in vain, and without



success; for they always resisted the Holy Ghost in Christ and in his apostles, as their fathers before them resisted him in the prophets, as Stephen observes to them, (~~4076~~ Acts 7:51) hereby was fulfilled what our Lord promised to his disciples, (~~4009~~ Matthew 10:19,20) (~~4215~~ Luke 21:15).

**Ver. 11.** *Then they suborned men*, etc.] Hired false witnesses, which seems to have been commonly done by the Jews; so they did in the case of Christ:

*which said, we have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God*; that is, against the law of Moses, and so against God, who gave the law to Moses, as appears from (~~4063~~ Acts 6:13) the blasphemous words seem to be, with respect to the ceremonial law, and the abrogation of it, which Stephen might insist upon, and they charged with blasphemy; (see ~~4084~~ Acts 6:14).

**Ver. 12.** *And they stirred up the people*, etc.] The common people, who were easily wrought upon, and soon incensed and provoked, when at any time it was suggested to them that the rituals and ceremonies of the law of Moses were treated with any neglect or contempt; (see ~~427~~ Acts 21:27,28).

*And the elders and the Scribes*; who belonged to the sanhedrim, to whom they reported these things, as persons, under whose cognizance they properly came:

*and came upon him*; at an unawares, and in an hostile way:

*and caught him*; seized him with violence:

*and brought him to the council*; the great sanhedrim, then sitting at Jerusalem, to whom it belonged to judge of blasphemy.

**Ver. 13.** *And set up false witnesses*, etc.] Having hired them, they brought them and set them before the sanhedrim, to bear witness against Stephen:

*which said, this man*; meaning Stephen, who was now before the council, at whom they pointed, and whose name, through contempt, they would not mention:

*ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place*; either the city of Jerusalem, which is sometimes called the holy city, and which was foretold by the angel to Daniel, and by Christ, that it should be destroyed, and which Stephen might speak of; or rather the temple, so the Ethiopic

version; in a part of which, or in a place contiguous to it, the sanhedrim might now be sitting:

*and the law*; the ceremonial law: the sense is, that Stephen was continually telling the people, that in a little time their temple would be destroyed, and an end be put to temple worship, and to all the rituals and ceremonies of the law of Moses; the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions leave out the word “blasphemous”; and so do the Alexandrian copy, and Beza’s most ancient one; but as Beza observes, it is certain, or at least it is most likely, that it was not omitted by the false witnesses; though speaking against the temple and the law was sufficient to make good a charge of blasphemy.

**Ver. 14.** *For we have heard him say*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “besides”; but rather these words are a reason, giving evidence to, and supporting the general charge:

*that this Jesus of Nazareth*; Stephen spoke of, and whom they so called by way of contempt:

*shall destroy this place*; meaning the temple, as the Ethiopic version renders it; and is the same charge, the false witnesses at Christ’s examination brought against him:

*and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us*; that is, the rites, ceremonies, institutions, and appointments of the Mosaic dispensation; and yet this is no other, than what the Jews themselves say will be done, in the times of the Messiah; for they assert<sup>f254</sup>, that

“*awbl dyt* [I], “in time to come” (i.e. in the days of the Messiah) all sacrifices shall cease, but the sacrifice of thanksgiving.”

**Ver. 15.** *And all that sat in the council*, etc.] The whole sanhedrim,

*looking steadfastly on him*; to observe whether his countenance altered, his tongue stammered, or he trembled in any part of his body, neither of which appeared; but on the contrary, they

*saw his face, as if it had been the face of an angel*. The Ethiopic version adds, “of God”; there was such a calmness and serenity in it, which showed his innocence and unconsciousness of guilt; and such a beauty and glory upon it, that he looked as lovely and amiable as the angels of God, who when they appeared to men, it was in very glorious and splendid forms: his face might shine as Moses’s did, when he came down from the mount; or

in some degree as Christ's did at his transfiguration; and this might, as it ought to have been, taken as an acquittance of him by God, from the charge of blasphemy, either against God or Moses: the Jews <sup>f255</sup> say of Phinehas, that when the Holy Ghost was upon him, his face burned or shone like lamps, and Stephen was now full of the Holy Ghost, (~~406~~ Acts 6:5,8).

# CHAPTER 7

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 7

**Ver. 1.** *Then said the high priest*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “to him”; that is, to Stephen; for to him he addressed himself: or he “asked him”, as the Syriac version renders it; he put the following question to him:

*are these things so?* is it true what they say, that thou hast spoken blasphemous words against the temple, and the law, and hast said that Jesus of Nazareth will destroy the one, and change the other? what hast thou to say for thyself, and in thine own defence? this high priest was either Annas, or rather Caiaphas; (See Gill on “~~406~~Acts 4:6”).

**Ver. 2.** *And he said*, etc.] Stephen replied, in answer to the high priest’s question, and addressed himself to the whole sanhedrim, saying:

*men, brethren, and fathers, hearken*; to the following oration and defence; he calls them men, brethren, by an usual Hebraism, that is, “brethren”; and that, because they were of the same nation; for it was common with the Jews to call those of their own country and religion, brethren; and he calls them “fathers”, because of their age and dignity, being the great council of the nation, and chosen out of the senior and wiser part of the people:

*the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham*; he calls God “the God of glory”, because he is glorious in himself, in all his persons, perfections, and works, and is to be glorified by his people; and his glory is to be sought by all his creatures, and to be the end of all their actions; and the rather he makes use of this epithet of him, to remove the calumny against him, that he had spoke blasphemous things against God; and because God appeared in a glorious manner to Abraham, either in a vision, or by an angel, or in some glorious form, or another; and it is observable, that when the Jews speak of Abraham’s deliverance out of the fiery furnace, for so they interpret Ur of the Chaldees, they give to God much such a title; they say <sup>f256</sup>

““the King of glory” stretched out his right hand, and delivered him out of the fiery furnace, according to (~~0150~~Genesis 15:7).”

Stephen uses a like epithet; and he calls Abraham “our father”, he being a Jew, and according to the common usage of the nation: and this appearance of God to Abraham was “when he was in Mesopotamia”; a country that lay between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates, from whence it had its name; and is the same with Aram Naharaim, the Scriptures speak of; (See Gill on “<sup>4113</sup>Acts 2:9”). Of this appearance of God to Abraham, mentioned by Stephen, the Scriptures are silent; but the Jewish writers seem to hint at it, when they say <sup>f257</sup>,

“thus said the holy blessed God to Abraham, as thou hast enlightened for me Mesopotamia and its companions, come and give light before me in the land of Israel.”

And again, mentioning those words in (<sup>23108</sup>Isaiah 41:8,9) “the seed of Abraham my friend, whom I have taken from the ends of the earth”; add by way of explanation, from Mesopotamia and its companions <sup>f258</sup>: and this was

*before he dwelt in Charan*; or Haran; (see <sup>4113</sup>Genesis 11:31) where the Septuagint call it “Charan”, as here; and by Herodish <sup>f259</sup> it is called *καρραι*, where Antoninus was killed; and by Pliny <sup>f260</sup>, “Carra”; and by Ptolomy <sup>f261</sup>, “Carroe”; it was famous for the slaughter of M. Crassus, by the Parthians <sup>f262</sup>. R. Benjamin gives this account of it in his time <sup>f263</sup>;

“in two days I came to ancient Haran, and in it were about twenty Jews, and there was as it were a synagogue of Ezra; but in the place where was the house of Abraham our father, there was no building upon it; but the Ishmaelites (or Mahometans) honour that place, and come thither to pray.”

Stephanus <sup>f264</sup> says it was a city of Mesopotamia, so called from “Carra”, a river in Syria.

**Ver. 3.** *And said unto him*, etc.] Not the words in (<sup>4113</sup>Genesis 12:1) for they were said in Haran, these in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt there, and besides, these are different from them; no mention is here made of getting out from his father’s house, as there; because his father’s house sent along with him, or rather he with them from Mesopotamia to Haran:

*get thee out of thy country*; from Ur of the Chaldees, where he was born:

*and from thy kindred*; his relations that lived in the same place, who did not go along with him:

*and come into the land which I shall show thee*; not telling him the place whither he was to go; wherefore when he had his first call, and first set out, he knew not whither he went; (see <sup>s1108</sup>Hebrews 11:8). This was an emblem of the calling of the saints out of the world, from their former course of life, and from among their old companions and friends, to follow Christ whithersoever he is pleased to lead them; and who at last will bring them safe to the land afar off, the better and heavenly country.

**Ver. 4.** *Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans*, etc.] The same with Mesopotamia; so Pliny says <sup>f265</sup>, that

“because of Babylon the head of the Chaldean nation — -the other part of Mesopotamia and Assyria is called Babylonia.”

And he places Babylon in Mesopotamia; it was out of Ur, in the land of the Chaldeans particularly, that Abraham came, upon his first call:

*and dwelt in Charan*: according to the Jewish writers <sup>f266</sup>, he dwelt here five years:

*and from thence, when his father was dead*; who died in Haran, as is said in (<sup>o1132</sup>Genesis 11:32) and that it was after the death of Terah his father, that Abraham went from thence, is manifest from (<sup>o1131</sup>Genesis 11:31,32) (<sup>o1134</sup>Genesis 12:4,5) and yet a Jew <sup>f267</sup> has the impudence to charge Stephen with a mistake, and to affirm, that Abraham went from Haran, whilst his father was yet living; proceeding upon a false hypothesis, that Terah begat Abraham when he was seventy years of age: but Philo the Jew is expressly with Stephen in this circumstance; he says <sup>f268</sup>,

“I think no man versed in the laws can be ignorant, that Abraham, when he first went out of the land of Chaldea, dwelt in Charan; *τελευτησαντος τε αυτω του πατρος εκενυσι* “but his father dying there”, he removed from thence:”

and so says Stephen:

*he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell*; the land of Canaan; (see <sup>o1135</sup>Genesis 12:5) or “he removed himself”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; or rather “God removed him”, as the Syriac version reads, and so one copy in the Bodleian library; for it was by the order and assistance,

and under the direction and protection of God, that he came into that land: after the words

*wherein ye now dwell*, Beza's ancient copy adds, "and our fathers that were before us".

**Ver. 5.** *And he gave him none inheritance in it*, etc.] To be personally enjoyed by him; and which was a great trial to Abraham's faith, to be brought out of his country, and into another land, and which was promised to him and his; and yet, as not the whole, so not a single part of it was given him to possess:

*no, not so much as to set his foot on*: so that when Sarah his wife died, he was obliged to buy a piece of ground for a burying place to bury her in: and which could not be said to be given him by the Lord, for he bought it with his money:

*yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child*; which was another exercise of Abraham's faith, that he should have a whole country promised him and his seed, and yet had no seed given him; (see <sup><0127></sup>Genesis 12:7 13:15 15:2,3,7).

**Ver. 6.** *And God spake on this wise*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, "and God spake to him", and so does one of Beza's copies; and the Ethiopic version reads it both ways, God "said thus to Abraham", as in (<sup><0153></sup>Genesis 15:13).

*That his seed should sojourn in a strange land*; or "be a stranger in a land not theirs"; first in the land of Canaan, and then in Egypt, which were possessed by other persons, the natives of them:

*and that they should bring them into bondage*; that is, the inhabitants of the lands, and particularly Egypt, should bring the seed of Abraham into bondage, as they did; and very hard bondage it was, at least some part of it:

*and entreat them evil four hundred years*; which must be reckoned not from the time of their going down into Egypt, which to their coming up out of it were but two hundred and ten years, but from the birth of Isaac: which was as soon as Abraham had the promised seed, and may be reckoned after this manner; from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob, sixty years, (<sup><0226></sup>Genesis 25:26) and from thence to the coming of Jacob

into Egypt, one hundred and thirty years, (<sup>Q170</sup>Genesis 47:9) and from thence to the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, two hundred and ten years; which in all make up four hundred years; for the sojourning and evil entreating of Abraham's seed are not to be confined to the land of Egypt, but belong to other lands, where they were within this time, though that land is more especially intended; and so the Septuagint version renders the text in (<sup>Q124</sup>Exodus 12:40). "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, which they (and some copies add, and their fathers) sojourned in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, were four hundred and thirty years": and this text is differently read in the Talmuds, in one of them thus <sup>f269</sup>; "and the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt", **twxrah l kbw**, "and in all the lands, were four hundred and thirty years"; and in the other of them thus <sup>f270</sup>, "and the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt", **twxra raçbw**, "and in the rest of the lands, were four hundred years"; upon which latter the gloss has these words;

"from the time that the decree of the captivity was made between them to the birth of Isaac, were thirty years; and from the birth of Isaac, until the Israelites went out of Egypt, were four hundred years; take out of them the sixty of Isaac, and the one hundred and thirty that Jacob had lived when he went down into Egypt, and there remain two hundred and ten; and so is the decree, that "thy seed shall be a stranger in a land not theirs", (<sup>Q153</sup>Genesis 15:13) and it is not said in Egypt, but in a land not theirs; and when Isaac was born, Abraham was a sojourner in the land of the Philistines; and from thence, till they went out of Egypt, it will be found that Isaac and his seed who were the seed of Abraham, were strangers: and the thirty years before that are not numbered in the decree;"

(See Gill on "<sup>Q177</sup>Galatians 3:17").

**Ver. 7.** *And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage*, etc.] At the end of the four hundred years, and which was the Egyptian nation:

*I will judge, said God*; that is, condemn and punish them, as he did, by inflicting the ten plagues upon them:

*and after that they shall come forth*; out of the land of Egypt, and their hard bondage there; and which was brought about by the judgments executed upon the Egyptians:



*and serve me in this place*; in the land of Canaan; though these words are not to be found in (<sup><0153></sup>Genesis 15:13) what comes nearest them is in (<sup><0182></sup>Exodus 3:12). “Ye shall serve God upon this mountain”; meaning Mount Horeb, where Moses then was, and from whence the law was afterwards given.

**Ver. 8.** *And he gave him the covenant of circumcision*, etc.] Or the covenant, of which circumcision was a sign or token, (<sup><0171></sup>Genesis 17:11). Stephen speaks here in the language of the Jews, who are wont to speak of circumcision after this manner; hence in the Jewish liturgy, there is a collect, *hl ym tyrbī*, “for the covenant of circumcision” <sup>f271</sup>; and so it is said <sup>f272</sup>,

“when Joseph died, they made void the “covenant of circumcision”.”

*and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day*; according to the express command in (<sup><0172></sup>Genesis 17:12 (See Gill on “<sup><0185></sup>Philippians 3:5”))

*and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs*; the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel.

**Ver. 9.** *And the patriarchs, moved with envy*, etc.] (see <sup><0171></sup>Genesis 37:11) the sons of Jacob and brethren of Joseph were filled with envy, and enraged at him, because of the evil report of them he brought to his father; and because he had a greater share in his father’s love than they had; and because of his dreams, which signified that he should have the dominion over them, and they should be obliged to yield obedience to him: wherefore they

*sold Joseph into Egypt*; they sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver, who were going down to Egypt, and who carried him thither with them: these twenty pieces of silver, the Jews say, the ten brethren of Joseph divided among themselves; everyone took two shekels, and bought shoes for his feet; to which they apply the passage in (<sup><0186></sup>Amos 2:6) “they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes” <sup>f273</sup>; and they suggest, that the redemption of the firstborn among the Israelites on account of the selling of Joseph; they say <sup>f274</sup>,

“because they sold the firstborn of Rachel for twenty pieces of silver, let everyone redeem his son, his firstborn, with twenty pieces

of silver; says R. Phinehas, in the name of R. Levi, because they sold the firstborn of Rachel for twenty pieces of silver, and there fell to each of them a piece of coined money (the value of half a shekel), therefore let everyone pay his shekel coined.”

They also affirm <sup>f275</sup>, that the selling of Joseph was not expiated by the tribes, until they were dead, according to (<sup>2724</sup>Isaiah 22:14) and that on the account of it, there was a famine in the land of Israel seven years. There seems to be some likeness between the treatment of Joseph and Jesus Christ, which Stephen may have some respect unto; as Joseph was sold by his brethren for twenty of silver, so Christ was sold by one of his disciples, that ate bread with him, for thirty pieces of silver; and as it was through envy the brethren of Joseph used him in this manner, so it was through envy that the Jews delivered Jesus Christ to Pontius Pilate, to be condemned to death: of this selling of Joseph into Egypt, Justin the historian speaks <sup>f276</sup>; his words are,

“Joseph was the youngest of his brethren, whose excellent wit his brethren fearing, secretly took him and sold him to strange merchants, by whom he was carried into Egypt.”

And then follow other things concerning him, some true and some false; Stephen here adds,

*but God was with him;* (see <sup>433D</sup>Genesis 39:2) he was with him, and prospered him in Potiphar’s house; he was with him, and kept him from the temptations of his mistress; he was with him in prison, and supported and comforted him, and at length delivered him from it, and promoted him as follows; and caused all the evil that befell him to work for good to him and his father’s family.

**Ver. 10.** *And delivered him out of all his afflictions,* etc.] From the evil designs of his mistress, and from all the miseries of a prison:

*and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt;* so Justin in the place above cited says, that Joseph was very dear to the king; but not through his knowledge of magic arts, as he suggests, but on account of the wisdom which God gave him; for when he is said to have favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, the meaning is, that he was highly esteemed of by him, because of the wisdom he saw in him; and both the favour he had with him, and the wisdom he had in himself, were from the Lord; and in a very humble and modest manner does he speak of

himself, in (<sup><0416></sup>Genesis 41:16) which Onkelos the Targumist paraphrases thus:

““not from my wisdom”, but from the Lord, shall the peace of Pharaoh be answered;”

the name of this Pharaoh was Misphragmuthosis; by the Jews he is called Rian ben Walid <sup>f277</sup>:

*and he made him governor over Egypt*: a deputy governor under him; for Pharaoh kept the throne, and in it was greater than Joseph, and had the other ensigns of royalty, and Joseph rode in the second chariot to him:

*and all his house*; (see <sup><0440></sup>Genesis 41:40,41,43) as he had the affairs of the kingdom committed to him, so likewise the domestic affairs of Pharaoh, he was steward of his household.

**Ver. 11.** *Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt, and Canaan*, etc.] This dearth, or famine, is said to be in all lands, (<sup><0454></sup>Genesis 41:54) though only Egypt and Canaan are mentioned here, because the history is concerned with no other. The Jewish writers <sup>f278</sup> speak of three lands particularly, which were affected with it, Phenicia, Arabia, and Palestine; and this famine in the land of Israel, they say <sup>f279</sup>, which lasted seven years, was on account of the selling of Joseph into Egypt, as before observed. The Heathen writers make mention of this famine, particularly Justin <sup>f280</sup>, who speaking of Joseph says, that he foresaw many years before the barrenness of the fields; and all Egypt would have perished with famine, had not the king, through his advice, ordered by an edict, that corn should be laid up for many years: this was the fifth of the ten famines, the Jews say have been, or shall be in the world <sup>f281</sup>:

*and great affliction*; meaning the famine, which was very severe, and lasted a long time, even seven years: want of eating is called *ywny* [ , “affliction”, by the Jews <sup>f282</sup>; by which they mean fasting, which is a voluntary want of eating, or abstinence from it; and if that is an affliction, then much more want of food, or abstinence through necessity; compare (<sup><5450></sup>1 Timothy 5:10).

*And our fathers found not sustenance*; Jacob and his family could not get sufficient provision for them in the land of Canaan, where they then were, but were obliged to go to Egypt for it.

**Ver. 12.** *But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt*, etc.] Not then growing, or gathering in there, or that was of that year's produce; for the famine was strong in the land of Egypt, as well as in Canaan; but was what had been laid up, and preserved in the seven years of plenty, by the order and care of Joseph; which by some means or another, Jacob had heard of; (see <sup><0440></sup>Genesis 42:1,2) the Jews suggest <sup>f283</sup>, that it was by divine revelation:

*he sent out our fathers first*; the first time, or the first year of the famine; or he sent them first, he laid his commands on them, or they had not gone; these were the ten sons of Jacob, and brethren of Joseph, who were sent the first time, for Benjamin stayed with his father: (see <sup><0440></sup>Genesis 42:3,13).

**Ver. 13.** *And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren*, etc.] That is, when the brethren of Joseph went a second time down to Egypt for corn, Joseph made himself known unto them, (<sup><0440></sup>Genesis 45:1).

*And Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh*; for though it was known before that he was an Hebrew, (see <sup><0397></sup>Genesis 39:17 41:12) yet it was not known of what family he was, who was his father, or his brethren, but now it was known, (<sup><0456></sup>Genesis 45:16).

**Ver. 14.** *Then sent Joseph*, etc.] Gifts and presents to his father, and wagons, to fetch down him and his family into Egypt, (<sup><0452></sup>Genesis 45:21,23).

*and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls*; which seems to disagree with the account of Moses, who says, that "all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten", (<sup><0457></sup>Genesis 46:27). But there is no contradiction; Moses and Stephen are speaking of different things; Moses speaks of the seed of Jacob, which came out of his loins, who came into Egypt, and so excludes his sons' wives; Stephen speaks of Jacob and all his kindred, among whom his sons' wives must be reckoned, whom Joseph called to him: according to Moses's account, the persons that came with Jacob into Egypt, who came out of his loins, and so exclusive of his sons' wives, were threescore and six; to which if we add Jacob himself, and Joseph who was before in Egypt, and who might be truly said to come into it, and his two sons that were born there, who came thither in his loins, as others in the account may be said to do, who were not yet born, when Jacob went

down, the total number is threescore and ten, (<sup><0465></sup>Genesis 46:26,27) out of which take the six following persons, Jacob, who was called by Joseph into Egypt, besides the threescore and fifteen souls, and Joseph and his two sons then in Egypt, who could not be said to be called by him, and Hezron and Hamul, the sons of Pharez not yet born, and this will reduce Moses's number to sixty four; to which sixty four, if you add the eleven wives of Jacob's sons, who were certainly part of the kindred called and invited into Egypt, (<sup><0450></sup>Genesis 45:10,19 45:5) it will make up completely threescore and fifteen persons: or the persons called by Joseph maybe reckoned thus; his eleven brethren and sister Dinah, fifty two brother's children, to which add his brethren's eleven wives, and the amount is threescore and fifteen: so that the Jew <sup>f284</sup> has no reason to charge Stephen with an error, as he does; nor was there any need to alter and corrupt the Septuagint version of (<sup><0457></sup>Genesis 45:27) to make it agree with Stephen's account; or to add five names in it, in (<sup><0470></sup>Acts 7:20) as Machir, Galaad, Sutalaam, Taam, and Edom, to make up the number seventy five: and it may be observed, that the number is not altered in the version of (<sup><0502></sup>Deuteronomy 10:22) which agrees with the Hebrew for seventy persons.

**Ver. 15.** *So Jacob went down into Egypt*, etc.] At the invitation of his son Joseph:

*and died, he, and our fathers*; both Jacob and his twelve sons died in Egypt, though we have no account of the death of any of them, but Jacob and Joseph, particularly; only in general, that Joseph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation, (<sup><0483></sup>Genesis 49:33 50:26) (<sup><0006></sup>Exodus 1:6) the Syriac version adds "there", that is, in Egypt.

**Ver. 16.** *And were carried over into Sichem*, etc.] The Syriac version reads in the singular number, "and he was translated into Sichem, and laid", etc. as if this was said of Jacob only, whereas he is not spoken of at all, only the fathers, the twelve patriarchs; for Jacob, though he was carried out of Egypt, he was not buried in Sichem, but in the cave of Machpelah, (<sup><0403></sup>Genesis 50:13). But Joseph and the rest of the patriarchs, who died in Egypt, when the children of Israel came out from thence, they brought their bones along with them, and buried them in Sichem: of the burial of Joseph there, there is no doubt, since it is expressly affirmed in (<sup><0282></sup>Joshua 24:32) and that the rest of the patriarchs were buried there, and not in Hebron, as Josephus asserts <sup>f285</sup>, may be concluded from hence; because in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron, there are never mentioned more in

Jewish writers <sup>f286</sup>, than these four couple; Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; from whence, they say, Hebron was called Kirjath Arba, the city of four; as also, because it is the general consent of the Jews; and if they had not agreed in it, or said nothing about it, the thing is natural to suppose, that the children of Israel brought the bones of all the patriarchs out of Egypt, along with Joseph's <sup>f287</sup>; and since they buried the bones of Joseph in Sichem, it is most reasonable to believe, that the rest were buried there likewise; though it must be owned, that there is an entire silence about them, even when the sepulchre of Joseph is taken notice of: so R. Benjamin speaking of the Samaritans says <sup>f288</sup>,

“among them is the sepulchre of Joseph the righteous, the son of Jacob our father, on whom be peace, as it is said, (~~f164E~~-Joshua 24:32).”

And says another of their writers <sup>f289</sup>,

“from Sichem about a sabbath day's journey, in a village, called Belata, there Joseph the just was buried;”

but of the rest, no mention is made:

*and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sichem*; the last clause, the father “of Sichem”, is left out in the Syriac version; and the Alexandrian copy reads it, “in Sichem”; as if it was the name of a place, and not of a man: the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, “the son of Sichem”; whereas it is certain, that Sichem was the son of Emmor, or Hamor, (~~f0339~~-Genesis 33:19 34:6) unless it can be thought there were two Sichems, one that was the father of Emmor, and another that was his son: but the great difficulty is, how the sepulchre in which the fathers were laid at Sichem, can be said to be bought by Abraham of the sons of Emmor, when what Abraham bought was the field and cave of Machpelah; and that not of the sons of Emmor, but of the sons of Heth, and of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hitrite, (~~f02316~~-Genesis 23:16,17). Whereas the parcel of ground in Sichem, bought of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sichem, was bought by Jacob, (~~f0339~~-Genesis 33:19) (~~f164E~~-Joshua 24:32). Various things are suggested, to reconcile this; some think the word Abraham is an interpolation, and that it should be read, which he (Jacob) bought; but to support this, no copy can be produced: others observe, that it may be read, which he bought for Abraham; that is, which Jacob bought for Abraham

and his seed, as a pledge of the inheritance of the whole land, promised unto him; others think that by Abraham is meant a son of Abraham, that is, Jacob; as children are sometimes called by their father's name; as the Messiah is called David, and the like; but what best seems to remove the difficulty is, that the words refer to both places and purchases; to the field of Machpelah bought by Abraham, and to the parcel of field is Sichem bought by Jacob, of the sons of Emmor; for the words with the repetition of the phrase, "in the sepulchre", may be read thus; "and were laid in the sepulchre, that Abraham bought for a sum of money", and in the sepulchre (bought by Jacob) "of the sons of Emmor", the father of Sichem; or the words may be rendered thus, "they were carried over into Sichem, and laid in the sepulchre which Abraham bought for a sum of money, besides" that "of the sons of Emmor", the father "of Sichem"; namely, which Jacob bought, and in which Joseph was laid, (<sup><0139></sup>Genesis 33:19, <sup><0242></sup>Joshua 24:32). And this agrees with Stephen's account and design, in the preceding verse; he observes, that Jacob died in Egypt, and all the twelve patriarchs; and here he tells us how they were disposed of, and where they were buried, both Jacob and his sons; they were removed from Egypt, and brought into the land of Canaan; Jacob, he was laid in the cave of Machpelah, in the sepulchre Abraham bought of the children of Heth; and Joseph and his brethren, they were laid in the sepulchre at Sichem, which Jacob bought of the sons of Emmor: upon the whole, the charge of several errors brought by the <sup>f290</sup> Jew against Stephen appears to be groundless; the sum this sepulchre was bought for was an hundred pieces of money, (<sup><0339></sup>Genesis 33:19).

**Ver. 17.** *But when the time of the promise drew nigh*, etc.] That is, the time of the four hundred years; when God promised to deliver the seed of Abraham out of their affliction and servitude, and bring them into the land of Canaan to inherit it:

*which God had sworn to Abraham*; in (<sup><0153></sup>Genesis 15:13,14) for though there is no express mention made of an oath, yet there is a most solemn affirmation, which is equivalent to one; the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read,

*which God promised unto Abraham; the people grew and multiplied in Egypt*; (see <sup><0107></sup>Exodus 1:7) insomuch, that though their number were but threescore and ten when they went down to Egypt, and though various methods were taken to destroy them, and lessen their numbers, yet in little

more than two hundred years, their number was increased to six hundred thousand, and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men, besides old men, women, and children, and besides two and twenty thousand Levites, (<sup>(-00146)</sup>Numbers 1:46, 3:39). And it seems, that they multiplied the more towards the time when the promise of deliverance drew nigh to be accomplished, and even when they were the most afflicted, (<sup>(-00112)</sup>Exodus 1:12,20).

**Ver. 18.** *Till another king arose*, etc.] In, or over Egypt, as the Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read; in (<sup>(-0008)</sup>Exodus 1:8) it is a new king; the Jewish writers are divided about him, whether he was a different king from the former; or only so called, because he made new edicts <sup>f291</sup>:

“Rab and Samuel, one says a new one absolutely: and the other says, because his decrees were renewed; he that says a new one absolutely, (thinks so) because it is written a new one; and he who says, because his decrees are renewed (or he makes new decrees, he thinks so) from hence, because it is not written, and he died, and there reigned; and (it makes) for him that says, because his decrees are renewed, what is written, “who knew not Joseph”; what is the meaning of that, “who knew not Joseph?” that he was like one who knew not Joseph at all.”

The Septuagint version of (<sup>(-0008)</sup>Exodus 1:8) renders it “another” king, as does Stephen here; another king from the Pharaoh of Joseph: the name of this was Ramesses Miamun; and one of the treasure cities built for him seems to be called after his name, Raamses, (<sup>(-00111)</sup>Exodus 1:11). The Jews call him Talma <sup>f292</sup> and by Theophilus of Antioch <sup>f293</sup> he is called Tethmosis; and by Artapanus <sup>f294</sup>, Palmanotha: “which knew not Joseph”; nor what great things he had done, to the advantage of the Egyptian nation; he was acquainted with the history of him, and of his worthy deeds, and therefore had no regard to his people, as the other Pharaoh had Josephus <sup>f295</sup> says, the kingdom was translated to another family; which might be the reason why he was not known, nor his friends taken notice of: Aben Ezra says, he was not of the seed royal; wherefore it is written, “and there arose”; he the kingdom, and had not a just right and title so that being a stranger, it is no wonder that he should not know Joseph; Jarchi’s note is,

“he made himself as if he did not know him”



he dissembled, he pretended ignorance of him, because he would show no respect unto his people. Beza's ancient copy, and another in the Bodleian library, read, "which remembered not Joseph".

**Ver. 19.** *The same dealt subtilly with our kindred*, etc.] See (<sup><4010></sup>Exodus 1:10) he took crafty, and yet cruel methods, to diminish the children of Israel, and to humble them; weakening their strength by labour, that they might not be able to beget children; ordering the Hebrew midwives to kill all the males that were born; and charging all his people to drown such male children that should escape the hands of the midwives;

*and evil entreated our fathers*; keeping them to hard labour, in mortar and brick, and all rural service; in which he made them to serve with rigour, and thereby made their lives bitter to them; employing them in building cities, pyramids, walls, and towers; making ditches, throwing up trenches, cutting watercourses, and turning rivers, with other things; which he added, setting taskmasters over them, to afflict them with burdens:

*so that they cast out their young children*, or "by making their children cast out": or as the Arabic version renders it, "by making that their children should be cast out": that is, by ordering his people to expose them to ruin, and to cast them in the rivers; and so the Syriac version, "and he commanded that their children be cast out"; for this refers to Pharaoh, and his orders to his officers and people, to cast out the male children of the Israelites; and not to the parents of the children, which our version and the Vulgate Latin incline to: for though Moses's mother, after she had hid him three months, put him into an ark of bulrushes, and laid him among the flags by the river's side, yet that was in order to save his life: whereas the end of the casting out of these young children was as follows,

*to the end they might not live*: for this has not respect unto the parents of the children, that they might not increase or multiply their offspring, but to the young children, that they being cast into the waters, might perish, and not live and become men; the Ethiopic version is rather a paraphrase, "and he commanded that they should kill every male that was born".

**Ver. 20.** *In which time Moses was born*, etc.] The word Moses, is differently written in the New Testament; sometimes Moses, as here, sometimes Mo-yseus, as in (<sup><4075></sup>Acts 7:35,37) sometimes Mo-yseus, as in (<sup><4150></sup>Acts 15:1,5,21) and sometimes Moseus, as in (<sup><4154></sup>Romans 5:14). He had his name from the Hebrew word, **hçm**, which signifies "to draw",

(<sup>f295</sup>Psalm 18:16) according to the reason of it given by Pharaoh's daughter,

*she called his name Moses; and she said, because I drew him out of the water,* (<sup>f296</sup>Exodus 2:10) Though Josephus<sup>f296</sup>, Philo<sup>f297</sup>, and others<sup>f298</sup>, make it to be an Egyptian name; the former of which serves, that the Egyptians call water "Mo", and "yses", such who are saved from water; wherefore compounding the name of both, they gave it to him: though according to Aben Ezra<sup>f299</sup>, his name in the Egyptian language was Monios; his words are these,

"the name of Moses is interpreted out of the Egyptian language into the Hebrew language, for his name in the Egyptian language was Monios; and so it is written in a book of agriculture, translated out of the Egyptian language into the Arabic, and also in the books of some Greek writers."

Moses had many names, as a Jewish chronologer observes<sup>f300</sup>;

"Pharaoh's daughter called his name Moses; his father called him Chabar, or Heber; his mother called him Jekuthiel; and his sister called him Jether (perhaps Jared, since this was one of his names); and his brethren called him Abizanoah; and Kohath called him Abi Socos; and the Israelites called him Shemaiah ben Nathaneel, and sometimes Tobiah, sometimes Shemaiah, and sometimes Sopher; but the Egyptians called him Monios."

For "Mo", in the Egyptian language, signifies "water", and "Ni" is "out"; and so both together signify, "out of the water", which agrees with the Hebrew etymology of his name. Now he was born at the time that orders were given by Pharaoh to cast all the male children of the Israelites into the rivers, to drown them; Moses was born, whose parents were Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi; he was born, according to the Jews<sup>f301</sup>, on the seventh day of Adar, or February:

*and was exceeding fair*; or "fair to God"; divinely fair and beautiful; and so Pharaoh's daughter, according to Josephus, said to her father, that she had brought up a child that was *μορφη ψειον*<sup>f302</sup> "in form divine": and so the Jews say<sup>f303</sup>, that his form was as an angel of God; or he was fair in the sight of God, as the Ethiopic version; the Syriac version renders it, "he was dear to God"; and the Vulgate Latin version, grateful to God; was well-pleasing to him, in whom he delighted, having designed to do great things

by him: or “fair by God”: he had a peculiar beauty put upon him by God; partly to engage his parents the more to seek the preservation of him; and partly to engage the affection of Pharaoh’s daughter to him, when she should see him. Justin the historian <sup>f304</sup> makes mention of his extraordinary beauty, for which he was praised; but very wrongly makes him to be the son of Joseph; and the account Josephus gives of it, is very remarkable <sup>f305</sup>;

“as to beauty, says he, no man could be so out of love with it, as to see the goodly form of Moses, and not be amazed; it happened to many who met him, as he was carried along the way, that they would turn back at the sight of the child, and neglect their business, to indulge themselves with the sight of him; for such was the loveliness of the child, that it detained those that saw him.”

The Arabic version renders it, he “was consecrated by a vow to God”; but of this we have no account: the Jews say <sup>f306</sup>, that

“the Spirit of God came upon Miriam, and she prophesied; saying, behold a son shall be born to my father and to my mother at this time, who shall save Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians — and it is further said, that at the time of his birth, the whole house was filled with a great light, as the light of the sun and moon;”

upon which they had raised expectations of him: though this phrase, “fair to God”, may be only an Hebraism, just as Niniveh is said to be a city “great to God”, i.e. exceeding great, (Jon 3:3) it being usual with the Jews to join the word God to an adjective, to express the superlative degree; and so it is rightly rendered here, “exceeding fair: and nourished up in his father’s house three months”; so long he was hid by his mother there, which was a great instance of her faith; (see ~~<III>~~ Exodus 2:2, ~~<SI123>~~ Hebrews 11:23). The reason why he was kept no longer there was, because as the Jews say <sup>f307</sup>, the three months after Jochebed was delivered of a son, the thing was known in the house of Pharaoh, wherefore she could hide him no longer.

**Ver. 21.** *And when he was cast out*, etc.] Into the river, or by the river, as some copies read; the Syriac version adds, by his own people; by his father and mother and sister; who might be all concerned in it, and were privy to it; and which was done after this manner; his mother perceiving she could keep him no longer, made an ark of bulrushes, daubed with slime and pitch, into which she put him; and then laid it in the flags, by the river’s side, and

set his sister Miriam at a proper distance, to observe what would be done to him, (<sup>4088</sup>Exodus 2:3,4).

*Pharaoh's daughter took him up*; her name, according to Josephus <sup>f308</sup>, was "Thermuthis"; she is commonly, by the Jews <sup>f309</sup>, called "Bithiah"; and by Artapanus in Eusebius <sup>f310</sup>, she is called "Merrhis". This princess coming down to the river to wash, as she and her maidens were walking by the river side, spied the ark in which the child was laid, among the flags, and ordered one of her maids to go and fetch it; and which being done by her orders, is attributed to her; and opening the ark, she was struck at once with the loveliness of the babe, and being filled with compassion to it, which wept, she took him,

*and nourished him for her own son*: not that she took him to the king's palace, and brought him up there, but the case was this; Miriam the sister of Moses, observing what was done, and perceiving the inclination of Pharaoh's daughter to take care of the child, offered to call an Hebrew nurse, to nurse the child for her; to which she agreed, and accordingly went and fetched her own and the child's mother, who took it upon wages, and nursed it for her; and when it was grown, brought it to her, who adopted it for her son, (<sup>4088</sup>Exodus 2:5-10). According to Josephus <sup>f311</sup>, and some other Jewish writers <sup>f312</sup>, so it was, that when the child was taken out of the ark, the breast was offered it by several Egyptian women, one after another, and it refused to suck of either of them; and Miriam being present, as if she was only a bystander and common spectator, moved that an Hebrew woman might be sent for; which the princess approving of, she went and called her mother, whose breast the child very readily sucked; and at the request of the princess she took and nourished it for her: according to Philo the Jew <sup>f313</sup>, this princess was the king's only daughter, who had been a long time married, but had had no children, of which she was very desirous; and especially of a son, that might succeed in the kingdom, that so the crown might not pass into another family; and then relating how she came with her maidens to the river, and found the child; and how that the sister of it, by her orders, fetched an Hebrew nurse to her, which was the mother of the child, who agreed to nurse it for her; he suggests that from that time she gave out she was with child and feigned a big belly, that so the child might be thought to be *γνησιος αλλ μη υποβολιμαιος* "genuine, and not counterfeit": but according to Josephus <sup>f314</sup>, she adopted him for her son, having no legitimate offspring, and brought him to her father, and told him how she had taken him out of the

river, and had nourished him; (Josephus uses the same word as here;) and that she counted of him to make him her son, and the successor of his kingdom; upon which Pharaoh took the child into his arms, and embraced him, and put his crown upon him; which Moses rolling off, cast to the ground, and trampled upon it with his feet: other Jewish writers say <sup>f315</sup>, that he took the crown from off the king's head, and put it on his own; upon which, the magicians that were present, and particularly Balaam, addressed the king, and put him in mind of a dream and prophecy concerning the kingdom being taken from him, and moved that the child might be put to death; upon which his daughter snatched it up, and saved it, the king not being forward to have it destroyed: and they also tell this story as a means of saving it, that Jethro who was sitting by, or Gabriel in the form of one of the king's princes, suggested that the action of the child was not to be regarded, since it had no knowledge of what it did; and as a proof of it, proposed that there might be brought in a dish, a coal of fire, and a piece of gold, or a precious stone; and that if he put out his hand and laid hold on the piece of gold, or precious stone, then it would appear that he had knowledge, and deserved death; but if he took the coal, it would be a plain case that he was ignorant, and should be free: the thing took with the king and his nobles, and trial was made, and as the child put out his hand to lay hold on the piece of gold or precious stone, the angel Gabriel pushed it away, and he took the coal, and put it to his lips, and to the end of his tongue; which was the cause of his being slow of speech, and of a slow tongue: by comparing Philo's account with this text, one would be tempted to think that Pharaoh's daughter did really give out, that Moses was her own son; and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews seems to confirm this, (<sup><38124></sup>Hebrews 11:24) who says, "that Moses denied to be called, or that he was the son of Pharaoh's daughter"; as the words may be rendered.

**Ver. 22.** *And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, &c,]* Which was reckoned very considerable: (<sup><1060></sup>1 Kings 4:30) Philo the Jew says <sup>f316</sup> that he learned arithmetic, geometry, and every branch of music, the hieroglyphics, the Assyrian language, and the Chaldean knowledge of the heavens, and the mathematics; yet was not a magician, or skilled in unlawful arts, as Justin suggests <sup>f317</sup>:

*and was mighty in words;* he had a command of language, and a large flow of words, and could speak properly and pertinently upon any subject; for though he was slow of speech, and of tongue, and might have somewhat of

a stammering in speaking, yet he might have a just diction, a masculine style, and a powerful eloquence, and the matter he delivered might be very great and striking:

*and in deeds*; or in “his deeds”, as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: he was a man of great abilities, and fit for business both in the cabinet and in the field. Josephus<sup>f318</sup> relates an expedition of his against the Ethiopians, whilst he was in Pharaoh’s court, in which he obtained victory over them, when the Egyptians had been greatly oppressed by them; in which his prudence and fortitude were highly commended.

**Ver. 23.** *And when he was full forty years old*, etc.] This Stephen had from tradition, and not from Scripture, which is silent about the age of Moses at this time, and only says, “it came to pass in those days when Moses was grown”, (<sup>(A21b)</sup>Exodus 2:11) but that he was at this time at such an age, is the general sense of the Jews. Upon the above mentioned passage they have this note<sup>f319</sup>

“twenty years old was Moses at that time; and there are that say, that he was forty years old. And<sup>f320</sup> elsewhere still more particularly; Moses was “forty” years in the palace of Pharaoh, forty years in Midian, (the Amsterdam edition reads, *rbdmb*, “in the wilderness”, wrongly,) and he served Israel forty years.”

Indeed, the fabulous history of his life makes him to be but fifteen years of age at this time<sup>f321</sup>; but Stephen’s account is undoubtedly right, and which is confirmed by the above testimonies.

*It came into his heart*; by the Spirit of God, under a more than ordinary impulse of which he now was:

*to visit his brethren, the children of Israel*; whom he knew to be his brethren, partly from the common report in Pharaoh’s court concerning him, and partly from the mark of circumcision in his flesh, and chiefly from divine revelation: for some years he had lived a courtly and military life, and had took no notice of the Israelites in their oppressions; but now the Lord laid it upon his heart to visit them, and observe how things were with them; and though he could not use any public and open authority, yet Philo the Jew says<sup>f322</sup>, that he exhorted the officers to use mildness and moderation with them, and comforted and encouraged the Israelites to bear

their burdens with patience and constancy, and not sink under them; suggesting, that things would take another turn, and would change for the better in time.

**Ver. 24.** *And seeing one of them suffer wrong*, etc.] Beza's Cambridge copy, and one of Stephens's, and one in the Bodleian library add, "of his own kindred": and so (<sup><0001></sup>Exodus 2:11) he is said to be "one of his brethren"; which Aben Ezra explains, **wtj pçmm**, "of his family", one of the tribe of Levi; and so another Jewish writer <sup>f323</sup> is very particular, and says,

"Moses went out to the camp of the Israelites, and saw an Egyptian smite one of the sons of Kohath, who was of his brethren of the tribe of Levi, as it is said, (<sup><0001></sup>Exodus 2:11)."

This man, according to some of the Jewish writers <sup>f324</sup>, was the husband of Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, (<sup><0001></sup>Leviticus 24:11) but, according to others, it was Dathan <sup>f325</sup>: the cause and manner of his suffering wrong was this, as they report <sup>f326</sup>; one of the taskmasters having set his eyes upon his wife, who was a beautiful woman, came early one morning, and got him out of his house to work, and then went into his wife, and lay with her; which when the man understood, he made some disturbance about it, for which he caused him to serve in very hard bondage, and beat him severely; who flying to Moses for protection,

*he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed*; he took his part, and screened him from the insults and blows of the officer, and avenged his cause:

*and smote the Egyptian*; and killed him: it is commonly said by the Jews <sup>f327</sup>, that he killed him by the sword of his mouth, by making use of the word Jehovah; though others <sup>f328</sup> say, he smote him with his fist, which is more likely; or rather with his sword; the Ethiopic version adds, "and buried him in the sand". Beza's ancient copy, and one of Stephens's, add, "and he hid him in the sand", as it is in (<sup><0001></sup>Exodus 2:12) and which the Jews understand not literally of any sand pit, into which he might cast him, and cover him; or of the sand of the sea, near which he was, and which does not appear; but mystically of the people of Israel, comparable to the sand of the sea, among whom he hid him. So in one of their Midrashes <sup>f329</sup> it is observed on these words,

“and “he hid him in the sand”; though there were none there but the Israelites — -who are like to sand: he said unto them, ye are like the sand; take this man here and put him there, and his voice is not heard; so this thing will be hid among you, and not heard. And so you find that the thing was not heard but by the means of the Hebrews, as it is said, “and he went out on the second day, and two men of the Hebrews”, etc.”

And another of their <sup>f330</sup> writers, says, that when Moses saw the Egyptian smiting the Hebrew,

“he began to curse him, and took the sword of his lips, and killed him, and hid him in the camp of the Israelites, as it is said, (<sup><002></sup>Exodus 2:12) not in the sand, but among the Israelites: hence it is said, “the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea”, (<sup><010></sup>Hosea 1:10).”

To which may be added what one of their chronologers <sup>f331</sup> affirms, that

“Moses slew the Egyptian with the ineffable name of God, and hid him among the children of Israel, who are like to sand.”

This Egyptian is said, by Jarchi, to be one of the taskmasters who was appointed over the officers of Israel, who, from the cockcrowing, kept them to their work, which is very probable.

**Ver. 25.** *For he supposed his brethren would have understood him*, etc.] From his being an Hebrew in such high life; from his wonderful birth, and miraculous preservation in his infancy, and education in Pharaoh’s court; and from the promise of God that he would visit them and save them:

*how that God by his hand would deliver them*: wherefore he was the more emboldened to kill the Egyptian, believing that his brethren would make no advantage of it against him; but look upon it as a beginning and pledge of their deliverance by him:

*but they understood not*; or “him not”, as the Ethiopic version reads; they did not understand that he was to be their deliverer, or that this action of his was a token of it.

**Ver. 26.** *And the next day he showed himself to them, as they strove*, etc.] To two men of the Hebrews, who were quarrelling and contending with one another: these are said by the Jews <sup>f332</sup> to be Dathan and Abiram; who



were disputing and litigating the point, and were very warm, and at high words. The occasion of their contention is <sup>f333</sup> said to be this,

“the Hebrew man (that had been abused) went to his house to divorce his wife, who was defiled, but she fled and told the affair to Abiram her brother: and on the morrow, Moses returned a second time to the Hebrew camp, and found Dathan and Abiram contending about the divorce.”

Though some think this is prophetically said, because they afterwards contended and divided in the business of Korah <sup>f334</sup> Moses came up to them, and let them know who he was; and this was the day after he had killed the Egyptian. So Stephen explains the “second day” in (<sup>ⲉⲙⲓⲃ</sup>Exodus 2:13) and to this agrees what a Jewish writer <sup>f335</sup> says, that in the morning, Moses returned a second time to the camp of the Hebrews:

*and would have set them at one again*; persuaded them to peace and concord, composed their difference, reconciled them, and made them good friends:

*saying, sirs, ye are brethren*; as Abraham said to Lot, when there was a strife between their herdsmen, (<sup>ⲉⲙⲓⲃ</sup>Genesis 13:8) and if these two were Dathan and Abiram, they were brethren in the strictest sense, (<sup>ⲉⲙⲓⲃ</sup>Numbers 16:1)

*why do ye wrong one to another?* by abusing each other, calling ill names, or striking one another; or by lifting up the hand to strike, as Jonathan the Targumist says Dathan did against Abiram.

**Ver. 27.** *But he that did his neighbour wrong*, etc.] Who seems to be the same person whom Moses had defended the day before; and, according to the Jews, must be Dathan <sup>f336</sup>: the same

*thrust him away*; from them, when he went to part them, and persuade them to be good friends:

*saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?* which was very ungrateful, if he was the man he had delivered the day before; and very impertinent, since he did not take upon him to rule and judge, but only to exhort and persuade to peace and brotherly love: the language suits with the spirit of Dathan or Abiram; (<sup>ⲉⲙⲓⲃ</sup>Numbers 16:3,12,13) This is thought to be said to him by way of contempt of him, as being a very young man:

the words are thus commented on in one of the ancient commentaries of the Jews <sup>f337</sup>,

“R. Judah says, Moses was twenty years of age at that time: wherefore it was said to him, thou art not yet fit to be a prince and a judge over us, seeing one of forty years of age is a man of understanding. And R. Nehemiah says, he was forty years of age; (See Gill on “<sup><4073></sup>Acts 7:23”) and it was said to him, truly thou art a man, but thou art not fit to be a prince and a judge over us: and the Rabbans say, he said to him, art thou not the son of Jochebed, though they call thee the son of Bithiah? and dost thou seek to be a prince and a judge over us? it is known concerning thee what thou didst to the Egyptian.”

**Ver. 28.** *Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?*] That is, is it thy will? dost thou design to kill me? or, as in (<sup><4024></sup>Exodus 2:14) “intendest” thou to kill me? In the Hebrew text it is, “wilt thou kill me, dost thou say?” that is, as Aben Ezra rightly interprets it, dost thou say so “in thine heart?” which is a much better observation than that of Jarchi’s;

“from hence we learn, says he, that he slew him by the ineffable name:”

though this is the sense of some of their ancient doctors <sup>f338</sup>;

““to kill me dost thou say?” it is not said, “dost thou seek?” but “dost thou say?” from whence you may learn, that the ineffable name was made mention of over the Egyptian, and he slew him.”

The word “yesterday” is added by Stephen, but with great truth and propriety, and is in the Septuagint version of (<sup><4024></sup>Exodus 2:14). The “as” here does not intend the manner of killing, whether by the fist or sword, or by pronouncing the word Jehovah, as Jarchi thinks, but killing itself, by whatsoever way; and the words were very spitefully said, on purpose to publish the thing, and to expose Moses to danger of life, as it did.

**Ver. 29.** *Then fled Moses at this saying,* etc.] For hereby the thing was known to Pharaoh, being presently carried to court, who sought to kill him for it, (<sup><4025></sup>Exodus 2:15) The Jews have a very fabulous story, that Moses was taken up upon it, and put in prison, and delivered into the hands of an executioner to be put to death; but that God wrought a miracle for him; he made his neck as hard as a pillar of marble, and the sword turned upon the

neck of the executioner, and he died; and God sent Michael, the prince, in the likeness of the executioner, who took Moses by the hand, and led him out of Egypt, and left him at the borders of it, the distance of three days' journey<sup>f339</sup> but the truth of the matter is, as Stephen relates, he fled directly, as soon as he heard the above words, for he knew his life was in the utmost danger:

*and was a stranger in the land of Madian*; which, as Josephus says<sup>f340</sup>, lay near the Red sea, and took its name from one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah. Philo the Jew<sup>f341</sup> says, it was on the borders of Arabia; and according to Jerom<sup>f342</sup>, it was near Arnon and Areopolis, the ruins of which only were shown in his days; here he sojourned many years with Jethro the priest of that place:

*where he begat two sons*; whose names were Gershom and Eliezer, having married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, (<sup><4012></sup>Exodus 18:2-4).

**Ver. 30.** *And when forty years were expired*, etc.] “Forty other years” the Arabic version reads; for so long the Jews<sup>f343</sup> say Moses kept Jethro's flock, and so many years he lived in Midian; and so the Syriac version, “when then he had filled up forty years”; which agrees exactly with the account of the Jewish writers observed on (<sup><4023></sup>Acts 7:23) who say, that he was forty years in Pharaoh's court, and forty years in Midian; so that he was now, as they<sup>f344</sup> elsewhere justly observe, fourscore years of age:

*there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai*; the same with Horeb, (<sup><4011></sup>Exodus 3:1) where it is said, “Moses came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb”; where he saw the sight of the burning bush, and out of which the angel appeared to him: and Stephen is to be justified in calling it Mount Sinai; the account which Jerom<sup>f345</sup> gives of it is this;

“Horeb is the Mount of God in the land of Midian, by Mount Sinai, above Arabia, in the desert, to which is joined the mountain and desert of the Saracenes, called Pharan: but to me it seems, that the same mountain was called by two names, sometimes Sinai, and sometimes Horeb;”

and in which he was right. Some think the same mountain had two tops, and one went by one name, and the other by another; or one side of the mountain was called Horeb, from its being dry and desolate; and the other Sinai, from the bushes and brambles which grew upon it. So <sup>^</sup>nynys,

“Sinin”, in the Misna <sup>f346</sup>, signifies the thin barks of bramble bushes; and the bush hereafter mentioned, in the Hebrew language, is called *hns*, “Seneh”; from whence, with the Jews, it is said to have its name.

“Says <sup>f347</sup> R. Eliezer, from the day the heavens and the earth were created, the name of this mountain was called Horeb; but after the holy blessed God appeared to Moses out of the midst of the bush, from the name of the bush “(Seneh)”, Horeb was called Sinai.”

Some say the stones of this mountain, when broken, had the resemblance of bramble bushes <sup>f348</sup> in them. Add to this, that Josephus <sup>f349</sup> calls this mountain by the same name as Stephen does, when he is reciting the same history. Moses, he says,

“led the flock to the Sinaean mountain, as it is called: this is the highest mountain in that country, and best for pasture, abounding in good herbage; and because it was commonly believed the Divine Being dwelt there, it was not before fed upon, the shepherds not daring to go up to it.”

Here Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law; for to such a life did he condescend, who for forty years had been brought up in the court of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. Here appeared to him

*an angel of the Lord*, and who was no other than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as appears from (<sup>4172</sup>Acts 7:32) and was the second person in the Trinity, the Son of God, the angel of the divine presence, and of the covenant, an uncreated angel. And this is the sense of many of the Jewish writers, who interpret it of the angel the Redeemer, the God of Bethel <sup>f350</sup>; though Jonathan the paraphrast seems to understand it of a created angel, whose name he calls Zagnugael <sup>f351</sup>, and some say it was Michael, and some Gabriel <sup>f352</sup>.

*In a flame of fire in a bush*; and which yet was not consumed by it. This bush was a bramble bush, or thorn; so Aben Ezra <sup>f353</sup> says it was a kind of thorn, and observes, that in the Ishmaelitish or Turkish language, the word signifies a kind of dry thorn; and so Philo the Jew says <sup>f354</sup>, it was a thorny plant, and very weak; and therefore it was the more wonderful, that it should be on fire, and not consumed. Josephus <sup>f355</sup> affirms, that neither its verdure, nor its flowers were hurt, nor any of its fruitful branches

consumed, though the flame was exceeding fierce. The Jerusalem Targum of (<sup><1111></sup>Exodus 3:2) is,

“and he saw and beheld the bush burned with fire, and the bush **byj rm**: “became green”; or, as Buxtorf renders it, “emitted a moisture”, and was not burnt.”

This sight, the Arabic writers <sup>f356</sup> say, Moses saw at noon day. Artapanus <sup>f357</sup>, an ancient writer, makes mention of this burning, but takes no notice of the bush; yea, denies that there was anything woody in the place, and represents it only as a stream of fire issuing out of the earth: his words are,

“as he (Moses) was praying, suddenly fire broke out of the earth, and burned, when there was nothing woody, nor any matter fit for burning in the place.”

But Philo better describes it; speaking of the bush, he says <sup>f358</sup>,

“no one bringing fire to it, suddenly it burned, and was all in a flame from the root to the top, as if it was from a flowing fountain, and remained whole and unhurt, as if it was no fuel for the fire, but was nourished by it.”

The Jews allegorize this vision different ways: sometimes they say <sup>f359</sup>,

“the fire designs the Israelites, who are compared to fire, as it is said, (Obidiah 1:18) “the house of Jacob shall be a fire”; and the bush denotes the nations of the world, which are compared to thorns and thistles; so shall the Israelites be among the people, their fire shall not consume the people, who are like to thorns and briars; nor shall the nations of the world extinguish their flame, which is the words of the law: but in the world to come, the fire of the Israelites shall consume all people, who are compared to thorns and thistles, according to (<sup><2331></sup>Isaiah 33:12)”

But it is much better observed in the same place;

“the bush pricks, afflicts, and gives pain, why does he (the Lord) dwell in affliction and anguish? because he saw the Israelites in great affliction, he also dwelt with them in affliction, as it is said, (<sup><2330></sup>Isaiah 63:9) “in all their affliction he was afflicted””

And very appropriately is it remarked by Philo <sup>f360</sup>;

“the burning bush (says he) is a symbol of the oppressed, the flaming fire, of the oppressors; and whereas that which was burning was not burnt, it shows, that they that are oppressed shall not perish by those who attempt it; and that their attempt shall be in vain, and they shall escape safe.”

And so Aben Ezra has this note on (~~Exod~~ Exodus 3:2).

“the enemy is compared to fire, and Israel to the bush, wherefore it was not burnt:”

this may be very well considered as an emblem of the state of the Jewish people in fiery trials, and very severe afflictions; who were like a bush for the number of its twigs and branches, they being many, and for its weakness and liableness to be consumed by fire, and yet wonderfully preserved by the power and presence of God among them.

**Ver. 31.** *When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight*, etc.] To see a bush on fire was no extraordinary thing; but to see a bush on fire, and yet not consumed by it, which was the case here, was wonderful indeed: and that an angel of the Lord, or the Lord himself, should appear in it, made it still more amazing; though, as yet, this was not observed by Moses, only the former; and which struck him with wonder, and excited his curiosity:

*and as he drew near to behold it*; to take a more exact view of it, and satisfy himself with the truth of it, and, if it was possible, to find out the reason why it was not burnt:

*the voice of the Lord came unto him*; to his ears, out of the bush, and expressed the following words.

**Ver. 32.** *Saying, I am the God of thy fathers*, etc.] Who made a covenant with them, promised the land of Canaan to them, and to their posterity, and to bring the children of Israel out of their servitude and bondage, and into the possession of the promised land:

*the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; words which our Lord makes use of to prove the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, since God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, (See Gill on “~~Mat~~ Matthew 22:32”)

*Then Moses trembled*; this Stephen had by tradition; in which way also the author of the epistle to the Hebrews had the account of his trembling and quaking at the same mount, when the law was given, (<sup><3821></sup>Hebrews 12:21)

*and durst not behold*; either “the sight” of the burning bush, and curiously consider and inquire into that, as the Syriac version reads; or him, as the Ethiopic version; that is, God, and which is expressed in (<sup><1006></sup>Exodus 3:6)

**Ver. 33.** *Then said the Lord to him*, etc.] To Moses, who through curiosity had made too near an approach:

*put off thy shoes from thy feet*; in token of humility, obedience, and reverence:

*for the place where thou standest is holy ground*; not really, but relatively, on account of the divine presence in it, and only so long as that continued.

**Ver. 34.** *I have seen, I have see the affliction of my people*, &c] The repetition of the phrase denotes the certainty of it, the exquisite and exact knowledge the Lord took of the affliction of his people, and how much his heart was affected with it:

*which is in Egypt*; from whence Moses had fled and had left them, he being now in the land of Midian, which was the place of his sojourning: and

*I have heard their groaning*; under their various oppressions and burdens, and by reason of the cruel usage of their taskmasters:

*and am come down to deliver them*; not by local motion, or change of place, God being omnipresent, who fills all places at all times; but by the effects of his grace and power.

*And now come, I will send thee into Egypt*; to Pharaoh, the king of it, (<sup><1000></sup>Exodus 3:10) to require of him to let the children of Israel go, and to deliver them out of their bondage.

**Ver. 35.** *This Moses, whom they refused*, etc.] That is, the Israelites; the Ethiopic version reads, “his kinsmen denied”; those of his own nation, and even of his family: “saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge?” as Dathan, or whoever said the words in (<sup><4077></sup>Acts 7:27).

*the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer*; or “a redeemer”; so the Jews often call Moses, saying <sup>f361</sup>

“as was the first redeemer, so shall be the last Redeemer.”

He was an eminent type of the Messiah; and the redemption of the people of Israel out of the Egyptian bondage, by him, was emblematical of redemption from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law by Jesus Christ; and as Moses had his mission and commission from God, so had Jesus Christ, as Mediator; and as Moses was despised by his brethren, and yet made the ruler and deliverer of them, so, though Jesus was set at nought by the Jews, yet he was made both Lord and Christ, and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour. Moses was sent “by the hands of the angel, which appeared to him in the bush”; and who was the second person in the Godhead; the Father sent him by the Son, not as an instrument, but as having the power and authority over him, to govern, direct, and assist him. The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin version read, “with the hand of the angel”; he sent Moses along with him to be used by him as an instrument in his hand, to deliver the people of Israel; nor does this at all contradict what the Jews say<sup>f362</sup> at the time of the passover:

“and the Lord hath brought us out of Egypt, *Æal m ydy I [ al* ,  
 “not by the hands of an angel”, nor by the hands of a seraph, nor by the hands of a messenger, but the holy blessed God, by his own glory, by himself;”

for he did not deliver them by a created angel, but by an uncreated one.

**Ver. 36.** *He brought them out*, etc.] Of Egypt, and delivered them from all their oppressions in it:

*after that he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt*; by turning his rod into a serpent, and by his rod swallowing up the rods of the Egyptians, and by the ten plagues, which were inflicted on Pharaoh, and his people, for not letting the children of Israel go:

*and in the Red sea*; by dividing the waters of it, so that the people of Israel went through it as on dry ground, which Pharaoh and his army attempting to do, were drowned. This sea is called the Red sea, not from the natural colour of the water, which is the same with that of other seas; nor from the appearance of it through the rays of the sun upon it, or the shade of the red mountains near it; but from Erythrus, to whom it formerly belonged, and whose name signifies red; and is no other than Esau, whose name was Edom, which signifies the same; it lay near his country: it is called in the



Hebrew tongue the sea of Suph, from the weeds that grew in it; and so it is in the Syriac version here:

*and in the wilderness forty years*; where wonders were wrought for the people in providing food for them, and in preserving them from their enemies, when at last they were brought out of it into Canaan's land, by Joshua. This exactly agrees with what has been before observed on (<sup><4073></sup>Acts 7:23) from the Jewish writings, that Moses was forty years in Pharaoh's court, forty years in Midian, and forty years in the wilderness.

**Ver. 37.** *This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel*, etc.] What is recorded in (<sup><6185></sup>Deuteronomy 18:15).

*a prophet*, etc. (See Gill on "<sup><4192></sup>Acts 3:22").

**Ver. 38.** *This is he that was in the church in the wilderness*, etc.] Which must be understood of the children of Israel, who were the then church of God, whom he had chosen and separated from the rest of the world, to be a peculiar people to himself, to whom were given the word and ordinances, the service of God, and the promises; and God always had, and will have a church, though that is sometimes in the wilderness; which has been the case under the Gospel dispensation, as well as before; (<sup><6116></sup>Revelation 12:6,14) and it was a peculiar honour to Moses, that he was in this church, though it was in the wilderness; even a greater honour than to be in Pharaoh's court. This has a particular respect to the time when all Israel were encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai, when Moses was not only in the midst of them, and at the head of them; but was

*with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sina*: this is the same angel as before, in (<sup><4073></sup>Acts 7:30) and refers either to his speaking to him then, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, etc. which was at Mount Sinai; or rather to the time when the law was given on that mount; and it may be to both; it is true of each, though it, may more especially regard the latter; for it was the angel of the divine presence, the second person in the Trinity, the word of God, that bid Moses come up into the mount; and who spake all the ten words to him; and who is described in so grand and august a manner in (<sup><6312></sup>Deuteronomy 33:2)

*and with our fathers*; the Jewish ancestors, who came out of Egypt under Moses, with whom he was as their deliverer and ruler, their guide and governor:

*who received the lively oracles to give unto us*; he received from the angel which spake to him the law, to deliver to the children of Israel; which is called “the oracles”, because it came from God, and contained his mind and will, and was a sure and infallible declaration of it; and “lively” ones, because delivered “viva voce”, with an articulate voice, and in audible sounds, and because it is quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it, “the words of life”: not that the law gives life, or points out the way of life and salvation to sinful men; it is to them all the reverse; it is the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death: it is indeed a rule of life, or of walk and conversation to men, and it promises life in case of perfect obedience, (~~<8885>~~ Leviticus 18:5, ~~<6309>~~ Deuteronomy 30:19,20, 32:47) but this is impracticable by fallen men, and therefore there is no life nor righteousness by the law. Though these lively oracles may be considered in a larger extent, as including all the promises of God respecting the Messiah, delivered to Moses, and all the rites and ordinances of the ceremonial law, which pointed out Christ, as the way of life, righteousness, and salvation, from whence they may very well take this name.

**Ver. 39.** *To whom our fathers would not obey*, etc.] But often murmured against him, and were disobedient to him, and to the oracles he delivered to them, and so to God, whose oracles they were:

*but thrust him from them*; as one of the two Hebrews did, when he interposed to make up the difference between them; and which was an emblem and presage of what that people would afterwards do; (~~<4072>~~ Acts 7:27)

*and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt*; they wished themselves there again, they lusted after the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, leeks, onions, and garlic there; and went so far as to move for a captain, and even to appoint one to lead them back thither again.

**Ver. 40.** *Saying unto Aaron, make us gods to go before us*, etc.] This is a proof of their disobedience to the law of Moses, and of their rejection of him, and of the inclination of their hearts to the idolatry of the Egyptians; which shows the gross stupidity, as well as ingratitude of this people, to think that gods could be made; and that those that are made could go before them, be guides unto them, and protectors of them; when they have eyes, but see not, and hands, but handle not, and feet, but walk not:

*for as for this Moses*; whom they speak of with great contempt, and in a very irreverent way:

*which brought us out of the land of Egypt*; which they mention not with gratitude, but as reflecting upon him for doing it:

*we wot not what is become of him*; they thought he was dead, according to the Targum of Jonathan on (<sup>(423D)</sup>Exodus 32:1) they concluded he was consumed with fire on the mount which flamed with fire.<sup>f363</sup> The following story is told by the Jews;

“when Moses went up on high, he said to the Israelites, at the end of forty days, at the beginning of the sixth hour I will come; at the end of forty days came Satan, and disturbed the world; he said to them, where is Moses your master? they answered him, he is gone up on high: he said to them, the sixth hour is come; they took no notice of him; he is dead (says he); they had no regard to him; he showed them the likeness of his bier; then they said to Aaron, “as for this man Moses”, etc.”

**Ver. 41.** *And they made a calf in those days*, etc.] Whilst Moses was in the mount; this was done in imitation of the Egyptian idol Apis or Serapis, which was an ox or a bullock; and it was made of the golden earrings of the people, which were melted down, and cast into the form of a calf, and graved by Aaron with a graving tool, (<sup>(423D)</sup>Exodus 32:2-4) And so the Syriac version here reads in the singular number, “and he made them a calf”; this was a most shameful and scandalous piece of idolatry. The Jews themselves are so sensible of the horribleness of it, and of the guilt of it, and of the reproach that lies on them for it, that it is common for them to say<sup>f364</sup>,

“there is not a generation, or an age, in which there is not an ounce of the sin of the calf.”

Or, as elsewhere<sup>f365</sup> expressed,

“no punishment befalls thee, O Israel, in “which there is not an ounce of the sin of the calf”.”

*And offered sacrifice unto the idol*; an altar was built, and proclamation made, that the next day would be the feast of the Lord; and accordingly early in the morning the people rose, and offered both burnt offerings and

peace offerings, (<sup><12315></sup>Exodus 32:5,6) and rejoiceth in the works of their own hands; for so the calf was; and which rejoicing they showed by eating, and drinking, and singing, and dancing.

**Ver. 42.** *Then God turned*, etc.] Away from them, withdrew his presence, and his favours from them:

*and gave them up to worship the host of heaven*; not angels, but the sun, moon, and stars; for since they liked not to retain the knowledge and worship of the true God, who made the heavens, and the earth, God in righteous judgment, in a judicial way, gave them up to a reprobate mind, to commit all the idolatry of the Gentiles, as a punishment of their former sin in making and worshipping the calf:

*as it is written in the book of the prophets*; of the twelve lesser prophets, which were all in one book; and which, as the Jews say <sup>f366</sup>, were put together, that a book of them might not be lost through the smallness of it; among which Amos stands, a passage in whose prophecy is here referred to; namely, in (<sup><3165></sup>Amos 5:25) “O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness”; no; they offered to devils, and not to God, (<sup><16217></sup>Deuteronomy 32:17) and though there were some few sacrifices offered up; yet since they were not frequently offered, nor freely, and with all the heart, and with faith, and without hypocrisy, they were looked upon by God as if they were not offered at all.

**Ver. 43.** *Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch*, etc.] Sometimes called Molech, and sometimes Milcorn; it was the god of the Ammonites, and the same with Baal: the one signifies king, and the other lord; and was, no doubt, the same with the Apis or Serapis of the Egyptians, and the calf of the Israelites. Frequent mention is made of giving seed to Molech, and causing the children to pass through fire to him. The account the Jews give of this image, and of the barbarous worship of it, is this <sup>f367</sup>:

“though all idolatrous places were in Jerusalem, Molech was without Jerusalem; and it was made an hollow image, placed within seven chancels or chapels; and whoever offered fine flour, they opened to him the first; if turtle doves or two young pigeons, they opened the second; if a lamb, they opened the third; if a ram, they opened the fourth; if a calf, they opened the fifth; if an ox, they opened the sixth; but whoever offered his son, they opened the

seventh: his face was a calf's, and his hands were stretched out, as a man opens his hands to receive any thing from his friend; and they make him hot with fire, and the priests take the infant and put it into the hands of Molech, and the infant expires: and wherefore is it called Topher and Hinnom? Tophet, because they make a noise with drums, that its father may not hear the voice of the child, and have compassion on it, and return to it; and Hinnom, because the child roars, and the voice of its roaring ascends."

Others give a milder account of this matter, and say, that the service was after this manner<sup>f368</sup>; that

"the father delivered his son to the priests, who made two large fires, and caused the son to pass on his feet between the two fires,"

so that it was only a sort of a lustration or purification by fire; but the former account, which makes the child to be sacrificed, and put to death, seems best to agree with the scriptural one. Now this idol was included in chancels or chapels, as in the account given, or in shrines, in tabernacles, or portable temples, which might be taken up and carried; and such an one is here mentioned: by which is meant, not the tabernacle of the Lord made by Bezaleel; as if the sense was, that the idolatrous Israelites, though not openly, yet secretly, and in their hearts worshipped Moloch, as if he was included in the tabernacle; so that to take it up means no other, than in the heart to worship, and to consider him as if he had been shut up and carried in that tabernacle; nor is it to be thought that they publicly took up, and carried a tabernacle, in which was the image of Moloch, during their forty years' travels in the wilderness; for whatever they might do the few days they worshipped the golden calf, which is possible, it cannot be received, that Moses, who was so severe against idolatry, would ever have connived at such a practice: this therefore must have reference to after times, when they sacrificed their children to him, and took up and carried his image in little shrines and tabernacles.

*And the star of your god Remphan.* The Alexandrian copy reads "Raiphān"; some copies read "Raphān"; and so the Arabic version; others "Rephān"; the Syriac version reads "Rephon"; and the Ethiopic version "Rephom". Giants, with the Hebrews, were called "Rephaim"; and so Moloch, who is here meant, is called "Rephān", and with an epenthesis "Remphan", because of his gigantic form; which some have concluded from the massy crown on his head, which, with the precious stones,

weighed a talent of gold, which David took from thence, (~~1020~~2 Samuel 12:30) for not the then reigning king of the Ammonites, but Molech, or Milchom, their idol, is meant: this is generally thought to be the same with Chiun in Amos; but it does not stand in a place to answer to that; besides, that should not be left untranslated, it not being a proper name of an idol, but signifies a type or form; and the whole may be rendered thus, “but ye have borne the tabernacle of your king, and the type, or form of your images, the star of your god”; which version agrees with Stephens’s, who, from the Septuagint, adds the name of this their king, and their god Rephan, or Remphan. Drusius conjectures, that this is a fault of the Scribes writing Rephan for Cephon, or that the Septuagint interpreters mistook the letter **k** for **r**, and instead of Cevan read Revan; and Chiun is indeed, by Kimchi and Aben Ezra <sup>f369</sup>, said to be the same with Chevan, which, in the Ishmaelitish and Persian languages, signifies Saturn; and so does Rephan in the Egyptian language: and it is further to be observed, that the Egyptians had a king called Remphis, the same with Apis; and this may be the reason why the Septuagint interpreters, who interpreted for Ptolomy, king of Egypt, put Rephan, which Stephen calls Remphan, instead of Chiun, which they were better acquainted with, since they both signify the same deity, and the same star; and which also was the star of the Israelites, called by them **yatbc**, because supposed to have the government of the sabbath day, and therefore fitly called the “star of your god”. Upon the whole, Moloch, Chiun, Rephan, or Remphan, and Remphis, all are the same with the Serapis of the Egyptians, and the calf of the Israelites; and which idolatry was introduced on account of Joseph, who interpreted the dream of Pharaoh’s kine, and provided for the Egyptians in the years of plenty against the years of famine, and was worshipped under the ox with a bushel on his head;

*figures which ye made to worship them*; in Amos it is said, “which you made for yourselves”: meaning both the image and the tabernacle in which it was, which they made for their own use, to worship their deity in and by:

*and I will carry you beyond Babylon*; in Amos it is beyond Damascus, and so some copies read here, which was in Babylon; and explains the sense of the prophet more fully, that they should not only be carried for their idolatry beyond Damascus, and into the furthest parts of Babylon, but beyond it, even into the cities of the Medea, Halah, and Habor, by the river Gozan; and here is no contradiction: how far beyond Damascus, the

prophet does not say; and if they were carried beyond Babylon, they must be carried beyond Damascus, and so the words of the prophet were fulfilled; and Stephen living after the fulfilment of the prophecy, by which it appeared that they were carried into Media, could say how far they were carried; wherefore the Jew <sup>f370</sup> has no reason to cavil at Stephen, as if he misrepresented the words of the prophet, and related things otherwise than they were; and so Kimchi interprets it, far beyond Damascus; and particularly mentions Halah and Habor, cities in Media, where the ten tribes were carried.

**Ver. 44.** *Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “of Sinai”; there it was that the tabernacle was first ordered to be built, and there it was built, and set up; which was a sort of a portable temple, in which Jehovah took up his residence, and which was carried from place to place: of it, and its several parts and furniture, there is a large account in (<sup><0250></sup>Exodus 25:1-27:21). It is sometimes called Ohel Moed, or “the tabernacle of the congregation”, because there the people of Israel gathered together, and God met with them; and sometimes “the tabernacle of the testimony”, or “witness”, as here; (<sup><0282></sup>Exodus 38:21) (<sup><0450></sup>Numbers 1:50,53) because the law, called the tables of the testimony, and the testimony, it being a testification or declaration of the will of God, was put into an ark; which for that reason is called the ark of the testimony; and which ark was placed in the tabernacle; and hence that took the same name too. The Jewish writers say <sup>f371</sup>, it is so called,

“because it was a testimony that the Shekinah dwelt in Israel”;

or as another <sup>f372</sup> expresses it,

“it was a testimony to Israel that God had pardoned them concerning the affair of the calf, for, lo, his Shekinah dwelt among them.”

This tabernacle, in which was the testimony of the will of God, what he would have done, and how he would be worshipped, and which was a token of his presence, was among the Jewish fathers whilst they were in the wilderness; and is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin, that they should now, or afterwards, take up and carry the tabernacle of Moloch. The Alexandrian copy reads, “your fathers”; the sense is the same.

*As he had appointed*; that is, as God appointed, ordered, and commanded:

*speaking unto Moses*, (<sup>10250</sup>Exodus 25:40)

*that he should make it according to the fashion he had seen*; when in the Mount with God; (<sup>3008</sup>Hebrews 8:5) for it was not a bare account of the tabernacle, and its vessels, which he hearing, might form an idea of in his mind; but there was a visible form represented to his eye, a pattern, exemplar, or archetype of the whole, according to which everything was to be made; which teaches us, that everything in matters of worship ought to be according to the rule which God has given, from which we should never swerve in the least.

**Ver. 45.** *Which also our fathers that came after*, etc.] Who came after those that died in the wilderness, and never saw nor entered into the land of Canaan; the children of that generation whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, who sprung from them, came up in their room, and succeeded them:

*brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles*; that is, they having received the tabernacle from their fathers, brought it into the land of Canaan, which was possessed by the Gentiles, when they entered into it with Joshua their leader, and captain, at the head of them; who is here called Jesus, as he is in (<sup>3008</sup>Hebrews 4:8) for Joshua and Jesus are the same name, and signify a saviour; for such an one Joshua was to the people of Israel; and was an eminent type of Jesus Christ, the captain of our salvation, in his bringing many sons to glory:

*whom God drove out before the face of our fathers*; the Gentiles, who before possessed the land of Canaan, were drove out by God before the Israelites, to make way for their settlement there; for to whom can the success of those victories over the Canaanites be ascribed, which the Israelites under Joshua obtained, but to God? The language on the “Tingitane”, or Hercules’s pillars, said to be set up by some of these Canaanites, agrees with this, on which they inscribed these words;

“we are they who fled from the face of Joshua the robber, the son of Nave,”

or Nun:

*unto the days of David*; this clause must not be read in connection with the words immediately preceding, as if the sense was, that the inhabitants of Canaan were drove out of their land unto the times of David, and then



returned and resettled, as in the Ethiopic version; but with the beginning of the verse, and the meaning is, that the tabernacle which the Israelites received from their fathers, and brought into the land of Canaan with them, was there unto the times of David.

**Ver. 46.** *Who found favour before God*, etc.] That is, David, who had an interest in the free favour and love of God, was chosen of God, a man after his own heart, and raised up to do his will; and who had the grace of God implanted in him, and was acceptable, and well pleasing to God through Christ; the same is said of Noah, (<sup><ORIG></sup>Genesis 6:8)

*and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob*; from whom the Israelites descended: David having a deep sense of the love of God to him, and the grace of God wrought in his heart, was exceeding desirous of finding a place for the building of an house, or fixed habitation for God; for there was a tabernacle already, which had been from the time of Moses, and which the children of Israel brought with them into Canaan, and was moved from place to place; sometimes it was at Gilgal, sometimes at Shiloh, and then it was at Nob, and Gibeah, and at length it was brought by David into his own city; but he wanted to build a settled and stable house for the Lord, of which there was a hint given that the Lord would choose a place to put his name in, (<sup><ORIG></sup>Deuteronomy 16:2) but it seems, where that was to be was not known; and therefore David very anxiously sought after it; the reference is had to (<sup><ORIG></sup>Psalms 132:3-5) where David determines not to go to his house, nor up to his bed, nor give sleep, to his eyes, nor slumber to his eyelids, till he had found out a place for the habitation of the God of Jacob.

**Ver. 47.** *But Solomon built him an house.*] Though David was so set upon it, and made such large provisions for it, he was not to be the man that should build it, he having been greatly concerned in wars, and in the effusion of blood; but Solomon his son, who enjoyed much peace, was the person designed for this work, and who did accomplish it; of which there is a large account in the (<sup><ORIG></sup>1 Kings 6:1-7:51).

**Ver. 48.** *Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands*, etc.] Such an one as Solomon's was; he did indeed dwell in his temple, but he was not confined to it, nor included in it, or circumscribed by it; and so much Solomon himself suggests, when he expresses his wonder at his dwelling on earth, seeing the heaven of heavens could not contain him, and

still less the house which he had built, (<sup><1087></sup>1 Kings 8:27),  $\hat{w}yl$  [ , “the most High”, is one of the names of God, (<sup><0148></sup>Genesis 14:18,19,22) the Apostle Paul says the same of God as Stephen does here; (<sup><4172></sup>Acts 17:24) “as saith the prophet”; the prophet Isaiah, (<sup><2360></sup>Isaiah 66:1,2).

**Ver. 49.** *Heaven is my throne*, etc.] There is the seat of the divine Majesty; there his glory is most conspicuous; there he keeps his court, that is his palace; and there are his attendants, the angels; and from thence are the administrations of his regal power and government, over the whole world:

*and earth is my footstool*; which is under his feet, is subject to him, and at his dispose, and which he makes use of at his pleasure: these things are not to be literally understood, but are images and figures, representing the majesty, sovereignty, and immensity of God; who is the maker of all things, the governor of the universe, and is above all places, and not to be contained in any:

*what house will ye build me? saith the Lord*; or where can any be built for him, since he already takes up the heaven and the earth? what house can be built by men, or with hands, that can hold him, or is fit for him to dwell in?

*or what is the place of my rest?* not in any house made with hands, but in the church among his saints, who are the temples of the living God; and this is his rest for ever, and here will he dwell, because he has chosen and desired them, and built them up for an habitation for himself, (<sup><3213></sup>Psalms 132:13,14)

**Ver. 50.** *Hath not my hand made all these things?* The heaven, and the earth, and all that is in them; the Arabic version renders it, “all these creatures”; and therefore what can be made for God? or what house built for him? in Isaiah the words are read without an interrogation, and affirm that his hand had made all these things, and therefore nothing could be made for him suitable to him, by the hands of men.

**Ver. 51.** *Ye stiffnecked*, etc.] Or “hard necked”, the same with  $Prw$  [  $h\check{c}q$ , which is a character frequently given of this people, (<sup><0230></sup>Exodus 32:9, 33:3,5, 34:9) and elsewhere, and is expressive of their obstinacy, stubbornness and refractoriness; who would not submit their necks to the yoke of God’s law, and be obedient to his commands:

*and uncircumcised in heart and ears*; for though they had the mark of circumcision in their flesh, of which they boasted; yet they had not the true

circumcision of the heart; their hearts were not circumcised to fear and love the Lord, nor their ears to hear the word of the Lord and the Gospel of Christ; so that notwithstanding their confidence in carnal privileges, they were uncircumcised persons:

*ye do always resist the Holy Ghost*; the resistance made by these persons was not to the Spirit of God in them, of which they were destitute, but to the Spirit of God in his ministers, in his apostles, and particularly in Stephen; nor to any internal operation of his grace, but to the external ministry of the word, and to all that objective light, knowledge, evidence, and conviction that it gave of Jesus's being the Messiah: and such who resist Christ's ministers, resist him, and such who resist him, may be said to resist his Holy Spirit; and the word here used signifies a rushing against, and falling upon, in a rude and hostile way, and fitly expresses their ill treatment of Christ and his ministers, by falling upon them and putting them to death: which is the resistance here designed, as appears by the following verse: so that this passage is no proof of the resistance of the Holy Spirit, and the operations of his grace in conversion, when he is in men, and acts with a purpose and will to convert them; since it does not appear that he was in these persons, and was acting in them, with a design to convert them; and if he was, it will be difficult to prove that they so resisted, and continued to resist, as that they were not hereafter converted; since it is certain that one of them, Saul, was really and truly converted, and how many more we know not. Though it will be allowed, that the Holy Ghost in the operations of his grace upon the heart in conversion may be resisted, that is, opposed; but not so as to be overcome or be hindered in, or be obliged to cease from, the work of conversion, insomuch that may come to nothing:

*as your fathers did, so do ye*; or as "your fathers were, so are ye"; as they were stiffnecked, self-willed, obstinate, and inflexible, so are ye; as they were uncircumcised in heart and ears, so are ye; and as they resisted the Spirit of God in his prophets, so do ye resist him in the apostles and ministers of the Gospel.

**Ver. 52.** *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?* etc.] Either by reviling and speaking all manner of evil of them, (<sup><A151></sup>Matthew 5:11,12) or by killing them, (<sup><A231></sup>Matthew 23:31,37) and they have slain them; as Isaiah, Zachariah, and others:

*which showed before of the coming of the just one*; of Jesus the Messiah, whose character in the prophecies of the Old Testament is righteous servant, righteous branch, just, and having salvation; and whom Stephen styles so partly on account of the holiness of his nature, and the innocence and harmlessness of his life; and partly because he is the author of righteousness, and the end of the law for it to all that believe; of whose coming in the flesh all the prophets more or less spoke: and this being good news, and glad tidings, made the sin of the Jewish fathers the greater, in putting them to death, as the innocent character of Christ was an aggravation of the Jews' sin, in murdering of him, as it follows:

*of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers*; Judas, one of their nation, betrayed him into the hands of the chief priests and elders; and they betrayed, or delivered him into the hands of Pontius Pilate to be condemned to death, which they greatly importuned, and would not be satisfied without; and therefore are rightly called the murderers, as well as the betrayers of him.

**Ver. 53.** *Who have received the law, by the disposition of angels*, etc.] Who attended the angel that spake to Moses on Mount Sinai, (~~4078~~ Acts 7:38) who is the head of all principality and power, and whom he might make use of in giving the law to Moses: hence the law is said to be ordained by angels, in the hand of a Mediator, and is called the word spoken by angels, (~~8619~~ Galatians 3:19, ~~8011~~ Hebrews 2:2) and certain it is, that there were great numbers of angels on Mount Sinai, when the law was given, (~~6631~~ Deuteronomy 33:2, ~~6687~~ Psalm 68:17) And so the Jews say <sup>f373</sup>, that

“when the holy blessed God descended on Mount Sinai, there came down with him many companies of angels, Michael and his company, and Gabriel and his company”

Indeed they often say <sup>f374</sup>,

“the law was not given to the ministering angels:”

their meaning is, it was not given to them to observe and keep, because there are some things in it, which do not concern angels; but then it might be given to them to deliver to Moses, who gave it to the Israelites, and so may be said to receive it by the ministration of angels, through the hands of Moses. And now the law being given and received in so grand a manner, was an aggravation of the sin of the Jews in violating it, as it follows:

*and have not kept it*; but broke it in innumerable instances, and scarce kept it in any; for no man can keep it perfectly.

**Ver. 54.** *When they heard these things*, etc.] How that Abraham, the father of them, was called before he was circumcised, or the law was given to Moses, or the temple was built, which they were so bigoted to, and charged with speaking blasphemously of; and how that Joseph and Moses were very ill treated by the Jewish fathers, which seemed to resemble the usage Christ and his apostles met with from them; and how their ancestors behaved in the wilderness when they had received the law, and what idolatry they fell into there, and in after times; and how that though there was a temple built by Solomon, yet the Lord was not confined to it, nor would he dwell in it always; and especially when they heard him calling them a stiffnecked people, and uncircumcised in heart and ears; saying, that they persecuted and slew the prophets, and were the betrayers and murderers of an innocent person; and notwithstanding all their zeal for the law, and even though it was ministered to them by angels, yet they did not observe it themselves:

*they were cut to the heart*; as if they had been sawn asunder; they were filled with anguish, with great pain and uneasiness; they were full of wrath and madness, and could neither bear themselves nor him:

*and they gnashed on him with their teeth*: being enraged at him, and full of fury and indignation against him.

**Ver. 55.** *But he being full of the Holy Ghost*, etc.] That is, Stephen, as Beza's ancient copy, and some others express it; and so the Ethiopic version; the Syriac version reads, "full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost", as in (~~4016~~ Acts 6:5) and so some copies; being under the influences of the Spirit of God, and filled with his divine comforts, and strong in the faith of Jesus Christ, and having a holy boldness, courage, and intrepidity of mind; instead of being discouraged and dejected, of being cast down in his spirits, and looking down upon the ground, he

*looked up steadfastly to heaven*; where he desired to be, and hoped and believed he should be; and from whence he knew his help came, and which he might now implore, as well as forgiveness for his enemies.

*And saw the glory of God*; not the essential glory of God, but some extraordinary light and brightness, which was a token and representation of him:

*and Jesus standing on the right hand of God*; of that glory which was a Symbol of him: Jesus being risen from the dead, and ascended on high, was set at the right hand of God, in human nature, and so was visible to the corporeal eye of Stephen; whose visual faculty was so extraordinarily enlarged and assisted, as to reach the body of Christ in the third heavens; where he was seen by him standing, to denote his readiness to assist him, and his indignation at his enemies.

**Ver. 56.** *And said, behold, I see the heavens opened*, etc.] As they were at the baptism of Christ, (See Gill on <sup>“41816”</sup>Matthew 3:16’):

*and the son of man standing at the right hand of God*; he calls Jesus “the son of man”; a name by which he often called himself in his state of humiliation; and that though he was now glorified, it being the name of the Messiah in (<sup>4807</sup>Psalm 80:17, <sup>2073</sup>Daniel 7:13) as was well known to the Jews; and this Stephen said to show that God was on his side, and to let them know what honour was done him, what divine supports and comforts he had, and that he was an eyewitness of Jesus, and of his being alive, and in glory.

**Ver. 57.** *Then they cried out with a loud voice*, etc.] These were not the sanhedrim, but the common people; the Ethiopic version reads, “the Jews cried out”; which, they did, in a very clamorous way, either through rage and madness, or in a show of zeal against blasphemy; and cried out, either to God to avenge the blasphemy, or rather to the sanhedrim to pass a sentence on him, or, it may be, to excite one another to rise up at once, and kill him, as they did:

*and stopped their ears*; with their fingers, pretending they could not bear the blasphemy that was uttered. This was their usual method; hence they say, <sup>f375</sup>

“if a man hears anything that is indecent, (or not fit to be heard,) let him put his fingers in his ears hence the whole ear is hard, and the tip of it soft, that when he hears anything that is not becoming, he may bend the tip of the ear within it.”

By either of these ways these men might stop their ears; either by putting in their fingers, or by turning the tip of the ear inward.

*And ran upon him with one accord*; without any leave of the sanhedrim, or waiting for their determination, in the manner the zealots did; (See Gill on “~~4004~~ Matthew 10:4”) (See Gill on “~~4102~~ John 16:2”).

**Ver. 58.** *And cast him out of the city*, etc.] Of Jerusalem; for the place of stoning was without the city. The process, when regular, according to the sentence of the court, was after this manner <sup>f376</sup>;

“judgment being finished, (or the trial over,) they brought him out (the person condemned) to stone him; the place of stoning was without the sanhedrim, as it is said, (~~4344~~ Leviticus 24:14) “bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp”, when he was ten cubits distant from the place of stoning, they order him to confess and when four cubits from it, they take off his garments — the place of stoning was twice a man’s height.”

And elsewhere <sup>f377</sup> it is said, that the place of stoning was without three camps (the camp of the Shekinah, the camp of the Levites, and the camp of the Israelites): upon which the gloss has these words;

“the court is the camp of the Shekinah, and the mountain of the house the camp of the Levites, and every city the camp of the Israelites; and in the sanhedrim in every city, the place of stoning was without the city like to Jerusalem.”

And these men, though transported with rage and fury, yet were so far mindful of rule, as to have him out of the city before they stoned him:

*and they stoned him*; which was done after this manner, when in form <sup>f378</sup>:

“the wise men say, a man was stoned naked, but not a woman; and there was a place four cubits from the house of stoning, where they plucked off his clothes, only they covered his nakedness before. The place of stoning was two men’s heights, and there he went up with his hands bound, and one of the witnesses thrust him on his loins, that he might fall upon the earth; and if he died not at that push, the witnesses lifted up a stone, which lay there, the weight of two men, and one cast it with all his strength upon him; and if he died not, he was stoned by all Israel.”

*And the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul*; for the witnesses, according to the above account, were

first concerned in the stoning; and this was agreeably to the rule in (<sup><4870></sup>Deuteronomy 17:7) and which they seem to have observed amidst all their hurry and fury: and that they might perform their work with more ease and expedition, they plucked off their upper garments, and committed them to the care of Saul of Tarsus; who was now at Jerusalem, and belonged to the synagogue of the Cilicians, that disputed with Stephen, and suborned false witnesses against him. He is called a young man; not that he was properly a youth, for he must be thirty years of age, or more; since about thirty years after this he calls himself Paul the aged, (<sup><5009></sup>Philemon 1:9) when he must be at least sixty years of age, if not more; besides, Ananias calls him a “man”, (<sup><4493></sup>Acts 9:13) nor would the high priests have given letters to a mere youth, investing him with so much power and authority as they did; but he is so called, because he was in the prime of his days, hale, strong, and active. The learned Alting has taken a great deal of pains to show, that this Saul, who was afterwards Paul the apostle, is the same with Samuel the little, who is frequently mentioned in the Talmud; he living at this time, and being a disciple of Rabban Gamaliel, and a bitter enemy of the heretics, or Christians; and who, at the instigation of his master, composed a prayer against them; and his name and character agreeing with him: but it is not likely that the Jews would have retained so high an opinion of him to the last, had he been the same person: for they say<sup>f379</sup>,

“that as the elders were sitting in Jabneh, Bath Kol came forth, and said, there is one among you fit to have the Holy Ghost, or the Shekinah, dwell upon him; and they set their eyes on Samuel the little; and when he died, they said, ah the holy, ah the meek disciple of Hillell!”

**Ver. 59.** *And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God,* etc.] As he was praying, and putting up the following petition;

*and saying, Lord Jesus receive my Spirit;* from whence we learn, that the spirit or soul of man sleeps not, nor dies with the body, but remains after death; that Jesus Christ is a fit person to commit and commend the care of the soul unto immediately upon its separation; and that he must be truly and properly God; not only because he is equal to such a charge, which none but God is, but because divine worship and adoration are here given him. This is so glaring a proof of prayer being made unto him, that some Socinians, perceiving the force of it, would read the word Jesus in the



genitive case, thus; “Lord of Jesus receive my Spirit”: as if the prayer was made to the Father of Christ, when it is Jesus he saw standing at the right hand of God, whom he invokes, and who is so frequently called Lord Jesus; whereas the Father is never called the Lord of Jesus; and besides, these words are used in like manner in the vocative case, in (<sup>f620</sup>Revelation 22:20) to which may be added, that the Syriac version reads, “our Lord Jesus”; and the Ethiopic version, “my Lord Jesus”.

**Ver. 60.** *And he kneeled down*, etc.] It seems as if he stood before while they were stoning him, and while he was commending his soul to Christ, but now he kneeled down; prayer may be performed either kneeling or standing:

*and cried with a loud voice*; not only to show that he was in good spirits, and not afraid to die, but chiefly to express his vehement and affectionate desire to have the following petition granted:

*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*: do not impute it to them, or place it to their account; let it not rise and stand in judgment against them, or they be condemned for it; grant them forgiveness for it, and for every other sin: there is a great deal of likeness between Christ and this first martyr of his at their deaths; Christ committed his Spirit into the hands of his Father, and Stephen commits his into the hands of Christ; both prayed for forgiveness for their enemies; and both cried with a loud voice before they expired; for so it follows here,

*and when he had said this, he fell asleep*; or died; for death, especially the death of the saints, or dying in Jesus, is expressed by sleep. This way of speaking is common with the Jews, who say <sup>f380</sup>, that Rabbi such an one *Æymd*, “slept”; i.e. “died”; and this they say is a pure and honourable way of speaking with respect to an holy body, whose death is no other than as it were a sleep: and elsewhere <sup>f381</sup> it is said, that one saw such an one *µnmnm*, “sleeping”; the gloss upon it is, *SSWG*, “expiring”: (See Gill on “<sup>f811</sup>John 11:11”), (See Gill on “<sup>f113</sup>1 Thessalonians 4:13”). The Vulgate Latin version adds, “in the Lord.”

# CHAPTER 8

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 8

**Ver. 1.** *And Saul was consenting unto his death*, etc.] This clause, in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic and Ethiopic versions, stands at the close of the preceding chapter, and which seems to be its proper place; and so it does in the Alexandrian copy: that Saul consented to the death of Stephen, and approved of that barbarous action, is evident from his taking care of the clothes of the witnesses that stoned him; but the word here used signifies not a bare consent only, but a consent with pleasure and delight; he was well pleased with it, it rejoiced his very heart; he joined with others in it, with the utmost pleasure and satisfaction; this, and what is before said concerning his having the clothes of the witnesses laid at his feet, as well as what follows, about his persecuting the saints, are, the rather mentioned, because this violent persecutor was afterwards converted, and became an eminent preacher of the Gospel; and these accounts serve to set off and illustrate the grace of God, which was abundant towards him.

*And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem:* it began “on that day”, as the words may be rendered, on which Stephen was stoned. As soon as they had put him to death, these bloodthirsty wretches were the more greedy after the blood of others; and being now in great numbers, and filled with rage and fury, fell upon the members of the church wherever they met them, and killed them; for that more, besides Stephen, were put to death, seems plain from (~~4830~~ Acts 26:10) and, according to some accounts, though they cannot be depended on, two thousand persons suffered at this time: and if this was the case, it might be called a great persecution:

*and they were all scattered abroad;* not all the members of the church, nor perhaps any of the private ones; for we afterwards read of devout then that carried Stephen to his grave; and of the church being made havoc of by Saul; and of men and women being haled out of their houses, and committed to prison by him; but all the preachers of the word, except the apostles; for they that were scattered, went about preaching the word, (~~4188~~ Acts 8:4, 11:19) They seem to be the seventy disciples, and other

ministers of the word, on whom the Holy Ghost fell at the day of Pentecost, or was since bestowed; among who were Philip, who went to Samaria; and Ananias, who was at Damascus; and others that went as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch: and particularly they are said to be dispersed

*throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria*; where their ministry was so greatly blessed, to the conversion of souls, that there were quickly many churches planted and formed in these parts, as appears from (~~<408E>~~Acts 9:31) so that this persecution was for the furtherance and spread of the Gospel: that upon this dispersion any of them came into France and England, or into any other parts of Europe, is not probable; since the particular places they went to are mentioned; and since they preached to Jew only: and this scattering by reason of the persecution, was of all the preachers,

*except the apostles*; the twelve apostles, who stayed at Jerusalem to take care of the church; to encourage the members of it to suffer cheerfully for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; and to animate them to abide by him: and this was not only an instance of courage and constancy in them, and of the divine protection and preservation of them, in the midst of their enemies; but also of the timidity of their adversaries, who might be afraid to meddle with them; remembering what miraculous works were performed by them, and how they had been delivered out of prison, and especially the case of Ananias and Sapphira, who were struck dead by Peter. Beza's ancient copy adds, "who remained in Jerusalem".

**Ver. 2.** *And devout men carried Stephen to his burial*, etc.] These men were not Jewish proselytes, but members of the Christian church; who were eminent for their religion and piety, and who had courage enough, amidst this persecution, to show a respect to the dead body of this holy martyr; which they took from under the stones, washed it, and wound it up in linen clothes, and put it into a coffin, or on a bier: they did everything preparatory to the funeral, which, is chiefly designed by the word here used, rather than the carrying of him out to his grave; though this also they did, and buried him: and to bear a corpse and follow it to the grave, and bury it, were with the Jews <sup>f382</sup> reckoned among acts of kindness, mercy, and piety, and which would not fail of a reward; they have a saying <sup>f383</sup>, that

“he that mourns, they shall mourn for him; and he that buries, they shalt bury him and he that lifts up (his voice in weeping lamentation), they shall lift up for him; he that accompanies (a dead

corpse), they shall accompany him; he that “carries”, they shall carry him;”

as these devout men did, who would not suffer Stephen to be buried in the common burying place of malefactors, but interred him elsewhere, in a more decent manner: but whether they had leave from the sanhedrim so to do, or whether they did this of themselves, is not certain; if the latter, which seems most likely, it is an instance of great boldness and resolution, and especially at this time; for

“they did not bury one that was stoned in the sepulchres of his fathers, but there were two burying places appointed by the sanhedrim, one for those that are stoned and burnt, and another for those that are slain with the sword and strangled <sup>f384</sup>.”

So that, they acted contrary to the Jewish canon, as they also did in what follows:

*and made great lamentation over him*; though they did not sorrow as those without hope, yet they did not put on a stoical apathy; but as men sensible of the loss the church of Christ had sustained, by the death of a person so eminent for his gifts and grace, they mourned over him in a becoming manner: in this they went contrary to the Jewish rule, which forbids lamentation for those that died as malefactors, and runs thus <sup>f385</sup>

“they do not mourn, but they grieve; for grief is only in the heart;”

their reason for this was, as the commentators say <sup>f386</sup>, because they thought that

“their disgrace was an atonement for their sin:”

but these devout men knew that Stephen needed no such atonement, and that his sins were atoned for another way: otherwise the Jews looked upon mourning for the dead to be to the honour of him; hence they say <sup>f387</sup>, that mourning

“is the glory of the dead — whoever is backward to the mourning of a wise man shall not prolong his days; and whoever is sluggish in mourning for a good man, ought to be buried alive; and whoever causes tears to descend for a good man, lo, his reward is reserved for him with the holy blessed God.”

**Ver. 3.** *As for Saul, he made havoc of the church*, etc.] Did evil to the saints, destroyed them that called upon the name of Christ, (<sup>4913</sup>Acts 9:13,21) and persecuted and wasted the church of God, as he himself says, (Gal 1:13) and now did Benjamin, of which tribe Saul was, ravine as a wolf, (<sup>0442</sup>Genesis 49:27)

*Entering into every house*; where the saints dwelt:

*and haling men and women*: in a violent manner, without any regard to age or sex:

*committed them to prison*; delivered them up into the hands of the chief priests and magistrates, in order to be committed and sent to prison; this he himself confesses, (<sup>4024</sup>Acts 22:4, 26:10).

**Ver. 4.** *Therefore they that were scattered abroad*, etc.] By reason of the persecution in Jerusalem: the seventy disciples, and other ministers of the word; or the hundred and twenty, excepting the apostles,

*went every where*; or *went through* the countries of Judea and Samaria, as far as Phenice, Cyrus, and Antioch:

*preaching the word*; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions add, “of God”, and so some copies; the Gospel, which is the word of God, and not man; which was not of men, nor received from men, but came from God, and by the revelation of Christ; and which was good news and glad tidings, of peace, pardon, righteousness and salvation, by Jesus Christ.

**Ver. 5.** *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria*, etc.] The city which was formerly called Samaria, but now Sebaste; it had been destroyed by Hyrcanus, and was rebuilt by Herod; and called by him, in honour of Augustus, by the name of Sebaste<sup>f388</sup>; and so R. Benjamin says<sup>f389</sup>, that

“from Luz he came in a day to Sebaste, <sup>^</sup>wrmwç ayh, “this is Samaria”; where yet may be discerned the palace of Ahab king of Israel — — -and from thence are two “parsas” to Neapolis, this is Sichem.”

Which last place, Sichem, is by Josephus said to be the “metropolis” of Samaria; and is thought by Dr. Lightfoot to be the city Philip went to, and where our Lord had before been, and preached to the conversion of many persons: this place lay lower than Jerusalem, and therefore Philip is said to go down to it; and who was not Philip the apostle, but Philip the deacon,

for the apostles abode at Jerusalem; and beside, though this Philip preached the Gospel, and baptized, and wrought miracles, yet did not lay on hands, in order that persons might receive the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost; this was peculiar to the apostles, and therefore Peter and John came down for this purpose, when they heard of the success of Philip's ministry: the subject matter of which follows:

*and preached Christ unto them*; that Christ was come in the flesh, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, and that he was the Son of God, and the alone Saviour of men; who by his obedience, sufferings, and death, had wrought righteousness, procured peace and pardon, and obtained eternal redemption for his people; and was risen again, and ascended into heaven, and was set down at the right hand of God, where he ever lived to make intercession, and would come again a second time to judge both quick and dead.

**Ver. 6.** *And the people with one accord*, etc.] The inhabitants of the city of Samaria, as one man, came to hear the word:

*and gave heed to those things which Philip spake*; they listened to them, took notice of them, gave their ascent to them, believed and embraced them; being induced thereunto, not only upon the evidence by which these things came, but by reason of the miracles which he wrought, for the confirmation of them: for it follows,

*hearing and seeing the miracles which he did*; and which are particularly mentioned in the next verse.

**Ver. 7.** *For unclean spirits*, etc.] Devils, so called because they were unclean themselves, defiled others, and delighted in impure persons and places; (See Gill on "~~400~~ Matthew 10:1")

*crying with loud voice*; showing their unwillingness to remove, and the irresistibility of divine power they could not withstand:

*came out of many that were possessed* with them; who had for a long time dwelt in them, and had greatly afflicted them:

*and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed*; by Philip, in the name of Christ, through a word speaking, or by touching them, without making use of any means or medicines.

**Ver. 8.** *And there was great joy in that city.*] Both on a spiritual account, for the good of their souls, through the preaching of Christ and his Gospel to them; and on a temporal account; for the good of their bodies, or their friends, being dispossessed of devils, and healed of their diseases.

**Ver. 9.** *But there was a certain man called Simon,* etc.] Who, as Justin Martyr<sup>f390</sup> says, was a Samaritan, and of a village called Gitton; and so a Jewish writer<sup>f391</sup> calls him Simeon, *ynwrmçh*, “the Samaritan”, a wizard: here is a

*but* upon this new church, the success of the Gospel in this place, and the joy that was there; a man of great wickedness and sophistry plays the hypocrite, feigns himself a believer, and gets in among them; (See Gill on “~~Acts~~ Acts 5:1”),

*which beforetime in the same city used sorcery;* who before Philip came thither, practised magic arts; wherefore he is commonly called “Simon Magus”, for he was a magician, who had learned diabolical arts, and used enchantments and divinations, as Balaam and the magicians of Egypt did:

*and bewitched the people of Samaria;* or rather astonished them, with the strange feats he performed; which were so unheard of and unaccountable, that they were thrown into an ecstasy and rapture; and were as it were out of themselves, through wonder and admiration, at the amazing things that were done by him:

*giving out that himself was some great one;* a divine person, or an extraordinary prophet, and it may be the Messiah; since the Samaritans expected the Messiah, as appears from (~~John~~ John 4:25) and which the Syriac version seems to incline to, which renders the words thus, “and he said, I am that great one”; that great person, whom Moses spake of as the seed of the “woman”, under the name of Shiloh, and the character of a prophet.

**Ver. 10.** *To whom they all gave heed,* etc.] Were not only attentive to the strange things he did, and to the wonderful things he gave out concerning himself; but they believed what he said and did as real things, and were obedient to him: and that

*from the least to the greatest;* which does not so much respect age, though the Ethiopic version renders it, “from the younger of them to the eldest of them”, as state and condition; persons of every rank and quality, high and

low, rich and poor, magistrates and subjects, from the meanest to the greatest of them; and so the Syriac version renders it, “both great”, or “noble, and mean”; he drew the attention, and commanded the regard, both of princes and peasants, of the learned and unlearned, of the great men, and of the common people, who one and all wondered at him, and applauded him:

*saying, this man is the great power of God*; or as the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, “this is the power of God which is called great”; they took him for the supreme Deity, or as Justin Martyr <sup>f392</sup> expresses it, they accounted him the first, or chief God, or they looked upon him to be the Messiah, “the great power of God”: as the Syriac version renders it; and who should be great, and called the Son of the Highest, (~~413~~ Luke 1:32).

**Ver. 11.** *To him they had regard*, etc.] Which is repeated from the foregoing verse, for the sake of what follows:

*because that of a long time he had bewitched them with sorceries*; or because he had, it may be for many years, astonished them with his magic arts, and the pranks he played in the use of them.

**Ver. 12.** *But when they believed Philip*, etc.] Though they had been carried away so long with this deceiver, and had been so much attached unto him, and held in admiration of him; yet when Philip came and preached Christ unto them, such was the power that attended his ministry, and such the efficacy of divine grace that was exerted, that they not only gave heed unto him, but believed what he said:

*preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God*; concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel; and concerning the kingdom of grace, which is spiritual and internal, and which lies not in external things, as meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy; and concerning the kingdom of glory, the meetness for it, which lies in regenerating grace, and the right unto it, which is the righteousness of Christ:

*and the name of Jesus Christ*; concerning the person of Christ, as the Son of God: and the offices of Christ, as prophet, priest, and King; and the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, for pardon, justification, and atonement: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read this



clause, “in the name of Jesus Christ”: and connect it with the following words,

*they were baptized, both men and women*: that is, when, they heard Philip preach the Gospel, and believed in Christ, the sum and substance of it, and made a profession of faith, they were of each sex, both men and women, baptized by immersion, in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Ver. 13.** *Then Simon himself believed also*, etc.] With an historical and temporary faith, as that Jesus was the Messiah, etc. or at least he pretended, to believe this, and professed that he did believe, what others did, and Philip preached:

*and when he was baptized*; upon profession of his faith, which he so artfully made, that Philip could not discover his hypocrisy: but taking him to be a sincere believer, admitted him to baptism: after which,

*he continued with Philip*; kept close to him, and got into a familiar acquaintance with him; and constantly attended on his ministry, as if he had been a sincere disciple and follower of Christ:

*and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done*; he was as much amazed at the miraculous performances of Philip, as the inhabitants of Samaria had been at his, which he could observe were real things; and this increased his wonder, and threw him into an ecstasy, that he was scarce himself: whereas he knew that what he did were only sham performances, and legerdemain tricks.

**Ver. 14.** *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem*, etc.] Not that there were some at Jerusalem, and some elsewhere; for they all tarried at Jerusalem, when the rest of the ministers of the word were scattered abroad; though it is possible, that by this time, some of them might have departed from hence; but it seems more probable, that they were as yet all here: these

*heard that Samaria had received the word of God*; that is, they heard that the Samaritans, who only received the five books of Moses, and that not the Hebrew, but their own copy of them, now received not only the whole Bible, but the Gospel of Christ, as preached by Philip; which they might hear by a letter, or messengers sent from Philip to them, to acquaint them with the success of the Gospel; or from some persons, who had been in those parts: upon which

*they sent unto them Peter and John:* who were not only fellow apostles, but very familiar and intimate companions; these they sent to confirm the doctrine of Philip, and establish the young converts in it, and to form them into a Gospel church state, and ordain ministers over them.

**Ver. 15.** *Who when they were come down,* etc.] To the city of Samaria, where Philip was, and these converts dwelt:

*prayed for them;* for some of them, unto God:

*that they might receive the Holy Ghost;* the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, as to be able to speak with tongues, to prophesy and work miracles: they might pray for them all, that they might have a larger measure of grace, and more spiritual light and knowledge; and that they might be established in the doctrines of the Gospel, and hold fast the profession of their faith unto the end; but it can hardly be thought that they should pray for them all, both men and women, that they might have the above extraordinary gifts, which were not necessary to them all: and that these are meant by the Holy Ghost is clear from what follows, since he was not yet fallen on any of them, which cannot be understood in any other sense; and seeing it was something visible, which Simon could discern, and therefore cannot mean internal grace, and an increase of that.

**Ver. 16.** *(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them,* etc.) They had received him as a spirit of illumination and sanctification, and as, a spirit of conversion and faith; they had been regenerated, enlightened, and sanctified by him; and were converted by him, and brought to believe in Christ, and live, by faith upon him; they were baptized believers, and no more; as yet, none of them had gifts qualifying them for the ministry; and still less could any of them speak with tongues, or prophesy, or work miracles; the Holy Ghost had not yet descended on them for such purposes:

*only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus:* all as yet appeared in them was, that they were believers in Christ, and had been baptized in his name, upon a profession of their faith; and more than this they had been called to, or qualified for: the word “only”, does not respect the form of baptism, as if they had been baptized only in the name of Christ; whereas they were doubtless baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; but refers to baptism itself, which was the only ordinance as yet administered to them.

**Ver. 17.** *Then laid they their hands on them*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “who had been baptized”; but not upon all of them, men and women, only on some they were directed unto by the Spirit of God; whom he had designed, and now would qualify for the work of the ministry, that so this new church, might be supplied with proper officers, pastors, and teachers, to feed them with knowledge and with understanding, and who might not only have ministerial gifts to qualify them for preaching the Gospel, but extraordinary ones, which would serve for the confirmation of it; and for this purpose the apostles, “both” of them, as the Arabic version reads, laid their hands on them: for it will not seem probable, that they laid their hands upon the women, on such an account; and it will hardly be received, that they should lay their hands on Simon Magus, otherwise he would have received the Holy Ghost too; so that it seems a plain case, that imposition of hands was not used to them all:

*and they received the Holy Ghost*; that is, they received the gifts of the Holy Ghost; so that they could prophesy and speak with tongues, and heal diseases, and do other wonderful works: and since now these effects have ceased, the rite and ceremony which was peculiar to the apostles as such, it should seem should cease likewise.

**Ver. 18.** *And when Simon saw*, etc.] Whence it appears, that the Holy Ghost, or his gifts, which were received by imposition of hands, were something visible and discernible; and so something external, and not internal; otherwise they would have been out of Simon’s reach, and would not have fallen under his notice; but he saw,

*that through laying on of the apostles’ hands, the Holy Ghost was given*: he saw, that upon this men began to prophesy, and to speak with divers tongues they had never learned, and to work miracles, cure men of their diseases, and the like: and when he observed this,

*he offered them money*; to purchase such a power of conferring the like gifts, on whomsoever he should lay his hands: hence buying and selling spiritual things, or what relate thereunto, are commonly called “simony”: a vice which has greatly prevailed in the church of Rome, and among its popes; and who therefore may be more properly called the successors of Simon Magus, than of Simon Peter.

**Ver. 19.** *Saying, give me also this power*, etc.] He does not ask them to lay their hands on him, that he might receive the Holy Ghost, and have these

gifts to exercise himself, but that he might have the power of conferring them on others:

*that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost*; in which he discovered his ambition and avarice: his ambition, that he might be above Philip; who though he had these gifts, yet had not a power to lay on hands, and thereby convey them unto others; he perceived that this was purely apostolical; and indeed, what he requested was more than what the apostles could do; for though upon their prayers, and through the imposition of their hands, the gifts of the Spirit were bestowed upon men; yet they never could, nor did give a power to others, to do as they did; and his avarice prompted him to this, that he might make gain of it; not by doing miracles himself, but by conveying a power to others to do them.

**Ver. 20.** *But Peter said to him*, etc.] With great abhorrence and indignation, resenting and detesting his proposal:

*thy money perish with thee*; or “go into destruction with thee”; signifying, that he would not touch his money, or have anything to do with that or him either, in any such way: the words do not so much design an imprecation on his person, as an abhorrence of his sin; and rather show what his sin deserved than what he desired might be; for the apostle did not simply wish his damnation, since he afterwards exhorts him to repentance, and to pray for forgiveness; but threatens, and even predicts what would be his case, should he live and die in such a state, in which he appeared to be:

*because thou hast thought that the gift of God*; the Holy Ghost, and his extraordinary gifts, which are freely given, when and to whom the Lord himself pleases:

*may be purchased with money*; he appears to have a wrong notion of the Spirit of God and his gifts, and of the grace of in bestowing them; as well as a wicked design of purchasing them with money, in order to sell them again; so that it was a sullyng and lessening of the grace of God, as well as seeking himself, his own ambition, and filthy lucre: and let such observe how near they come to his sin, who seek to obtain the grace of justification, and the free gift of eternal life, by their own works.

**Ver. 21.** *Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter*, etc.] Or business of the gift of the Holy Ghost; signifying, that as he had not the grace of the Spirit of God implanted in him, so he should not have any of the gifts of the Spirit bestowed on him; and much less a power of communicating them

to others, through laying on of hands: or “in this word”; the word of the Gospel, preached by the apostles; and in any of the blessings published in it, as the forgiveness of sins, a justifying righteousness, and eternal life; and so the Syraic version renders it, “in this faith”; neither in the grace of faith, nor in the doctrine of faith: it seems to answer to a way of speaking frequently used among the Jews, that such and such persons, **ql h p̄hl ʿya**, “have no part or lot”, in the world to come<sup>f393</sup>. The Ethiopic version reads, “because of this thy word”; because for his money, he had desired to have a power of bestowing the Holy Ghost on persons, through the imposition of his hands; which showed he had no share in the grace of God, and would have no part in eternal life, thus living and dying:

*for thy heart is not right in the sight of God*; he had not a clean heart, nor a right spirit created in him; he had not true principles of grace wrought in him; his heart was full of covetousness, ambition, and hypocrisy; he had no good designs, ends, and aims, in what he said and did; in his profession of faith, in his baptism, in his attendance on Philip’s ministry, and in his request for the above power, of conferring the Holy Ghost: his view was not the spread and confirmation of the Gospel, or the enlargement of the kingdom and interest of Christ, and the glory of God, but his own applause and worldly interest; and therefore, however he might be thought of by men, to be a good and disinterested man, he was otherwise in the sight of God, who is the searcher of the heart, and the trier of the reins of the children of men.

**Ver. 22.** *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness*, etc.] For a great piece of wickedness it was, to offer money for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to imagine, that could be purchased with money; and what made the wickedness still greater was, the evil design he had in this, to advance himself in opposition to Christ and his apostles, as he afterwards did; and when the apostle puts him upon repentance, his view is to show the heinousness of his crime, the need he stood in of repentance, and that without it, his case must be miserable:

*and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*; though he was in a state of nature, the apostle exhorts him to the duty of prayer; for prayer is a natural duty, and binding upon all men, though none but a spiritual man can perform it in a spiritual way: and though this sin of Simon’s was a very heinous one, and came very near unto, and looked very much like the sin against the Holy Ghost, yet it was not the unpardonable

one; it might be pardoned by the grace of God, and through the blood of Christ; and therefore Peter, who wished his salvation and not his damnation, put him upon prayer for it; which was possible, though difficult, but not certain: the apostle says not this, as doubting; if it was a case wholly to be despaired of, then he would not have directed him to the means; and yet the wickedness was so horribly great, and he in such a wretched hardened state, that there was no great hope or expectation of his repentance, and so of the application of pardon to him: however, this advice was not given ironically: Peter was too grave and serious to speak sarcastically, or break a jest upon a man in such circumstances; whom no doubt he heartily pitied, though he abhorred his sin: the Syriac version renders it, “the deceit of thine heart”: and the Ethiopic version, “the evil thought of thine heart”; and such it was.

**Ver. 23.** *For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness,* etc.]

Alluding to (<sup><15298></sup>Deuteronomy 29:18, 32:32) with which compare (<sup><3125></sup>Hebrews 12:15) and signifying, that he was in a state of nature and unregeneracy; under the power and dominion of covetousness, ambition, and hypocrisy; and in a way pernicious to himself, infectious to others, and ungrateful to God, and to good men; and that instead of the root of the matter, the truth of grace being in him, there was nothing in him but the bitter root of sin; which bore gall and wormwood, and everything that was nauseous and disagreeable:

*and in the bond of iniquity;* referring to (<sup><3162></sup>Proverbs 5:22, <sup><2816></sup>Isaiah 58:6) and suggesting, that he was held fast bound in the bonds of sin, and with the cords of iniquity, or was entirely under the government of his lusts: the preposition εἰς, which we render “in”, may retain here, as is by some observed, its proper sense of “for”, or “into”; and have the same signification it has in (<sup><3115></sup>Hebrews 1:5) “I will be to him for a father”, or “a father”, and “he shall be to me for a son”, or “a son”: and then the sense of Peter is, I plainly perceive and clearly see by thy words and actions, that thou art nothing else but a lump of bitter gall, and a bundle of sin and wickedness.

**Ver. 24.** *Then answered Simon, and said,* etc.] Whose conscience might be touched, and smote with what Peter had said; and he might be terrified with the wrath of God, and filled with fear of his judgment coming upon him for his wickedness, and might now stand trembling before the apostles: and if this was not his case, he was a most hardened and audacious wretch;

and his following words must be understood in a different sense, from what they might seem to have, when they came out of his mouth:

*pray ye to the Lord for me*; the Arabic version reads, “pray ye two”; the words are addressed both to Peter and John; for though Peter only spake to him, yet John joined with him, and assented to what he said, and approved of it; and which he might signify either by word or gesture; wherefore Simon desires both of them, that they would pray to the Lord for him; but whether he was serious, and in good earnest in this, is a question; since there is no reason to believe he truly repented, from the accounts given of him by ancient writers; who always represent him as an opposer of the apostles and their doctrine, as the father of all heresies, as a blasphemous wretch; who gave out that he was the Father in Samaria, the Son in Judea, and the Holy Ghost in other places; and as a very lewd and wicked man, who carried about with him a whore, whose name was Helena; whom he called the mother of the universe, and gave out the angels were made by her, and the world by them; with many other errors, blasphemies, and impieties: so that it should rather seem, that though Peter was serious in his advice to Simon, yet he was not so in his request to him; but in a sarcastic sneering way, desired his prayers for him; suggesting, that he was not in any pain about what he had said: and if he was in earnest, he did not take Peter’s advice to pray for himself; nor did he declare any repentance for his sin; and his desire that the apostles would pray for him, might not be from any sense he had of the evil of his sin, but from a slavish fear of the evil, or mischief, that was like to come upon him for his sin, as appears by what follows:

*that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me*; as that his money should perish with him, and he with that; or that he should go into destruction; that everlasting destruction and ruin would be his portion; and that he should have no part nor lot in eternal life, unless he repented, and his sin was pardoned: and this confirms what has been before observed, that John assented to what Peter spoke, or said the same, or such like things to Simon as he did.

**Ver. 25.** *And they, when they had testified*, etc. That is, Simeon (or Peter) and John, as the Syriac version expresses it; when they had bore their testimony to, and by it confirmed the Gospel as preached by Philip, and had established the young converts in it, and against the errors of Simon Magus:



*and preached the word of the Lord*; or of “God”, as read the Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; when they had preached the Gospel in the city of Samaria, the same as Philip had preached before; whereby it appeared, that there was an harmony and agreement between them:

*returned to Jerusalem*; to the rest of the apostles there, to give them an account, how they found things at Samaria; what they had done, and what they had met with: and upon their return, whilst on their journey, they stopped at several places, which lay in their way;

*and preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans*; their first commission in (<sup>400B</sup>Matthew 10:5) being now cancelled, and a new one given them to preach the Gospel to every creature; and being appointed witnesses for Christ in Samaria, as well as in Jerusalem and Judea; (<sup>400B</sup>Acts 1:8).

**Ver. 26.** *And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip*, etc.] To inquire who this angel was, whether Michael or Gabriel, or the tutelar angel of Ethiopia, or of the eunuch, or of Philip, is too curious; it was one of the ministering spirits sent forth by Christ, to serve a gracious purpose of his, and for the good of one of the heirs of salvation:

*saying, arise*; at once, make haste and speed, and quick dispatch; the phrase denotes readiness, alacrity, and expedition:

*and go toward the south*; the southern point from the city of Samaria, where Philip now was; or to the south of Jerusalem: the parts of Gaza, Lydda, Jamnia, Joppa, etc. were called the “south”: hence often mention is made of such a Rabbi and such a Rabbi, that he was *amwrd*, “of the south” <sup>f394</sup>; so R. Joshua, who was of Lydda, is said to be of the south <sup>f395</sup>. The Ethiopic version renders it at “noon time”, and so the Arabic of Deuteronomy Dieu; as if it respected not the place whither he was to go, but the time when he was to go; and that it might be about the middle of the day, the following narrative seems to confirm:

*unto the way which goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert*: this place is sometimes called Azzah, and sometimes Gaza, which is owing to the different pronunciation of the first letter of it; it was first inhabited by the Avim, or Hivites, who being destroyed by the Caphtorim, they dwelt in their stead, (<sup>400B</sup>Deuteronomy 2:23). It fell to the lot of the tribe of



Judah, but could not be held by it, because of the giants which remained in it; and was, as Jerom says <sup>f396</sup>, a famous city of Palestine in his day; and was formerly the border of the Canaanites towards Egypt; and the way to Egypt lay through it, in which the eunuch was travelling: the way from Jerusalem to this place lay through Bethlehem, as the above ancient writer observes, on (<sup>2815</sup>Jeremiah 31:15) where he says

“some of the Jews interpret this place thus; that Jerusalem being taken by Vespasian, through this way (Bethlehem and Ephratah, of which he is speaking) to Gaza and Alexandria, a vast number of captives were led to Rome.”

And as the same writer elsewhere says <sup>f397</sup>, Bethlehem was six miles from Aella (or Jerusalem) to the south, in the way which leads to Hebron; and it is commonly believed that the way to Gaza was through Hebron, and is the way in which they go to it now; and to a hill near this place Samson, carried the gates of Gaza, (<sup>2761E</sup>Judges 16:1-3) And this also was to the south of Jerusalem, and two and twenty miles from it <sup>f398</sup>: and it is also said by the same author <sup>f399</sup>, that there is a village called Bethzur, and in his time Bethhoron, in the way from Jerusalem to Hebron, about twenty miles from the former, at which there was a fountain, where it was reported the eunuch was baptized by Philip. There was it seems another way from Jerusalem to Gaza, through Diospolis, or Eleutheropolis, and so to Ascalon, and from thence to Gaza <sup>f400</sup>: and this was the road the eunuch went, if their conjecture is right, that he was baptized in the river Eleutherus; but which way he went is not certain, nor where he was baptized. The situation of Gaza was, according to Arrianus <sup>f401</sup>, as follows:

“Gaza is distant from the sea at least twenty furlongs (two miles and a half), and the access unto it is sandy and deep, and the sea near the city is all muddy. Gaza was a great city, and was built on high ground, and encompassed with a strong wall: it was the last of those cities inhabited, as you go from Phoenicia into Egypt, **επι τη αρχη της ερημου** “at the beginning of the desert”.”

Which last words seem to furnish out a reason why it is here called Gaza, “which is desert”; because it was situated where the desert began: though this clause is differently understood; some apply it to Gaza; as if the sense was “Gaza the desert”, to distinguish old Gaza which was destroyed by Alexander the great, and as Strabo says <sup>f402</sup>, “remained desert”, from new Gaza, built at some distance from it: Jerom has <sup>f403</sup> this distinction of old

and new Gaza; there is scarce any appearance, he says, of the foundations of the ancient city; and that which is now seen is built in another place; and an unknown Greek writer makes express mention of new Gaza, which is the city itself; and speaks of another Gaza at some distance, which he calls Gaza,  $\eta \epsilon\rho\eta\mu\omicron\varsigma$ , “the desert”<sup>f404</sup>: but the haven, which was seven furlongs distant from Gaza, was not called new Gaza till Julian’s time: it was first called Majuma, and afterwards Constantia, by Constantine; either from his son Constantius, or his sister Constantia, it having embraced the Christian religion<sup>f405</sup>: wherefore, as Beza observes, no regard could be had to this distinction in the times of Luke; and though it was besieged by Alexander and taken, yet it did not become a desolate place; it had its walls, gates, and fortifications afterwards; and was after this taken by Ptolomy, and then by Alexander Janneus; it was repaired by Gabinius, and given to Herod by Augustus<sup>f406</sup>: so that it could not be said to be desert, in the times of Philip and the eunuch, with respect to its inhabitants and fortifications: it seems rather therefore to be so called, for the above reason, because situated at the beginning of the desert; and the whole space between the parts of Egypt next the Nile, and Palestina, is called “the desert”, both by Arrianus<sup>f407</sup> and Josephus<sup>f408</sup>: others apply this epithet to the way, and read it as do the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, “to the way of the desert which goes from Jerusalem”; meaning the wilderness, which lay in the way from Jerusalem to Gaza. This place was distant from Jerusalem about seventy five miles; for from Jerusalem to Ascalon was, as Josephus<sup>f409</sup> says, five hundred and twenty furlongs, which make sixty five miles; and from Ascalon to Gaza were ten miles, as our countryman Mr. Sandes Says<sup>f410</sup>; though according to the Itinerary of Antoninus<sup>f411</sup>, the distance was sixteen miles. The Talmudists make mention of this place, they represent it as a very pleasant place to dwell in; they say<sup>f412</sup>, Gaza is  $hpy hywyn$ , “a beautiful habitation”; they speak of three famous markets, and one of them was the market of Gaza<sup>f413</sup>; and very near to this city there was a beast market<sup>f414</sup>; and to which may be added, though it may not serve to strengthen the reason of its name being called Gaza the desert, there was a place on the border of the city, which was named  $atrygs atbrwj$ , “the desert of the leper”<sup>f415</sup>: there were also brooks about the parts of Gaza and Azotus<sup>f416</sup>; in one of which, if the eunuch was near Gaza, to which he was going, he might be baptized; since it is uncertain whereabouts Philip met him, and where the place of water was, in which the ordinance of baptism was administered to him. This city is now called Gazera, or Gazara, and is inhabited by Greeks, Turks, and Arabians.

**Ver. 27.** *And he arose and went*, etc.] As soon as he had his orders, he immediately obeyed them; he made no dispute about the matter, though he was directed only part of his way, and had no account of what he went about, or was to do;

*and behold, a man of Ethiopia*; or “a man, an Ethiopian”; an Hebraism, such as “a man a Jew”, (<sup><3023></sup>Zechariah 8:23) wherefore his being called a man, is no contradiction to his being an eunuch; for the word “man” does not regard his sex, but with the other the country of which he was; and it is the same as if he had only been called an Ethiopian, which signifies one of a black countenance; for Ethiopia was not so called from Ethiops, the son of Vulcan, who is said to reign over it, but from the colour of its inhabitants; (<sup><2413></sup>Jeremiah 13:23, <sup><3007></sup>Amos 9:7). This country in the Hebrew language is called Cush, and the people of it Cushites, from Cush the son of Ham, (<sup><0106></sup>Genesis 10:6) And so Josephus says <sup>f417</sup>, that the Ethiopians over whom he (Cush) reigned, are now by themselves, and by all in Asia, called Chuseans; and so likewise the inhabitants of upper Ethiopia, or the Abyssines, are to this day called Cussinns, by the Portuguese. Geographers make mention of two Ethiopias, one in Africa, divided into upper and lower, and which is here meant; and the other in Asia and a part of Arabia, and which is the Ethiopia spoken of in the Old Testament: a note of admiration is prefixed, to observe to us what was remarkable in providence that just at this time, and in this way, such a man should be travelling; and what was still a greater wonder of grace, that such an one should be the object of God’s peculiar favour, and should be chosen and called, have the Gospel preached to him, and be admitted to an ordinance of it; whereby some prophecies began to have their accomplishment in part, (<sup><1031></sup>Psalms 68:31, <sup><3010></sup>Zephaniah 3:10)

*An eunuch of great authority*; he might be one that was literally so, it being common for eastern princes and great men to have such persons as guards over their wives, to preserve their chastity; and so hereby was a fulfilment in part of (<sup><2508></sup>Isaiah 56:3-5) though this word is used to denote a person in office: so Potiphar is called **syr**s, an eunuch, though he had a wife, and which we rightly render an officer; and the Chaldee paraphrase renders it, **abr**, “a prince”, or great man, (<sup><0301></sup>Genesis 39:1). So Balaam is said <sup>f418</sup> to be one of the king’s eunuchs, and yet Jannes and Jambres are said to be his sons; and the word Dynastes here used, which we translate “of great authority”, may be considered as explanative of the word eunuch; to teach

us, that this word was not expressive of his case, but a title of office: it is reported of this eunuch, that after his conversion he preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of Zeylan and Arabia Felix, and in the island of Traprobane in the Red sea, and at last suffered martyrdom<sup>f419</sup>: this great person said to be

*under Candace queen of the Ethiopians*; that is, of those Ethiopians who inhabited the island of Meroe; for Candace, or Candaoce, as Pliny<sup>f420</sup> reads it, was a common name of the queens of that island, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptian kings, and Caesar of the Roman emperors: the word Candace signifies a governor of children, that is, servants; it is derived from the Ethiopic word *ynq*, “Kani”, which signifies to govern; and from *qd*, “Dak, a child”, or servant; and the king of the Abyssines is to this day called Prestar Chan, or Kan, a prince of servants, who is commonly and corruptly called Prester John; and Chan, or Kan, is a well known name for an emperor or governor in the eastern countries as with the Tartars and Persians, witness the late famous Kouli Kan. Some say<sup>f421</sup>, her proper name was Judith, others Lacasa<sup>f422</sup>, and others Hendake, or Indich; which, as Ludolphus<sup>f423</sup> observes, is no other than Candace; though this last name Indich, according to Zaga Zabo, an ambassador of the king of the Ethiopians, was the name of the eunuch himself; his words, as reported by Damianus a Goes<sup>f424</sup>, are these;

“we, almost before all other Christians, received baptism from the eunuch of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, whose name was Indich:”

*who had the charge of all her treasure*; was her lord treasurer; which shows, that he was not an eunuch to her on account of chastity, but an high officer in her kingdom: the word Gaza here used, signifies in the Persian language treasure, or treasury<sup>f425</sup>. The Ethiopic version takes it for the name of a place, and renders it, “and he was governor of the city of Gaza”, but very wrongly: “and had come to Jerusalem for to worship”; hence he seems to have been either a Jew by birth, or rather a proselyte to the Jewish religion; and had been at Jerusalem at one of their annual feasts, the passover, “pentecost”, or tabernacles, to worship the God of Israel, whom he believed to be the only true God.

**Ver. 28.** *Was returning*, etc.] From Jerusalem, having finished the parts of divine worship he came to perform; and it is remarkable, that though he must doubtless have heard of Jesus of Nazareth, and what had passed in

Jerusalem lately, and of his apostles, yet heard them not; or however, was not converted by them, nor believed in Jesus; his conversion being ordered to be at another time, in another place, and by another instrument:

*and sitting in his chariot:* as was the manner of princes and great persons:

*read Esaias the Prophet;* the Book of the Prophecies of Isaiah the Prophet; and in (<sup><4017></sup>Luke 4:17) it is called the “Book of the Prophet Esaias”; and in the note there, (see Gill on “<sup><4017></sup>Luke 4:17, I have observed, that the prophets, especially the larger ones, were sometimes in separate and distinct books, and so might be the prophecy of Isaiah; and such an one was delivered to Christ, in the synagogue of Nazareth; and such an one the eunuch might have, and be reading in it: hence we read <sup>f426</sup>, that Daniel should say to the Israelites, who came to discourse with him about the prophecies of Jeremiah, bring me, says he, **hy[çy dps**, “the Book of Isaiah”); he began to read, and went on till he came to this verse, “the burden of the desert of the sea”, etc. (<sup><2201></sup>Isaiah 21:1) and both the Arabic and Ethiopic versions here read, “the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.” (See Gill on “<sup><4017></sup>Luke 4:17”). Some think the eunuch might be reading over some passages of Scripture in this prophet, which he had heard expounded at Jerusalem, to refresh his memory with what he had heard. This prophet is a very evangelical one, and very delightful and profitable to read: many things are prophesied by him concerning the Messiah, and particularly in the chapter in which the eunuch was reading; and this being a time when there was great expectation of the Messiah, such passages might be read and expounded in their synagogues, which concerned him: however, the eunuch improved his time, as he was travelling in a religious way, which was very commendable; and as this was the occasion and opportunity which the Holy Ghost took to bring on his conversion, it may serve greatly to recommend the reading of the Scriptures.

**Ver. 29.** *Then the Spirit said unto Philip,* etc.] Not the angel, a ministering Spirit, as in (<sup><4026></sup>Acts 8:26) but the Holy Spirit, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, the same with the Spirit of the Lord, (<sup><4039></sup>Acts 8:39) who spoke unto him, either by an articulative voice, such as was the Bath Kol among the Jews; or inwardly, by a secret impulse upon him, he directed him, saying:

*go near, and join thyself to this chariot;* he bid him make up to the chariot, he saw driving on the road at such a distance, and follow it, and attend it

closely; and not leave it, till an opportunity of conversing with the person in it offered.

**Ver. 30.** *And Philip ran thither to him*, etc.] Being very ready to obey the divine order, and hoping he might be an instrument of doing some good, which might issue in the glory of God, and the welfare of men:

*and heard him read the prophet Esaias*; that is, “the Book of Isaiah the Prophet”; as before; and so the Ethiopic and Arabic versions read here, as there: he read it out, with a clear and distinct voice, so that Philip could hear him; and this he did, partly through reverence to the word of God, and partly to fix his attention to it the more, that he might the better understand and remember it, and also for delight and pleasure: it is very likely, that it was the Book of Isaiah in the Hebrew tongue in which he was reading, and which language he might understand, though he might be at a loss about the sense of the prophet:

*and said, understandest thou what thou readest?* meaning not the language, but the sense; for overhearing him, he perceived it was a prophecy in Isaiah he was reading; which was not so easy to be understood as laws and precepts are, which command this, and forbid that; whereas prophecies were more abstruse, and regarded things to come.

**Ver. 31.** *And he said, how can I, except some man should guide me?* etc.] Which shows that he was of an excellent spirit and temper; since instead of answering in a haughty and disdainful manner, as great men are too apt to do; and instead of charging Philip with, impertinence and insolence, in interrupting him whilst reading, and putting such a question to him, he expresses himself with great and uncommon modesty; with a sense and confession of his ignorance and incapacity and of the necessity and usefulness of the instructions of men, appointed of God to open and explain the Scriptures: and though he wanted such a guide, and could have been glad of one, yet he was willing to use all diligence himself in reading, that he, might, if possible, come at some knowledge of the truth; which was very commendable in him; and no doubt but the spirit he was in was much owing to his reading the word, and to the Spirit of God disposing his mind in this manner:

*and he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him*; which is an instance of his great humanity and courteousness, and of his meekness and condescension, as well as of his vehement thirst after the knowledge of the

Scriptures; he concluding, or at least hoping by Philip's question, and by the air and look of the man, that he was one that might be useful to him this way.

**Ver. 32.** *The place of the Scripture which he read was this*, etc.] Or the paragraph or section of Scripture; that part of it in which he was reading was (<sup>2510</sup>Isaiah 53:7,8) which shows, that by this time the Scriptures were divided into sections, chapters, and verses; whereas the Jews say the whole law at first was but one verse <sup>f427</sup>.

*He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb dumb before the shearer.* The metaphors of sheep and lamb express the innocence, meekness, and patience of Christ in his sufferings and death; and his being like these when led to the slaughter, and dumb before the shearer, show his willingness to suffer and die for his people, and to become a sacrifice for their sins. The allusion is to the sheep led either by the butcher to the slaughter house, or by the priest to the altar, and to the lamb of a year old being silent while it is shearing; and both denote the voluntariness of Christ in his sufferings, the stripping him of his good name, credit, and reputation among men, and of all worldly substance, though Lord of all, and even of the common blessings of nature, as of meat, drink, and raiment, and the light of the sun; and particularly the stripping him of his clothes, when his raiment was parted, and lots cast on his vesture, is very aptly signified by the shearing of the lamb, all which he took very patiently; and his being led forth to be crucified, when he was offered up as a sacrifice on the cross, very fitly answers to the sheep being led to the slaughter, without showing any reluctance. It was a custom with the Heathens to offer no creature in sacrifice, that struggled as it was led, or made an opposition, or showed any reluctance: it is remarkable, that there was nothing of this kind to be observed in Christ, who gave himself an offering, and a sacrifice; the reasons of which were, because of the great love he bore to his people: and because of the good and advantage that would come to them thereby: he was content to be poor, that they might be rich; to be made sin, that they might be made righteousness; to become a curse, that the blessings of the covenant might come upon them; to be stripped of all things, that they might enjoy all: and because no other sacrifice could atone for their sins; and because it was his Father's will, which always involves his own.

*So opened he not his mouth:* in defence of himself, when such false things were laid to his charge, and which he could have so easily refuted, and yet



answered to nothing, to the astonishment of his judge; the reason was, because he had the sins of his people on him, for which he was willing to suffer; and therefore declined self-vindication, lest he should hinder the judicial process against him; nor did he open his mouth against his enemies by way of threatening or complaint, when they spat on him, blindfolded, and buffeted him, and bid him prophesy who smote him; and when the chief priests, Scribes, the common people, and thieves mocked at him, and reviled him on the cross, he opened not his lips unto them, nor against them, only for them, saying, Father, forgive them; nor did he open his mouth against the justice of God, as bearing hard upon him; neither did he complain of the strictness of its demands, abating him nothing; nor of the severity and weight of its strokes, not sparing him at all; nor did he say one word against his people, whose sins brought all his sorrows and sufferings on him, but made intercession for the transgressors, whose sins he bore.

**Ver. 33.** *In his humiliation his judgment was taken away*, etc.] The humiliation, or low estate of Christ, lay in his assumption of human nature, with the weaknesses and imperfections of it; in the meanness of his parentage and education; in the sorrows he endured from his cradle to his cross; in his last conflict with Satan in the garden; in his being apprehended, bound, scourged, and condemned, both by the sanhedrim, and the Roman governor; and in being enclosed with the assembly of the wicked soldiers, who put on him their own clothes, and a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his hand, and then in a mock manner bowed to him as king of the Jews; and last of all in his obedience to death, even the death of the cross, and in his being laid in the grave. Now in this his low estate, “his judgment was taken away”; in the text in (<sup>281B</sup> Isaiah 53:8) the words are, “he was taken from prison and from judgment”; which some understand of his sufferings, and render the words thus, “by an assembly, and by judgment he was taken away”; that is, by the Jewish sanhedrim, and by the judgment or sentence of Pontius Pilate, his life was taken away: and others interpret it of his resurrection from the dead, when he was taken or delivered from the prison of the grave, and could not be held any longer by the cords and pains of death; and from the judgment or condemnation under which he lay, being justified in the Spirit, when he was raised from the dead. The words, as here cited, differ from the original text; which have caused some to think, that there was a different reading of these words, which the Septuagint followed, and Luke after them. Dr. Pocock <sup>f428</sup> has proposed a translation of the Hebrew text, as agreeable to this citation,



without supposing a various reading, thus, “because of affliction, even from judgment he is taken; or when he was humbled, he was taken from judgment”; it being all one whether he was taken from judgment condemnation, and punishment, as at his resurrection, or whether his punishment was taken from him: though the sense of the words, as they are here cited, rather seems to be this; when he was taken and bound by the Jews, and detained by them a prisoner, and arraigned before the high priest, and at Pilate’s bar, and false witnesses suborned, which was his time of humiliation and affliction; when he was reproached, blasphemed, buffeted, and spit, upon, justice was not done him, right did not take place, but was removed from him, and he was treated in a most unjust and unrighteous manner:

*and who shall declare his generation?* not his divine or human generation; nor the sorrows of his life; or the duration of his life since his resurrection; nor the numbers of his spiritual seed and offspring; senses put upon the words they will by no means bear; but the generation or age in which Christ lived, which for its wickedness among themselves, and their barbarity to him, and ill usage of him, cannot be sufficiently described and declared; and a great deal of it they themselves own; (See Gill on <sup>4006</sup>Matthew 10:36”) (See Gill on <sup>4029</sup>Matthew 12:39”)

*for his life is taken from the earth,* not in a common, but in a judicial way; in the most cruel, barbarous, and unjust manner, in a violent way; though not without his Father’s will, and his own consent; and though his life was taken from the earth, he now lives in heaven, and that for evermore.

**Ver. 34.** *And the eunuch answered Philip, and said,* etc.] After he had read the passage out, and Philip had put the question to him, whether he understood it; and after he had taken him up into his chariot to sit with him, and instruct him:

*I pray thee, of whom speakest the prophet this?* being desirous of knowing who was the subject of this famous prophecy: which to know was very useful and edifying, and was not a matter of mere indifference and speculation, but of great moment and concern. A like way of speaking, in order to know the sense of a passage, is used by the Jews <sup>f429</sup>: thus upon reading (<sup>3802</sup>Proverbs 31:2), it is asked,

“of whom does Solomon say this Scripture? he does not say it but of his father David.”

Does he speak

*of himself or of some other man?* which is very properly and pertinently put; since there might be some appearance of its application to Isaiah, who suffered under Manasseh; and it might be applied to different persons, as it has been since by the Jews; as to Josiah, Jeremiah in particular, and to the people of Israel in general, though very wrongly: Josiah could never be intended, as one of their noted commentators<sup>f430</sup> expounds the paragraph; since it was not the sins of the people that were the cause of his death, but his own, and his vanity in meddling with what he had nothing to do with, and had no real call unto; nor can it be said of him that he did no violence, or that he bore the sins of others, and died for them, and made his soul an offering for sin; nor were his days prolonged; nor did the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand: nor is the passage applicable to Jeremiah, as another of their writers<sup>f431</sup> would have it; he was not free from sin; nor was he wounded for the sins of his people; nor did he undergo his sufferings with patience; nor had he a large number of disciples; nor was he extolled and exalted, as this person is said to be: much less, as others<sup>f432</sup> say, is the whole body of the people of Israel in captivity intended; since one single individual as spoken of throughout the whole; and is manifestly distinguished from the people of Israel, whose sins and sorrows he was to bear, and for whose transgressions he was to be stricken and wounded. In all which they go contrary to their Targum<sup>f433</sup>, Talmud<sup>f434</sup>, and other ancient writings<sup>f435</sup>, which interpret many things in this section or paragraph of the Messiah<sup>f436</sup>: however, as it might be differently understood, or difficult to be understood, the eunuch very appropriately puts this question.

**Ver. 35.** *Then Philip opened his mouth*, etc.] With freedom and boldness, and spoke clearly and distinctly, and expounded the passage to him. This is a phrase frequently used in Jewish writings, especially in the book of Zohar<sup>f437</sup>, when they give an account of this or the other Rabbi interpreting any place of Scripture; as for instance, R. Eleazar j tp, “opened”, and said, “my sabbaths you shall keep”, etc. Again, R. Aba j tp, “opened”, and said, “and Manoah said unto his wife”, etc. Once more, “R. Simeon opened”, and said, “the heavens declare the glory of God”, etc. and

*began at the same Scripture*: “the fifty third of Isaiah”: and preached unto him Jesus of Nazareth; how that he was the true Messiah, and the person there designed, and that very rightly; for the Jews themselves, the ancient

ones, have interpreted several passages in that chapter of the Messiah, as has been before observed; he showed him how that he was born of a virgin, made under the law, and yielded perfect obedience to it in his life; and that he suffered and died for the sins of his people, and made satisfaction for them, and brought in an everlasting righteousness to justify them before God, and had obtained eternal redemption for them; that he was risen from the dead, was ascended into heaven, and now sat at the right hand of God, and ever lived to make intercession for transgressors; and would come a second time to judge both quick and dead; and in the mean while had left rules for the gathering, and forming, and governing his churches; and had appointed persons to preach his Gospel, and to administer the ordinances of baptism, and the supper of the Lord, which were to continue till his second coming.

**Ver. 36.** *And as they went on their way*, etc.] In the road from Jerusalem to Gaza; Philip preaching, and the eunuch hearing, and conversing in a religious and spiritual way together; and Beza says in one exemplar it is added, “conferring one with another”; about the person and office of Christ, the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it; as appears by what follows, both by the eunuch’s request to be admitted to baptism, and his confession of faith:

*they came unto a certain water*; which some say was at Bethhoron, in the tribe of Judah or Benjamin; and others think it was the river Eleutherus; the former is more likely; concerning which Jerom<sup>f438</sup> gives this account:

“Bethzur in the tribe of Judah, or Benjamin, and now called Bethhoron, is a village as we go from Aella (or Jerusalem) to Hebron, twenty miles from it; near which is a fountain, springing up at the bottom of a mountain, and is swallowed up in the same ground in which it is produced; and the Acts of the Apostles relate, that the eunuch of queen Candace was baptized here by Philip.”

This place was about two miles from Hebron; since that, according to the same writer<sup>f439</sup>, was twenty two miles from Jerusalem. Borchardus<sup>f440</sup> seems to place it further off from Hebron:

“from Hebron are three “leucas”, or six miles, northward, declining a little to the west, to Nehel Escol, that is, “the brook of the cluster”, from whence the spies carried the cluster of grapes; to the left of this valley, for the space of a mile, or half a leuca, runs a

river, in which Philip baptized the, eunuch of queen Candace, not far from Sicelech.”

And, according to Jerom<sup>f441</sup>, Escol lay in the way from Bethzur to Hebron. This account of the historian sets aside that weak piece of criticism on *Ac# 8:38* used by some persons; as if when Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, no more is meant, than that they went to the water side, or descended to the bank and brink of the river; seeing, here it is said, they came to a certain place of water; they came to the river itself, or the river side, and after this went down into it.

*And the eunuch said, see here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?* This question shows, that he had some knowledge of the ordinance of baptism, which he had received from the ministry and conversation of Philip; and that he had some desire after it, as regenerate persons have, after divine things, after Christ, his word, and ordinances; and that he was willing to take the first opportunity of submitting to it, but was jealous lest he should not be qualified for it; and therefore modestly proposes the affair to Philip, and desires to be examined and judged by him: and it also suggests, that there are some things which might be a just bar to this ordinance, as want of grace, and a disorderly life and conversation, which were the hindrances to the Pharisees and Sadducees, who came to John’s baptism; and these are sufficient ones, even though persons may be born in a Christian land, and of believing parents, and have had a good education; yea, though they may have much notional light and speculative knowledge: but where the good work of grace is begun, and when a soul is spiritually enlightened, and has evangelical repentance for sin, and true faith in Christ, and sincere love to him, nothing should hinder: not any thing on his side; not a sense of his own unworthiness, which will never be otherwise, but rather increase; nor the corruptions of his heart and nature, which will always remain, as long as he is in the body; nor fears of falling away, since there cannot be more danger after baptism than before, and Christ is the same who is always able to keep from it; nor the reproaches of the world, which should be esteemed above riches; and more especially, since to be ashamed of Christ, his word, or ordinances, is highly resented by him; nor the opposition of relations and friends, who, though they are to be regarded and listened to in civil matters, yet should have no sway in religious ones to move from the cause of Christ; nor any difficulty in the ordinance itself, since it is but water baptism, and not a bloody one, such as Christ was baptized with, and some of his followers have been

called unto: nor should anything hinder on the side of the administrator, when the above is the case; as not being circumcised, but Gentiles, as in the times of the apostles, (~~4007~~ Acts 10:47) so not the former life and conversation of the person, though it has been ever so wicked, as the instances of the crucifiers of Christ, of the jailor, of Saul the persecutor, and many of the Corinthians, show; nor the weakness of grace; the day of small things is not to be despised, nor a bruised reed to be broken, or smoking flax to be quenched: agreeably to this the Ethiopic version renders it, “who doth hinder”, etc.

**Ver. 37.** *And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,* etc.] Intimating, that if he did not believe, he had no right to that ordinance; though he was a proselyte to the Jewish religion, a serious and devout man, and was employed in a religious way, when Philip came up to him, and was very desirous of being instructed in the knowledge of divine things; and yet notwithstanding all this, he had no right to the ordinance of baptism, unless he had faith in Christ, and made a profession of it; nor would Philip administer it to him without it; from whence it appears, that faith in Christ, and a profession of it, are necessary prerequisites to baptism: and this faith should not be a mere historical and temporary faith, nor a feigned one, but a believing in Christ with the heart unto righteousness; or such a faith by which a soul relinquishes its own righteousness, and looks and goes unto Christ for righteousness, life, and salvation, and rests and relies upon him for them; and it should be a believing in him with the whole heart, which does not design a strong faith, or a full assurance of faith, but an hearty, sincere, and unfeigned one, though it may be but weak, and very imperfect. And that this is necessary to baptism is manifest, because without this it is impossible to please God; nor can submission and obedience to it be acceptable to him: nor indeed can the ordinance be grateful and pleasing to unbelievers; for though it is a command that is not grievous, and a yoke that is easy, yet it is only so to them that believe; nor can any other see to the end of this ordinance, or behold the burial, and resurrection of Christ represented by it, or be baptized into his death, and partake of the benefits of it; and besides, whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

*And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God:* which though a short, is a very comprehensive summary of the articles of faith respecting the person, offices, and grace of Christ; as that he is a divine person, truly and properly God, the only begotten of the Father, of

the same nature with him, and equal to him; that he existed from all eternity, as a divine person with him, and distinct from him; and that he is the Christ, the anointed of God, to be prophet, priest, and King; and is Jesus, the only Saviour of lost sinners, in whom he trusted and depended alone for righteousness, life, and salvation. This whole verse is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in five of Beza's copies, and in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions; but stands in the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions, and in the Complutensian edition; and, as Beza observes, ought by no means to be expunged, since it contains so clear a confession of faith required of persons to be baptized, which was used in the truly apostolic times.

**Ver. 38.** *And he commanded the chariot to stand still*, etc.] That is, the eunuch ordered his chariot driver to stop; for to him it better agrees to give this order than to Philip; though otherwise the words are so placed, that it would be difficult to say who gave the command.

*And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him:* upon which Calvin has this note;

“hence we see what was the manner of baptizing with the ancients, for they plunged the whole body into water.”

And indeed, other mode had been practised then, as sprinkling or pouring of water, there would have been no necessity of their going out of the chariot, and much less of their going down into the water; and as for change of apparel, it cannot be reasonably thought that so great a man should take so long a journey without it. In like manner the Jewish ablutions and purifications, which were performed by immersion, and therefore called baptisms, (<sup>3910</sup>Hebrews 9:10) are spoken of in the same sort of language as here: so a profluvius person, and a woman that had lain in, were obliged **l wbj l hdryç**, “to go down and dip”<sup>f442</sup>.

“It is a tradition of the Rabbins<sup>f443</sup>, that he that sees any nocturnal pollution on the day of atonement, **l bwj w drwy**, “goes down and dips himself”. — And so all that are obliged to dipping, dip according to their custom on the day of atonement; the profluvius person, man or woman, the leprous person, man or woman, the husband of a menstruous woman, and one defiled with the dead, dip according to their custom on the day of atonement.”

**Ver. 39.** *And when they were come up out of the water*, etc.] Which is another circumstance, showing that baptism was then performed by immersion; with this compare (<sup>(~~ARAB~~)</sup> Matthew 3:16) and so it is said of the high priest, when he washed himself on the day of atonement, **hl [ l bj w dry**, “he went down and dipped, and came up”<sup>f444</sup>; and so any other person that was obliged to dipping on any account, **hl [w l bj w dry**, “went down and dipped, and came up”<sup>f445</sup>. And again it is said<sup>f446</sup>, it happened to a servant maid of Rabbi, **htl [w hl bj ç**, “that she dipped herself and came up”.

*The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip*; as soon as the ordinance was over; so that the eunuch had no opportunity of rewarding him for his instructions and labour; and this might be done on purpose to show that he had no mercenary end in joining himself to his chariot; and this sudden rapture and disappearance might be a confirmation to the eunuch that this whole affair was of God. The Spirit of the Lord took up Philip, just as he is said to lift up Ezekiel, between earth and heaven, (<sup>(~~ARAB~~)</sup> Ezekiel 8:3) and carried him above the earth as far as Azotus. The Alexandrian copy, and one of Beza’s, and some others, read the words thus, “the holy Spirit fall upon the eunuch, but the angel of the Lord caught away Philip”; the same angel, it may be, that bid him go toward the south:

*that the eunuch saw him no more*; neither at that time, nor perhaps ever after; for one went one way, and another way:

*and he went on his way*; towards Ethiopia; and, as the Ethiopic version reads, “into his own country”; which is one reason why he saw Philip no more: however, he went thither

*rejoicing*, as he had great reason to do; being blessed with the saving knowledge of Christ, and true faith in the Son of God, and admitted to the holy ordinance of baptism; having first received the baptism of the Spirit, or having the grace of the Spirit bestowed on him, and implanted in him: and, according to some copies just now mentioned, after his baptism the Spirit fell on him in an extraordinary manner, and that without imposition of hands; so that, upon the whole, he had great reason to rejoice.

**Ver. 40.** *But Philip was found at Azotus*, etc.] The same with the Ashdod of the Philistines, famous for the temple of Dagon, (<sup>(~~ARAB~~)</sup> 1 Samuel 5:1)

where the Septuagint call it Azotus, as here: and so it is called in the Apocrypha:

“Howbeit all the hindmost of them were slain with the sword: for they pursued them unto Gazera, and unto the plains of Idumea, and *Azotus*, and Jamnia, so that there were slain of them upon a three thousand men.” (1Mac 4:15)

“Whereof when Apollonius heard, he took three thousand horsemen, with a great host of footmen, and went to *Azotus* as one that journeyed, and therewithal drew him forth into the plain. because he had a great number of horsemen, in whom he put his trust.” (1Mac 10:77)

“But Jonathan set fire on *Azotus*, and the cities round about it, and took their spoils; and the temple of Dagon, with them that were fled into it, he burned with fire.” (1Mac 10:84)

“And when he came near to *Azotus*, they shewed him the temple of Dagon that was burnt, and *Azotus* and the suburbs thereof that were destroyed, and the bodies that were cast abroad and them that he had burnt in the battle; for they had made heaps of them by the way where he should pass.” (1Mac 11:4)

where mention is made of Beth Dagon, and the idol’s temple in it; and by Herodotus <sup>f447</sup>, Pliny <sup>f448</sup>, and Ptolomy <sup>f449</sup>; and it is now called Palmis, according to R. Benjamin <sup>f450</sup>; it was about fifty four miles from Jerusalem, and two hundred and seventy furlongs, Or four and thirty miles <sup>f451</sup> from Gaza:

*and passing through*; or, as he passed along through that and other places:

*he preached in all the cities*; that lay in his way; which shows his zeal and diligence:

*till he came to Caesarea*; not Caesarea Philippi, (<sup><4163></sup>Matthew 16:13) but that which was before called Strato’s tower, and was rebuilt by Herod, and called Caesarea, in honour of Augustus Caesar <sup>f452</sup>; and not by Caesar himself, as R. Benjamin says <sup>f453</sup>: it was six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles from Jerusalem <sup>f454</sup>, This place was famous for Jewish Rabbins, and their schools of learning; frequent mention is made of *yr̄syqd*



^ynbr, “the Rabbins of Caesarea”<sup>f455</sup>; here Philip seems to have stopped, and stayed awhile.

# CHAPTER 9

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 9

**Ver. 1.** *And Saul yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter*, etc.] The historian having given an account of the dispersion of all the preachers of the Gospel at Jerusalem, excepting the apostles, and of their success in other parts, especially of Philip's, returns to the history of Saul; who, not satisfied with the murder of Stephen, and with the havoc he made of the church at Jerusalem, haling them out of their houses to prison, continued not only to threaten them with confiscation of goods and imprisonment, but with death itself. The phrase here used is an Hebraism; so in (<sup>492712</sup>Psalm 27:12) *smj j py*, "one that breathes out violence", or cruelty; and this shows the inward disposition of his mind, the rage, wrath, malice, envy, and blood thirstiness he was full of; and is observed to illustrate the riches of divine grace in his conversion. And wonderful it is, that that same mouth which breathed out destruction and death to the followers of Christ, should afterwards publish and proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God; that he whose mouth was full of cursing and bitterness, should hereafter, and so very quickly, come forth in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. And this rage of his, who now ravened as a wolf, as was foretold of Benjamin, of which tribe he was, was against the lambs of Christ, and the sheep of his fold:

*against the disciples of the Lord*; not against wicked men, murderers, and thieves, and other evildoers, but against the harmless and innocent followers of Jesus, and which was an aggravation of his cruelty: and being thus heated, and full of wrath,

*he went unto the high priest*; Annas or Caiaphas, who, notwithstanding the Jews were under the Roman government, had great authority to punish persons with stripes and death itself, who acted contrary to their law.

**Ver. 2.** *And desired of him letters to Damascus*, etc.] Damascus was the head or metropolis of Syria, (<sup>23078</sup>Isaiah 7:8) And so Pliny <sup>f456</sup> calls it Damascus of Syria: it was a very ancient city; it was in the times of Abraham; his servant Eliezer is said to be of it, (<sup>41152</sup>Genesis 15:2) and some

say it was built by him the said Eliezer; though Josephus<sup>f457</sup> makes Uz, a grandson of Shem, to be the founder of it; whose surname is conjectured, by some, to be Dimshak, seeing that and Uz differ not in sense: and Justin says<sup>f458</sup>, it had its name from Damascus, the king of it, in honour of whom the Syrians made a temple of the sepulchre of his wife Arathis, and her a goddess; after Damascus, he says, Azelus, then Azores, Abraham, and Israel were kings of it. Some think it has its name from blood, and that it signifies a “sack” or bag, or, as Jerom explains, a cup of blood<sup>f459</sup>, or one that drinks blood; who says, it is a true tradition, that the field in which Abel was killed by Cain, was in Damascus<sup>f460</sup>: but it seems rather to be so called from the redness of the earth about it; for some very good writers affirm, that the earth in the fields of Damascus is like wax tinged with red lead; so if it be read Dammesek, as it commonly is, in the Arabic language, “Damma” signifies to tinge, and “Meshko” is used for “red earth”; or if “Dummesek”, as it is in (~~12160~~2 Kings 16:10 \*marg), “Daumo”, in the same language, is “permanent”, what always abides, and “Meshko”, as before, “red earth”, and so “Dummesek” is never failing red earth; or if it be Darmesek”, as in (~~13185~~1 Chronicles 18:5 \*marg) the same with Darmsuk”, it may be observed, that the Syrians call red earth “Doro sumoko”: so that, upon the whole, this seems to be the best etymology of the word<sup>f461</sup>, and the rise of the name of this famous city, which Justin calls the most noble city of Syria. It is said<sup>f462</sup> to be an hundred and sixty miles from Jerusalem. Here might be many Christians before, and others might flee hither upon this persecution; and Saul, not content with driving them from their native place, persecuted them, as he himself says, to strange cities: and that he might do this with safety to himself, and with the greater force and cruelty to them, he got letters from the high priest, and sanhedrim, at Jerusalem; either recommending him to the Jews at Damascus, and exhorting them to assist him in what he came about; or empowering him to act under his authority, or both: and these were directed to be delivered

*to the synagogues*; to the rulers of them; for the Jews being numerous in this place, they had more synagogues than one. Josephus says<sup>f463</sup>, that under Nero the inhabitants of Damascus killed ten thousand Jews in their own city: and Benjamin Tudelensis<sup>f464</sup> in his time says, there were about three thousand Jews (Pharisees), besides two hundred Karaites (or Scripturarians), and four hundred Samaritans, who lived in peace together. Now to these synagogues, and the chief men of them, was Saul recommended for assistance and direction,

*that if he found any of this way*; of thinking; that were of this sect of religion, and either professed to believe, or preach, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah:

*whether they were men or women*; without any fear of one, or mercy to the other:

*he might bring them bound to Jerusalem*; to be examined and punished by the sanhedrim there, as they should think fit; and for this purpose he must take with him a considerable number of men; and that he had men with him is certain from (~~4407~~ Acts 9:7).

**Ver. 3.** *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus*, etc.] Some say it was a mile from Damascus: though, no mention is made of his obtaining letters from the high priest, only of his desiring them; yet there is no doubt but they were granted him; the design of the historian, under a divine direction, being to give an account of the temper and disposition of Saul; and he having got them, set out on his journey in high spirits, and proceeded on with the same wicked intentions, till he came near the city; where he designed to open and show his commission, and execute his wrathful purposes; but he is not suffered to go into the city with such a Spirit:

*and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven*; which exceeded the light and brightness of the sun, for it was at midday, (~~4433~~ Acts 26:13) and so the Ethiopic version here inserts this clause, “and it was noon time”; which circumstance shows that the light was very extraordinary; and it was an emblem of that inward and spiritual light which was now quickly communicated to him, light being the first thing in the new, as in the old creation; and of that Gospel light he was hereafter to spread in the world.

**Ver. 4.** *And he fell to the earth*, etc.] Not being able to bear the light, and still less the divine glory and majesty which he perceived was present; and therefore, in great confusion, amazement, and fear, he fell with his face to the ground, and lay there prostrate and so did also those that were with him, (~~4434~~ Acts 26:14)

*and heard a voice, saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* this voice was the real voice of Christ in his human nature, and who visibly and in person appeared, and was seen by the apostle; (~~4436~~ Acts 26:16, ~~4438~~ 1 Corinthians 15:8) the language he spoke in was the Hebrew tongue, and he

calls him by his Hebrew name Saul, and which is doubled to denote vehemency and affection; (See Gill on "~~4023~~ Luke 22:31") he knew him as one of his sheep, though straying, and calls him by name, and expostulates with him, wherefore he should persecute him in his members as he did; for the union between Christ and his people is so close, that what is done to them is done to him. There seems to be a considerable emphasis on the word "me"; "me", who have been they surety from everlasting; "me", who hath loved thee and given myself for thee; "me", who have shed my blood, laid down my life, and died for thee; "me", who am now at my Father's right hand, interceding for thee, that grace might be bestowed upon thee, the set time being now come.

**Ver. 5.** *And he said, who art thou, Lord?* etc.] For he knew not whether it was God, or an angel, or who it was that spake to him; he knew not Christ by his form or voice, as Stephen did, when he saw him standing at the right hand of God; he was in a state of ignorance, and knew neither the person, nor voice of Christ, and yet his heart was so far softened and wrought upon, that he was desirous of knowing who he was;

*and the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.* The Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, "read Jesus of Nazareth"; and one of Beza's copies, and another of Stephens', as in (~~4028~~ Acts 22:8) whose name thou art doing many things against, and whose people thou art destroying:

*it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks;* or "to resist me", as the Arabic version renders it; and which is the sense of the phrase; it is a proverbial expression, taken from beasts that are goaded, who kick against the goads or pricks, and hurt themselves the more thereby; and Christ uses it, suggesting hereby, that should Saul go on to persecute him and his people, to oppose his Gospel, and the strong evidence of it, in doctrine and miracles, and notwithstanding the present remonstrances made in such an extraordinary manner; he would find himself in the issue greatly hurt by it, and could not rationally expect to succeed against so powerful a person. This clause in the Syriac version is placed at the end of the fourth verse.

**Ver. 6.** *And he trembling and astonished,* etc.] At the light and voice, and appearance of Christ, and especially at the words last spoken; he was now pricked to the heart, and filled with a sense of sin, and loaded with guilt, and had dreadful apprehensions of his state and condition, on account of his past wickedness, and the present course of sin he was in: so persons

under first convictions “tremble” at the sight of their sins, which rise up like so many ghosts, and stare them in the face, and load their consciences with guilt; at the swarms of corruptions they see in their carts, which appear to them an habitation of devils, a hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird; at the curses of a righteous law which threatens with damnation and death; at the future judgment, and the apprehensions of divine wrath; and at the voice and word of God, which strikes terror, cuts them to the heart, and like an hammer breaks the rock in pieces: and they are “astonished” at their own wickedness and vileness, which they had no conception of before; at the sparing mercy and forbearance of God, who has continued them in being, and not sent them to hell, to be among devils and damned spirits; at the light around by which they see their sins, the plague of their own hearts, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, their lost state by nature, and need of salvation by Christ; and at the doctrines of the Gospel, so far as they have light into them; and at the person of Christ, and at his Father’s love and his in procuring salvation for them:

*said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* he was willing to do any thing he should him to, whereby he might make satisfaction for the injury he had done him, and by which he might be saved; for he was still upon the covenant of works, as persons under first convictions commonly are:

*and the Lord said unto him;* this, with all that goes before in this verse, is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and Syriac version: “arise and go into the city”; that is, of Damascus, as the Ethiopic version reads:

*and it shall be told thee what thou must do;* what was appointed for him to do, (<sup>4021</sup>Acts 22:10) and there it was told him both what he should do and suffer for Christ, but not to obtain salvation; and this was done internally by the Spirit of God, who instructed him in the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and externally by Ananias: in two of Beza’s copies, and in the Syriac version, it is read, “there shall it be told thee”, etc.

**Ver. 7.** *And the men which journeyed with him,* etc.] Out of respect to him, to keep him company; or rather to assist him in his designs:

*stood speechless:* astonished and amazed, they had not power to speak one word, nor to rise from the ground, and move one step forward; they were as if they were thunderstruck, and fastened to the earth; for this standing is

not opposed to their being fallen to the earth, but to their going forward, and only expresses the surprise and stupidity that had seized them:

*hearing a voice, but seeing no man*; that is, they heard the voice of Saul, saying, who art thou? and what wilt thou have me to do? but saw nobody that he spoke to, which surprised them; for it is certain they did not hear the voice of Christ, that spake to him, (<sup><427></sup>Acts 22:9) or if they heard the voice of Christ, it was only the sound of his voice, but did not understand what he said; but the former seems rather to be the sense, and the best way of reconciling the two passages.

**Ver. 8.** *And Saul arose from the earth*, etc.] As he was bid by Christ, (<sup><406></sup>Acts 9:6)

*and when his eyes were opened he saw no man*; neither Christ, who appeared to him from heaven, whom he had before seen, nor even any of his companions, nor indeed any object: the Syriac version renders it, “he saw nothing”; not anything at all; and the Ethiopic version, “he could not see”: when he opened his eye lids, he perceived his sight was gone, and this showed it to be real blindness; and which was an emblem of the ignorance and blindness he had been in:

*but they led him by the hand*; the men that were with him, perceiving that he could not guide himself, took him by the hand, and led him on his journey;

*and brought him into Damascus*; and now was fulfilled, at least in part, the prophecy in (<sup><300></sup>Zechariah 9:1).

**Ver. 9.** *And he was three days without sight*, etc.] Without bodily sight; for otherwise all this while his spiritual sight was increasing, and Christ was giving him by his Spirit a full view of himself, his state and case, and where his salvation was; and a clear insight into the doctrines of the Gospel, which he is said to have by the revelation of Christ, whereby he was fitted for the immediate preaching of it:

*and neither did eat nor drink*; having no regard unto, or time for either; being filled with grief and sorrow, and true repentance for sin, and taken up in prayer to God, and employed in attending to, and receiving the doctrines of grace, he was afterwards to publish.

**Ver. 10.** *And there was a certain disciple at Damascus*, etc.] Who perhaps came hither upon the persecution at Jerusalem, or rather might have lived here some time; (<sup>40B</sup>Acts 9:13) that he was more than a private or ordinary disciple of Christ seems manifest, from his being sent to Saul on such an, important affair; from his putting his hands upon him, upon which he was filled with the Holy Ghost; and from his baptizing him: some think he was one of the seventy disciples; some say he was a deacon; but it is certain he was not one of the first seven; others affirm he was a presbyter, and some report that he was afterwards bishop of Damascus, and died a martyr there; but these are things not to be depended on:

*named Ananias*; a Jewish name, the same with Hananiah, (<sup>2006</sup>Daniel 1:6) there was an high priest of this name, (<sup>42B</sup>Acts 23:2) and it was a name in much use among the Jews; frequent mention is made in the Misnic and Talmudic writings of R. Hananiah, or Ananias:

*and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias*; by “the Lord”, is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, as is evident from (<sup>40B</sup>Acts 9:17) who appeared to Ananias in a vision; the Arabic version adds, “by night”; perhaps in a dream, as the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph the husband of Mary, and called him by his name Ananias, to which he answered:

*and he said, behold, I am here, Lord*; in like manner as Samuel did, when a child, when the Lord called to him; showing his readiness to hearken to his voice, to do his will, and obey his orders, be they what they would.

**Ver. 11.** *And the Lord said unto him, arise*, etc.] Quickly, directly, immediately, from off thy bed; the case required haste and dispatch:

*and go into the street which is called Straight*; a street in the city of Damascus so called; the streets of cities were called by different names, to distinguish them as ours now are. So in Jerusalem there was the street of the house of God, which led to the temple, (<sup>150D</sup>Ezra 10:9) and the upper street, in which idolatrous Gentiles, and such as were fullers by trade, dwelt <sup>f465</sup>; and the street of the butchers; and the street of the wool staplers <sup>f466</sup>: and this street in Damascus might be called “Straight”; because it might be a long straight street, without any windings and turnings, which might go through the city. Whether or no this was one of the streets which Benhadad allowed Ahab to make in Damascus, (<sup>12B</sup>1 Kings 20:34) cannot be said;



*and inquire in the house of Judas*; which was in that street: who this Judas was is not certain, that he was a Jew appears by his name, but whether a believing, or an unbelieving Jew, is not known; however, he was Saul's host, and if this was the house he was recommended to from Jerusalem, or designed to go to when he set out from thence, it is very probable he was an unbeliever; but if it was an house he pitched on after his conversion, it is likely this Judas was a believer, and whether the same with Judas surnamed Barsabas may be considered, who is mentioned in (<sup><4152></sup>Acts 15:22,32) however, at this man's house Ananias was to inquire

*for one called Saul of Tarsus*; or Saul "by name the Tarsian". So it is said <sup>f467</sup> of Bigthan and Teresh, (<sup><1782></sup>Esther 6:2) that they were μυυσρj ync, "two Tarsians", perhaps citizens of Tarsus, as Saul was. Tarsus was a city in Cilicia, and which Solinus <sup>f468</sup> calls the mother of cities, and is the same with the Tarshish of the Old Testament; here Saul was born, and of it he was a citizen; (<sup><4213></sup>Acts 21:39, 22:3) and therefore is here called Saul of Tarsus, or Saul the Tarsian:

*for behold he prayeth*: so as he had never prayed before; now he prayed with the Spirit, and with the understanding, from a feeling sense of his wants, for spiritual blessings, such as he had no knowledge of, nor desire after before. God has no stillborn children; as soon as any are quickened by his grace, they cry unto him; prayer is the breath of a regenerate man, and shows him to be alive. He who before was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ, now breathes after communion with Christ and them. This is said, no doubt, to encourage Ananias to go to him. The Syriac and Arabic versions place this clause at the beginning of the next verse, "for behold, whilst he prayed he saw", etc. the Ethiopic version has it not.

**Ver. 12.** *And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias*, etc.] Some read this verse in a parenthesis, and take them to be the words of Luke the historian; but it is rather a continuation of the words of Christ, telling Ananias, for his greater encouragement to go to Saul, that he had seen him in a vision, and had knowledge both of his person, and of his name, and of what he was to do to him; for in the vision or dream, he had been represented to him as

*coming in*; to the house, and into the room where he was:

*and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight*; without which he had been three days, and which he did receive upon Ananias's putting his hands on him.

**Ver. 13.** *Then Ananias answered, Lord*, etc.] Though Ananias knew that it was the Lord that spoke, and acknowledged his power and dominion, and expressed his readiness to obey his commands; yet there was a timidity in him, and which was the more inexcusable, that it should appear after the Lord had told him of the vision which Saul had had of him; and yet still he was fearful of putting himself into his hands, who had been so violent a persecutor; and therefore obliquely excuses himself, by observing what Saul had done at Jerusalem, and the powers he came with to Damascus:

*I have heard by many of this man*; which shows that Ananias had been at Damascus some time, and was not an eyewitness of the havoc Saul made of the church, only had the account of it from others; and these many who fled to Damascus upon the persecution, which Saul was at the head of; and being so, was particularly spoken of, and his name was well known, and was become infamous for his cruelty and barbarity;

*how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem*; by entering into their houses with violence, haling men and women from thence, committing them to prison, and persecuting them unto death. Believers in Christ are called his "saints", because separated by his grace for his service, and sanctified by his Spirit, and to whom he is made sanctification; and because they live holy lives and conversations; all which is an aggravation of the evil done them, and which will be avenged by Christ in his own time.

**Ver. 14.** *And here he hath authority from the chief priests*, etc.] His fury and madness against the saints did not stop at Jerusalem, but he had received a commission from the sanhedrim to go to Damascus, where he now was:

*to bind all that call on thy name*; to take up all such persons and put them in bonds, and carry them bound to Jerusalem, whom he should find either praying to Christ, as God, as the first Christians used to do, and which is no inconsiderable proof of the deity of Christ; or professing the name of Christ, or were called by it.

**Ver. 15.** *But the Lord said unto him, go thy way*, etc.] The Syriac version reads, "arise, go thy way"; make no delay, nor any excuse, there is no reason for it; nothing is to be feared from him:

*for he is a chosen vessel unto me*; a choice and excellent one, full of the heavenly treasure of the Gospel, full of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and so very fit and richly qualified for the use and service of Christ; and was *htdmj yl k*, “a vessel of desire”, or a desirable one, as the Jews speak <sup>f469</sup>: or he was, to render the words literally, “a vessel of election”; both an instrument gathering in the election, or the elect of God, through the preaching of the Gospel; and was himself chosen of God, both to grace and glory, a vessel of mercy, and of honour prepared for glory; and was separated, predestinated, and appointed to the Gospel of God, to preach it among the Gentiles; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

*to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel*; by “the name” of Christ is meant his Gospel, which is a declaration of his person, perfections, glories, and excellencies, of his offices, grace, righteousness, and salvation; and to “bear” it, is to preach it, to carry it about, spread abroad, and propagate it; in allusion either to the prophets of old, whose prophecies are often called a “burden”, which they bore and carried to the several nations to whom they were sent; or to the Levites bearing the tabernacle of the Lord, and its vessels, “be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord”, (<sup>2821b</sup> Isaiah 52:11). Upon which Aben Ezra has this note,

“they are the Israelites, *hrwth yaçwn*, “that bear the law”;

but Saul was a chosen vessel to bear the Gospel; or to the sower of seed, (<sup>4906b</sup> Psalm 126:6) “before the Gentiles”, or nations of the world; and he was an apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity; the Gospel of the uncircumcision was particularly committed to him: and before “kings”, as he did before Agrippa, king of the Jews, and before Nero, emperor of Rome; and his bonds for the Gospel, and so the Gospel through his bonds became manifest in all the palace, or court of Caesar. And before

*the children of Israel*; the Jews, to whom he first preached it; but when they put it away he turned to the Gentiles, and afterwards, before the Jews, he bore a testimony for it.

**Ver. 16.** *For I will show him*, etc.] In vision, and by prophecy, either now, or hereafter; or by facts, as they come upon him:

*how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake*; such as weariness, pain, and watchings, hunger, thirst, fastings, cold, and nakedness, perils on

various accounts, and from different quarters, stripes, scourges, imprisonment, shipwreck, stoning, and death, of which he himself gives a detail, (<sup><4712></sup>2 Corinthians 11:23-28) so that Ananias had no reason to be afraid to go to him, and converse with him, and do unto him as he was directed.

**Ver. 17.** *And Ananias went his way*, etc.] He arose from off his bed or seat, where he was, went out of his house, and on the way to the place where Saul was; he had nothing more to say, his objections were answered; there was no room to excuse himself, nor did he now desire it, but quietly yields, and cheerfully obeys:

*and entered into the house*; or “that house”, the house of Judas, where Saul was, and whither Ananias was directed, (<sup><4491></sup>Acts 9:11)

*and putting his hands on him*; on Saul, in the same form Saul had seen him, in vision, doing it: and which was done, either as a prayer gesture; or for the healing of him, the restoring him to his sight; or that he might receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost; and it may be on all these accounts: and

*said, brother Saul*; he calls him “brother”, not because he was of the same nation, but because he was now of the same faith; because he was a regenerate person, and belonged to the family of God, and was of the same household of faith: and this he said, not upon what he had received from Saul’s own mouth, for he addressed him in this manner as soon as he came to him; but upon what the Lord had said concerning him; though it was indeed common with the Jewish doctors to salute one another with this name.

“When R. Jose ben Kisma was sick, R. Chanina ben Tradion went to visit him; he said unto him, Chanina, *yj a yj a* “my brother, my brother”, etc. <sup>f470</sup>.”

So Shemaiah called Abtalion his brother <sup>f471</sup>. And in like manner R. Eleazar ben Azariah saluted R. Ishmael <sup>f472</sup>. And R. Joshua speaks of R. Tarphon in the same language <sup>f473</sup>:

*the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest*; that is, who appeared to Saul as he was in the way to Damascus; not that Jesus was in the way, for he was in heaven, and appeared from thence to Saul, who was in the way: and he mentions Jesus by name, and this

appearance of his, partly to assure him of his mission from him; for otherwise he could have known nothing of his appearance to him; and partly to show the love of Christ to him, and though he had persecuted him in so violent a manner, he had a compassionate regard for him; as also to encourage and comfort him, who had been trembling, and astonished at what he had heard from Jesus. This same glorious person, adds he,

*hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight*; his bodily sight, which he had been without three days, by the imposition of hands:

*and be filled with the Holy Ghost*; with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as speaking with divers tongues, healing diseases, and the like; for as for the graces of the Spirit, and even Gospel light and knowledge, and gifts for preaching it, he had received these already.

**Ver. 18.** *And immediately there fell from his eyes, as it had been scales*, etc.] Which were little thin skins or films, like the scales of fishes, which were formed from the defluxions that fell from his brain, through the excessive light that shone around him, and the surprise he was thrown into by it: these, as soon as Ananias put his hands upon him, dropped off; which were an emblem and representation of the scales of ignorance, of himself, of sin, of righteousness, of the law, of the Gospel, and of Jesus as the Messiah; and of unbelief in him, and of pride, malice, and envy, and of superstition and bigotry, and of error and false doctrine, which, upon his being enlightened by the Spirit of God, fell from him:

*and he received sight forthwith*; his corporeal sight, which was an emblem of that spiritual sight he had also received: the word “forthwith”, or “immediately”, is not in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, but seems necessary; and indeed, if it was not expressed, it would be understood; for as soon as the scales fell from his eyes, he must receive his sight: the Ethiopic version places it after the word “baptized”, in the next clause:

*and arose, and was baptized*; that is, after Ananias had appointed it to him, as his duty, had pressed him to it, and called upon him to submit to it without delay, (<sup>4216</sup>Acts 22:16) And this shows that baptism was performed by immersion; for had it been done in any other way, either by pouring or sprinkling a little water, Saul might have kept his seat, and water might have been brought to him, and so the ordinance might have been performed; but he arose and went, either to a bath that might be in Judas’s

house, fit for such a purpose; for the Jews had their baths to bathe their whole bodies in on certain occasions; or he went to some certain place of water without doors, convenient for the administration of baptism, where it was administered by Ananias unto him. And this also may suggest to us, that only enlightened persons are the proper objects of this ordinance; such as have the scales of darkness, ignorance, and unbelief removed from them, and have a spiritual sight and sense of divine things: hence the ancients used to call baptism by the name of φωτισμος, “illumination”, and baptized persons “enlightened” ones.

**Ver. 19.** *And when he had received meat*, etc.] Which was set before him when he had received his sight, and after he was baptized, of which he had not tasted for three days:

*he was strengthened*; in body, being before very weak and feeble; not so much through fatigue of his journey, as through the fear and surprise the appearance of Christ to him, and his words, threw him into; as also through his fasting so long, and his continuance and constancy in prayer all this while, and the attention he gave to the divine instructions which were communicated to him, internally and externally:

*then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus*; who came from Jerusalem upon the persecution raised against them there; with these Saul continued some few days after his conversion and baptism, for quickly after he went into Arabia, as appears from (Gal 1:17). These disciples, with the new converts afterwards, it is highly probable, formed a church state in Damascus; Ananias is said to be the bishop or pastor of it, and which remained in several ages. In the catalogue of the council of Nice, which was held in the beginning of the “fourth” century, Damascus is mentioned as the seat of a church; in the “fifth” century a bishop of Damascus was in the council at Ephesus; and in the same century it was reckoned a metropolitan church in Asia; in the seventh century it appears there was a church in this place; and even in the “eighth” century, though the Arabians ravaged in those parts, yet still a church continued here for some time, till Ulid, the prince of the Saracens, took away the temple from the Christians of this place, and dedicated it to Mahomet; after which we hear no more of the church at Damascus<sup>f474</sup>.

**Ver. 20.** *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues*, etc.] The Syriac version adds, “of the Jews”; that is, which were in Damascus, (~~419D~~Acts 9:2) from whence it appears, that he was immediately, as soon as

converted, qualified for the work of preaching the Gospel: nor did he confer with flesh and blood, or stand disputing and debating with himself and carnal reason, what was best for him to do; but as soon as he knew Christ himself, he preached him to others, and whom he always made the subject of his ministry; and particularly,

*that he is the Son of God*; the only begotten of the Father, the eternal Son of God, truly and properly God, of the same nature and essence with God his Father, and equal to him. His design was to assert and maintain the dignity of his person, which is the foundation of his office, as Mediator, and of all the wonderful things he performed: had he meant no more than that he was the Messiah, the sense would only be, that he preached that Christ was the Christ; but the meaning is, that he preached that Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, was not a mere man, but a divine person, even the Son of God: he set out in his ministry, with the principal and most fundamental article of the Christian religion, that which Christ asserted, and for which he suffered, and which all the apostles, and first Christians believed. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read “Jesus”, instead of “Christ”.

**Ver. 21.** *But all that heard him were amazed*, etc.] Not the disciples that believed in Christ, but the unbelievers, as appears from their words:

*and said, is not this he that destroyed them that called on this name in Jerusalem?* they do not express the name of Christ, out of malice and ill will; which shows who they were that said these words, and were astonished to hear Saul preaching in this name, and proving him to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah; when it was but a little while ago he consented to the death of Stephen, made havoc of the church, wasted and destroyed it as much as was in his power, and persecuted unto death such as called upon the name of Christ, or were called by his name, he could find in Jerusalem: nor did this satisfy him, for it follows,

*and came hither*, that is, to Damascus,

*for that intent, that he might bring them bound to the chief priests*: whom he should find professing or invoking the name of Christ, or bearing it; now to see and hear him preach this same name, was surprising to them.

**Ver. 22.** *But Saul increased the more in strength*, etc.] Not of body, but of mind; his gifts and graces, and spiritual light and knowledge increased; his abilities were greater; his fortitude of mind, boldness, and freedom of



speech, every day increased: he got more, and new, and fresh arguments, by which he himself was confirmed, and he confirmed others in the truths of Christ. Some copies read, “he was more strengthened in the word”; either in the word of God, having a clearer understanding, and being more confirmed in the truth of it; or in speech, being more ready and powerful in speaking it.

*And confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus*; confuted them, and put them to silence, so that they had nothing to say for themselves, or against the truth:

*proving that this is very Christ*; by joining and knitting passages of Scripture in the Old Testament together, by producing and citing express testimonies from thence, and by comparing the prophecies and the characters of the Messiah in them, with Jesus of Nazareth, he proved to a demonstration that he must be the Messiah.

**Ver. 23.** *And after that many days were fulfilled*, etc.] This phrase is used by the Septuagint on (<sup><4021></sup>Exodus 2:11,23, 4:18) for a considerable length of time, for many years. The Jewish writers observe <sup>f475</sup>, that the phrase, “many days”, signify at least three days; for by “days”, in the plural number, two must be designed, and many signifies a third, or that one at least is added to them; but here it signifies three years, as it also does, (<sup><418></sup>1 Kings 18:1) where it is said, “and it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year”; and such a space of time is designed by the many days here; for when the apostle had stayed a little while at Damascus, and preached Christ in the synagogues, he went into Arabia, where he continued about three years, and then returned to Damascus, where what is related happened to him; (<sup><4017></sup>Galatians 1:17,18 <sup><4112></sup>2 Corinthians 11:32,33).

*the Jews took counsel to kill him*; being filled with indignation at him, that he had changed his religion, and from a persecutor was become a preacher of the Gospel; this they had meditated some time, and now upon his return to Damascus attempted to put their counsel into execution.

**Ver. 24.** *But their laying await was known of Saul*, etc.] Either by divine revelation, or by some friends, who had got knowledge of it, and gave him information, as in (<sup><4216></sup>Acts 23:16) and they watched the gates night and day to kill him; that is, the Jews, together with the governor of the city, and the garrison of soldiers in it. These all watched at the several gates of the



city, night and day, that Saul might not make his escape, and that they might take him, and put him to death.

**Ver. 25.** *Then the disciples took him by night*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy reads, “his disciples”; the disciples of Saul, such as he had been instrumental in making at Damascus: but it is not usual for the saints to be called in Scripture the disciples of any man; therefore the common reading is best, and designs the disciples and followers of Christ; who being concerned for the preservation of so valuable a life, took Saul in the night season,

*and let him down by the wall in a basket.* Damascus was a walled city; hence we read of the wall of Damascus, (<sup><24927></sup>Jeremiah 49:27). And the house where Saul was, and which very likely was one of the disciples, was built upon the wall, as the house of Rahab was upon the town wall of Jericho; and as she let down the spies from thence by a cord through the window, (<sup><40215></sup>Joshua 2:15) so the disciples let down Saul in a basket with cords through the window of the house, as appears from <sup><47133></sup>2 Corinthians 11:33. (See Gill on “<sup><47133></sup>2 Corinthians 11:33”): no doubt, the disciples were directed by the overruling providence of God, in order to preserve the life of the apostle, who had much work to do for Christ in several parts of the world, and therefore must not fall into the hands of his enemies and die, his time not being yet come; and this shows, that it is lawful to make use of all prudent means and proper methods to prevent the designs of wicked men, and escape out of their hands, and preserve life when in danger; by which means Saul escaped their hands.

**Ver. 26.** *And when Saul was come to Jerusalem*, etc.] After he had escaped out of Damascus, in the manner before related, and which was three years after his conversion:

*he assayed to join himself to the disciples*; not to the private members of the church, or ordinary disciples, as distinct from the apostles, but to the whole society, as consisting of apostles and private Christians; for his chief view in going to Jerusalem was to see Peter; and the Ethiopic version reads, “to the apostles”: the sense is, that he tried either to get into a free and familiar conversation with them, or to become one of their body, and a member of the church. He did not return to the high priest from whom he had received letters to Damascus, to give him an account of the execution of his commission, or what use he had made of the letters he gave him, but to the disciples, against whom he had breathed out threatenings and

slaughter. Grace had made a strange alteration in him; those whom he hated, and was exceeding mad against, he now loves; they are the excellent ones in the earth in whom is all his delight; and whom he persecuted to strange cities, he now courts their company, and attempts to get among them; accounting it his greatest honour and happiness to be one of their society. It is the duty and interest of every gracious soul to join himself to a church of Christ, which consists of the disciples of Christ, as the church at Jerusalem did; of such who have learned Christ, and the way of life and salvation by him; who have believed in him, and have been taught to deny themselves for his sake, and to take up the cross and follow him, in the way of his ordinances and appointments; and to be “joined” to a church, is to become an open subject of Christ’s kingdom, a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, one of the family of God, and a member of the body of Christ visibly. The phrase is expressive of that strict union there is between the saints in church relation, and of that close and intimate communion they have with each other, and shows that their incorporation together is by mutual consent and agreement. And a great privilege it is to be in such a relation, having the grace of God; for such have the best of company, and the most refreshing ordinances; are in the greatest safety, being under the watch and care of ministers and members, of angels, and of God himself; and shall never be disfranchised, or become foreigners and strangers; they may expect the presence of God, fresh supplies of his grace, and even life for evermore, and need fear no enemy. That which qualifies for church membership, is not natural descent from religious parents, nor a religious education, nor mere morality and civility, nor even a constant attendance on the word of God, but faith in Christ Jesus, and a profession of it; and according to the order of the Gospel it is necessary that baptism in water should go before it; and these qualifications the apostle had.

*But they were all afraid of him*; knowing him to have been such an enemy to Christ, and so violent a persecutor of his church in times past:

*and believed not that he was a disciple*; or a true follower of Christ, but only pretended to be one, having some wicked design upon them in attempting to get among them: the reason of their not knowing anything of his conversion might be, because not only of the distance between Damascus and Jerusalem, and the continuance of the persecution in the latter place, which might occasion few comers to and fro of the Christians; but because the apostle, soon after his conversion, went to Arabia, where he had been all this while. Hence it appears, that the primitive churches

were very careful in the admission of persons into fellowship with them; as they could not bear them in their communion who were evil, so they would not admit any among them but such as they looked upon to be the true disciples of Christ: and this is a method worthy of imitation; and such persons who, before a profession of religion, have been either very scandalous in their lives and conversations, or notorious enemies to Christ and his Gospel, ought to be thoroughly examined into, and full satisfaction obtained concerning them, ere they be received into the bosom of the church.

**Ver. 27.** *But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles*, etc.] To Peter and James, the brother of our Lord, for no other apostles did he see at this time, (Gal 1:18,19). It is probable that Barnabas had been at Damascus, and had there related to him, the whole account of Saul's conversion and entrance on the ministry, which he gives a particular relation of, as follows:

*and declared unto them, how he had seen the Lord in the way*; he told the apostles, Peter and James, how that Christ had appeared to him in person, as he was on his way to Damascus:

*and that he had spoken to him*; and expostulated with him about his persecution of him in his members, and bid him go into the city, where it should be told him what he should do:

*and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus*; that he had used great freedom of speech, and had shown courage and greatness of mind in preaching Christ at Damascus, both as soon as he was converted, and now upon his return thither. Hence it is manifest, that previous to admission into a church of Christ, and in order to satisfy the members of it, and gain their assent to such an admission, there ought to be a declaration made of the work of grace upon the souls of such, who propose to be joined to it; as how the Lord has met with them, and shown them the evil of their ways, and given them repentance unto life; and how they have had a sight of him by faith, and have looked to Christ and believed in him for the salvation of their souls; and how they have embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, and have found much sweetness and comfort in them; and that from a principle of love to him, and faith in him, and with a view to his glory, they are willing to submit to his ordinances, and to walk in holy fellowship with his people; and such an account of Saul being given by Barnabas, who had had it from him; and this being, no

doubt, declared and attested by Saul himself, he was received into fellowship with the disciples: hence it follows,

**Ver. 28.** *And he was with them*, etc.] Peter and James, and the rest of the disciples; he lived with them, conversed with them, and joined with them in all religious exercises; which is signified by his

*coming in and going out at Jerusalem*; no one of the apostles or disciples forbidding or hindering him.

**Ver. 29.** *And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus*, etc.] He spoke the Gospel of Christ boldly, as it ought to be spoken; he spoke it openly, publicly, freely, and faithfully, not fearing the faces or revilings of any: the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions add, “to the Gentiles”; but this is not in any of the Greek copies: and disputed against the Grecians; or Hellenists, that is, the Hellenistical Jews; by whom are meant, not Greeks proselyted to the Jewish religion, but Jews who had been born and brought up in Greece, or at least had learned the Greek language, and used the Greek Bible; and so the Syriac version renders it, “he disputed with the Jews that knew Greek”; perhaps the same persons, of the synagogue of the Libertines, Alexandrians, Cyrenians, and of Cilicia and Asia, who disputed with Stephen, with whom he had before joined, (<sup><406B></sup>Acts 6:9,10)

*but they went about to slay him*; he being an over match for them; and they not being able to resist him, but being confuted, and confounded, and put to silence, they were filled with indignation; and since they could not conquer him by arguments, they were for slaying him with the sword.

**Ver. 30.** *Which when the brethren knew*, etc.] When the members of the church heard of it, by some means or another:

*they brought him down to Caesarea*; not that which was before called Strato’s tower, the same as in (<sup><408D></sup>Acts 8:40) but Caesarea Philippi, mentioned in (<sup><4063></sup>Matthew 16:13) the Syriac version adds, “by night”, and some copies, “and sent him forth to Tarsus”; a city of Cilicia, his own native place, where he might be more safe, and also useful among his friends and acquaintance; (<sup><402I></sup>Galatians 1:21).

**Ver. 31.** *Then had the churches rest*, etc.] Meaning not spiritual rest in Christ; this they had before, even in tribulation, but rest from persecution; not so much because of the conversion of Saul, the great persecutor of them, for his conversion had been three years before; but rather because of

his removal to other parts, the sight of whose person, and especially his ministry, had afresh stirred up the Jews to wrath and fury. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read in the singular number, “the church”: but the several countries hereafter mentioned shows that more are designed: for it follows,

*throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria*; for by means of the dispersion, on account of persecution, the Gospel was preached in these several places, and churches gathered, and which shared in the persecution until this time, when they began to have rest; (<sup><4112></sup>Galatians 1:22) (<sup><5114></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:14) and were edified; or built up on the foundation Christ, and their most holy faith, through the ministry of the word and ordinances, and their mutual love and holy conversation; and had an increase of members, and of grace, and of spiritual knowledge:

*and walking in the fear of the Lord*; which was always before their eyes, and upon their hearts, continuing in religious exercises, and in the discharge of every duty, both to God and man. Not in a slavish fear of the wrath of the Lord, and of damnation for sin committed against him; for this is not consistent with their characters, as Gospel churches, made of persons who had received not the spirit of bondage to fear, but the Spirit of adoption, nor with their edification in faith and holiness; for “he that feareth is not made perfect in love”; (<sup><6118></sup>1 John 4:18) which edifies; nor with the comforts of the Holy Ghost, they are afterwards said to walk in: but in a godly fear, which has the Lord for its author, is not of a man’s self, but of the grace of God, and is encouraged and increased by the discoveries of his grace and goodness: and which has the Lord for its object, whose name is holy and reverend, and is to be feared by all his saints: it shows itself in an hatred of sin; in a departure from it; in a carefulness not to offend the Lord; in withholding nothing from him, though ever so dear and valuable, he calls for; and in attending to all the parts of divine worship: and walking in it denotes a continuance in it, a constant progression in all the acts of internal and external worship, which are both included in the fear of the Lord; and it requires strength, and supposes pleasure and freedom. It is said of Enoch, that “he walked with God”; which the Targum of Onkelos paraphrases, “he walked in the fear of the Lord”, (<sup><0122></sup>Genesis 5:22,24) the same phrase which is here used.

*And in the comfort of the Holy Ghost*: which he communicated by shedding abroad the love of God in them, taking the things of Christ, and

showing them to them, applying covenant blessings and Gospel promises to their souls, owning the word and ordinances, and making them useful to them, thereby leading them into fellowship with the Father, and with the Son. In all which he acts the part of a Comforter, and answers to the character he bears, and the office he is in: the love of God, which he directs into, and sheds abroad in the heart, refreshes and revives the Spirit of God's people; it influences and encourages every grace that is wrought in them; and makes them easy and comfortable under all providences, even the most afflicting ones: the things of Christ he takes and shows unto them are his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; which being applied, and interest in them shown, produce abundance of peace, joy, and comfort: the promises of the covenant, and of the Gospel, he opens and applies, being such as hold forth the blessings of grace unto them; and being exceeding great, and precious, and suitable to their cases; and being absolute and unconditional, immutable, and sure, afford them much pleasure and satisfaction: and the word and ordinances being attended with the Holy Ghost, and much assurance, are breasts of consolation to them: and "walking" in those comforts which he administers, by such means, denotes a continuance of them, a long enjoyment of them, which is not very common; for, generally speaking, these comforts last but for a small time; and also it intimates much delight and pleasure in them, (<sup>f476</sup>Psalm 94:19) and so "were multiplied"; both in their gifts and graces, and in the number of converts added to them.

**Ver. 32.** *And it came to pass, as Peter passed through all quarters,* etc.] The Arabic version reads, "all the foresaid places", as Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; through which he took a tour, in order to visit the new churches here planted, fix pastors over them, and confirm the Gospel by miracles, which they had received:

*he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda:* a city which lay on the west of Jerusalem, and is said <sup>f476</sup> to be a day's Journey from it; and a day's journey were ten parsas, or forty miles <sup>f477</sup>: it was but thirty two miles from Jerusalem, and was a place famous for Jewish doctors; for which reason it is frequently mentioned in the Talmudic writings, under the name of Lod or Lud. Mention is made of R. Simlai, who was of Lydda <sup>f478</sup>, and of the chambers of Beth Nithzah, and of Arum in Lydda <sup>f479</sup> where the doctors disputed; there was a school here, of which R. Akiba was president <sup>f480</sup> here also the sanhedrim sometimes sat, since we are told that Ben Sutda was tried and stoned at Lud or Lydda <sup>f481</sup>; and here likewise they

intercalated the year <sup>f482</sup>, it being in Judea: this place was situated in a plain; so says Jerom <sup>f483</sup>,

“they that dwell in Sephela, that is, in the plain, Lydda and Emmaus, which design Diospolls and Nicopolis, shall possess the Philistines.”

And with this agrees the account the Talmudists <sup>f484</sup> give of it,

“the country of Judea was divided into three parts, the hill country, the plain, and the valley; from Bethhoron to Emmaus was the hill country; from Emmaus to Lydda was the plain or champaign country; and from Lydda to the sea, the valley.”

Hence also we read <sup>f485</sup> of *dwl tl pç*, “the plain of Lydda”: and now Peter coming from Jerusalem, and the hill country of Judea, into this plain and champaign country, is properly said to come down to the saints there. So Quadratus in Josephus <sup>f486</sup> is said to come up from Lydda to Jerusalem. This place was near the Mediterranean sea; and was in Jerom’s time called Diospolis <sup>f487</sup>, and in the time of R. Benjamin <sup>f488</sup> Seguras; it is the same with Lod in (<sup><1923></sup>Ezra 2:33, <sup><1675></sup>Nehemiah 7:37) The builder of it was Shamed the son of Elpaal, (<sup><1382></sup>1 Chronicles 8:12). It was in the times of Josephus <sup>f489</sup> a village, yet not inferior to a city for greatness. It is now called S. Georgia. And here it seems some saints or Christians dwelt, whom Peter, among the rest, visited; and which is mentioned for the sake of the miracle he there wrought, next related. And these saints at Lydda very likely were converted under Philip’s ministry, as he passed from Azotus to Caesarea, (<sup><408></sup>Acts 8:40) and, it may be, were in a church state, or, however, were afterwards. Zenas the lawyer, the Apostle Paul speaks of in (<sup><5083></sup>Titus 3:13) is said to be bishop of Diospolis, or Lydda; in the beginning of the fourth century Aetius was bishop of this place, who assisted in the council of Nice; and in the same century, anno 331, Dionysius, another bishop of this place, was present at a council at Constantinople; and in the fifth century Photinus wrote himself bishop of Lydda, in the Chalcedon council, anno 451 <sup>f490</sup>.

**Ver. 33.** *And there he found a certain man*, etc.] In a house in that city, into which he entered:

*named Aeneas*; which is a Gentile name, and so might the person be; though there is mention made of this name among the Jews. We read of



one R. Samuel Bar, *ayyna* “Aenea, or Aeneas”<sup>f491</sup>; but it was more common among the Greeks. Aeneas the Trojan is well known in history, who, after the destruction of Troy, went into Italy, and settled there; and from him the Trojans are sometimes called Aeneadae. The name comes from the Greek word *αἶνω*, “ainoo”, which signifies “to praise”; and Aeneas is one “worthy of praise”: though Jerom<sup>f492</sup> takes it to be an Hebrew name, which he interprets “one that answers”, or a “poor man”, or “misery”; as if it came from the Hebrew word *חנ* [“anah”, which signifies “to answer, or to afflict”].

*Which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy*; so that the distemper was grown stubborn, and thought incurable; nor perhaps had he, or his friends, any hope of his ever being restored to health again.

**Ver. 34.** *And Peter said unto him, Aeneas*, etc. He called him by his name, which he might without divine revelation know, though he was a stranger to him, by the people of the house, where he was:

*Jesus Christ maketh thee whole*; Peter knew, by some secret impulse upon his mind, that Christ would cure this man by him as an instrument at this time, and therefore said these words; not as a prayer, as some render them, “may Jesus Christ heal thee”, though was it so, it was a prayer of faith; but as a promise that he would, or rather as a declaration of the then present exertion of his power to heal him; which he ascribes not to himself, but to Christ, in whose name, and by whose power the apostles wrought all their miracles; (<sup><44B2></sup>Acts 3:12,14, 4:9,10) “arise, and make thy bed”; which would be a full demonstration that he was perfectly whole:

*and he arose immediately*; and also, no doubt, made his bed, as the man at Bethesda’s pool was bid by Christ, to take up his bed and carry it, as a proof of his soundness.

**Ver. 35.** *And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron*, etc.] Saron, which is here joined to Lydda, is the name of a fruitful country on the borders of the Mediterranean sea, between Joppa and Caesarea, beginning at Lydda. There were two countries in the land of Israel called Saron, as Jerom observes<sup>f493</sup>; there was one between Mount Tabor, and the lake of Tiberias; and there was another which reached from Caesarea of Palestine, to the town of Joppa; the former was inhabited by the Gadites, and was beyond Jordan, (<sup><43E6></sup>1 Chronicles 5:16) the other was on this side Jordan, near Lydda. And this is what is here meant; and of which the same writer



elsewhere says <sup>f494</sup>, the whole country by Joppa and Lydda is called Saron, in which are large and fruitful fields; and on (<sup>2350</sup>Isaiah 65:10) which the Vulgate Latin renders, “and the plains shall be for folds of flocks”, he observes, that “Sharon”, in the Hebrew text, is put for plains or champaign country; and adds, all the country about Lydda, Joppa, and Jamnia, is fit to feed flocks: and agreeably to this, in Jewish writings, the calves of Sharon <sup>f495</sup> are spoken of as the best; and the word is by the commentators of the Misna interpreted <sup>f496</sup> by *rçym* “a plain”, or champaign country; for this was not the name of a single town or city, but of a country, bordering on Lydda, and the above mentioned places; in which were several towns and villages, and the inhabitants of those that were nearest Lydda are here designed. It was such a fruitful and delightful country, that the Targum on (<sup>2311</sup>Song of Solomon 2:1) has rendered it by the garden of Eden: it had its name either from *rwcç*, “Shur”, which signifies to behold afar off, from the fine and large prospect that might be taken on it; or from *rç* “Shar”, which signifies the navel, because it was a valley or plain surrounded on every side with mountains and hills: it abounded in flowers and fruits; hence mention is made of the rose of Sharon, (<sup>2311</sup>Song of Solomon 2:1) and in vines; hence we frequently read of the wine of Saron <sup>f497</sup>, and which was so very good, that they mixed two parts of water with one of wine <sup>f498</sup>. It was a country, the Jews say <sup>f499</sup>, whose earth was not fit to make bricks of; and therefore houses made of them did not stand long, but needed repairing often in seven years: hence the high priest, on the day of atonement, used to pray for the Saronites, that their houses might not become their graves <sup>f500</sup>. Now when the inhabitants of this place, as well as of Lydda,

*saw him*; that is, Aeneas, made whole, who had been ill of a palsy, and had kept his bed eight years, they were so impressed with it, that it issued in their conversion:

*and turned to the Lord*: they believed in Christ, embraced his Gospel preached by Peter, professed faith in him, and submitted to his ordinances; being turned by powerful efficacious grace, they turned their feet to keep his testimonies.

**Ver. 36.** *Now there was at Joppa*, etc.] The same with Japho, (<sup>4896</sup>Joshua 19:46) a sea port town in the tribe of Dan, said by some historians <sup>f501</sup> to be a very ancient one, even before the flood. It is now called Jaffa, and its name, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies beauty: some say it had its name from Jope, the daughter of Aeolus, the wife of Cepheus, the founder of it;

and others derive it from the name of Japhet, because it looks towards Europe, which is inhabited by the sons of Japhet. It was built upon a hill, as Pliny<sup>f502</sup> says; and so high, as Strabo<sup>f503</sup> reports, that Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea, might be seen from thence, which was distant from it forty miles; as may be concluded from what Jerom,<sup>f504</sup> says, who lived at Bethlehem many years: his words are; from Joppa, to our little village Bethlehem, are forty six miles; now Bethlehem was six miles distant from Jerusalem, to the south of it, and Joppa was to the west of it. The place is well known by Jonah's taking ship there, and going for Tarshish, when he was cast into the sea, and devoured by a fish; from whence the Ionian sea might have its name: and this was the occasion of the fable of Andromeda being exposed to a fish of a prodigious size at this place; the bones of which, Pliny<sup>f505</sup> relates, were brought to Rome from hence, being forty foot long; and, the stones, to which she was bound, Jerom<sup>f506</sup> says, were shown in his time on this shore: and here also, the inhabitants report, may be seen some stones in the sea, on which Peter stood and fished, when he dwelt in this place.

*A certain disciple, called Tabitha*; this was a woman's name, the masculine name was Tabi. R. Gamaliel had a manservant of this name<sup>f507</sup>, and also a maidservant, whose name was Tabitha<sup>f508</sup>; yea, every maidservant of his was called mother Tabitha, and every manservant father Tabi<sup>f509</sup>:

*which by interpretation is called Dorcas*; which signifies a roe in the Greek language, as Tabitha does in the Syriac:

*this woman was full of good works*; was constantly employed in doing good; her works were both many and good:

*and alms deeds which she did*; she was very kind and beneficent to the poor; she wrought with her hands much for their sakes, as appears by what follows.

**Ver. 37.** *And it came to pass in those days*, etc.] While Peter was in those parts, and particularly at Lydda, which was near:

*that she was sick and died*; fell ill with some disorder, and died of it:

*whom, when they had washed*; as was the manner of the Jews; and this they did, even though it was on a sabbath day: for so their canon runs<sup>f510</sup>,

“they do all the necessaries for the dead (on the sabbath), they anoint him, װײַ ײִדמװ, “and they wash him”.”

yet that of Maimonides deserves some notice <sup>f511</sup>;

“it is forbidden to anoint part of the body, as the whole body; but if it is to remove filth, it is lawful; and so it is forbidden to wash part of the body with hot water, but with cold water they may wash his face, his hands, and his feet, but not the whole body.”

This custom still continues, and their usual method is to wash the body with hot water, in which they put dried roses and camomile flowers: likewise, they take an egg, and beat it up in wine, and therewith anoint the head; and this washing and anointing are done by some at the house before the corpse is carried out (as here); but in some places, especially where there is a large number of Jews, all this is done in the burying places; where they have a little house, whither they carry the corpse, and put it on a table, and there wash it; and after washing, put, it into a coffin, and inter it <sup>f512</sup>: and this has been the custom of other nations, if not of all nations: the custom with the Turks is this <sup>f513</sup>; the body being laid upon a board, and covered with a linen cloth, one of the ecclesiastical elders washes it with hot water and soap, another being present to hand the water; but they do not suffer others to look on: the body is thrice washed; and the third time they mingle camphire with it; and being washed, it is put into a coffin. And Ludolphus <sup>f514</sup> reports of the Abyssines, that their bodies being well washed and perfumed, they wrap them up in garments, and then are put upon a bier, and buried. And this was the practice both of the ancient Grecians and Romans, that as soon as ever anyone was dead, the body was immediately washed and anointed. Thus Creon is said to fetch Jocaste to wash her dead son; and Antigone requests of Creon, that she might wash her brother <sup>f515</sup>. It has been the custom of some countries to wash their dead bodies in rivers: and some people, in the northern parts, have chose, for this reason, to have their burying places near the banks of rivers, that their dead bodies might be washed in running water: and the Indians, which live at a distance from the river Ganges, will go fifteen or twenty days journey thither, to wash their corpse in it, though then putrefied, and then burn them; yea, they take their sick alive when they think they will die, and put them up to their middle in rivers, that they may die in pure and clear water; and they enjoin a very severe penance on those who omit to bring such as are near death, to a river to be washed <sup>f516</sup>:

*they laid her in an upper chamber.* The Ethiopic version reads quite the reverse; “they put her in the lower part of the house”: which is not likely. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures that this upper chamber might be the common meeting place of the saints; and that they put her here, that if Peter should work a miracle all might be spectators of it; and certain it is, that the Jewish doctors used to meet in upper rooms, and confer together; (See Gill on “~~400B~~ Mark 2:4”), and such there were in Lydda; (See Gill on “~~400B~~ Acts 1:13”) and such there were in Lydda; (~~400C~~ Acts 9:32).

**Ver. 38.** *And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa,* etc.] Some say it was six miles distant, but it must be eight; since from Jerusalem to Joppa were forty miles, and from Jerusalem to Lydda thirty two, and therefore it must be eight miles from thence to Joppa:

*and the disciples had heard that Peter was there;* and also no doubt that he had healed Aeneas of his palsy, and which might induce them to do as follows:

*they sent unto him two men;* very likely of their own company or church; for it is certain here were disciples or believers in Christ, and very likely were formed into a church state; these seem to be converts under Philip’s ministry, who when he went from Azotus, preached in all the cities, and so in Joppa, till he came to Caesarea, (~~400D~~ Acts 8:40) though we read nothing in ecclesiastical history of this church at Joppa, until the fifth century, when it appears there was a church in that place <sup>f517</sup>; and in the same century we read of Fidus bishop of Joppa, that was present in the synod held at Ephesus, anno 431 and in the sixth century of Elias bishop of the same place, in the council at Jerusalem, anno 536 <sup>f518</sup> and in the same century a bishop of the church here assisted in the synod of Rome and Constantinople <sup>f519</sup>.

*desiring him, that he would not delay to come to them;* they entreated he would not refuse to come, and think it too great a burden on him, or make any difficulty about it, or show any aversion to it; but that he would with all readiness and cheerfulness, and without delay immediately come unto them; for the case they wanted him for required speed and haste.

**Ver. 39.** *Then Peter arose and went with them,* etc.] After the messengers had delivered their message, and made their request to Peter in the name of the brethren, he at once agreed to go with them, and accordingly did; whether he went to restore Dorcas to life, whose death the messengers had

informed him of, and whether this was the view of the brethren with respect to that, is not certain. However, he might go with them on other accounts, as to comfort them under the loss of so valuable and useful a person, and to strengthen and establish them in the faith, and to exhort and animate them to the discharge of their duty.

*When he was come*; that is, to Joppa, and to Dorcas's house there:

*they brought him into the upper chamber*; where the corpse of Dorcas lay:

*and all the widows stood by him weeping*; these were poor widows, to whom Dorcas had been very liberal and beneficent, who stood about the apostle lamenting the death of their benefactress, and by their tears expressing their desire of her return to life, if it could be:

*and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them*; the Vulgate, Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "which Dorcas made for them"; and the Syriac version renders it, "which Tabitha gave unto them, while she was alive"; which last clause aptly explains, "while she was with them"; for now she was not, with respect to her better part, her immortal soul: the coats and garments were the inner and upper ones, wore in these countries; and it seems that she did not buy these garments, and give them unto them, but that she made them up herself for them, or at least wrought with them in making of them; which shows her diligence and industry, as also her humility, as well as her beneficence: and these the widows produced, and are shown as proofs of the same; which was expressive of gratitude in them, and was done with a design to move Peter to be concerned for restoring so useful a life.

**Ver. 40.** *But Peter put them all forth*, etc.] As he had seen his Lord and Master do, when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, (~~108~~ Luke 8:54)

*and kneeled down and prayed*; it may be, as yet, he had not the mind of God in this matter, and therefore betook himself to prayer, in which he chose to be private and alone:

*and turning him to the body*; the corpse of Dorcas, after he had prayed, and was well assured that the power of Christ would be exerted in raising of it:

*said, Tabitha, arise*; which words were spoken in the name and faith of Christ, and were all one as, if Christ himself had spoken them; for to his power, and not to the apostles, is the following miracle to be ascribed: and she opened her eyes; which, upon her death, had been closed by her friends; and perhaps the napkin was not yet bound about her face: or if it was, she must remove it ere she could open her eyes and see Peter:

*and when she saw Peter*; whom she might know:

*she sat up*; upon the bed or bier on which she lay.

**Ver. 41.** *And he gave her his hand, and lift her up*, etc.] Off of the bed or bier where she was:

*and when he had called the saints and widows*; the disciples, brethren and sisters, who were come together on this occasion, as well as the poor widows she had been kind to; the Ethiopic version reads without a copulative, “the holy widows”; and so might these widows be, even such as are described in (<sup>5450</sup>1 Timothy 5:10)

*presented her alive*; as Christ did the widow’s son of Naam to her, (<sup>4075</sup>Luke 7:15) and which no doubt was matter of great joy as well as astonishment to all the saints, and especially to the poor widows.

**Ver. 42.** *And it was known throughout all Joppa*, etc.] The report of such a miracle, and wrought upon a person of note, was soon spread all over the place, which was very large, for it was a city, as it is called, (<sup>4115</sup>Acts 11:5), and it had, as Josephus <sup>f520</sup>says, villages and little towns or cities round about it; all which might go by the name of Joppa, and throughout which the fame of this miracle might pass:

*and many believed in the Lord*; in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom Peter preached, and the saints in Joppa professed, and in whose name, and by whose power, this miracle was done.

**Ver. 43.** *And it came to pass*, etc.] Or so it was;

*that he tarried many days in Joppa*; conversing with the saints, confirming the disciples, and preaching the Gospel, to the conversion of sinners; and his abode

*was with one Simon a tanner*; it seems as if persons of this trade used to dwell in towns near the sea, as fit for their business; so we read of some at Sidon, a city on the sea coast, as Joppa was;

“it happened at Sidon that a certain **ysrwb**, “tanner”, (the same word here used, adopted into the Hebrew language,) died, and he had a brother a tanner, etc. <sup>f521</sup>”

where the Gemara <sup>f522</sup> distinguishes between a great tanner and a little tanner; the latter, the gloss says, is one that is poor and has but few skins: which of these Simon was, cannot be said. This business was very contemptible with the Jews; they say <sup>f523</sup>,

“woe to him whose trade is a tanner:”

and further observe <sup>f524</sup> that they never make one a king, nor a high priest: but their doctors many of them were of as mean trades, as shoemakers, skimmers, etc. (See Gill on “~~40B~~ Mark 6:3”) and Simon the Athenian philosopher was **σκυτοτομος** “a leather cutter” <sup>f525</sup>; and according to the Ethiopic version, this our Simon was a shoemaker; with him Peter chose to abide, and not with Dorcas.

# CHAPTER 10

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 10

**Ver. 1.** *There was a certain man in Caesarea*, etc.] This was the Caesarea formerly called Strato's tower, not Caesarea Philippi; for the former, and not the latter, lay near Joppa:

*called Cornelius*; which was a Roman name, and he himself was a Roman or an Italian:

*a centurion of the band called the Italian band*; which consisted of soldiers collected out of Italy, from whence the band took its name, in which Cornelius was a centurion, having a hundred men under him, as the name of his office signifies.

**Ver. 2.** *A devout man*, etc.] A truly religious person, who had forsaken the Roman idolatry and superstition, in which he was brought up:

*and one that feared God*: the one only living and true God, the God of Israel; he had the fear of God wrought in his heart, which is a part of the covenant of grace, a blessing of it, and the beginning of wisdom; he was truly a gracious man, a converted person, and who from an internal principle worshipped God externally:

*with all his house*; he brought up his family in a religious way, as every good man should; and which was very remarkable in a Gentile, a soldier, and an officer:

*which gave much alms to the people*; to the Jews that dwelt at Caesarea, and therefore was of good report among them, and much beloved by them, (~~4102~~ Acts 10:22) he had regard to both tables of the law, both to the worship of God, and the love of the neighbour: and prayed to God always; every day, at the usual times of prayer; prayed privately in his closet, and with his family, as well as attended public service of this kind.

**Ver. 3.** *He saw in a vision evidently*, etc.] He was not in a dream, or in a trance, but he was thoroughly awake, and his eyes open, and was himself; it was not in the night, but in clear day:



*about the ninth hour of the day*; or three o'clock in the afternoon, which was the hour of prayer, (~~400~~Acts 3:1) in which exercise he was now engaged, (~~400~~Acts 10:30) at this time he saw

*an angel of God coming to him*; into the room where he was at prayer:

*and saying unto him, Cornelius*; he called him by his name, to let him know that he knew him, as angels are very knowing spirits; and to express his affection and friendship to him, and that he was a messenger, not of bad, but of good news to him; as well as to engage his attention to him; for he might be so intent at his devotion, that had he not called him by name, he would not have minded him.

**Ver. 4.** *And when he looked on him, he was afraid*, etc.] What with the brightness of his clothing, (~~400~~Acts 10:30) and the lustre of his countenance, and the majestic form in which he appeared, he perceived there was something uncommon and divine in this vision, and therefore was filled with awe and reverence, yea, with something of a panic fear; as it was usual, even with good persons, as the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament, Zacharias, the Virgin Mary, and others; from a sense of the greatness of the divine majesty, which they supposed to be near, or this to be an emblem of it, and from a notion that, at the sight of God, they should die.

*And said, what is it, Lord* what is the matter? what is to be said or done? What is the reason of this unusual appearance? Some of the Latin copies, and the Ethiopic version, read, “who art thou, Lord?” but by the angel’s answer, not this, but the former was the question: for it follows,

*and he said unto him, thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God*; that is, the prayers which he had put up in faith, for himself and family, and the charitable actions he had performed from a principle of love, were like sacrifices upon the altar, which ascended to God with acceptance; so these sacrifices of prayer and beneficence came up with acceptance from off that altar which sanctifies the gift, or were acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ; these were taken notice of, approved by God, and remembered by him, and the fruits and effects he was shortly to enjoy; for that Cornelius was a believer, need not be questioned; since he was not only a devout and religious person, but one that feared God, which includes the whole of religion, internal and external; and so faith in Christ, without which he could not pray aright: there is no

doubt of it, but he had read the prophecies of the Old Testament, attended the synagogues of the Jews, and believed in the Messiah to come, though he did not know that he was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; so that his faith was of the same kind with that of the saints before the coming of Christ; and in this faith he did all the good works he did, which became acceptable to God through Christ, and without which it is impossible to please him.

**Ver. 5.** *And now send men to Joppa*, etc.] Which lay near to Caesarea;

*and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter*: the angel was not sent to instruct Cornelius himself, but to direct him to an apostle of Christ, and minister of the Gospel, who should do it; for not angels, but men, are employed in the ministry of the word, which is the ordinary means of spiritual knowledge, and of increasing it. So the eunuch was instructed by Philip, and Saul by Ananias; which shows the excellency and usefulness of the Gospel ministry and ministers, and what dignity is put upon them, what use should be made of them, and in what esteem they should be had.

**Ver. 6.** *He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner*, &c] Simon the tanner was his host; this man very probably was a good man, and one that lodged strangers; of his trade, (See Gill on “~~40B~~ Acts 9:43”)

*whose house is by the sea side*; Joppa was a sea port, (<sup>4216</sup>2 Chronicles 2:16) (Jon 1:3) hence we read of **wpyd amy**, “the sea of Joppa”<sup>f526</sup>; and also of **wpyl ç hnyml**, “the port of Joppa”<sup>f527</sup>; now Simon’s house was in the outer part of the city, and by the sea side, as well for convenience for his business, as because such trades might not be exercised within a city; being nauseous and disagreeable, because of their skins and manner of dressing them, and the dead carcasses from whence they often took them off; hence that rule of the Jews<sup>f528</sup>,

“they place dead carcasses, graves, **yqsrwbh taw**, “and a tanner’s workshop”, (in which he dresses his skins,) fifty cubits from the city; nor do they make a tanner’s workshop, but at the eastern part of the city. R. Abika says, it may be made at every part excepting the west.”

The reason of that, as given by the<sup>f529</sup> commentators, is, because prayer was made towards the west, where the temple stood, and the divine

presence was. The Ethiopic version very wrongly renders it, “and the house of Cornelius is near the sea”; for not his, but Simon’s is meant:

*he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do*; he was to tell him words, or to deliver doctrines to him, by which he and his family would be better instructed in the way of salvation, and arrive to a greater degree of knowledge of Christ, and faith in him, and be brought to a submission to his commands and ordinances; (see ~~44102~~ Acts 10:22,32, 11:14), this clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in some others, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions.

**Ver. 7.** *And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed*, etc.] For when he had delivered his message, he either disappeared, or withdrew, and immediately Cornelius showed himself ready to obey the heavenly vision: for

*he called two of his household servants*; who were not of the band of soldiers under him, but were servants in his family, and such as feared God with him;

*and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually*: besides his household servants, there were soldiers that continually attended him, and among these there was one at least that was a devout and religious man; and him he called out from among the rest, and to him with the two household servants he communicated the vision: these three persons being religious, were very proper ones to be informed of this matter, and to be sent on the errand they were; and three might be particularly pitched upon, being a sufficient number to attest to Peter what they had from the mouth of their master, for by the mouth of two or three witnesses is everything established; and partly for the honour of Peter, and to show a proper respect to him, he would not send a single person, who could have told the story, and done the errand as well as three, but this would not have looked respectful enough.

**Ver. 8.** *And when he had declared all these things unto them*, etc.] Which he had heard and seen in the vision, and of which he gave them a particular account; partly to engage them the more cheerfully to go on the errand, and partly that they might be able to give a distinct relation of it to Peter, that so he might be moved the more to comply with the request, and come along with them:

*he sent them to Joppa*; perhaps not that evening, since it was at the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, when Cornelius had the vision; and some time must be taken up in discourse with the angel, and afterwards in sending for his servants, and relating the affair to them, and giving them their proper instructions. So that it may be they did not set out till early the next morning, as seems from the following verse.

**Ver. 9.** *On the morrow, as they went on their journey*, etc.] From Caesarea to Joppa; Joppa is said to be six and thirty miles distant from Caesarea; so far Caesarea was from Lydda, but it seems to be further from Joppa; for according to Josephus <sup>f530</sup>, from Joppa to Antipatris were a hundred and fifty furlongs, which are almost nineteen miles, and from thence to Caesarea were twenty six miles; unless there was a nearer way by the sea shore, as there was a way by that from Caesarea to Joppa, of which the above author makes mention <sup>f531</sup>; wherefore they must either have set out the evening before, or early that morning, to get to Joppa by the sixth hour, or twelve o'clock at noon; as it seems they did, by what follows:

*and drew nigh unto the city*; that is, of Joppa, were but a little way distant from it:

*Peter went up upon the housetop to pray*; the roofs of houses in Judea were flat, and persons might walk upon them, and hither they often retired for devotion and recreation; (see Gill on “~~<4007>~~Matthew 10:27”), (see Gill on “~~<4047>~~Matthew 24:17”), it was on the former count, namely for prayer, that Peter went up thither, and that he might, be private and alone, and undisturbed in the discharge of that duty. This being at a tanner's house, though not in his shop, brings to mind a canon of the Jews <sup>f532</sup>,

“a man may not enter into a bath, nor into a tanner's shop, near the Minchah,”

or time of prayer. Now this was about the sixth hour or twelve o'clock at noon, when Peter went up to pray; at which time the messengers from Cornelius were near the city of Joppa; this was another time of prayer used by the Jews, and is what they call the great Minchah, which began at the sixth hour and an half, and so was as is here said, about the sixth hour (See Gill on “~~<4001>~~Acts 3:1”)

**Ver. 10.** *And he became very hungry*, etc.] It being in the middle of the day, when it was usual to eat; and perhaps he had ate nothing that day, for

those were reckoned the most religious persons, who eat nothing before the Minchah:

*and would have eaten*; though the Jews say <sup>f533</sup>, a man ought not to eat near the Minchah, not even the least, lest he should continue at it, and so neglect his prayers:

*but while they made ready*, while Simon's family were getting dinner ready, preparing the food for it:

*he fell into a trance*; or an ecstasy, or an ecstasy fell upon him; it was what was supernatural, and came from above, and did not arise from any natural cause in him; he was as it were out of the body, and entirely in the spirit; all the bodily organs and senses were shut up, and all sensible objects removed from him; and he was wholly intent on what was proposed to him in the vision, which filled him with wonder and astonishment.

**Ver. 11.** *And saw heaven opened*, etc.] Not literally, as at the baptism of Christ, and the stoning of Stephen; but in a visionary way, and which was an emblem of the opening and revealing the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles, which in other ages was not made known, as it now and afterwards was:

*and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet*: which seems to represent the church of God, whose original is from heaven, and consists of persons born from above, who have their conversation in heaven, and were designed for it; and especially as under the Gospel dispensation, which Peter had a vision of in this emblematic way; the doctrines and ordinances of which are from heaven: and which may be compared to a linen sheet for its purity and holiness; through the blood and righteousness of Christ, and the grace of his Spirit, and with respect to its discipline and conversation; and so to a great one for its largeness; for though the number of its members, when compared with the world, are few, yet in themselves are a number which no man can number; and though it was but small at first, yet the Gospel being carried among the Gentiles it increased, and in the last times will be large:

*knit at the four corners*; which may denote the preaching of the Gospel, and the spread of it, and the planting of churches by it in the four parts of the world; and also the church being knit to Christ, and the members of it one to another:

*and let down to the earth*; for Peter to see it, and where it was to continue for a while, even to the second coming of Christ, and when the whole church of the firstborn will be let down to earth again; (see Revelation 21:2).

**Ver. 12.** *Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth*, etc.] Not as if they were painted upon it, and these were only pictures and representations of them made on the linen sheet; but as if they really add actually were upon it alive; since Peter is afterwards called upon to kill and eat: and these design four-footed beasts of every kind, that are tame, as distinct from the wild ones, after mentioned, as horses, camels, oxen, sheep, hogs, dogs, etc.

*and wild beasts*; lions, tigers, panthers, bears, etc. This clause is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions:

*and creeping things*; the above copy and versions here add, “of the earth”, which they omit in the first clause; these intend serpents, snakes, worms, &c:

*and fowls of the air*; birds of all sorts: now the whole of this signifies, that the church of Christ, under the Gospel dispensation, consists of all sorts of persons, of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, the one being reckoned clean, the other unclean; of men of all sorts of tempers and dispositions, comparable to wild or tame beasts; and of all sorts of sinners, who before conversion have been greater or lesser sinners; as well as denotes that the distinction of food under the ceremonial law was now ceased. This is not designed to represent that there are good and bad in Gospel churches, as there certainly are and much less that immoral persons are to be received and retained there; but that those who have been of the blackest character, if called by grace, should be admitted into them; and chiefly to show that Gentiles reckoned unclean, when converted, are not to be rejected.

**Ver. 13.** *And there came a voice to him*, etc.] Formed by an angel, or rather by Christ himself:

*rise, Peter, kill and eat*; he might be on his knees when he fell into this trance, being at prayer, and therefore is bid to rise; and he is called by name, the more to encourage him to do as he was ordered; and he is bid to kill and eat of all the creatures without distinction, which were represented to him in the sheet; and the design of this was to teach him, that both the distinction between clean and unclean creatures in the law was now

abolished, and men might lawfully eat of whatsoever they pleased; and that he might and should without any difference converse with all sorts of men, Jews and Gentiles, circumcised and uncircumcised, and preach the Gospel to one as to another, and maintain a church communion and fellowship with all equally alike.

**Ver. 14.** *But Peter said, not so, Lord,* etc.] God forbid I should do this, so contrary to the law of God, and to my own practice, throughout the whole course of my life:

*for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean;* in a ceremonial sense, which was in common use with Gentiles, but unclean by the law of Moses: this shows that Peter as yet closely adhered to the ceremonial law, nor did he know that it was abolished by Christ; and notwithstanding the commission given to him and the rest of the apostles to preach the Gospel to every creature, and the extraordinary gifts of speaking with divers tongues for that purpose, bestowed on them at the day of Pentecost; yet he and they remained greatly strangers to the calling of the Gentiles, and the admitting of them to a civil and religious conversation with them; the knowledge of every truth was not at once communicated to them, but gradually, as it pressed the Lord to enlighten their minds.

**Ver. 15.** *And the voice spake unto him again the second time,* etc.] The following words,

*what God hath cleansed;* that is, hath pronounced clean and lawful to be used, as he now had all sorts of food, (<sup><4051></sup>Matthew 15:11, <sup><5144></sup>Romans 14:14, <sup><500></sup>1 Timothy 4:4).

*[that] call not thou common;* or pronounce it to be unholy or unclean, and unlawful to be used: and the same holds good of men, as well as things; for as hereby the Lord instructed Peter, that there was nothing of itself common, or unclean, and unfit for use; so that no man, not any Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, or be he who he would, was common or unclean, and his company to be avoided as such. Distinctions both of men and meats were now to be laid aside; and the Jews themselves own, that what is now unclean, will be clean in the time to come, or the times of the Messiah; they say<sup>f534</sup>,

“every beast which is unclean in this world, *the holy blessed God htwa rhj m, cleanses it*, in the time to come, (the times of the Messiah,) as they were at first clean to the sons of Noah (~~GEN~~ Genesis 9:3), wherefore, as the herb was clean to all, and as the beasts were clean to the sons of Noah; so also in the time to come he will loose what he has bound, or forbidden.”

And particularly they observe, that a swine is call *ryzh* from *rzh*, “to return”, because the Lord will return it unto Israel. <sup>f535</sup>

**Ver. 16.** *This was done thrice*, etc.] That is, either the voice spoke the same words three times, or the sheet was let down three times; and it may be both; it may be, that every time the voice was spoke, the sheet was let down: this was done, not with respect to any mystical meaning in the number three, but for the confirmation of Peter, that he might be the more firmly assured of the truth of the things represented unto him:

*and the vessel was received up again into heaven*; to denote, that when the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, whether Jews or Gentiles, are all gathered in, by the preaching of the Gospel to them, they will be taken up to heaven, their original and native place, and be for ever with the Lord; as well as to certify to Peter, that what was now shown him on earth, concerning the taking away the distinction of men and meats, was ratified in heaven.

**Ver. 17.** *Now while Peter doubted in himself*, etc.] For notwithstanding what he had heard and seen, he had not at once a full knowledge of this matter. Beza’s most ancient copy reads, “as he was in himself, he doubted”; that is, when he came to himself, for he was before, as it were, out of himself, and was in a trance, or ecstasy; and now being come to himself, and reflecting on what he had seen and heard, he had some doubts and hesitations in his mind:

*what this vision which he had seen should mean*; what the vessel or sheet should signify, what should be meant by the four-footed beasts, etc. why he should be called to arise, and kill, and eat such creatures, and what should be designed by God’s cleansing them; and while he was revolving these things in his mind, and at some uncertainty about them, something providentially happened, which was a key unto, and opened the whole vision clearly to him:



*behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius, had made inquiry for Simon's house*; they were come to Joppa, and, according to the direction given them, had inquired and found out the house of Simon the tanner, where Peter was:

*and stood before the gate*; of the house; perhaps knocking at it, in order to bring out somebody within to them, of whom they might inquire for Peter.

**Ver. 18.** *And called, and asked*, etc.] That is, they called to the people of the house, Simon's family; and in a civil and courteous manner asked them,

*whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter*; which they said to distinguish him from Simon the master of the house, and as Cornelius was directed, and they were instructed by him: concerning him they inquired, whether he

*were lodged there*; the Ethiopic version adds, without any foundation for it, "and the place where they called at was Peter's lodging room".

**Ver. 19.** *While Peter thought on the vision*, etc.] Which greatly amused him, affected his mind, and employed his thoughts what should be the meaning and design of it:

*the Spirit said unto him*; the holy Spirit of God, either by an articulate voice, or by making an impulse on his mind;

*behold, three men seek thee*; the Arabic version leaves out the word "three": the Spirit of God is omniscient, and knows all things; if the deep things of God, then much more man, and the things of man.

**Ver. 20.** *Arise, therefore, and get thee down*, etc.] From the top of the house where he was:

*and go with them*; the three men, to Caesarea

*doubting nothing*; whether it is right or wrong, lawful or unlawful, to go with them, because not Jews, but uncircumcised Gentiles, laying aside all such Jewish scruples:

*for I have sent them*: the Spirit of God is said to do what Cornelius did at his instigation and direction, signified by an angel he sent to him, (~~4405~~ Acts 10:5,8).

**Ver. 21.** *Then Peter went down to the men*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “from the third floor”; to the place where the men were: the following clause,

*which were sent unto him from Cornelius*, is not in Beza’s most ancient copy, nor in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions:

*and said, behold, I am he whom ye seek*; without being called by any of the family he came down, and without being informed in that way who the men were inquiring for; it being suggested to him by the Spirit of God, he declared himself to be the person they were seeking after: and put this question to them,

*what is the cause wherefore ye are come?* for that was not intimated to him by the Spirit; it was only told him there were three men seeking him, and he was bid to go with them, without any scruple or hesitation; but what they came for, or he was to go with them about, was not suggested.

**Ver. 22.** *And they said, Cornelius, the centurion*, etc.] A certain person, by name Cornelius, a Roman or Italian, as his name shows, and by office a “centurion”, that was over an hundred soldiers: a just man; before God, and in his sight, through the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to him; and who was a new man, created in righteousness and true holiness; and lived soberly, righteously, and godly, and did justice between man and man; and so was just in the sight of men, which was very rare in a Gentile, and in a soldier:

*and one that feareth God*; the true God, the God of Israel, and worshipped him, both internally and externally; for both sorts of worship are included in the fear of God:

*and of good report among all the nation of the Jews*; that knew any thing of him, especially at Caesarea, where many Jews, and even many of their most celebrated doctors lived: and this is the rather observed, to induce Peter, a Jew, to go along with them to him, since his character was so very good, and he was in so much credit and esteem with the people; for he must be something extraordinary to have their good word, who had such an abhorrence of uncircumcised Gentiles in general: this man, they add,

*was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house*; they intimate hereby, that he did not send for him of himself, he was not led

to it by any fancy of his own, or any curiosity in him; nor should he have presumed to have used such freedom with Peter, but that he had some instructions from God himself, who had sent an holy angel to him, and had ordered him to send men to Joppa, and fetch Peter from thence to his house, for the end next mentioned: *and to hear words of thee*: the doctrines of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it: that being taught by the one, he and his might submit to the other.

**Ver. 23.** *Then called he them in*, etc.] Into Simon's house; not "into his own house", as the Ethiopic version adds; as yet they stood without, before the gate of the house; he took them in, no doubt, with the leave of Simon, his host, and set provisions before them, and lodged them that night:

*and in the morning Peter went away with them*; the next morning he set out with them towards Caesarea:

*and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him*; there were six of them, as appears from (<sup>4112</sup>Acts 11:12) these went with him, not only to bear him company, and out of respect to him; but to be witnesses of what might be seen, heard, said, or done, and for Peter, should there be any occasion for it, as there afterwards was.

**Ver. 24.** *And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea*, etc.] So that they were one day, and part of another, on their journey:

*and Cornelius waited for them*; he had an eager desire to hear the word from Peter's mouth; and was longing and looking for the coming of him, with the men he sent for him; and he and his family were in a waiting posture, and ready to hear the word, when the apostle of Christ should come: it would be well if this was always the case of the hearers of the word, to assemble before their ministers come; and be waiting for them, and in full expectation of them, and ready to receive them, and the words of grace which drop from their lips:

*and had called together his kinsmen and near friends*; or necessary ones: not only his relations according to the flesh, which might be in the Italian band, but his most familiar acquaintance, with whom he was in the strictest friendship; who may be called "necessary", as they are both by the Greeks and Romans, because they are often necessary for assistance and counsel: this shows the true grace of God in him, which wherever it is, puts a man

on seeking after the spiritual and eternal welfare of all with whom he is concerned, and especially his relatives and friends.

**Ver. 25.** *And as Peter was coming in*, etc.] Not into the city of Caesarea, for his entrance there is mentioned before, but into the house of Cornelius:

*Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet*; to testify his great affection for him, and reverence of him:

*and worshipped [him]*; not with a religious adoration, or with worship due to God; for that would have been contrary to his character as a devout man, and one that feared God; but with civil worship and respect, in which he might exceed just bounds, and therefore is reprov'd by Peter: nor could he take him for an angel of God, or for one sent immediately from heaven to him; for he had been inform'd who he was, and what he was, and from whence he came, and what he was to do.

**Ver. 26.** *But Peter took him up*, etc.] As he lay at his feet, and lifted him up and set him on his legs:

*saying, stand up*; and continue in this posture:

*I myself also am a man*; a mortal man, a man of like passions with others, no better than others by nature: and it was by grace, and not any merit of his own, that he was a believer in Christ, and an apostle of his; and therefore he chose not to have any distinguishing homage and respect paid to him, and especially in any excessive and extravagant way; which though not designed, might carry in it a suggestion, as if he was more than a man.

**Ver. 27.** *And as he talked with him*, etc.] About the excessive respect he showed him, and his own infirmity and frailty, and unworthiness, as a creature:

*he went in*; to Cornelius's house, at the door, and through the porch, to some interior room and apartment in it:

*and found many that were come together*; besides his family, many of his relations and intimate friends, whom he had got together on this occasion, that they might receive some advantage, as well as himself.

**Ver. 28.** *And he said unto them*, etc.] The whole company that were met together, who were chiefly, if not altogether Gentiles:

*ye know that it is an unlawful thing*; what is forbidden by the law of Moses, (~~Exodus~~ Deuteronomy 7:2,3) and by the traditions of the elders, which carry the matter further than the law did, and made it very criminal:

*for a man that is a Jew, to keep company with, or come unto one of another nation*; besides entering into covenants and marriages with them, which were forbidden by the law, though they allowed of trade and commerce with the Gentiles, yet not any familiar conversation with them; it was prohibited to eat and drink any sort of liquor with them in their houses <sup>f536</sup>, nor might they walk with them in the streets, or on the road; says Maimonides <sup>f537</sup>,

“it is forbidden a Jew to unite himself to Gentiles, because they are suspected of shedding blood, and he may not join himself with them in the way; if he meets a Gentile in the way, he causes him to turn to the right hand; if they ascend by an ascent, or descend by a descent, the Israelite may not be below, and the Gentile above: but the Israelite must be above, and the Gentile below, lest he should fall upon him and kill him; and he may not go even with (or along side by him) lest he break his skull.”

It is said <sup>f538</sup> of some Rabbins, that they saw a certain man coming;

“says R. Chiyah, let us be gone, perhaps this man is an idolatrous Gentile, or one of the people of the earth, and it is forbidden to join with him in the way.”

They looked upon the houses of Gentiles unclean, and therefore would not enter into them: (See Gill on “~~Exodus~~ John 18:28”).

yea they say <sup>f539</sup>, that:

“the court of a stranger (or Gentile) is as the habitation of a beast.”

Such an aversion was there in that people to all civil society with Gentiles: and so Apoltonius says of them <sup>f540</sup>, that

“they not only departed from the Romans, but from all men, living a separate life from others; nor did they communicate at table with others; neither in things sacred, nor in any ceremonies;”

and this was well known to Jews and Gentiles:

*but God hath showed me*; partly by the vision he had seen, and partly by discourse with the men that came from Cornelius to him; and by comparing the vision and their message to him together, he saw that he was not obliged to abide by the customs and laws of the Jews: but was showed, as he says,

*that I should not call any man common or unclean*; that is, in a ceremonial sense; for otherwise, all by nature are morally unclean; and none are pure, but such who are washed in the blood of Christ, and are justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit: he saw there was now no difference between Jew and Gentile; that the one was not clean because of his circumcision, nor the other unclean on account of his uncircumcision, or to be avoided for that reason; that the Gospel was to be preached to all; and that every believer of whatsoever nation, was acceptable to God, and ought to be regarded by his ministers and people.

**Ver. 29.** *Therefore came I unto you, without gainsaying*, etc.] Readily and cheerfully, without objecting to it, or saying one word against it, or making any excuse to put it off:

*as soon as I was sent for*: he immediately consented to go, as soon as ever the messengers from Cornelius acquainted him with their message, being previously directed so to do by the Spirit of God; though he did not set out with them till the next day, it being more suitable and convenient:

*I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?* this he said, not as ignorant of the true cause, for he had inquired of the messengers, who had informed him of the reason of it; but he was willing to have it from the mouth of Cornelius himself; not only for further confirmation's sake, but for order sake, to lead him on regularly to what he had to say.

**Ver. 30.** *And Cornelius said*, etc.] The Syriac version adds, "to him", to the apostle; the following he said, in a very submissive and humble manner:

*four days ago I was fasting unto this hour*; in the Greek text it is, "from the fourth day unto this hour I was fasting": which looks as if he had been fasting four days, and was still fasting at that hour; though the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out the phrase "I was fasting": but the sense which our version and others give is the truest; that four days ago, or reckoning four days back, Cornelius was fasting on that day, until such time in that day as now it was in this present day; and which perhaps might be the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon: the account of days

exactly agrees; as soon as Cornelius had had the vision, he sends men to Joppa, which was one day; on the morrow they came to Joppa, which makes two days; Peter lodged them all night there, and the next day set out on the journey with them, so you have three days; and the day after that, which was the fourth, he entered into Caesarea, and came to Cornelius's house, where he now was:

*and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house*; which was one of the stated times of prayer; (see Gill on “<sup><400></sup>Acts 3:1”).

*And behold a man stood before me in bright clothing*; or “in a white garment”, as the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: which was an emblem of the excellency, glory, and purity of the angel, and of the divine majesty in him: he calls him a man, because he appeared in the form of one, as angels used to do.

**Ver. 31.** *And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard*, etc.] What he was now particularly making to God, as well as others he had before put up to him:

*and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God*; (See Gill on “<sup><400></sup>Acts 10:4”).

**Ver. 32.** *Send therefore to Joppa*, etc.] (See Gill on “<sup><400></sup>Acts 10:5”), (see Gill on “<sup><400></sup>Acts 10:6”).

*who when he cometh shall speak unto thee*, is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, but agrees with (<sup><400></sup>Acts 10:6,22).

**Ver. 33.** *Immediately therefore I sent unto thee*, etc.] This he said, to show his obedience to the heavenly vision, and his faith in it; and to remove from himself any suspicion of pride, vanity, and imperiousness: he did not send for the apostle of himself, but by a divine order; which as soon as he had, he executed; for the very same hour, he called his servants and gave them their instructions, and sent them away:

*and thou hast well done, that thou art come*; a phrase expressive of benignity and goodness in Peter, and of thankfulness to him for his coming; it was not only doing that which was right in the sight of God, but was kind in him, and acceptable to Cornelius and his house:

*now therefore are we all here present before God*; the searcher of hearts, the omniscient God, who knew the sincerity of their intentions in meeting

together, and the eagerness of their souls, and their fervent desire to hear the word: it is a sort of an appeal to God, for the truth of all this: in Beza's most ancient copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, it is read "before thee"; before the apostle: to hear all things that are commanded thee of God; or "of the Lord", as the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin versions read; that is, of the Lord Jesus Christ; and designs all things, both with respect to doctrine and practice, which Christ had commanded his apostles to teach: and particularly, what he had ordered Peter to instruct Cornelius and his friends in.

**Ver. 34.** *Then Peter opened his mouth*, etc.] (See Gill on "<sup>4085</sup>Acts 8:35")

*And said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons*; which is to be understood, not of the substances of men, but of the outward state and condition, circumstances and qualities of men; he respects the proper persons of men themselves, but not because of their outward appearances; he does not prefer or despise men, because of their being of this or the other nation, as Jews or Gentiles; or because they are circumcised, or not circumcised; or because they are high or low, rich or poor, free or bound, or the like: the true sense here is, that God valued no man the more, because he was a Jew and circumcised, nor anyone the less, because he was a Gentile and uncircumcised; and this the apostle found to be a most certain truth, of which he was fully persuaded; partly by the vision which he himself saw, and partly by that which Cornelius had, and which the more confirmed him in this matter: these words do not at all militate against the doctrines of personal election and reprobation; and indeed, those acts in God, are not according to the outward state and condition of men, or any circumstances that attend them, or any qualities they have, internal or external; but entirely proceed from the sovereign will of God; (See Gill on "<sup>4111</sup>Romans 2:11")

**Ver. 35.** *But in every nation*, etc.] In any Gentile nation in the Roman empire, and in any part, even in Scythia, or in the most uncultivated parts of the universe, as well as in Judea:

*he that feareth him*; God, not with a slavish fear, or with the fear of punishment to be inflicted by him, with a fear of hell and damnation, with which Cain, Pharaoh, Judas, and even the devils themselves have feared him; nor with an hypocritical fear; but with a godly filial fear; which is a new covenant blessing, springs from the love of God, is a grace implanted in the soul and regeneration, and includes all true religion, both external



and internal; and faith among the rest, without which it is impossible to please God, or do works of righteousness acceptable in his sight, as it follows:

*and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him*; that is, he who from such principles, as the fear of the Lord; love to him, and faith in Christ, does works of righteousness, particularly alms, as Cornelius did, and which the Jews often call *hqd̄x*, “righteousness”; (see Gill on “~~400~~ Matthew 6:1”), such an one is acceptable, or well pleasing to God, let him be of what nation he will: it should be observed, that though God accepts of such who fear him, and work righteousness from a right principle, and to a right end, without any regard to their being circumcised, or not circumcised, or to their being of this or the other nation, yet their fear of him, and working righteousness, are not the ground of their acceptance; but are to be considered as descriptive of the persons, who are accepted by him in Christ; for there is no acceptance of persons or services, but in Christ Jesus: the Jews themselves say, that

“the godly of the nations of the world shall have their part and portion in the world to come. <sup>f541</sup>”

**Ver. 36.** *The word which God sent unto the children of Israel*, etc.] Now the apostle enters on his sermon or discourse, of which the above were only a preface, or an introduction; and his sense is, that the doctrine which he was now about to preach to them, was the doctrine of the Gospel; which it pleased God, of his infinite wisdom and rich grace, to send first to the people of the Jews, by the ministry of the apostles: this word is sometimes called the word of God, of which he is the author; and the word of Christ, of which he is the sum and substance; and the word of salvation, salvation by Christ alone being the principal part of it; and the word of righteousness, because therein is the righteousness of Christ revealed, from faith to faith; and the word of faith itself, because it is the means by which faith comes; and the word of truth, because it contains nothing but truth; and sometimes, the word of reconciliation, because it publishes peace and reconciliation by Christ, as is hereafter signified: this word God is said to send; which shows that it comes from him, and is of a divine original, and therefore ought to be received, not as the word of man, but as: the word of God; and it may be said to be “sent”, because the apostles were sent with it by Christ; who ordained them, and sent them forth to preach it in the several cities of Judea; and which shows that Christ is God, who sent this

word by them, and so the text is a proof of his deity; and this was sent to the children of Israel and to them only at first; the apostles were forbidden going in the way of the Gentiles, or entering into any of the cities of the Samaritans; and though their commission was now enlarged, and they might go to the Gentiles, as yet they had not done it, only published the Gospel to the Jews: the substance of which was,

*preaching peace by Jesus Christ:* that word preached, or the apostles in the ministry of it preached; or rather God, who sent the word by them, preached through them the doctrine of peace and reconciliation, by the blood of Christ; and this being so principal a doctrine of the Gospel, the whole is called from it, the Gospel of peace, and the word of reconciliation: by “peace” here is meant, not peace with the creatures of the earth, the beasts of the field, which, through the sin of men, are become troublesome to them; nor peace with men, which is desirable, and to be sought after, and to a good man the Lord makes his enemies to be at peace with him; nor peace with the saints, which ought by all means to be maintained, and which should rule in the hearts of God’s people, and to which the Gospel calls them; but peace with God, which was broken by the sin of man, which filled his mind with enmity to God; and now he is incapable of restoring it, and reconciling himself to God; he has neither disposition, nor ability to perform it; but Christ is the sole author of it: a council of peace was held, in which the scheme of it was drawn; a covenant of peace was entered into, between the Father and the Son; Christ was provided, promised, and prophesied of, as the peace maker; he came into the world for this purpose; the chastisement of our peace was laid on him, and he procured it by his obedience, sufferings; and death: and this is what the Gospel publishes; not peace made by men, by their repentance, humiliation, and works of righteousness; but made by Christ, the Prince of peace, by his blood and sacrifice: and not as to be made by him, or any other, but as already made; being not only a plan drawn, but executed, a finished work; and that not conditionally, if men will repent, believe, and obey, but absolutely, as a thing done, and not dependent on any condition required of man; and a wonderful blessing this is, being made on honourable terms, and so lasting, and bringing with it a train of other blessings; and this being an article in the Gospel, makes that to be good news, and glad tidings indeed: and these doctrines of peace with God by the blood of Christ, and reconciliation for sin by his sacrifice, were to be preached to them that were afar off, and to

them that are nigh, both to the Jews and Gentiles; to strengthen which observation, the following clause put into a parenthesis is added,

*he is Lord of all*: of the whole world, and all things in it; of all the nations of the world, Gentiles as well as Jews, and particularly of God's elect among them both; and therefore he will have the Gospel preached to one, as to another; (<sup><4027></sup>Ephesians 2:17).

**Ver. 37.** *The word [I say] you know*, etc.] By common fame and report, which had for some years past been published by John, Christ, and his apostles, in Judea and Galilee; especially some parts of it, or points in it, such as the apostle hereafter mentions must have reached their ears:

*Which was published throughout all Judea*; by Christ, his twelve apostles, and seventy disciples; who were sent out by him into all places, where he himself would come:

*and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached*; that is, after John had began to preach the ordinance of water baptism, and to administer it; which were done, to set the Jews inquiring after the Messiah, and to make him manifest in Israel; upon which the word of the Gospel quickly began to be preached by Christ and his apostles, and that in Galilee; for here Christ began to preach himself, and here he called his apostles, and sent them forth to preach it.

**Ver. 38.** *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth*, etc.] And so declared him to be the Messiah, that was promised to the Jews, and expected by them; the anointed prophet, priest, and King; who because his parents lived at Nazareth, and he was educated there, and there he chiefly preached and wrought his miracles, he was by way of contempt called Jesus of Nazareth: and him God anointed, with

*the Holy Ghost and with power*; with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, without measure; signified by the descent of the Spirit, as a dove upon him at his baptism, and is what in (<sup><4027></sup>Psalm 45:7) is called, "the oil of gladness". The person anointed is elsewhere represented as a divine person; as God, and the Son of God, (<sup><4026></sup>Psalm 2:6,7, 45:6,7) but here under his most contemptible character, by which he was known among men, because it was in his human nature, that he was anointed; and this anointing belongs to him, as considered in his office capacity; from whence he is called the Christ, or anointed of God. The anointer of him is God, which must be understood of God the Father, who is the God of Christ,

and the same that anoints his people, (~~40021~~2 Corinthians 1:21) and none but God can anoint with the Holy Ghost; and he it is, with whom Christ is here said to be anointed; who is compared to oil, in allusion to the anointing oil under the former dispensation, used for the anointing of persons, prophets, priests, and kings, and of the tabernacle, and the vessels of it; to the oil that was poured on Aaron's head, which ran down to the skirts of his garments, emblematical of the Spirit poured on Christ, the head, and which from him descends to all the members of his body; and to common oil, both for ornament and refreshment: "power" is added, which is but another name for the Holy Spirit, (~~02149~~Luke 24:49). And one particular branch of the extraordinary and immeasurable gifts of the Spirit, bestowed on him as man, was a power of doing miracles: for it follows,

*who went about*; the land of Judea and all Galilee; which shows laboriousness, diligence, and delight:

*doing good*; both to the bodies and souls of men; to the latter, by preaching the Gospel to them; and to the former, by curing all their diseases, of whatsoever sort: he did what none of Adam's sons could do, for there is none of them that does good, no not one, (~~8810~~Romans 3:10) he was good himself, essentially and naturally good, and therefore he did good, and he did nothing but good: he knew no sin, he did none, nor could any be found in him; and he always did good, that which was according to the will of God, and well pleasing in his sight; and without him no good is done, even by his own people; they have all the grace and strength from him, by which they perform the good things they do: he is the reverse of Satan, who goes about doing all the mischief he can; and he is to be imitated by his followers, who, as they have opportunity, should do good to all men, especially to the household of faith.

*And healing all that were oppressed of the devil*; both in body, as "lunatics, epileptics, and demoniacs"; and in soul, such as were led captive by him:

*for God was with him*; as his Son, essentially, through union to him; and as man, from his cradle to his cross, supporting and assisting him, and with his gracious presence comforting him; and by various instances, showing that he came from heaven, and had a divine mission and commission; which had he not, he would never have been encouraged and assisted as he was, as man, and could never have done the things he did: the Ethiopic version very wrongly reads, "for God was with them"; (~~8810~~John 3:2, 8:29)

**Ver. 39.** *And we are witnesses of all things*, etc.] That is, Peter, and the rest of the apostles, were witnesses, even eyewitnesses, of Christ's going about from place to place, and of the good he did every where, and of the miracles which he wrought; and even of every thing

*which he did both in the land of the Jews*; which takes in not only Judea, but Galilee, and beyond Jordan;

*and in Jerusalem*; the metropolis of Judea:

*whom they slew and hanged on a tree*; whom the Jews put to death; for since it was by their instigation, and at their request, it is ascribed to them; and who not content with any death, desired he might be crucified, or hanged on a tree; partly because of the pain and torture of it, and partly because of the shame and ignominy that attended it; as well as to throw off the scandal of his death from themselves to the Romans, crucifixion being a Roman punishment.

**Ver. 40.** *Him God raised up the third day*, etc.] According to the Scriptures, particularly (<sup><3812></sup>Hosea 6:2). The resurrection, of Christ, though it is sometimes ascribed to himself, as God, whereby he was declared to be the Son of God, yet generally to God the Father, as here:

*and showed him openly*; in a glorious body, and yet numerically the same he before lived and suffered in, so as to be heard, seen, and handled; by which full proof was given of the truth of his resurrection, in which he appeared to be the conqueror over death and the grave.

**Ver. 41.** *Not to all the people*, etc.] Of the Jews, who crucified him; nor to the whole body of the Christians, though at one time to a large number, even five hundred brethren at once:

*but unto witnesses chosen before of God*; by Christ himself, who is God:

*even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead*; namely, to the apostles, with whom he familiarly conversed by times, for the space of forty days after his resurrection; and Beza's most ancient copy; and the Ethiopic version here add, "forty days"; and particularly he did sometimes eat and drink with them; (<sup><4240></sup>Luke 24:42,43, <sup><4312></sup>John 21:12,15) and though drinking is not mentioned, it is included in eating, as in (<sup><4076></sup>Luke 7:36) wherefore there is no need to connect the last clause,

“after he rose from the dead”, with the latter part of the preceding verse, as some do, on that account.

**Ver. 42.** *And he commanded us, to preach unto the people,* etc.] Not only of the Jews, but of the Gentiles; to all nations, to the whole world, and every creature; for the apostle seems to refer to the commission given to him, and the rest of the apostles, after Christ’s resurrection, (~~4189~~ Matthew 28:19-20 ~~4165~~ Mark 16:15-16).

*And to testify that it is he which was ordained of God, to be the Judge of quick and dead:* the preaching of the Gospel is a testification of Christ, or a bearing a testimony for him; and among the rest to this truth, that he was from all eternity in the council and covenant of grace; appointed by God to have all power in heaven and in earth; and not only to judge and govern his church and people on earth, but to be the Judge of all men at the last day, of such who will be found alive at his coming, and of those that are dead; who will be raised again, and stand before his judgment seat, to receive their proper sentence; and though this is not expressed in the commission given the apostles, yet is implied therein; (~~4188~~ Matthew 28:18) That there will be a general judgment at the last day is certain, from the reason of things; from the relation of creatures to God as their Creator, to whom they are accountable for their conduct and actions; from the justice of God, which requires it, which does not take place in the present state of things; and it has a testimony in the consciences of men, which the most daring of infidels, at times, show by the fears they are possessed of about it; and it is abundantly clear from revelation, from the writings of the Old and New Testament; from whence it appears that it is future, it is yet to come; that it is certain, being appointed by God, though the time to men is uncertain; that it will be universal, and reach to all men, righteous and wicked, quick and dead, and to all actions, good and bad, open and secret; and that it will be a righteous one, and be administered according to the strictest rules of justice and equity; and that it is an eternal one; not that it will be ever carrying on, but will issue in the determination of the states of men to all eternity: now Christ he is appointed to do this work, he was ordained to unto it in the purposes of God from everlasting; this was settled in the covenant between them; and for the execution of which, he has all power and authority given him as Mediator: and for it he is every way qualified: he is of great and infinite majesty, being the mighty God; of great sagacity and wisdom, having, as Mediator, the spirit of wisdom and knowledge upon him, whereby he is of quick understanding and discernment; and he is

of great faithfulness and integrity, and will judge not after the sight of his eyes, and the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness and equity, and will do the thing that is right; and especially, inasmuch as he is omniscient, and knows the secrets of all hearts, and so capable of bringing every work into judgment, with every secret thing; and also omnipotent, and so able to raise the dead, summon all nations before him, separate the wicked and the righteous, and not only denounce the proper sentences upon them, but execute them.

**Ver. 43.** *To him give all the prophets witness*, etc.] As David, (<sup><3931></sup>Psalm 32:1,2,5 103:3 <sup><3425></sup>Isaiah 43:25, 44:22, 53:5, 55:7 <sup><2613></sup>Jeremiah 31:34 <sup><3625></sup>Ezekiel 36:25) (<sup><2109></sup>Daniel 9:9,24 Hos 14:2,4 <sup><3078></sup>Micah 7:18 <sup><3804></sup>Zechariah 3:4,9 13:1 <sup><3877></sup>Malachi 3:17)

*that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive the remission of sins*; the meaning is, that whoever believes in Christ with a right and true faith, with the heart, he shall receive, not as what his faith procures or deserves, but as a gift of God's grace, the free and full forgiveness of his sins, through Christ; through the effusion of his blood, and the virtue of his sacrifice. Christ was set forth in the purposes of God, in the types, figures, and sacrifices of the law, and in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, as he that should obtain the remission of sins by his blood, without which there is no remission; he came in the fulness of time, and shed his blood for this purpose, and accordingly it is procured by it; and this is published in the everlasting Gospel, that whoever believes in Christ, not with an historical or temporary faith, or in profession only, but with the faith of God's elect, which is the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit, which works by love, and makes Christ precious, shall receive it as a free gift; for it is not to be purchased by money, nor obtained by works of righteousness, nor procured by repentance, or by anything done by the creature, but is according to the riches of divine grace and mercy: through the name of Christ: through the blood of Christ, which was shed for it; through the power of Christ, as God, who is able to forgive it; and through the hands of Christ, as Mediator, who is exalted to bestow it; and for the sake of Christ, and his mediation, whose blood calls aloud for it; and whoever looks by faith to him for it, shall have it, of whatsoever sex, state, or condition they be, of whatsoever people or nation, and how great sinners soever they have been, and whether they are weak or strong believers. Some copies read, "through his blood".



**Ver. 44.** *While Peter yet spake these words*, etc.] As he was thus discoursing concerning Christ, his person, his miracles, his death and resurrection, and the efficacy of his blood for pardon, before he had done speaking,

*the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.* This is not to be understood of the operations of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men, under the ministry of the word; though true it is, that the Spirit of God attends the preaching of the Gospel, and not only qualifies men for it, and assists them in it, but makes it effectual to many that hear it: hearers of the word lie in the way of the gracious operations of the Spirit; and the gifts and graces of the Spirit are given to persons, or the Spirit falls upon them under such means: which may denote the original of the grace of the Spirit, it falls down from above, from heaven; the freeness of it, it is bestowed on whom he pleases, under the same ministry; the suddenness of it, it comes at once, unthought of, and undesired, as well as undeserved; the power and efficacy of it, it falls with weight, it melts the heart, and converts the sinner; and the plenty of it, it falls in abundance, it is exceeding abundant with faith and love; and the permanency of it, it continues where it falls, and is a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life: and also the invisibility of it unto others. But this is not here intended, at least it is not only designed; for though the Spirit of God, in the operations of his grace, might fall upon them that heard the word, whereby they were regenerated, converted, and sanctified, and so became proper subjects for baptism; yet also the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit came upon them, as they were hearing; not upon the men, the believing Jews, that came along with Peter; but upon Cornelius and his family, and upon all his relations and friends, who came together to hear the word at his invitation, and now were hearing it; and as they were, the Holy Ghost, in his miraculous gifts of speaking with divers tongues, fell upon them in a visible form, as upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost; for that it was in the same way seems probable from (<sup>4115</sup>Acts 11:15). These extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were necessary at the first preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles, for the confirmation of it: as well as for the further confirmation of Peter, that he was right in so doing; as also for the sake of the believing Jews he brought along with him.

**Ver. 45.** *And they of the circumcision which believed*, etc.] Or “of the Jews that believed”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; the circumcised Jews who believed in Jesus Christ:



*were astonished, as many as came with Peter*; who were six brethren, as appears from (<sup><4112></sup>Acts 11:12) these were amazed,

*because that on the Gentiles also was poured out of the gift of the Holy Ghost*; which they before thought was peculiar to the Jews; and this was according to their former notions, and the sentiments of the whole nation, that the Shekinah does not dwell without the land, and only in the land of Israel<sup>f542</sup>; yea, they sometimes say, only upon the families in Israel, whose genealogies are clear<sup>f543</sup>: the same they say of prophecy<sup>f544</sup>, which is one of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and was one of those which were now bestowed. They own, that before the giving of the law, the Holy Ghost was among the Gentiles, but from that time ceased to be among them<sup>f545</sup>: hence even these believing Jews wonder at the pouring it forth upon them; which they needed not, had they known that the legal dispensation was now at an end, and the Gospel dispensation had taken place; in which it had been foretold the Spirit should be poured forth on the dry ground of the Gentiles.

**Ver. 46.** *For they heard them speak with tongues*, etc.] With divers tongues, which they had never learned, and before did not understand: and magnify God; they spoke of the wonderful works of God in these languages, as the apostles did at Pentecost, (<sup><4211></sup>Acts 2:11) they spoke greatly in the praise of God, and gave thanks for his rich grace and mercy bestowed on them:

*then answered Peter*; as follows.

**Ver. 47.** *Can any man forbid water*, etc.] The use of his river, or bath, or what conveniency he may have for baptizing persons: which shows, that it required a place of some quantity of water, sufficient for baptism by immersion, otherwise it would not be in the power of any man to hinder them having a little water, to be sprinkled or poured on the face: unless rather by water should be meant baptism itself; and then the sense is, who can forbid these persons the ordinance of baptism, or deny the administration of it to them? for such who have the Spirit of Christ, are openly Christ's, and therefore have a right to his ordinances; such, being enlightened by him, are able to see to the end of the ordinance; and to such only can it be of use, and they only can please God in it: nor should it be forbidden them; this is to withstand God, act contrary to the commission of Christ, and resist the Holy Ghost; no, not though Gentiles: converted Gentiles, have as good a right as any to this ordinance; descent from

Abraham gives no right to it; there is no difference among men under the Gospel dispensation; Christ's commission reaches both to Jews and Gentiles; and there is but one baptism for both.

*That these should not be baptized;* though they are uncircumcised Gentiles:

*which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we;* the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; though, no doubt also, they had received the Spirit, as a spirit of illumination and conviction, as a spirit of regeneration, sanctification, and conversion, and as a spirit of faith and adoption, and as a witness, earnest, and pledge of future glory: and receiving him supposes, that they were without him before, and that he is a gift of God's free grace unto them; and which is no other than the baptism of the Spirit, and is a necessary pre-requisite to water baptism; and they that have the one, are right subjects of the other; nor ought it to be denied them. From hence it appears that water baptism is an ordinance of Christ, to be continued under the Gospel dispensation; it was not only what was practised in the times of John and of Christ, but what was practised by the apostles after the ascension of Christ, in compliance with the commission he gave, which could have respect to no other baptism; since the apostles were not capable of baptizing with any other, not with the baptism of the Spirit: and it is certain from hence, and by other instances, that they did baptize in water; and from the apostle's question it seems, that it must be by immersion in water, as before observed; and from what follows it is clear, that such who are partakers of the Holy Spirit and his grace, are the proper subjects of it.

**Ver. 48.** *And he commanded them to be baptized,* etc.] By some of the six brethren that came with him from Joppa, who might all of them, at least some of them, be ministers of the Gospel: and this he ordered to be done

*in the name of the Lord;* that is, of the Lord Jesus Christ, though not to the exclusion of the Father, and of the Spirit: perhaps the phrase, "in the name of the Lord", may stand connected with the word commanded; and the sense be, that in the name of the Lord, and by authority from him, he ordered them to be baptized:

*then prayed they him to tarry certain days;* partly to express their gratitude to him for the favour they had received through him as an instrument, and partly that they might be more instructed and established by him. And these baptized persons very likely laid the foundation of a Gospel church state in this place, which we find to continue in succeeding ages; in the "second"

century Theophilus presided over it; and in the “third” century Origen and Pamphilus, were presbyters of it; and in the same age, succeeding one another, Theoctistus, Domnus, and Theotecnus were bishops of it; and in the beginning of the “fourth” century, Eusebius the famous ecclesiastical historian was bishop of this church, after him Acacius; in the fifth century Gelasius the successor of Eunomius bore the same office in it; and in the “sixth” century the bishop of this place was present in the fifth synod at Constantinople; and in the “seventh” century it appears there was a church in this place: in which century the Arabians, after they had besieged this city seven years, took it, and killed seven thousand persons in it; and since it has been in the hands of the Turks; and this seems to have put an end to the ecclesiastical state of this place, as Christian<sup>f546</sup> .

# CHAPTER 11

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 11

**Ver. 1.** *And the apostles and brethren that were in Judea*, etc.] The rest of the twelve apostles, and the private members of the churches that were in Judea, for there were in it now more churches than that at Jerusalem, (~~408~~ Acts 9:31)

*heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God*; as well as Samaria, (~~408~~ Acts 8:14) the news by some means or other were quickly brought to them, and no doubt but they also heard that they had received the Holy Ghost, his extraordinary gifts, as well as his special grace, though no mention is made of them.

**Ver. 2.** *And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem*, etc.] From Caesarea, after he had stayed some certain days in Cornelius's house; so a journey from Caesarea to Jerusalem is called an ascending from the one to the other, (~~420~~ Acts 25:1) because Jerusalem stood on higher ground, as well as was the metropolis of the country; and this was a journey of six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles, for so far, according to Josephus <sup>f547</sup>, was Caesarea distant from Jerusalem:

*they that were of the circumcision*, which phrase designs not only the circumcised Jews that believed in Christ, for such were all they of the church at Jerusalem, or at least proselytes that had been circumcised, for as yet there were no uncircumcised Gentiles among them; but those of them, who were most strenuous for circumcision, and made it not only a bar of church communion, but even of civil conversation:

*these contended with him*; litigated the point, disputed the matter with him, complained against him, and quarrelled with him. Epiphanius says <sup>f548</sup>, that Cerinthus, that arch-heretic, was at the head of this contention.

**Ver. 3.** *Saying, thou wentest into men uncircumcised*, etc.] Into the houses of such, and lodged with them, and familiarly conversed with them:

*and didst eat with them*; which, according to the traditions of the Jews, were unlawful; (See Gill on “~~4108~~ Acts 10:28”) they say nothing about his preaching to them, and baptizing them, because these were so manifestly agreeable to the commission of Christ, in (~~4139~~ Matthew 28:19 ~~4165~~ Mark 16:15) and yet how these could be without the other, is not easy to say.

**Ver. 4.** *But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning*, etc.] Of the vision at Joppa;

*and expounded it by order unto them*; or related every particular, in a very methodical and orderly manner: he did not insist upon his authority as an apostle, and much less pretended to a primacy to the rest of the apostles; but submitted to have his case heard, examined, and judged of by the body of the brethren.

**Ver. 5.** *I was in the city of Joppa*, etc.] And so it is called by Josephus <sup>f549</sup>, and in the Apocrypha:

“And he pitched his tents against Joppa: but; they of Joppa shut him out of the city, because Apollonius had a garrison there.” (1 Maccabees 10:75)

“The men of Joppa also did such an ungodly deed: they prayed the Jews that dwelt among them to go with their wives and children into the boats which they had prepared, as though they had meant them no hurt.” (2 Maccabees 12:3)

here he was praying in an house of Simon the tanner, upon the top of it, and about the sixth hour of the day, or twelve o’clock at noon, which was one of the times of prayer with the Jews; (See Gill on “~~4100~~ Acts 10:9”),

*and in a trance I saw a vision*; with the eyes of his understanding; for the organs of his body were quite senseless and useless, which was as follows:

*a certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet*; a vessel which looked like a great sheet,

*let down from heaven by four corners*; to the earth, which four corners were knit, and perhaps were held and let down by angels, and in this visionary way were seen by Peter, though not expressed:

*and it came even to me*; descended upon the housetop where Peter was praying; and which was necessary, that he might see what was upon it, and

receive instruction from it; and that it was very near him is evident from what is after said to him, when he was bid to arise, and kill and eat what was upon it; and therefore it could not be hanging in the air, but must be let down upon the very spot where he was.

**Ver. 6.** *Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes*, etc.] Not of his body, but of his mind; for this was only in vision presented to him, when he was as Paul was, not knowing whether in the body or out of it:

*I considered*: being intent upon this object, he considered in his mind what it was, and what it should mean; it being something strange and unusual; which came down from heaven, and out of it, and came so close and near to him, that it engrossed all his thoughts, and was the subject of deep meditation:

*and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air*; not pourtrayed upon the sheet, but standing or walking upon it; the Syriac Version leaves out, “the wild beasts”; and the Ethiopic versions, “the creeping things”; but both are in the Greek copies, and in other versions.

**Ver. 7.** *And I heard a voice saying unto me*, etc.] As he apprehended in his mind; and this voice he heard in the same sense and manner, as the Apostle Paul heard when in a trance, (~~4027~~ Acts 22:17,18 ~~4710~~ 2 Corinthians 12:4).

*arise, Peter, slay and eat*; that is, get up and slay some of these creatures upon the sheet, and dress them and eat them.

**Ver. 8.** *But I said, not so, Lord*, etc.] For he took the voice he heard to be the voice of the Lord, and yet he was not obedient to the heavenly vision, and even though he was an hungry; which shows what a strict observer he was of the ceremonies of the law, and how much he was prejudiced in favour of them:

*for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth*; he had not suffered anything to come within his lips; he had not even tasted, and much less ate anything that was forbidden by the ceremonial law, so strictly had he observed it.

**Ver. 9.** *But the voice answered me again from heaven*, etc.] From whence the former voice came, and was the voice of the Lord, or of an angel of the Lord, and which answered him again, or

*a second time*; not that it said to him a second time kill and eat, but what follows;

*what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common*; that is, had declared to be clean and fit for use, and did not defile, and could not defile the man into whose mouth it entered, and therefore ought not to be pronounced unclean, and of a defiling nature; this Jesus Christ did, who is God over all blessed for ever, and by whose death an end was put to the ceremonial law, and the distinctions of meats by it; (<4051>Matthew 15:11 <5144>Romans 14:14).

**Ver. 10.** *And this was done three times*, etc.] That is, the voice from heaven answered three times, and encouraged Peter to kill and eat; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “and he likewise said unto me the third time”; the words as before:

*and all were drawn up again into heaven*; the sheet with all the creatures upon it, by the same hands that let it down; the Syriac version renders it, “and all betook themselves to heaven”; as if it all went up to heaven of itself; and the Ethiopic version, “and the whole returned again to heaven”; (See Gill on “<4006>Acts 10:16”).

**Ver. 11.** *And behold, immediately*, etc.] The moment the vision was over; *there were three men already come unto the house where I was*; they stood before the gate, as in (<4007>Acts 10:17) and as the Syriac and Ethiopic here have it, and were inquiring for Peter, whether he lodged there; and these men were

*sent from Caesarea unto me*; the Syriac version adds, “by Cornelius”: now this incident being just at the close of the above vision, served greatly to explain it to the apostle, and encouraged him to do what he had done; and besides which, he had also the express order of the Spirit, for his going with them to Cornelius’s house, as follows.

**Ver. 12.** *And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting*, etc.] (see Gill on “<4008>Acts 10:20”),

*moreover, these six brethren accompanied me*; it seems by this, that the six brethren that went along with Peter from Joppa to Caesarea, came also with him from thence to Jerusalem, and were now present, whom he points to; so that it looks as if Peter was aware, that he should be called to an account for his conduct, when he should come to Jerusalem; and therefore

brought these six brethren with him, to be witnesses for him, of what they had seen and heard, which was a very wise and prudential step:

*and we entered into the man's house*; the house of Cornelius, for entering into whose house they were contending with him, and where he entered not alone, but the six brethren with him; the Ethiopic version wrongly reads "three".

**Ver. 13.** *And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house*, etc.] The clause, "in his house", is very appropriately put; for since an angel had entered into his house, it could not be criminal in Peter, and the six brethren, to follow him. In one place he is called a man, and in another place an angel; (see ~~400B~~ Acts 10:3,30), because, though he was an angel, yet he appeared in the form of a man, as it was usual for angels to do; but whether Cornelius knew that he was an angel, is not certain, since he calls him a man; and not he, but Luke the historian, and Peter, who repeats the account of the vision, call him an angel; however, he looked upon him as an extraordinary person, as sent to him from God, and therefore obeyed the heavenly vision. The Ethiopic version reads, "an angel of God; which stood and said unto him, send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter"; (See Gill on "~~400B~~ Acts 10:5").

**Ver. 14.** *Who shall tell thee words*, etc.] Preach doctrines, such as relate to the person and office of Christ, to peace and pardon, and righteousness and salvation by him; such as Peter did preach, as appears by his discourse in the preceding chapter:

*whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved*; that is, which would be a means of instructing him and his family in the right and true way of salvation; for the Gospel only points out the way of salvation, and is only effectual to it, when it is accompanied with, the power of God: multitudes hear it, and yet are not saved by and those to whom it comes not in word only, but in power, are saved only by Christ, who is revealed in it, as God's way of salvation; it is not bare hearing the word and attending on ordinances that will save any, only such who believe in Christ with the heart, who is the sum and substance of the Gospel, are saved; and still less are any saved by the faith of others; the house or family of Cornelius were not saved by his believing in Christ; but the words of faith and sound doctrine being preached to them, as to him, and faith coming thereby to one as to another, they were saved in one and the same way, namely, through faith in Christ Jesus.



**Ver. 15.** *And as I began to speak*, etc.], That is, whilst he was speaking; the word “begin” with Luke, both, in his Gospel and in this history, is used not to denote the time or order of any action, but the thing itself; as in (~~☞~~ Luke 4:21 20:9 ~~☞~~ Acts 1:1) for otherwise it was towards the close, and not at the beginning of his discourse, that what follows happened:

*the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning*; of our ministry, since the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ; meaning on the day of Pentecost, and that the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and those that were with him, in a like visible form, and in the same kind of gifts, as speaking with tongues, as on them.

**Ver. 16.** *Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said*, etc.] Just before his ascension, (~~☞~~ Acts 1:5).

*John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost*; as they were on the day of Pentecost, and as now Cornelius and his family were; and since they had the greater baptism, the baptism of the Spirit, the lesser baptism of water could not be denied them.

**Ver. 17.** *Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift*, etc.] Of the Spirit, of speaking with divers tongues:

*as he did unto us; the apostles: who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ*: which clause stands either connected with “us” the apostles, and so is descriptive of them who first believed in Christ, and became followers of him; or with “them” the Gentiles, as the Syriac version renders it, “if therefore God gave that gift equally to these Gentiles which believed on our Lord Jesus Christ, as unto us”; for it seems most likely, that faith in Christ came by hearing Peter’s discourse, before the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit fell upon them:

*what was I that I could withstand God?* or hinder the baptism of these persons in water, whom God baptized with the Holy Ghost, and who believed in Christ Jesus: from whence it appears that the Spirit of God is a gift, which he bestows on whomsoever he pleases, without any desert of man’s, and that both in his extraordinary operations, and in the common influences of his grace; for it is equally the gift of God to believe in Christ, which is a grace of the Spirit, as it was to speak with divers tongues; and these, though they did not always go together, yet here they did, as on the apostles, so on Cornelius and his house: and hence they became qualified for the ordinance of baptism; not by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit,

but by his special grace; the extraordinary gifts were partly to confirm the Gospel preached unto them by Peter; and partly to assure him that he was right in going in to the Gentiles, and preaching to them; and to encourage him to baptize these persons who appeared to have also the grace of the Spirit, and to have believed in Christ; as well as to fit them, at least some of them, for public work and service: and now faith in Christ being a pre-requisite to baptism, and it being the will of Christ, and what he gave in commission to his disciples to baptize such as believed in him, and these being apparently such; to have refused to administer baptism to them, would have been acting contrary to the commission of Christ, a withstanding the will of God, and opposing the grace of the Spirit of God.

**Ver. 18.** *When they heard these things*, etc.] Peter's vision at Joppa, and Cornelius's at Caesarea, and the wonderful pouring forth of the Spirit upon these Gentiles under Peter's sermon:

*they held their peace*; and ceased contending and disputing with Peter, or blaming him for his conduct; for otherwise they were not silent, but made use of their tongues:

*and glorified God*; praised his name, adored his rich grace, and gave him the glory of all the wonderful things related to them:

*saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.* The phrase "unto life", is left out in the Ethiopic version, which only reads, "God hath also given to the Gentiles that they should repent"; but it ought not to be omitted, being in the Greek copies in general, and of considerable moment, rightly understood; the Arabic version directs to a wrong sense of it, "perhaps God hath given also to the Gentiles repentance, that they may live by it"; the word "perhaps", is very wrongly put instead of "then", which affirms that God had given them repentance, whereas this makes a doubt of it; and upon a supposition of it, the version ascribes too much to it; for it is not by repentance that men live spiritually, but by faith in Christ Jesus; nor do they obtain eternal life by it, but by Christ; though true repentance is an evidence of spiritual life, and it begins with it, for as soon as ever God quickens a sinner, he shows him the evil of sin, and gives him repentance for it: "repentance" here designs the grace of evangelical repentance, which is attended with faith in Christ, as it was in these Gentiles, and with views of pardon in Christ, and which springs from the love of God, and this is "unto life"; is a repentance from dead works, and is attended with a life of faith, and issues in eternal life: and it is also a

“grant” from God; it is not in the power of man’s free will, who though he may have time and means, yet if he has not grace given him to repent, he never will; his heart is hard and obdurate, and no means will do without an almighty power; not the most severe judgments, nor the greatest mercies, nor the most powerful ministry; it is a pure gift of God’s free grace, and a blessing of the covenant of grace: and this being given to Gentiles, shows that the covenant of grace belongs to them, as well as to the Jews; and discovers a false opinion of the Jews, that the Gentiles should not be saved; and answers the design of the Gospel being sent among them, whereby the doctrines both of repentance and remission are preached unto them; and opens the glorious mystery of the calling of them, and may encourage sinners of the Gentiles to hope for this grace, and apply to Christ for it, who is exalted to give it.

**Ver. 19.** *Now they which were scattered abroad,* etc.] These were not the apostles, but the other ministers of the word; (see <sup><488></sup>Acts 8:1) who were dispersed

*upon the persecution that arose about Stephen;* his preaching and miracles, his oration in defence of himself, and his death: these

*travelled as far as Phenice;* a country near to Syria and Galilee; its chief towns and cities were Tripolis, Botrys, Biblus, Berytus, Tyre, Sidon, Ecdippa, Ptolemais, and Dora. It was famous, as Pliny says <sup>f550</sup>, for the invention of letters, and of the constellations, and of naval and warlike arts. It was a maritime country, reaching from Orthosia (now called Tortosa) to Pelusium, or from Sidon to the borders of Egypt: it is the same with Old Canaan, and was so called, and had its name from Canaan; who, according to Sanchuniathon <sup>f551</sup>, also had the name of Phoenix, from whom this country was called Phoenice, or Phoenicia. Some think the name is the same with qn[ p, “Pahanah”, or qn[ twap, “Peoth Anak”, the corners of the Anakites; it being the tract of land which the children of Anak, or the giants inhabited, when drove out of Hebron by Caleb, (<sup><651></sup>Joshua 15:13,14). Others say, it had its name from the palm trees, with which it abounded; and here, it seems, dwelt some of God’s elect, who being made righteous, flourished like the palm trees;

*and Cyprus and Antioch;* the former of these was an island, lying between the shores of Syria and Cilicia: it had Syria on the east, Pamphilia on the west, and Phoenice on the south, and Cilicia on the north; (See Gill on

“~~(406)~~ Acts 4:36”) and the latter was a city of Syria, built by Seleucus, king of Egypt, and called Antiochia, after his father’s name Antiochus. The account Josephus gives <sup>f552</sup> of it is, that it is the metropolis of Syria, and that for its greatness, and other happy acquirements, it has, without doubt, the third place among the cities in the Roman empire; meaning, that it was the next to Rome and Alexandria: and elsewhere <sup>f553</sup> he calls it the palace or royal seat of the Syrians; and the Jews, when they speak of a great city, and would describe one, instance in Antioch, a great city, say they <sup>f554</sup>, as Antioch; with them, it is the same as Hemath the great, spoken of in (~~(306)~~ Amos 6:2) on which words Jerom has this note:

“Hemath the great is what is now called Antioch; and it is called the great, to distinguish it from the lesser Hemath, which is called Epiphania”

And so the Jerusalem Targum on (~~(1018)~~ Genesis 10:18) renders the Hamathite, “Antioch”: and the Targum of Jonathan on (~~(4121)~~ Numbers 13:21) renders Hamath by “Antioch”. Here many Jews dwelt, to whom the ministers of the word preached the Gospel only at first. Josephus <sup>f555</sup> speaks of many in this place, and gives reasons for it:

“the nation of the Jews, he says, was much spread throughout the whole world, and great part of Syria, because near, was mixed with them, especially there were many in Antioch; partly because of the greatness of the city, and chiefly because of the liberty of dwelling there, granted them by the successors of Antiochus; for Antiochus, called Epiphanes, having wasted Jerusalem, robbed the temple; but those that reigned after him, whatsoever among the things devoted to sacred use were of brass, they returned to the Jews in Antioch, to be laid up in their synagogue; and they granted to them equally to partake of the city with the Greeks; and many of the Grecians they brought over to their religion, and made them, in some sort, a part of themselves.”

Here the Jews also had schools and taught: it is said <sup>f556</sup> R. Samlai taught in Antioch; and here also was a sanhedrim. It is often said <sup>f557</sup>, that Nebuchadnezzar came and sat down at Daphne of Antioch, and the great sanhedrim went out to meet him. Now Antioch was formerly called Epidaphne, because it was near a fountain of that name; and in the Targumists on (~~(9811)~~ Numbers 34:11) Daphne answers to Riblah, which was in the land of Hamath, (~~(1233)~~ 2 Kings 23:33) and Riblah, Jerom <sup>f558</sup> says, is

what is now called Antioch of Syria: and that you may know, says he, that Riblah signifies this city, which is now the most noble in Coele Syria, it follows, over against the fountain, (in Numbers it is, “on the east side of Ain”.) which, it is clear, signifies Daphne, out of which fountain the above said city enjoys abundance of water. And so Josephus calls Antioch <sup>f559</sup>, Antiochia which is by Daphne of Syria; and in:

“Which when Onias knew of a surety, he reprov'd him, and withdrew himself into a sanctuary at Daphne, that lieth by Antiochia.” (2 Maccabees 4:33)

Daphne is said to be by Antioch. Some make it to be two hundred and eighty miles from Jerusalem. So far they went who were scattered abroad at Stephen's death, and carried the Gospel to this and other places, in which there was a manifest appearance of divine Providence, and of rich grace.

*Preaching the word to none but to the Jews only*, which dwelt in those parts; so little was the commission of Christ, to preach the Gospel to all nations, understood, though it was so plain; or so it was ordered in providence, that as it was to be first preached to them, so it should be only for a while, till the elect of God of that generation were brought in, and until the rest put it away from them, and so were left without excuse.

**Ver. 20.** *And some of them were men of Cyprus*, etc.] That is, some of the preachers, that were scattered abroad, were Jews born at Cyprus: such was Barnabas particularly, (<sup>4065</sup>Acts 4:36) though he was not among these, as appears from (<sup>4412</sup>Acts 11:22) “and Cyrene”; such were Simon that carried the cross after Christ, and his sons Alexander and Rufus, (<sup>4152</sup>Mark 15:21) and others that heard the apostles speak with tongues on the day of Pentecost, (<sup>420</sup>Acts 2:10)

*which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians*; or Hellenist Jews, who were born and brought up in Greece, and spoke the Greek language; though the Alexandrian copy, and the Syriac version, read “Greeks”, as if they were native Greeks, and properly Gentiles, to whom these ministers spoke the word of the Lord; but the former seems most likely.

*Preaching the Lord Jesus*; the dignity of his person, as the Son of God; what he did and suffered to obtain salvation for lost sinners; his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, and intercession; the

virtue of his blood for peace and pardon of his sacrifice for atonement of sin, and of his righteousness for justification.

**Ver. 21.** *And the hand of the Lord was with them*, etc.] Not only his hand of providence, which brought them thither, and protected them; and his hand of love, grace and mercy, which was upon them, and supplied them with gifts and grace, and everything necessary for them; and his hand of wisdom, which guided and directed them; but his hand of power, the same with the arm of the Lord, which when revealed, and made bare, the report of the Gospel is believed: but if that is not put forth, or efficacious grace is not exerted, no work is done, none are brought to believe, or are converted; ministers labour in vain, and spend their strength for nought: but this was not the case here, it was otherwise with these preachers; though they had travelled many miles, and were come into strange places, they were not left of God, nor without success, the power of God attended their ministry; so that the Gospel preached by them came not in word only, but in power, and it was the power of God unto salvation: hence it follows,

*and a great number believed*; not the Gospel only, but in Christ preached in it, (<sup><4111></sup>Acts 11:20) which was not owing to the force of moral persuasion in the ministers, nor to the power of free will in the people, but to the hand or power of the Lord; for the work of faith is not a work of man's will, but of God's almighty power and grace; and when that is displayed, multitudes believe in Christ for righteousness and life: and turned to the Lord; and obeyed his commands; (see <sup><4111></sup>Psalm 119:59,60) as a fruit, effect, and consequence of believing in Christ; for not first conversion is here intended, which is not man's work, but God's, and in which God is the agent, and man is passive; but obedience to the ordinances of Christ, as the fruit of faith, is meant.

**Ver. 22.** *Then tidings of these things*, etc.] Of the spread of the Gospel in several parts, and the success of it in the conversion of sinners, especially at Antioch:

*came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem*; these tidings were brought to the apostles and brethren there, by messengers which the ministers of the word sent unto them to let them know what success they met with; notwithstanding the persecution raised against the church of Jerusalem at the death of Stephen, and the havoc that was made of the members of it, and the dispersion of others, yet it still continued a church, and so it did for ages after: there are reckoned fifteen bishops of it unto the

times of Trajan, and the destruction of the city by him, when the Jews were no longer suffered to live in it; and they are these, James the brother of our Lord, Simeon, Justus, Zacchaeus, Tobias, Benjamin, John, Matthias, Philip, Seneca, Justus, Levi, Ephres, Joseph, and Judas; and these are said <sup>f560</sup> to be all originally Hebrews: but after the destruction of the city by Trajan, and the Jews were forbid inhabiting it, the church consisted of Gentiles only; and of them bishops were constituted over it, and were as follow: Marcus, Cassianus, Publius, Maximus, Julianus, Gaianus, Symmachus, Caius, another Julianus, Capito, another Maximus, Antoninus, Valens, Dolychianus, Narcissus, Aelius, Germanio, Gordius, and another Narcissus; all these governed this church in the “second” century: and in the “third” century, the bishops of this church were Alexander, Mazabanes, Labdas, and Hermon, who was the last before the Dioclesian persecution: in the “fourth” century, Macarins, Maximus, and Cyril, presided over it; and these were succeeded in the “fifth” century by Joannes Nepos, Prayllius, Juvenalis, Anastasius, and Martyrius; in this age also Lucian and Hesychius were presbyters of this church. In the “sixth” century, the names of the bishops of this church were Salustius, Helias, Johannes, Petrus, Macarius, Eustochius, Johannes, Neamus, and Isicius: in the “seventh” century were Thomas, Johannes, Neannus, Isaac, Zacharias, and Sophronius, who was the last bishop of Jerusalem before the utter and last devastation of it by the Saracens <sup>f561</sup>; since which time the city has underwent various fates, being sometimes in the hands of the Christians, and at other times possessed by the Turks, in whose power it now is.

*And they sent forth Barnabas*; who was himself an Hellenist, and of the country of Cyprus, and so very fit to be sent to the Grecians or Hellenists at Antioch, who had received the Gospel to confirm them in it: for his orders were,

*that he should go as far as Antioch* which is said to be about fifteen or sixteen days journey from Jerusalem: the phrase, “that he should go”, is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

**Ver. 23.** *Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God*, etc.] The many instances of the powerful and efficacious grace of God in regeneration and conversion; the great goodness, love, and favour of God in enlightening, quickening, and converting so many souls; and the



wonderful gifts of the Spirit bestowed upon many of them, fitting them for public use and service:

*was glad*; rejoiced at heart, and gave glory to God, as every good man will, at the success of the gospel in the conversion of sinners, let it be by what instrument or means it will, and at the gifts and grace bestowed on them:

*and exhorted them all*; in whom he saw the grace of God implanted, who had received the doctrine of the grace of God, and had gifts of grace qualifying them for usefulness, in some nation or another:

*that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord*; that is, with a fixed resolution in the grace and strength of Christ, they would hold to his person, exercising grace upon him, abide by his truths and ordinances, keep close to his people, adhere to his cause and interest, and hold on and out unto the end. The Arabic version takes “the purpose of heart” to be meant of Barnabas, and reads the words thus, “and he exhorted them according to the usual firmness of his heart, that they would continue in the faith of the Lord”; in the doctrine and grace of faith in Christ.

**Ver. 24.** *For he was a good man*, etc.] He had the grace of God wrought in his soul, and did good works; he was very kind, and generous, and charitable; he sold what land he had, and gave the money to the apostles, for the use of the community, (~~405~~ Acts 4:37)

*and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith*; he was full of the several graces of the Spirit, and particularly of faith; and he was full of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and of the faith of miracles; he was full of the doctrine of faith, and of spiritual gifts for the preaching of it: the same character is given of Stephen, (~~405~~ Acts 6:5)

*and much people was added unto the Lord*; by the means of Barnabas, through his ministry, and the exercise of those gifts he was full of; so the Arabic version, “and he drew a large multitude to the Lord”.

**Ver. 25.** *Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus*, etc.] “In Cilicia” to seek Saul; who had been sent thither by the brethren that he might escape the rage of the Grecians, who sought to slay him, (~~405~~ Acts 9:29,30).

**Ver. 26.** *And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch*, etc.] That he might be useful in directing, and assisting in settling this new and numerous church; in the establishing the members of it, and in putting them



into Gospel order, and in a method to secure and maintain peace, especially as they might consist both of Jews and Gentiles; and none so proper to be concerned in such a work as the apostle of the Gentiles.

*And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church;* preaching the Gospel, and administering the ordinances to them, during that time, at proper seasons. For here being a number of converts, they were embodied together in a church state, very probably by the direction and assistance of Barnabas, who was sent to them from the church at Jerusalem, and in which he might be assisted by Saul: the first bishop, or pastor of this church, was Evodius, as Ignatius observes unto them <sup>f562</sup>; Remember Evodius, your worthy and blessed pastor, who was first ordained over you by the apostles; and Ignatius himself was the next, of whom Origen speaking, says <sup>f563</sup>, that he was the second bishop of Antioch after Peter, who in persecution fought with beasts at Rome; next to him was Heron, after him Cornelius, then, Eros; to whom succeeded Theophilus, who wrote three books to Autolycus, in vindication of the Christian religion, which are now extant, in the times of the emperor Aurelius Verus, about the year of Christ 171. He was succeeded by Maximinus <sup>f564</sup> about the year 179, under Marcus Antoninus; and after him was Serapion, about the tenth year of the emperor Commodus, and of Christ 192; and about the year 214, Asclepiades succeeded in his room; next to him was Philetus, in the year 220, and then Zebennus in the year 231; next succeeded Babylas, the famous martyr, who suffered under Decius, and then followed Demetrianus, or Demetrius, about the year 255; and after him was the famous heretic Samosatenus, who was excommunicated from this church for his blasphemy against the Son of God; and Domnus, the son of Demetriauus, was put into his room, about the year 270; after him was Timaeus, in the year 274; and then Cyrillus, about the year 283: and these were the bishops or pastors of this church in the three first centuries <sup>f565</sup>.

*And taught much people;* besides the church, and with success, as to enlighten, convince, convert, comfort, and establish:

*and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch;* before they were called among themselves, the disciples, brethren, believers, the church, etc. and by others the Nazarenes, and Galilaeans: whether this name of Christians, which comes from Christ, and signifies anointed ones, was given by their enemies, or their friends, by others, or themselves, is not

certain, though it is most likely the latter; and it may be they hit upon this general appellation, upon the union of the Jews and Gentiles in one Gospel church state, and so happily buried the distinction of Jews and Gentiles, or those of the circumcision that believed, and those of the uncircumcision. Luke is particular in relating the affairs of this church, he being himself a native of this place. John of Antioch <sup>f566</sup> gives an account of this matter in these words;

“at the beginning of the reign of Claudius Caesar, ten years after Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, was ascended up into heaven, Evodus, the first after the Apostle Peter, being chosen bishop of Antioch, the great city of Syria, became a patriarch, and under him they were called Christians: for this same bishop, Evodus, conferring with them, put this name upon them, whereas before the Christians were called Nazarenes and Galilaeans.”

Epiphanius says <sup>f567</sup>, the disciples were called Jessaeans before they took the name of Christians first at Antioch: they were called Jessaeans, says he, I think, because of Jesse, seeing David was of Jesse, and Mary of David: and so the Scripture was fulfilled, in which the Lord says to David, of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne, etc. — Or else, they were called Jessaeans from the name of Jesus our Lord; and refers the reader to a book of Philo’s, written by him, concerning the Jessaeans, whom Epiphanius takes to be Christians; but those that Philo <sup>f568</sup> treats of were not Jessaeans, but Essaeans, and seem to be the same with the Essenes, who were not Christians, but a sect of the Jews. Nor do we ever find that the Christians were called by this name.

**Ver. 27.** *And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch.*], That is, some time in that year that Saul and Barnabas were at Antioch, there came from Jerusalem thither some Christian prophets; for such there were in the Christian church, who had not only a gift of expounding the more mysterious prophecies of the Old Testament, but also of foretelling things to come; (see <sup><4413></sup>Acts 13:1 <sup><4011></sup>Ephesians 4:11).

**Ver. 28.** *And there stood up one of them named Agabus,* etc.]] The same name with Hagaba in (<sup><4678></sup>Nehemiah 7:48) and with Hagabah, or Hagab in (<sup><4125></sup>Ezra 2:45,46) and which the Septuagint there call Agaba and Agab. The name signifies a “grasshopper”, (<sup><8122></sup>Leviticus 11:22) or “a locust”, (<sup><4473></sup>2 Chronicles 7:13). In a book that goes under the name of Jerom <sup>f569</sup>, it is interpreted, “a messenger of tribulation”; respecting, it may be, not the

true signification of the word, as the things which Agabus predicted, as the general dearth here, and the binding of the Apostle Paul, (<sup><4210></sup>Acts 21:10). And the same writer observes, that this interpretation is a violent, or a forced one. Some take it to be the same with **bg[**, “Agab”, which signifies “to love”; and so may be the same with the Greek name “Agapetus”, which may be interpreted “beloved”. This Agabus is said to be one of the seventy disciples that Christ sent forth: he seems to have been an itinerant prophet, who went from place to place delivering out his prophecies; we hear of him again at Caesarea, in (<sup><4210></sup>Acts 21:10). Some say he was a native of Antioch; but this does not follow from his being here, any more than that he was a native of Caesarea from his being there also; it seems most likely that he was a native of Judea, and perhaps of Jerusalem, since in both places he is said to come from thence: it is reported that he died at Antioch; and he is placed in the Roman martyrology on the third of February.

*And signified by the Spirit*; not by the position of the stars, or by any natural causes, or by mere conjecture, but by the Spirit of God:

*that there should be great dearth throughout all the world*; not only throughout all the land of Judea, but at least throughout the whole Roman empire; (see <sup><4110></sup>Luke 2:1) since other writers speak of it in other parts: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar; in the second year of his reign, as Dion Cassius<sup>f570</sup>, the Roman historian, says: and<sup>f571</sup> Eusebius seems to speak of it, as in the beginning of his reign; for he says, Caius, who scarce reigned four years, Claudius the emperor succeeded, in whose time a famine afflicted the whole world; for this some writers, different from our religion, have made mention of in their histories: though he elsewhere affirms<sup>f572</sup>, that it was in the fourth year of his reign; both may be true, it might last so long: and indeed, according to what this writer<sup>f573</sup> cites from Josephus, it must be after this time that the famine raged in Judea; for having observed the defeat of Theudas by Cuspius Fadus, the Roman governor, he observes, that at the same time a very great famine happened in Judea: now Fadus was sent into Judea, after the death of king Agrippa, towards the end of the fourth year of Claudius; so that it must be in the fifth or sixth year of Claudius that this famine was<sup>f574</sup>. The Magdeburgensian Centuriators say<sup>f575</sup>, it was about the ninth and tenth years of Claudius that this famine raged in Greece, Rome, and other parts of the world. Suetonius<sup>f576</sup> makes mention of it, and ascribes it to a constant sterility or barrenness: and that it particularly affected Judea

appears from hence, that Helena, queen of the Adiabeni, was at this time at Jerusalem, who sent for, and brought corn out of Egypt, and distributed it to the poor <sup>f577</sup>; of which Josephus <sup>f578</sup> gives this account:

“her coming was very seasonable to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for a famine at that time much afflicted their city, and many perished through want of food. Helena, the queen, sent of her own people some to Alexandria, who bought a great quantity of corn, and some to Cyprus, who brought loads of dry figs; who, as soon they came back, distributed the food to the needy. — And her son Izates, hearing of the famine, sent much money to the chief men of Jerusalem.”

The Misnic doctors <sup>f579</sup> speak of various gifts which Helena, and her son Monbaz, as they call him, gave to the Jews for the use of the temple, but make no mention of this bounty; though they represent the son as very liberal to the poor, and giving all his goods unto them <sup>f580</sup>.

**Ver. 29.** *Then the disciples*, etc.] That were at Antioch, *every man according to his ability*; whether rich or poor, master or servant, everyone according to the substance he was possessed of; whether more or less, which was a good rule to go by:

*determined to send relief to the brethren which dwelt in Judea*; either because that Agabus might have suggested, that the famine would be the severest in those parts; or because that the Christians there had parted with their substance already, in the support of one another, and for the spread of the Gospel in other parts; and therefore the Christians at Antioch, in gratitude to them for having received the Gospel, and Gospel ministers from them, resolved to help them with their temporal things, when in distress.

**Ver. 30.** *Which they also did*, etc.] They not only determined, but they put their resolutions into execution, and acted according to a rule which the apostle recommends, (~~2~~2 Corinthians 8:11 9:7)

*and sent it to the elders*; to the apostles; for though there were deacons there, yet they chose to send it to them, that they might put it into proper hands to distribute to the necessitous: and this collection they sent

*by the hands of Saul and Barnabas*; of this journey to Jerusalem, Paul makes no mention in (~~17~~Galatians 1:17-19,21, 2:1).

# CHAPTER 12

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 12

**Ver. 1.** *Now about that time*, etc.] That the famine was in Judea, and Saul and Barnabas were sent thither with what the church at Antioch had collected.

*Herod the king*; not Herod the great that slew the infants at Bethlehem, nor Herod Antipas that beheaded John, but Herod Agrippa; and so the Syriac version adds here, “who is surnamed Agrippa”; he was a grandson of Herod the great, and the son of Aristobulus: this prince

*stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church*; Beza’s ancient copy adds, “in Judea”: it seems to be the church at Jerusalem; perhaps some of the principal members of them; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, the rulers of the house of God. It is scarcely credible that he should lay hands on any of them himself in person; but it is very likely he encouraged his soldiers, or his servants, to abuse them, reproach them, strike and buffet them, as they met with them in the streets; or when at worship, might disturb them, and break them up.

**Ver. 2.** *And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.*] This was James, the son of Zebedee, whom our Lord told, that he should be baptized with the baptism he was baptized with, (~~and~~ Matthew 20:22) meaning the baptism of martyrdom; and he was the first martyr among the apostles: the death he was put to was one of the four capital punishments among the Jews, and was reckoned by them the most disgraceful of them all, and was inflicted upon deceivers of the people; and such an one James was thought to be <sup>f581</sup>.

**Ver. 3.** *And because he saw it pleased the Jews*, etc.] That is, as Beza’s ancient copy adds, “his stretching out his hands upon the faithful”; this pleased the Jews, a bloodthirsty generation of men, who had killed the prophets, and the Lord Jesus, and who were now greedy after the death of the apostles: it may easily be seen from what principle and spirit Herod

acted; it was not out of regard to the Jewish religion, rites, and ceremonies, but to ingratiate himself into the affections of the people:

*he proceeded further to take Peter also*; a principal apostle, and who was well known, and against whom the Jews had doubtless a particular antipathy, and would have been glad to have been rid of him; this Herod was, sensible of, and therefore to please them, ordered him to be taken up:

*then were the days of unleavened bread*; or the feast of the passover.

**Ver. 4.** *When he had apprehended him*, etc.] When his officers he sent to take him had brought him:

*he put him in prison*; in the common prison, very likely where he had been once before, (<sup><458></sup>Acts 5:18)

*and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him*; each quaternion consisted of four soldiers, so that they were in all sixteen; and so the Syriac version renders it, “and delivered him to sixteen soldiers”: how the Ethiopic version should make “seventeen” of them is pretty strange: these perhaps might take their turns to watch him by four at a time, two to whom he was chained, and two others to keep the doors; or all the sixteen together, being posted in one place or another for greater security: and it may be, that the reason of all this caution, and strong guard, might be, because it was remembered that he, and the rest of the apostles, when committed to the same prison some years ago, were delivered out of it:

*intending after Easter*, or the passover,

*to bring him forth to the people*; to insult and abuse him, and to put him to what death they should desire.

**Ver. 5.** *Peter therefore was kept in prison*, etc.] Till the feast of the passover was at an end:

*but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him*; this was not done by them as a body together, but either by them in several bands at different places, or by some of the principal of the church at some one certain place, and where they might frequently change companies, and keep on a continual incessant prayer for days together; and whereas it is very likely it might be at the beginning of the passover, when Peter was taken up, and it was now at the close of it, when he was delivered, the

church might be engaged by companies alternately, a whole week together, in prayer, on this occasion.

**Ver. 6.** *And when Herod would have brought him forth*, etc.] The next morning; so he had determined not to dismiss him, but to expose him to the people, and to put him to such a death they should choose:

*the same night, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers*; fearless of death, being in a good cause, and having nothing to ruffle and disturb his mind; and though he was in a prison, and in such company, God gave him, his beloved, sleep:

*bound with two chains*; one on one hand, and one on the other, each of which were fastened to the soldiers; that on his right hand was fastened to the left hand of the soldier, that was on that side; and that on his left hand to the right hand of the soldier, on the other side him; such security was made, that he might not get away from them; to which is added,

*and the keepers before the door kept the prison*; or watched it, that nobody went in, or came out.

**Ver. 7.** *And behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him*, etc.] Suddenly and at once, and stood by him; this was one of the ministering spirits sent forth by Christ, to minister to a servant of his:

*and a light shined in the prison*; the Syriac version renders it, “in the whole house”; and the word that is used does signify an habitation, or a dwelling house properly, but is used also by the Greek writers<sup>f582</sup> for a prison: this was an uncommon light produced by the angel, partly as an emblem of the presence, majesty, and power of God, who was present, to work a great deliverance; and partly for the use of Peter, that when being awaked he might see to rise and walk by:

*and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up*; he touched him on that side which lay uppermost, or punched him on it, in order to awake him, and raise him out of his sleep:

*saying arise up quickly*; without delay, make haste:

*and his chains fell off from his hands*; from both his hands, and were left with the soldiers, between whom he slept; which must be ascribed to an almighty power, which caused them to drop off.

**Ver. 8.** *And the angel said unto him, gird thyself,* etc.] He slept in his inner garment loose about him; wherefore the angel bids him gird it up with his girdle, and prepare to walk out after him:

*and bind on thy sandals;* which were a sort of shoes that covered only the soles of the feet, and were fastened to the leg, with strings:

*and so he did;* he did not ask any question, or the reason of these orders; he did not dispute the matter, but at once obeyed:

*and he saith unto him, cast thy garment about thee;* meaning his upper garment, or cloak, which lay by him:

*and follow me;* suggesting hereby, that he should take care of him, and show him his way, and bring him safe out of the prison.

**Ver. 9.** *And he went out and followed him,* etc.] He came out from between the two soldiers, and out of that apartment in the prison, in which he was, and followed the angel where he led him:

*and wist not that it was true that was done by the angel;* not that he thought the angel was a mere apparition, and all this that was done was a delusion; but he did not know whether this was matter of fact, or whether it was, not represented to him in a visionary way, as what could be, or would be done:

*but thought he saw a vision;* imagined he was in a dream or a trance, and only saw these things in a vision, and that they were not really done, the whole was so amazing and astonishing.

**Ver. 10.** *When they were past the first and the second ward,* etc.] Or watch, which were set within the prison, and might be some of the quaternions of soldiers to whom Peter was delivered; two of them were with him, and others might be placed at these two wards for further security; and these circumstances make the deliverance the more wonderful and remarkable; the watch must either be asleep, or their eyes were holden, or the angel and Peter passed by so swiftly that they were unobserved:

*they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city:* which was not one of the gates of the city, as if the prison was without the walls of it; but was the great and strong gate of the prison, which for the security of the prisoners was made of iron, and this gate led directly into the city of Jerusalem:



*which opened to them of his own accord*; as the gates of the temple are said to do <sup>f583</sup>, forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem: this was done by a divine power; and because no human creature had any hand in it, it is said to be done of its own accord:

*and they went out*. The Cambridge copy of Beza's adds, "they went down seven steps"; that is, from the prison into the city:

*and passed on through one street*; what street this was is not certain; there were several streets in Jerusalem: (See Gill on "~~491~~Acts 9:11") and forthwith the angel departed from him: he being now safe and out of danger, he left him to himself, to betake himself to what house he should think fit.

**Ver. 11.** *And when Peter was come to himself* etc.] For upon his being awaked out of sleep, what with the uncommon light, which shone around him, and with the appearance of the angel, and the chains dropping from his hands, and his surprising escape through the several wards, together with the iron gate opening of itself, he was so filled with amazement, that he was not himself; he could scarcely tell whether he was in the body or not, and whether he was in a dream or a trance, or whether he saw a vision or not; but upon the angel's leaving him he came to himself, the amazement wore off, and he found himself thoroughly awake, and perfectly in his senses, and that the deliverance was real: and then,

*he said, now know I of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel*; this was a thanksgiving to God, and an acknowledgment, that the deliverance, though it was by the ministry an angel, yet was owing to the goodness and power of God; it was God that sent his angel, and the salvation was of the Lord's doing, and it was marvellous in the eyes of Peter, and gratefully owned by him:

*and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod*; who intended that morning to have brought him forth, and sacrificed him to the will of the people:

*and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews*; not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the body of the Jewish nation, who were now at Jerusalem, on account of the passover; and who before they departed into their several cities and towns, expected to have had Peter brought forth, and put to death before them; but now both Herod and they were disappointed.

**Ver. 12.** *And when he had considered the thing*, etc.] The whole of the salvation wrought for him; or rather, where he should go, to what house he should betake himself; ere he was aware,

*he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark.* This good woman seems to be a widow, no mention being made of her husband, and was sister to Barnabas, (<sup><51040></sup>Colossians 4:10). She is described by a son she had, whose name was John Mark, because of the frequent mention made of him hereafter; her house being large, and her heart as large as her house, the saints met here, and were welcome, and where they were at this time, though so late:

*where many were gathered together, praying*; the Ethiopic version adds, “for him”; and there were some in other places, for one place could not hold them all; (see <sup><44217></sup>Acts 12:17) they held out to the end in prayer; this was their last effort in this way, and in this they were no doubt exceeding vehement and importunate, and they succeeded; so true is that observation in (<sup><30516></sup>James 5:16).

**Ver. 13.** *And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate*, etc. The lesser door in the great gate, or the door of the porch through which they entered into the house. So the Jews distinguish between **j tp**, “the door”, and **r[ç**, “the gate”; (see <sup><07816></sup>Judges 18:16,17) (<sup><23011></sup>Ezekiel 40:11) where the Septuagint use the same words as here. Kimchi<sup>f584</sup> says,

“**j tp**, “the door” is what is of the gate, without the folding doors; for all is called **r[ç**, “the gate”, whether within or without, with the folding doors, and the outward threshold, as that is joined to the side posts and lintel.”

The door was kept shut, for fear of the Jews, lest they should be disturbed: here Peter stood and knocked:

*a damsel came to hearken*; hearing a knocking, she came out to the door, and listened, to try if she could know who it was, a friend or a foe, before she opened; or she came “to answer”, as the Syriac version renders it, to know who was there, and what he or she wanted, and to give an answer. And the damsel was

*named Rhoda*, which signifies a rose in the Greek language: so the Jewish women often had their names, in the Hebrew tongue, from flowers and

trees, as Susanna from a lily, or rose: and which, perhaps, was the Hebrew name of this damsel; and Esther was called Hadassah, from the myrtle tree.

**Ver. 14.** *And when she knew Peter's voice*, etc.] often heard him preach and converse in the family:

*she opened not the gate for gladness*, filled with joy to hear his voice, and that he was delivered from prison, and in haste to carry the welcome news to the company within, stayed not to open the gate, and let Peter in:

*but ran in and told how Peter stood before the gate*: she went into the house in a great hurry, and related to them within, that Peter was at the door without.

**Ver. 15.** *And they said unto her, thou art mad*, etc. “Or art thou not mad?” as the Ethiopic version, and two of Beza’s exemplars read, and some others: they thought the girl must be out of her senses; they looked upon the thing impossible; for though they were praying for him, and praying in faith, yet they might have no expectation of a deliverance; but were praying that they might be supported under such a trial, and that it might be sanctified to them; and for Peter, that he might be strengthened and made steadfast, and kept faithful to the last; and bear, by his sufferings and death, a glorious and honourable testimony for Christ:

*but she constantly affirmed that it was even so*; she asserted it over and over, and was positive in it; nothing they could say could put her off of it; she was sure of it; which when they observed, they could not tell what to say to it, but as follows: then said they,

*it is his angel*; not his tutelar or guardian angel, everyone having, as some think, a particular angel to attend him; whereas sometimes one angel attends many persons, and sometimes many angels encamp about, and are a guard to a single saint; nor did they think it was an angel sent to give notice of his death, as some persons, by one means or another, have had previous notices of the death of their friends; but rather, that it was an angel in Peter’s shape, who had something to communicate: and this agrees with the notions of the Jews, who think that angels do assume the shapes of men on certain occasions: so they say <sup>f585</sup>, when Moses was in danger in Pharaoh’s court, God sent Michael, the prince of the host of heaven, “in the shape of an executioner”; who brought him at once out of Egypt, and set him at the border of it, the distance of three days journey: Bar Kaphra

says <sup>f586</sup>, an angel descended **hçm twmdb**, “in the likeness of Moses”, and caused him to flee, and they thought the angel had been Moses: and so it is elsewhere said <sup>f587</sup>, that an angel descended “in the likeness of Solomon”, sitting upon his throne: there are some who think, that the sense of the brethren praying for Peter, was not that it was an angel, a celestial spirit, but a messenger sent by Peter from the prison on some errand: who represented him, or mentioning his name, the damsel took him for Peter himself. Beza’s ancient copy reads, “then said they unto her, perhaps it is his angel”, and so the Syriac version.

**Ver. 16.** *But Peter continued knocking*, etc.] That they might come to him, and let him in; beginning to be impatient, and being very desirous of seeing his friends, as well as being in danger of being taken up, and had to prison again, should any of his enemies come by, who knew him:

*and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished:* they could hardly believe their own eyes; it was amazing to them, how it should be, that he should be delivered out of prison, when they knew there was such a strong guard about him.

**Ver. 17.** *But he beckoning unto them with the hand*, etc.] This is what the Jews call **hzymr**, “an hint” <sup>f588</sup>, which is a beckoning, or making signs, either with the head or hand: and this was now made, to hold their peace; to be silent, and not clamorous in their expressions of joy and wonder, lest it should alarm the neighbourhood, and the consequence be bad both to him and them; as also that he might have an opportunity of relating the whole affair to them; which he did, after he had entered into the house; which though not expressed is understood, and is added in Beza’s ancient copy, and in the Syriac version:

*and he went in;* that is, into the house: and declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of prison: how he had sent his angel to him in prison, what a light shone about him, how his chains fell from his hands, and how the angel conducted him through the several wards, till they came to the iron gate, which opened of itself; and how when he had brought him into the public streets, he left him; he ascribes this wonderful deliverance not to the angel, but to the Lord himself:

*and he said, go show these things to James;* the son of Alphaeus, sometimes called the brother of our Lord; for James the son of Zebedee, the brother of John, Herod had lately killed with the sword, (~~412~~ Acts 12:2)

and this other James very likely succeeded him as pastor of the church at Jerusalem, or at least had the superintendency of affairs there:

*and to the brethren*; the rest of the apostles, and even all the members; whom he would have acquainted with these things, which he knew would be matter of joy unto them, and a means of strengthening them in the ways of the Lord:

*and he departed, and went into another place*; to Rome, say the Papists, but without any foundation; if he went out of the city, and to any distant place for more safety, very likely he went to Antioch; but the words do not necessarily oblige us to conclude, that he went out of the city at that time, only that he went from Mary's house; "and went", as the Ethiopic version reads, "to another house": where another company of saints might be assembled, and where he might be more private and secure.

**Ver. 18.** *Now as soon as it was day*, etc.] When it was morning; as soon as there was any light in the prison, by which the guards could discern one another and their prisoners:

*there was no small stir among the soldiers*: the two between whom Peter slept, and the rest of the quaternions that were employed in the wards to keep watch; who were now all in an uproar, and in the utmost concern and fright:

*what was become of Peter*; whether he was in any other part of the prison, by what means he could escape, and whither he was gone.

**Ver. 19.** *And when Herod had sought for him and found him not*, etc.] Neither in the prison, nor in any part of the city:

*he examined the keepers*; of the prison, and those that were upon the watch, whether they had not been accessory to his escape:

*and commanded that they should be put to death*: or brought forth, not before a judge to be tried and judged, because they had been examined by Herod already; but either that they should be carried and laid in bonds, or be led forth to suffer punishment; and so our version directs, and which is confirmed by the Syriac; and the Greeks say<sup>f589</sup>, that *απαγωγή* is a kind of punishment:

*and he went down from Judea to Caesarea*; not Peter, but Herod:

*and there abode*; of this journey of Agrippa's to Caesarea, Josephus makes mention <sup>f590</sup>; this place was distant from Jerusalem six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles <sup>f591</sup>.

**Ver. 20.** *And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon,* etc.] Two cities on the sea coast, in the land of Phoenicia; with the inhabitants of which Herod was so enraged, that though he had not declared war against them, yet he had meditated it in his mind, and intended to do it at a proper time: what gave him this offence is not certain; that it should be for entertaining and concealing of Peter, when he made his escape, is without any foundation; and nothing but this following on that account, could ever occasion such a thought:

*but they came with one accord to him;* the ambassadors from both cities united in an address to him, and joined in ways and means to reconcile him to them:

*and having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend;* not merely by arguments, entreaties, and good works, but very likely by gifts, by making presents to him: persons in such an office had usually very great interest in the princes they served <sup>f592</sup>, as Blastus doubtless had with Herod; Commodus the emperor did every thing at the instances of his chamberlains, and so other princes; for these officers had access when others could not, the king's bedchamber next to sacred; and therefore the Tyrians and Sidonians privately applied to him first:

*desired peace;* either of Herod himself, to whom, by the means of Blastus, they were introduced; and in their address to him, entreated he would forgive the offence, and be at peace with them; or else of Blastus, whom by some means or another they made their friend; and therefore entreated of him, that he would use his interest with the king, and procure peace for them: and this sense the Arabic version inclines to, which renders the words thus, "and they prayed him that he would take care of reconciliation and peace"; though the former seems to be the true sense: "because their country was nourished by the king's country". These cities were seaports, and the inhabitants of them were much concerned in sending ships to sea, and in merchandise; and it was in Judea and Galilee, which were under Herod's jurisdiction, where they vented the goods they imported, and from whence they were supplied with wheat, honey, and oil, both for their own use, and perhaps to export abroad; (see <sup><100></sup>1 Kings 5:1,11) (<sup><27></sup>Ezekiel

27:3,17), etc. And it looks as if Herod had forbid all commerce with them, which if it had been continued, would have been the ruin of them.

**Ver. 21.** *And upon a set day*, etc.] Either on some feast day of divine appointment, as a feast day was by the Jews called *d[wm*, “a stated day”; or on some day appointed by Herod, for the receiving of the ambassadors of Tyre and Sidon, and of hearing their petitions; or as Josephus <sup>f593</sup> says, it was on the second day of the sports and plays, instituted by him in honour of Caesar:

*Herod, arrayed in royal apparel*; the same Jewish historian in the same place says, that this his apparel was all of silver, and of a wonderful contexture; and that going in this very early in the morning into the theatre, the silver shone so with the rays of the rising sun, that it struck the spectators with terror and admiration:

*sat upon his throne*; and very likely with the other ensigns of royalty, as a crown on his head, and a sceptre in his hand:

*and made an oration unto them*; either unto the ambassadors from Tyre and Sidon, or rather unto the common people, the multitude that were gathered together in the theatre, where the above historian says he was.

**Ver. 22.** *And the people gave a shout*, etc.] At the end of the oration; these were flatterers, as Josephus says in the place before referred to, who cried out one from another, saluting him as God; saying, be merciful to us, hitherto we have revered thee as a man, henceforward we confess thee somewhat more excellent than mortal nature: and so it follows here,

*saying it is the voice of a God, and not of a man*; the Vulgate Latin version reads, “the voices of God and not men”; and the Ethiopic version, “the city shouted in, or with the voice of God”, with the voice of man; as if this referred to the acclamation of the people, and not the speech of the king; very wrongly.

**Ver. 23.** *And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him*, etc.] With a disease after mentioned; this angel, according to Josephus, appeared in the form of an owl; for he says, that a little after (the shout of the people) the king looked up, and saw an owl sitting upon a rope over his head; whom he immediately understood to be an angel, or messenger of evil things to him, as it had been before of good things; for it seems by the same historian <sup>f594</sup>, that when he was bound by the order of Caligula, he saw an owl sitting

on that tree, on which he leaned; when a certain German predicted, that things would in a short time be changed with him, and he should be advanced to great honour; but remember, says he, whenever you see that bird again, you will die within five days. Eusebius <sup>f595</sup>, out of Josephus, makes no mention of the owl, but relates it thus; that a little after (the oration and the salutation of the people) the king looked up, and saw an angel sitting over his head, whom he immediately understood to be the cause of evil things to him, as he had formerly been of good: the reason of the angel's smiting him was,

*because he gave not glory to God*; or as the Jewish historian says, because he reprov'd not the flatterers, nor rejected their impious flattery, but tacitly took that to himself, which belonged to God:

*and he was eaten of worms*: Beza's most ancient copy adds, "while he was alive"; Josephus only makes mention of pains in his belly, but these were occasioned by the gnawing of the worms: this was accounted by the Jews a very accursed death; they say <sup>f596</sup>, that the spies which brought an ill report on the good land, died this death: their account is this, that

"their tongues swelled and fell upon their navels, and worms came out of their tongues and went into their navels, and out of their navels they went into their tongues,"

and Herod the great, the grandfather of this, according to Josephus <sup>f597</sup>; and Maximianus Galerius, according to Eusebius <sup>f598</sup>, and many of this death died many tyrants, oppressors, and persecutors! as Antiochus,

"So that the worms rose up out of the body of this wicked man, and while he lived in sorrow and pain, his flesh fell away, and the filthiness of his smell was noisome to all his army." (2 Maccabees 9:9)

others:

*and gave up the ghost*: not directly, but five days after, as Josephus relates, in the fifty fourth year of his age, and when he had reigned seven years; but before he died, and as soon as he was smitten, he turned to his friends and said, I your God am obliged to depart this life, and now fate reproves the lying words you have just now spoke of me; and I who was called immortal by you, am led away to die, with more, as related by Josephus: by



such a token as this, a man was discovered to be a murderer with the Jews; for so they say<sup>f599</sup>, that

“out of the beheaded heifer went a vast number of worms, and went to the place where the murderer was, and ascended upon him, and then the sanhedrim laid hold on him and condemned him.”

**Ver. 24.** *But the word of God grew and multiplied.*] The number of those who were converted by it, and embraced and professed it, increased; otherwise the word is the same, whether the professors of it be more or fewer; and this it did, notwithstanding the persecution raised against it by Herod whilst he was living; and after his death, it still gained more ground, met with less opposition, and was more freely professed.

**Ver. 25.** *And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem,* etc.] Two of Beza’s exemplars, the Complutensian edition and the Syriac version, add, “unto Antioch”; and certain it is, that from thence they were sent, and thither they returned, for we find them there in the beginning of the next chapter:

*when they had fulfilled their ministry;* which was the carrying the relief, or the money collected by the Christians at Antioch, for the brethren in Judea, on account of the famine that was there:

*and took with them John, whose surname was Mark:* the son of Mary, at whose house the disciples were met together, and praying; and where Peter first went, after he was delivered from prison, (<sup><44212></sup>Acts 12:12) him they brought with them from Jerusalem to Antioch, being a kinsman of Barnabas; and a man of promising gifts and usefulness, and judged to be a fit companion with them in their travels, for the spread of the Gospel.

# CHAPTER 13

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 13

**Ver. 1.** *Now there were in the church that was at Antioch*, etc.] This was Antioch in Syria, where was a Gospel church, and where the disciples were first called Christians; from whence Saul and Barnabas had been sent to Jerusalem, with a supply for the poor saints there, in a time of famine, and from whence they were now returned: and here were

*certain prophets and teachers*; who were both prophets and teachers, though these are sometimes distinguished; who had both a gift of foretelling things to come, as Agabus and others, and of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of teaching the people evangelic truths; these, at least some of them, came from Jerusalem hither, (~~4127~~ Acts 11:27).

*As Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger*; the former of these was a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, who sold his land and brought the money to the apostles; and who was first sent hither by the church at Jerusalem, upon hearing that many in this place believed, and turned to the Lord, (~~4066~~ Acts 4:36,37 11:22) but of the latter no mention is made elsewhere; by his first name he appears to be a Jew, who by the Romans was called Niger; very likely from the blackness of his complexion, for that word signifies “black”: and so the Ethiopic version interprets it:

*and Lucius of Cyrene*; who very probably was one of the synagogue of the Cyrenians, and seems manifestly to be one of the men of Cyrene, that went abroad upon the persecution raised at the death of Stephen, (~~4069~~ Acts 6:9 11:19,20) he is said to be bishop of Cyrene; some take him to be the same Lucius mentioned in (~~5162~~ Romans 16:21) and others think he is the same with Luke the Evangelist:

*and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch*: or his foster brother. The Syriac version calls him Manail, and one of Stephens’s copies Manaël, and the Ethiopic version Manache, and renders what is said of him, “the son of king Herod’s nurse”; which accounts for their being brought up, nourished, and suckled together: the name seems to be the

same with Menachem, or Menahem, a name frequent with the Jews; there was one of this name, who was very intimate with Herod the great, and was in his service, though before he was vice president of the sanhedrim: the account that is given of him is this <sup>f600</sup>:

“Hillell and Shammai received from them (i.e. from Shemaia and Abtalion, who were presidents before them), but at first there were Hillell and Menahem, but Menahem went out, dl mh tdwb[ l , “into the service of the king”, with fourscore men clad in gold — - Menahem was a very wise man, and a sort of a prophet, who delivered out many prophecies; and he told Herod when he was little, that he should reign; and after he was king, he sent for him, and he told him again, that he should reign more than thirty years, and he reigned thirty seven years, and he gave him great riches.”

Of this Menahem, and of his going into the king’s service, mention is made elsewhere <sup>f601</sup>: now though this Menahem cannot be the same with Manaen here, yet this Manaen, as Dr. Lightfoot conjectures, might be the son of him, and called after his name; who might be brought up with the son of Herod the great, here called the tetrarch; and who was Herod Antipas, the same that beheaded John the Baptist: and Saul; who afterwards was called Paul.

**Ver. 2.** *As they ministered to the Lord*, etc.] That is, the five prophets and teachers before mentioned; and whose ministry lay in preaching the Gospel, teaching the people the doctrines of it, and expounding prophecies, and also in prayer; to which latter the Syriac version restrains their ministry, rendering it, “as they prayed to God”; but the phrase seems to be more extensive: “and fasted”; which the Jews were much used to, and the believing ones had not yet left it off; their custom was to fast on Mondays and Thursdays: (See Gill on <sup>“<del>2812</del></sup> Luke 18:12”). Whether it was on one of those days, that these men were ministering and fasting, is not certain; but this we may be sure of, it was not on the Jewish sabbath, for on that day they never fasted; very likely that this was a fast appointed and fixed among themselves, on some particular occasion; it may be on account of the famine, which was at this time, (<sup>“<del>4112</del></sup> Acts 11:28).

*The Holy Ghost said*; either with an articulate voice, or by an internal impulse, upon the minds of three of the prophets:

*separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them*; the work which the Holy Ghost had appointed, and called them to before this, was to go and preach the Gospel among the Gentiles, distinct from the Jews, of which we read in the latter part of this chapter; and now he would have them be separated from their brethren, as Aaron and his sons were from theirs, and be sent forth from hence directly, upon that work: this shows the Spirit to be a person, since speaking and commanding in an authoritative way, and calling to a work, are ascribed unto him; and that he is a divine person, and truly God, and equal with God, since calling to a sacred office is attributed to him; and a separation to it is ordered for himself, for his service, honour, and glory; he does not say separate them to the Lord, or to God, but to me.

**Ver. 3.** *And when they had fasted and prayed*, etc.] Not when they had done fasting and praying, at the time the Holy Ghost made an impulse on their minds, to separate two of their brethren to a work they were appointed to; but at another time, which was fixed for that purpose; when they fasted and prayed, not for direction, who they were to set apart and send; for the persons were before pointed out to them, but that they might have every needful gift and qualification for the work, and be succeeded in it:

*and laid their hands on them*; not as ordaining them, for this was not an ordination; the Apostle Paul particularly was not ordained an apostle by man, but by Jesus Christ; who personally appeared to him, and made and ordained him his minister and apostle; and much less by men inferior to himself, as Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen were; but this was a gesture and ceremony used among the Jews, when they wished any blessing or happiness to attend any persons; and so these prophets, when they separated Paul and Barnabas from their company, and were parting from them, put their hands on them, and wished them all prosperity and success: could this be thought to be an ordination, as it cannot, since both of them were stated and authorized ministers of the word, and one of them an apostle long before this; there might seem some likeness between it and the Jewish ordination of elders, which was done by three<sup>f602</sup>, as here were Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen; but then this was not done without the land of Israel, as here, nor by imposition of hands<sup>f603</sup>: now when they had thus prayed for them, and wished them well, they sent them away; to do the work they were called unto; not in an authoritative way, but in a friendly manner they parted with them, and bid them farewell.

**Ver. 4.** *So they being sent forth of the Holy Ghost*, etc.] This is said, lest it should be thought they were sent by men; it was the Holy Ghost that moved the prophets at Antioch to separate them from them, and to send them away; and who inclined their minds to go, and directed them what course to steer: and accordingly they

*departed to Seleucia*; which was a city of Syria, called by Pliny, Seleucia Pieria <sup>f604</sup>; it had its name from Seleucus Nicanor, king of Egypt, who was the builder of it: it was not far from Antioch, it is said to be twenty four miles from it; it is the first city of Syria from Cilicia, and was situated at the mouth of the river Orontes; wherefore Saul and Barnabas made no stay here; and it seems that their coming hither was only in order to take shipping for the island of Cyprus; for Seleucia was upon the sea coast, as appears from:

“King Ptolemee therefore, having gotten the dominion of the cities by the sea unto Seleucia upon the sea coast, imagined wicked counsels against Alexander.” (1 Maccabees 11:8)

and was the proper place to set sail from to Cyprus. So we read of Apollonius Tyaneus and his companions <sup>f605</sup>, that

“they went down to the sea by Seleucia, where having got a ship, “they sailed to Cyprus:” and so it follows here,”

*and from thence they sailed to Cyprus*; an island in the Mediterranean sea, the native country of Barnabas, (<sup><del>408</del></sup>Acts 4:36 (See Gill on “<sup><del>408</del></sup>Acts 4:36”))

**Ver. 5.** *And when they were at Salamis*, etc.] A chief city of Cyprus; and so Herodotus <sup>f606</sup> calls it Salamis of Cyprus; and in this island it is placed by Pliny <sup>f607</sup> and Ptolomy <sup>f608</sup>: it was built by Teucer, the son of Telamon, after his return from the Trojan war; and so called by him, from his native country Salamine, in Greece, as is generally agreed by historians <sup>f609</sup>: it was the birth place of the famous philosopher Solon, who is from thence called Salaminius; he died in the island of Cyprus, in the eightieth year of his age; and before he died, gave orders to carry his bones to Salamis, and being reduced to ashes, to scatter them throughout the province <sup>f610</sup>: it was also claimed by the Cyprians, as the birth place of Homer, and is said <sup>f611</sup> to be prophesied of that it should be; it was afterwards called Constantia, and now Famagusta, and is in the hands of the Turks; of it Jerom <sup>f612</sup> thus writes:

“Salamis, a city in the island of Cyprus, now called Constantia, which, in the time of the Emperor Trajan, the Jews destroyed, having killed all the inhabitants of it:”

which shows what a multitude of Jews dwelt in this island, and even in this place; hence, in this verse, mention is afterwards made of synagogues of Jews in it, where the apostles preached, and which was the reason of their coming hither. This place, with the whole island, was taken from the Venetians by Mustapha, general to Selimus the Second, emperor of the Turks, in the year 1571, after a siege of eleven months; which, when he was possessed of, contrary to the agreement made, he put all the Christians to death; and having cut off the ears and nose of Bragadinus, the governor of it, took off his skin alive <sup>f613</sup>. Epiphanius, an ancient writer of the fourth century, famous for his books against heresies, was bishop of this place <sup>f614</sup>, when it was called Constantia, from Constantins Augustus, the emperor; and before him, we read of Gelasius, bishop of this place, who was in the council of Nice; there was a church here in the fifth century; and mention is made of a presbyter of it, in the sixth century, present at the fifth council at Constantinople; and in the seventh century, a bishop of this church was in the sixth council of Constantinople; and in the Nicene synod, in the “eighth” century, John, bishop of this place, assisted <sup>f615</sup>:

*they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews*; the Jews being in great numbers in these parts, to them the apostles first preached, though they were sent unto the Gentiles; and this they continued to do, till the Jews put away the Gospel, which made their way more clear and open to the Gentiles:

*and they had also John to their minister*: this was John Mark, whom they brought with them from Jerusalem, (~~4122~~ Acts 12:12,25) who waited upon them, and provided for them the necessaries of life; for this is not to be understood of the ministry of the word, which is peculiarly ascribed to them, or of his being an assistant to them in it; nor can it be understood of his being the minister in any of the synagogues for them, to bring out the book of the law, and direct public service, where it cannot be thought he should have any such office and authority; but of his ministering in civil and secular things to the apostles, or to the poor by their orders.

**Ver. 6.** *And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, “the whole isle”; for through the midst of the whole island they must go, to go

from Salarnis to Paphos; for Salamis was on the east, and Paphos on the west of the islands<sup>f616</sup>: it had its name from the Phoenician word, **twap tap**, “peathpaoth”, “the corner of corners”; because both old and new Paphos were situated in the extreme part of the island; and not from Paphus, the son of Pygmalion, by any ivory statue which he had made, whom Venus, at his request, according to the fables of the Heathens, turned into a woman: some say<sup>f617</sup>, that Cinyras, a king of the Assyrians, coming into Cyprus, built Paphos; but Pausanias<sup>f618</sup> affirms, that Agapenor, who came hither after the Trojan war, was the builder of this place, and also of the temple of Venus in it, for which it was famous<sup>f619</sup>; and in a certain area of which, Pliny<sup>f620</sup> says it never rained; and from this place, Venus was called Paphia: according to Chrysostom, it was the metropolis of Cyprus; and it is indeed mentioned by Pliny<sup>f621</sup>, first of the fifteen cities that were in it; and seems at this time to have been the seat of the Roman deputy Paulus Sergius, afterwards spoken of: concerning this place Jerom says<sup>f622</sup>,

“Paphus, a city on the sea coast, in the island of Cyprus, formerly famous for the sacred rites of Venus, and the verses of the poets; which fell by frequent earthquakes, and now only shows, by its ruins, what it formerly was:”

so Seneca<sup>f623</sup> says, “quotiens in se Paphus corrui?”, “how often has Paphus fell within itself?” that is, by earthquakes: the ruins of many goodly churches and buildings are to be seen in it; and the walls of a strong, and almost impregnable tower, situated upon a hill in the middle of the city, supposed to be the habitation of Sergius Paulus; there is also shown, under a certain church, a prison divided into seven rooms, where they say Paul and Barnabas were imprisoned, for preaching the Gospel; what remains of it, is now called Bapho: here

*they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus*, or the son of Jesus; Jesus was a name frequent among the Jews, and is the same with Joshua, and was in use long before our Saviour’s time; there was Jesus the son of Sirach, the author of Ecclesiasticus, and who had a grandfather of the same name, the Syriac version here calls him “Barsuma”, which some render “the son of a name”; that is, a man of note, a famous person, of great renown; others, “the son of a swelling”, or “the son of ulcers”; he professing to be a physician, and to cure them, with which they make the name of Barjesus to agree, deriving it from a root,

which signifies to heal: Jerom <sup>f624</sup> pronounces this name Barieu, and observes, that some corruptly read it Barjesu; and he makes it to signify an evil man, or one in evil; and Drusius says, he found the name **βαριηου**, “Barjeou”, in some papers of his; and a very learned man <sup>f625</sup> of later years says, it is the same with Bar-Jehu, the son of Jehu; and affirms, that the Greek word is **βαριηους**, “Barjeus”, which others wrongly turn into “Barjesus”; the Magdeburgensian Centuriators call him, “Elymas Barjehu”; the reason Beda gives, why it should be so read, and not Bar-jesus, is because that a magician was unworthy to be called the son of Jesus, the Saviour, when he was a child of the devil; but the Greek copies agree in Barjesus; his name shows him to be a Jew, as he is here called: and he was one of those false prophets our Lord said should arise, and deceive many; he pretended to foretell things to come, and practised sorcery, and was given to magic arts.

**Ver. 7.** *Which was with the deputy of the country*, etc. Or the Roman governor of the island; who very likely dwelt at Paphos, it being a principal, if not the principal city in the island, since Pliny mentions it first of all the cities in it, as before observed: and with this governor, or proconsul, as the word signifies, or rather praetor, Bar-jesus was: either he lived with him, making great pretensions to knowledge and learning, which the governor might be a favourer of, or in quality of a physician; the Ethiopic version adds, “and he was a servant of the governor”; or he might be only with him occasionally and accidentally, just at that time, though the former seems most likely: and the name of this deputy was Sergius Paulus; the name of Paulus was common among the Romans; Pliny the younger speaks <sup>f626</sup> of one Passienus Paulus, a famous Roman knight, and very learned, who wrote elegies; and Trajan <sup>f627</sup>, in an epistle to him, makes mention of Paulus the proconsul; and Pliny the older, among his authors from whom he compiled his history, cites one of this very name, Sergius Paulus <sup>f628</sup>. The island of Cyprus was at this time in the hands of the Romans, and this man was the governor of it; it was first inhabited by some of the sons of Japhet; Josephus <sup>f629</sup> assigns it to Cittim: Cittim, he says,

“had the island Chetima, which now is called Cyprus; and from it all the islands, and most places about the sea, are called Chethim by the Hebrews; and as a proof of what I say, (adds he,) one of the cities in Cyprus still retains the name; for it is called Citium by those who have made it Greek, and not much differing from the name Chethimus.”



After the Trojan war, it came into the hands of the Grecians; and continued with them from the times of Teucer, until Evagoras and his son Nicocles; and then it fell into the hands of the Romans, and through them to the kings of Egypt; and after them became a Roman colony, in the following manner: Clodius Pulcher condemned Cyprus to the Roman people, to possess which Cato being sent, Ptolomy the king of the island, having cast his money into the sea, prevented the ignominy of it by a voluntary death, Anno U. C. 698<sup>f630</sup>. The Roman historian says<sup>f631</sup>, Cyprus being conquered, the glory of it was not assigned to any, seeing it was made a province by the decree of the senate, by the means of Cato, through the death of the king, which he brought upon himself; and from that time, as Strabo says<sup>f632</sup>, it became a praetorian province, and was now governed by a praetor, though he is called a deputy, or proconsul; the reason of which Dr. Hammond thinks was, because that P. Lentulus, Ap. Claudius, and M. Cicero, being proconsuls of Cilicia, had the administration of Cyprus also granted to them by the senate; hence afterwards the governors of Cyprus were called proconsuls, or deputies. This same Greek word here used, is adopted by the Jewish Rabbins into their language; hence we read of *aj wpyj na avvsvpatoc*, “the deputy”, or “proconsul” of Caesarea<sup>f633</sup>; which is explained by a governor, and a judge<sup>f634</sup> or a third from the king<sup>f635</sup>; and it is refined in the Syriac version: this deputy is said to be a “prudent man”. The Arabic version seems to distinguish Paul the prudent man, from Sergius the deputy, or tribune, as it calls him; reading the words thus, “who was by Sergius the tribune, with Paul a prudent man”; but Sergius and Paulus undoubtedly design one and the same man, who was prudent: he is said to be “a prudent man”, in the management of his affairs, as a governor; and might be very learned, ingenious, and an understanding man; a man of great sagacity and penetration, who very likely saw through the vain pretensions, and impostures of Bar-jesus, and was desirous to expose him in a public manner; or at least might conclude he would be discovered and exposed by those good men, who were come into the city; and what follows seems to be mentioned as an instance of his prudence:

*who called for Barnabas and Saul*; sent messengers to them, to desire them to come to him; Barnabas is mentioned first, though the inferior person, because he was a native of the country, and might be best known:

*and desired to hear the word of God*; whether this was at first from mere curiosity, or from any political view, or from a true desire of knowing the way of life and salvation, which might be wrought in his soul by the Spirit

of God, is not certain; though the latter seems most likely, since it issued in his conversion.

**Ver. 8.** *But Elymas the sorcerer, for so is his name by interpretation,* etc.] Not that Magus a sorcerer is by interpretation Elymas; as if Luke was interpreting the Persic word “Magus”, which is sometimes used in a good sense, for a wise man, as in (~~4011~~ Matthew 2:1) by an Arabic word “Elim”, which signifies knowing; but “Elymas” is the interpretation of his name “Bar-jesus”; which as that signifies the son of salvation, or of healing, so this, as Deuteronomy Dieu observes, may be derived from  $\mu\lambda\ j$ , “Chalam”, which signifies “to heal”, or to be sound and in health. Junius thinks the name comes from the Arabic word  $\mu\lambda\ a$ , which signifies “to mutter”, as wizards and sorcerers, and such sort of men used to do; and though he rejects the opinion of Tremellius, taking it for an Hebrew name, and to be the same with  $\text{Umyl } a$  “Elimaatz”, which signifies “divine counsel”; yet this, or what is near to it, is embraced by a late learned man <sup>f636</sup> who observes, that Elymas is in Hebrew,  $\text{Uml } a$ , “Elmahatz”; the interpretation of which is, God’s counsel, or the counsel of God; the name of a man, Maaz, is read in (~~1127~~ 1 Chronicles 2:27) and that it is the same with Elymotos, as Olympas is the same with Olympiodorus; and he further observes, that Barjeus, as Jerom or Origen say it was anciently read, and not Bar-jesus, is the same with  $\text{W[y } r\ b$ , “Barjeutz”, or Barjeus, the “son of counsel”, and so agrees with Elymas: now he

*withstood them:* Saul and Barnabas, just as Jannes and Jambres, the magicians of Egypt, withstood Moses: he did all he could to prevent their coming into the governor’s house, and them from preaching to him, and him from hearing of them; and especially from giving heed to, and embracing the doctrines preached by them; which he opposed and argued against, with all the cunning and sophistry he was master of:

*seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith;* the doctrine of faith, from hearing and receiving it; and when he had received it, he endeavoured to set him against it, and cause him to deny and reject it with abhorrence; the Ethiopic version calls him “the king”, as in the former verse “the prince”.

**Ver. 9.** *Then Saul (who also is called Paul),* etc.] He was called by both these names; as he was a Jew by birth, his parents called him Saul, that was his Jewish name, and by which he went among the Jews; and as he was a citizen of a Roman city, Tarsus in Cilicia, he went among the Romans, or

Gentiles, by the name of Paul, a Roman name; and it was usual with the Jews to be called after this manner, that is, to have one name among themselves, and another among the Gentiles: it is a rule with them <sup>f637</sup>, that

“the Israelites out of the land, their names are as the names of the Gentiles;”

yea, their names differed in Judea and Galilee; a woman went by one name in Judea, and another in Galilee <sup>f638</sup>: and it is observable, that Luke calls the apostle by his Jewish name Saul, whilst he was among the Jews, and only preached among them; but now he is got among the Gentiles, and was about to appear openly to be their apostle, he all along hereafter calls him by his Gentile name Paul: though some think his name was changed upon his conversion, as it was usual with Jewish penitents to do; when a man repented of his sin, he changed his name (says Maimonides) <sup>f639</sup>,

“as if he should say, I am another, and not the man that did those (evil) works.”

So when Maachah, Asa’s mother, or rather grandmother, was converted, or became right, she changed her name into Michaihu, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah; that her former name might not be remembered, lest it should be a reproach unto her <sup>f640</sup>: though others think, that the apostle was so called, from Sergius Paulus the deputy, whose conversion he was the instrument of; and whose family might choose to call him so, because of the nearness in sound between the two names: others think he had his name Paul, or Paulus, from the smallness of his stature and voice, to which he seems to have some respect, in (~~4700~~2 Corinthians 10:10) and there is one Samuel the little, which the Jewish doctors often speak of, and who by some is taken to be the same with the Apostle Paul. This name is by Jerom, or Origen <sup>f641</sup>, interpreted “wonderful”, as if it came from the Hebrew word **al p** “pala”; and others derive it from **l [p**, “paul”, which signifies to work; and a laborious worker the apostle was, and a workman also which needed not to be ashamed; but since it is certain that Saul was his Hebrew name, it is most likely that this was a Gentile one, and not of Hebrew derivation: the first account of these names, and the reason of them, seems to be the best: now of him it is said,

*that he was filled with the Holy Ghost*; which does not design the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost in general, with which he was always filled, and thereby qualified for his work as an apostle; but in particular, that he had

by the Spirit, not only a discerning of the wickedness of this man, but of the will of God, to make him at this time a public example of divine wrath and vengeance, for his opposition to the Gospel: wherefore he

*set his eyes on him*; very earnestly, thereby expressing an abhorrence of him, and indignation against him, and as it were threatening him with some sore judgment to fall upon him.

**Ver. 10.** *And said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief*, etc.] Which may have regard both to his general character as a sorcerer, and a false prophet; in acting up to which he used much deceit and cunning among the people, and did much mischief to them; to which there was a promptness and readiness in him, as the word used signifies; and also to the sophistry he used, and the mischief he endeavoured to do in seeking to turn the deputy from the faith. The minds of carnal men are vain and empty, and destitute of all that is good, and full of all that is evil: their character is,

*filled with all unrighteousness*, (<sup>f642</sup>Romans 1:29). They have many of them a great deal of wit, but it is wicked wit, and they employ it in an evil and mischievous way, both to the hurt of themselves and others; they are like the old serpent, whose seed they are, who was more subtle than any beast of the field; they are wiser in their generation than the children of light; they are wise to do evil, though they have no knowledge of what is spiritually good; they are able to form very cunning and artful schemes, to commit sin, and do mischief; for all their craft and subtlety are used in such a way; nor can they sleep, or be easy in their minds, unless they are doing mischief.

*Thou child of the devil*; perhaps alluding to his name, that instead of Bar-Jesus, the son of a saviour, he should have been called Bar-Satan, the son of Satan, or Ben-Belial, a son of Belial. The phrase *ן j ç rwbk*, “the firstborn of Satan”, is used by the Jews, sometimes in a good sense, for one that is acute, sharp, and subtle, and that abides by his doctrine, and does his work<sup>f642</sup>: but here a child of the devil is used in an ill sense, for being like him in wicked cunning and subtlety; in like sense as the other phrase was used by Polycarp, whom Marcion the heretic met, and said unto him, know us; to whom Polycarp replied, I know thee, the firstborn of Satan<sup>f643</sup>: thou enemy of all righteousness; a wicked man is an enemy to all righteousness in every branch of it, in whatsoever light it may be considered: he is an enemy, yea, enmity itself against God the righteous being, and who is the

fountain of all righteousness; he is an enemy to Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the Lord our righteousness; he is an enemy to that righteousness which he has wrought out; he is an enemy to all righteous persons, and hates their holy and righteous conversation; he is an enemy to the law, and cannot be subject to it, which is the rule of righteousness; and he is an enemy to the Gospel, which reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith, and teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly; in short he is an enemy to all righteousness, moral and evangelical.

*Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* the doctrines and ordinances of Christ, in which he has directed his people to walk; which this man, through his sophistry and wickedness, in which he was industrious and indefatigable, endeavoured to render intricate and obscure, when they were plain, and straight, and easy. “For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them”, (~~2849~~Hosea 14:9) they are right, and it is becoming such to walk in them; they are plain to them that have a true knowledge of them, even wayfaring men, though fools shall not err in them; they are entirely consistent with the righteousness and holiness of God, and lead right on to eternal glory and happiness. Christ himself is the true way to eternal life, which is plainly pointed, and clearly directed to in the word of God, and by the ministers of the Gospel, who show unto men the way of salvation; the path of truth is fully described, and such things said of it as are very inviting to walk in it; and good men cannot but choose and delight to walk in it, when led into it by the Spirit of truth: Wisdom’s ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths of peace; even all the paths of duty and worship, the ways of righteousness and holiness; but wicked men seek to pervert these ways, to give a false account of them, to set them in a wrong light, and represent them not only as rough and troublesome, but as dangerous, and leading to ruin; and do all they can to hinder persons from entering into them, and to cause those to stumble who are in them; nor will they cease acting this wicked part; they are continually at work to make the ways of Christ odious, to set people against them, to discourage from walking in them by their opposition to them, the false glosses they put upon them, and by their scoffs and jeers at those that walk in them, and by their violent persecutions of them, when it is in their power.

**Ver. 11.** *And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee*, etc.] That is, the power of God was just ready to be exerted on him in a way of punishment, by striking him with blindness:

*and thou shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a season*: so blind as not to see the sun, when it shined ever so brightly: this punishment seems to be but for a time; and some say that Elymas repented, and had his sight restored to him; and after that he returned to his sorcery, and again greatly opposed Barnabas in the island of Cyprus:

*and immediately there fell on him a mist and darkness*; as soon as ever the apostle had said the above words, a dark mist fell upon his eyes, which began the blindness, and issued in a total one:

*and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand*; he groped about the room, if he could find, and lay hold on some person to lead him: for he was quickly stone blind, so that he could not guide himself, as the men of Sodom were, when smitten with blindness by the angel; wherefore, though they groped about for the door of the house till they were weary, they could not find it, (<sup><0191></sup>Genesis 19:11) of which the Jews say, as here, that it was *μᾶχ tam hkm*, “a stroke from God” <sup>f644</sup>. Blind men need one to hold them by the hand, and lead them, as Samson, (<sup><0765></sup>Judges 16:26) and Saul, (<sup><4008></sup>Acts 9:8). The striking this man with blindness is an instance of the power the apostles were endued with, for the punishing of offenders: so Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for telling a lie: and the incestuous person was delivered to Satan to undergo a corporeal punishment for his incest; as Hymenaeus and Alexander were for their blasphemy, (<sup><4005></sup>Acts 5:5,10 <sup><4005></sup>1 Corinthians 5:5 <sup><5001></sup>1 Timothy 1:20).

**Ver. 12.** *Then the deputy, when he saw what was done*, etc.] That Elymas was struck with blindness immediately, and that the hand of God was manifestly in it, and there was no juggle nor magic art in the case; it was a plain fact, which was certain and visible:

*he believed*; in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the apostle preached:

*being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord*: both at what was contained in it: for there are many astonishing things in the doctrine of faith; as the birth of Christ of a virgin; the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person; salvation through his crucifixion and death, and the resurrection of the dead, with others: and also at the miracles which attended this doctrine, and confirmed it; though the Alexandrian copy reads the words thus, “being astonished, he believed in the doctrine of the Lord”; which affords a very easy and natural sense, as that being filled with admiration at the striking of Elymas with blindness, he was induced to

believe the doctrine of Christ, preached by Paul and Barnabas, and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “he wondered, and believed in our Lord”: and Beza’s ancient copy, and others read, “he wondered and believed in God”. This deputy we hear no more of afterwards; there is no reason to believe that he quitted his government of this island; though some pretend to say that he did, and followed the Apostle Paul, and went with him into Spain; and that he was left by him at Narbonne in Languedoc in France, and became bishop of that place; which office he held till his death. And though we read of no more converted at this time in Paphos, yet it is highly probable there were others, and that a foundation of a Gospel church state was laid in this place, even though Heathenism still continued. The temple of Venus remained in this place in the “second” century; and in the “fourth” century Venus was worshipped here; yet in the beginning of the “fourth” century, in the council of Nice, Cyril, bishop of Paphos, was present; and in the “fifth” century, a bishop of this place was at the synod of Chalcedon: and in the “eighth” century, Michael, bishop of Taphos, was in the Nycene synod <sup>f645</sup>. Jerom <sup>f646</sup> makes mention of Hilarion, an eminent servant of Christ, who was for some time at Paphos, in the fourth century, and of the many miraculous cures he wrought here; but of the church here, or of any number of believers in Christ, he takes no notice, only of one Hesychius, a disciple; though it is certain there must be a church at this time, as before observed.

**Ver. 13.** *Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos,* etc.] Which was upon the sea coast: so Jerom <sup>f647</sup> says, that Paphos was “*urbs maritima*”, a city on the sea coast of the island of Cyprus; it was on the western part of the island, to the west of which lay the sea of Pamphylia, over which the apostle, and his company, sailed to the place next mentioned, which was in Pamphylia; and so Apollonius Tyaneus <sup>f648</sup>, having got a ship at Seleucia, is said to sail to Paphos in Cyprus; and from hence the apostle, and those that were with him, set sail; and as the Syriac version renders it, “went by sea”, or “through the sea”; that is, of Pamphylia; of which mention is made in (~~427B~~ Acts 27:5).

*They came to Perga in Pamphylia* which country was before called Mopsopia; (See Gill on “~~420B~~ Acts 2:10”) which now, with Cilicia, is called Caramania; and among the cities and towns in it, both Pliny <sup>f649</sup> and Ptolomy <sup>f650</sup> make mention of Perga; where was a famous temple of Diana, whence she was sometimes called Pergea <sup>f651</sup>; and every year a great feast was kept here in honour of her: it was the birth place of Apollonius, a very



famous geometrician, who wrote eight books of conic sections, four of which are now extant <sup>f652</sup>; and who, from his native place, is called Apollonius Pergaeus <sup>f653</sup>. It was situated between two great rivers, Oestros and Catarctes <sup>f654</sup>; and since  $\gamma\rho\pi$ , “Parag”, in the eastern languages, signifies “to delight”, perhaps it might be so called from its delightful situation. Hilleras <sup>f655</sup> observes, Pargi (or rather Perage), as is the word in the Syriac version of (<sup><4137></sup>Matthew 23:37, <sup><4124></sup>Luke 2:24) with the Syrians signifies the young of birds, as of hens and doves; and so do Pargiia, Pargiot, and Perigin, with the Jewish Rabbins <sup>f656</sup>; which writer seems to suggest, that this place was so called from the multitude of fowls that were about it.

*And John departing from them returned to Jerusalem*; that is, John Mark, whom Paul and Barnabas took with them, and who was a minister to them: but what was the reason of his departure, whether for the sake of seeing his mother at Jerusalem; or because he did not like, but grew weary of the travels, labours, and fatigues of the apostle, and his company; or did not choose to go among the Gentiles, is not certain: however, his departure was resented by Paul; and it laid a foundation for a sharp contention between him and Barnabas, who was uncle to this John Mark, (<sup><4153></sup>Acts 15:38,39) from whence it appears that it was not at Paphos in Cyprus, but at Perga in Pamphilia, that he left them, by which the mistake of some interpreters on this text must be corrected.

**Ver. 14.** *But when they departed from Perga*, etc.] Where they seemed not to make any long stay; nor is there any account of what they did there; though it is certain here was a church of Christ in after times, and very likely planted by the apostles; for after this Paul and Barnabas preached the word in this place, (<sup><4145></sup>Acts 14:25) and no doubt with success. In the third century there were martyrs of this church at Perga, which suffered under the Emperor Decius; and in the, fourth century, we read of a famous church in this place, over which Jovinian was bishop or pastor; and in the “fifth” century there was a church here, whose bishop is mentioned in the catalogue of bishops who assisted in the first council at Ephesus; and, in the same century, the church of this place was the metropolitan church of Pamphilia; and, in the “sixth” century, one Epiphanius was bishop of Perga; and, in the “seventh” century, it is spoken of as the metropolitan of Pamphilia; and, in the “eighth” century, we read of Sisinnius as bishop of it <sup>f657</sup>; so far down can we trace Christianity in this city.



*They came to Antioch in Pisidia*; so called to distinguish it from Antioch of Syria, from whence they were sent, (~~413~~Acts 13:1-3) and so this place is called Antioch of Pisidia by Ptolomy <sup>f658</sup>; and also from another Antioch in Mygdania, before called Nisibis, as Pliny <sup>f659</sup> observes, and which is the Antioch in the Apocrypha:

“Afterward departed he in all haste, and returned unto Antiochia, where he found Philip to be master of the city: so he fought against him, and took the city by force.” (1 Maccabees 6:63)

“Heard that Philip, who was left over the affairs in Antioch, was desperately bent, confounded, intreated the Jews, submitted himself, and sware to all equal conditions, agreed with them, and offered sacrifice, honoured the temple, and dealt kindly with the place,” (2 Maccabees 13:23)

concerning which Josephus <sup>f660</sup> has these words; Nisibis is the name of the country, and in it formerly the Macedonians built Antioch, which they called Mygdonia. Pisidia was a province of Asia; it had Pamphilia on the north, Lycaonia on the east, and Phrygia Pacatiana on the west; and it is mentioned together with Phrygia, Lycaonia, and Pamphilia by Pliny <sup>f661</sup>: and this Antioch in it, is, by the same writer, called Caesarea <sup>f662</sup>: his words are, the Pisidians have their seat upon the top (of the valley) formerly called Solymi, whose colony is Caesarea, the same with Antioch. This is the Antioch to which Paul and Barnabas came, when they went from Perga, where were many Jews, and who had a synagogue in it: we read before, in (~~414~~Acts 2:9,10) of devout Jews that came to Jerusalem, whose native places were Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphilia, to which Pisidia was near: wherefore it follows, and

*went into the synagogue on the sabbath day*; for though the ceremonial law was abrogated by the death of Christ, it still was observed by the Jews, who had their synagogues open on that day for religious service; wherefore Paul and Barnabas took the opportunity of going in when they were assembled together, in order to preach Christ to them, not having a convenient time on other days:

*and sat down*: on one of the seats in the synagogue; either as hearers of the law and prophets, which were read every sabbath day in the synagogues; or else to teach the word, expound the Scriptures, and preach the Gospel of Christ, it being usual to sit when this was done; (See Gill on ~~415~~Matthew

5:1”) and both were true, for they heard a part of the law and prophets read, according to the custom of the Jews; see the following verse, and (<sup><4152></sup>Acts 15:21) and they also gave a word of exhortation to the people.

**Ver. 15.** *And after the reading of the law and the prophets*, etc.] Which was done every sabbath day, (<sup><4152></sup>Acts 15:21) The five books of Moses, which are meant by the law, were divided into sections: Genesis was divided into twelve, Exodus into eleven, Leviticus into ten, Numbers into ten, and Deuteronomy into ten, which in all make fifty three sections: and so by reading one on each sabbath, and two on one day, they read through the whole law in the course of a year, and which they finished at the close of the feast of tabernacles; and that day was called *hrwt tj mç* “the rejoicing of the law”; it was a day of rejoicing, that the law was read through. Some make fifty four sections, and then two of them must be read together, on two sabbath days, to finish the whole in the year. In some synagogues the section was divided into three parts, and so they finished the law in three years; but this custom was less common <sup>f663</sup>. The custom of reading the law, the Jews say, was one hundred and seventy years before the time of Jesus Christ; though some say the division of the law, into sections, was made by Ezra; and others refer it to Moses himself: it is certain it obtained in the times of Christ and his apostles, as did also the reading of the prophets, and which was introduced in this way, and upon this account. When Antiochus Epiphanes burnt the book of the law, and forbad the reading of it, the Jews in the room of it selected some passages out of the prophets, which they thought came nearest in words and sense to the sections of the law, and read them in their stead; and when the law was restored again, they still continued the reading of the prophetic sections; and the section for the day was called *hrj ph*, “the dismissal”, because usually the people were dismissed upon it, unless anyone stood up, and preached or expounded the word of God unto the people: hence the following message and address to the apostles,

*the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them*; that is, those who were the principal men in the synagogue, the ruler of it, together with the elders; for there was but one ruler in a synagogue; (See Gill on “<sup><4108></sup>Matthew 9:18”) though there were more elders; and so the Syriac version here renders it, “the elders of the synagogue”; but it may be asked, why should they send to the apostles? how did they know that they were teachers, being strangers? this they might conclude from their outward appearance, their

gravity and solidity; for as for habit or dress there was no distinction; or from their sitting down when they came into the synagogue, which was the custom of teachers; or they might have had some knowledge of them, and conversation with them, before they came into the synagogue; for it cannot be reasonably thought that they admitted anyone, whether they knew him or not, to teach in their synagogues:

*saying, ye men and brethren:* which was the common style of the Jews, they used in addresses, and especially to their own countrymen, as they might perceive Paul and Barnabas were; (see ~~412~~ Acts 2:29, 7:2).

*if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on;* the sense is, if they were prepared to preach, or had anything upon their minds to say to the people; or if they had, as it is in the original text, “any word of exhortation or comfort” in them, as they had indeed a rich treasure in their earthen vessels, they had leave and liberty to speak it to the people. “A word of exhortation” designs any doctrine that might be for instruction and comfort, and this was agreeably to the practice of the Jews. For it is said <sup>f664</sup>

“on the sabbath day, *hçrd`yçrwd*, “they preach a sermon”, or expound to housekeepers (or masters of families), who are employed in business all the days of the week; and in the midst of the sermon they teach them the traditions, concerning what is forbidden, and what is lawful; and it is better for them to hear than to read in the Hagiographa;”

which books they did not read publicly, as is said in the same place, only the law and the prophets; with the latter of which they dismissed the people, unless a sermon was preached; and which, when done, was chiefly for the sake of the common people, men and women: and it is said <sup>f665</sup>, that

“the women, and the people of the earth (or the common people), come to hear the sermon, and the preachers ought to draw out their hearts;”

speak out their whole mind, and deliver all they know that may be instructive and profitable.

**Ver. 16.** *Then Paul stood up*, etc.] Not so much that he might be heard; or merely out of reverence and respect to the rulers, and the people; but to

show that he accepted the invitation; as also in order to take his proper place in the synagogue, and sit down and teach, as was their custom:

*and beckoning with his hand*; to the people to be silent, and attend to what he had to say:

*said, men of Israel*; by whom are meant the proper Jews, the natural descendants of Jacob, whose name was Israel; this was accounted a very honourable character, and was a common form of address; (see <sup><4122></sup>Acts 2:22)

*and ye that fear God*; not as distinguishing some among the Israelites from the rest, as if there were some of them that did not fear God; for by these are meant, not Jews by birth, but proselytes, devout and religious men from among the Gentiles; who were proselyted to the Jewish religion, and attended with them in their synagogues on religious worship; and that there were such in this synagogue, is certain from (<sup><4133></sup>Acts 13:43) and we find that sometimes the Jews distinguish the proselytes from the Israelites by this very character <sup>f666</sup>: it is said, (<sup><4301></sup>Psalms 128:1)

“blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord, that walketh in his ways; he does not say blessed are the Israelites, blessed are the priests, blessed are the Levites, but blessed is everyone that feareth the Lord; *μῦρgh wl a* “these are the proselytes, for they fear the Lord” — of what proselyte is it “said blessed?” of the proselyte who is a proselyte of righteousness, and not of the Cuthites, of whom it is written, (<sup><4273></sup>2 Kings 17:33) but of a proselyte who fears the Lord, and walks in his ways;”

so (<sup><4223></sup>Psalms 22:23 115:11) are interpreted by many Jewish writers <sup>f667</sup>. Now to both these sort of persons, both to the proper Jews, and to the proselytes of righteousness, the apostle addresses himself, and desires they would give audience to what he had to say; which is as follows.

**Ver. 17.** *The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers*, etc.] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed after them, to be a peculiar people to himself; wherefore he is often, as here, styled their God, and whom he distinguished and blessed with many blessings, civil and religious, above all people upon the face of the earth. The apostle seems particularly to address himself to the Gentiles, the inhabitants of Antioch, and the proselytes of righteousness, now in the synagogue, (<sup><4133></sup>Acts 13:42,43)

and, as it were, with his finger pointed to the native Jews present, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a part of the people whose God the Lord was:

*and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt* as they did for many years, and as the Lord foretold to Abraham they should, (<sup>41513</sup>Genesis 15:13) This refers either to the great honour and dignity Joseph was advanced unto, and to the favours and privileges bestowed on Jacob and his family at the first of their sojourning in that land; or to the great increase of their posterity towards the close of it, even when they were the most oppressed and afflicted.

*And with an high arm he brought them out of it* out of the land of Egypt, and out of their oppression in it; which was owing to, and was a wonderful display of his mighty power and great strength here expressed by an “high arm” for nothing short of that could have wrought deliverance for them.

**Ver. 18.** *And about the time of forty years,* etc.] From their coming out of Egypt, to their entrance into the land of Canaan:

*suffered he their manners in the wilderness;* which were very perverse and provoking; as their murmuring for water, their rebellion against Moses and Aaron, their idolatry and the ill report brought on the good land by their spies; and yet the Lord fed them, and led them, and kept them as the apple of his eye: some think the true reading is *ετροφοφορησεν*, “he bore”, or “fed them”, as a nurse bears and feeds her children; and so the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it, “he nourished them”; rained manna, and gave them quails from heaven, and furnished a table for them in the wilderness: and indeed, though there were instances of God’s patience and forbearance with them, yet certain it is, that as he was tempted and proved by them, so he was grieved with them during the forty years in the wilderness; and often let fall his vengeance upon them, by cutting off great numbers of them; and even the carcasses of all that generation that came out of Egypt fell in the wilderness; nor did any of them enter into the land of Canaan, but Joshua and Caleb.

**Ver. 19.** *And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan,* etc.] The Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, and Girgashites; and the name of seven nations is what they are usually called by in Jewish writings; and though they were not utterly destroyed, or everyone of them put to death, or driven out, for some remained to be

thorns in the sides of the Israelites; yet they were so wasted and conquered, that they could never recover any more: he divided their land to them; every tribe had its portion of it assigned, by lot; (see <sup><640></sup>Joshua 14:1-3).

**Ver. 20.** *And after that he gave unto them judges*, etc.] As Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Abimelech, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon, Samson, and Eli:

*about the space of four hundred and fifty years*; not that from the division of the land of Canaan among the tribes, to Samuel the prophet, was such a space of years; for from the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, to the year that Solomon began to build the temple, were but four hundred and fourscore years, (<sup><100></sup>1 Kings 6:1) and out of these must be taken the forty years the children of Israel were in the wilderness, and seven years in subduing the land of Canaan, before the division of it, which reduce this number to four hundred and thirty and three; and from hence must be deducted the time of Samuel's judging Israel, the reigns of Saul and David, and three years of Solomon's, which reduced the years of the judges to less than four hundred years; and according to some, the years of the judges were three hundred and fifty seven; and according to others, three hundred and thirty nine, and both fall short of the space of years here assigned. The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read this clause in connection with the preceding words, "he divided their land unto them, about the space of four hundred years, and after that he gave unto them judges"; agreeably hereunto the Ethiopic version renders it, "and after four hundred and fifty years, he set over them governors, &c". So that this account respects not the time of the judges, or how long they were, but refers to all that goes before, and measures out the space of time from God's choice of the Jewish fathers, to the division of the land of Canaan: and reckoning from the birth of Isaac, when the choice took place, and in whom Abraham's seed was called, there was much about such a number of years; for from the birth of Isaac to the birth of Jacob, were sixty years; from thence to his going down into Egypt, an hundred and thirty years; and from thence to the Israelites coming out of Egypt, two hundred and ten years; and from thence to their entrance into the land of Canaan, forty years; and from that time to the division of the land, seven years, which in all make four hundred and forty seven years: so that, according to this account, there were three years wanting of the sum in the text; hence the apostle might with great propriety say, that it was about the space of so many years. It follows,

*until Samuel the prophet*; the meaning of which, is not that there was such a space of time as before mentioned, from the distribution of the land of Canaan until the times of Samuel the prophet, during which space judges were given; but that after that term of time was expired, God gave them judges, or raised up one after another, until Samuel the prophet, who was the last of them: of his character as a prophet, (See Gill on “~~403~~Acts 3:24”) and which is a title frequently given him by Jewish writers <sup>f668</sup>.

**Ver. 21.** *And afterward they desired a king*, etc.] (~~085~~1 Samuel 8:5) which the Jews <sup>f669</sup> say, was in the tenth year of Samuel; that is, of his government over Israel, or of his judging them:

*and God gave unto them Saul*; whose name signifies one that is asked; he was

*the son of Cis*; so the Septuagint read and pronounce the word “Kish”, the name of Saul’s father, (~~090~~1 Samuel 9:1) a man of the tribe of Benjamin; not of Judah, from whence the sceptre was not to depart till Shiloh came; the business of their asking a king being resented by God, he gives them their first king of another tribe:

*by the space of forty years*. The Jews are very much divided about the years of Saul’s reign, some allow him but two years <sup>f670</sup>, and others three, one year that he reigned with Samuel, and two by himself <sup>f671</sup>, which they conclude from (~~093~~1 Samuel 13:1) but others <sup>f672</sup> think this too short a time for the things done by him, the wars he fought with many nations, and his persecution of David from place to place; wherefore others <sup>f673</sup> allow him, some seventeen, and others twenty years; but our apostle ascribes forty years to him, which must be understood both of him and Samuel; with which Josephus <sup>f674</sup> agrees, who says that he reigned eighteen years, during Samuel’s life, and twenty two years after his death, which make the space of forty years fixed by the apostle; though the clause, “by the space of forty years”, may be read in construction with the latter end of the preceding verse, until Samuel the prophet; who, the Jews <sup>f675</sup> own, judged so many years: wherefore the apostle is not to be charged with an error, as he is by a Jewish <sup>f676</sup> objector; who observes, that from the beginning of Saul’s kingdom, or from the time that he was anointed by Samuel the prophet, until the kingdom was renewed to him by all Israel, was one year, and then Saul chose three thousand men out of Israel after that he reigned two years by the consent of all Israel, until he sinned in the business of the Amalekites, and then he was accounted as a dead man, and the years of his



reign were not numbered; at which time David was anointed, who must be about twenty years of age, (<sup><0168></sup>1 Samuel 16:18) and yet when he came to the kingdom after the death of Saul, he was but thirty years of age, (<sup><0184></sup>2 Samuel 5:4) from whence he thinks it follows that Saul reigned but ten years: in all which he is guilty of several mistakes, and advances things he cannot prove; it was not after Saul had reigned one year, but after he had reigned two years, that he chose three thousand men out of Israel, as is expressly said, (<sup><0183></sup>1 Samuel 13:1,2) and that he had reigned but two years when he sinned in the case of the Amalekites, wants proof; nor is it evident that David was twenty years of age when he was anointed, for it was after his unction that he is said to be a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, (<sup><0168></sup>1 Samuel 16:18) nor indeed can it be said in what year of Saul's reign he was anointed; so that nothing can be concluded from the age David was at when he began to reign, concerning the years of the reign of Saul his predecessor; and even according to this man's own reckoning, he must reign thirteen years, one before the consent of all Israel, two after, and before his sin about the Amalekites, and ten from the time of David's unction: but that Saul must reign more years than these, and even as many as the apostle assigns to him, may be concluded, not only from his wars with many nations, and his long persecution of David before observed; but from the number of high priests which were in his time, and who were no less than three, Ahiah, Abimelech, and Abiathar, (<sup><0148></sup>1 Samuel 14:3 22:20 23:9) and from his being a young man when he began to reign, (<sup><0185></sup>1 Samuel 9:2) and yet at the end of his reign, or at his death, he had a son, Ishbosheth, that was forty years of age, (<sup><0120></sup>2 Samuel 2:10).

**Ver. 22.** *And when he had removed him,* etc.] Either by death, or rejected him from being king while he was living; (<sup><0153></sup>1 Samuel 15:23 16:1)

*he raised up unto them David to be their king;* who was of the tribe of Judah, and who was raised from a very mean condition, from keeping of sheep, to sit upon the throne of Israel:

*to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David;* a type of the Messiah; he chose him to be king, sent Samuel to anoint him, and at length set him on the throne: the apostle adds, as a further account of him,

*the son of Jesse;* who lived at Bethlehem, where the Messiah was to be born, and who was a person of no great note and figure in Israel; and this is mentioned as an illustration of the distinguishing goodness of God to David. It follows,



*a man after mine own heart*; on whom the heart of God was set, and who had an interest in his heart's love, and to whom he was exceeding grateful and acceptable; God took great delight and pleasure in him, in the general course of his life, and in his principles, aims, and designs; he was as he would have him to be:

*which shall fulfil all my will*; in governing the people, subduing their enemies, settling the order of divine worship and service, and preparing things for the building of the temple; and who also had a regard to all the commandments of God, and walked in them, though he was not without his sins and infirmities: now these words are not to be found together in anyone passage, as they might be thought to be from the manner in which they are produced, they being cited as a testimony delivered by the Lord, saying these concerning David; but where? the first part of them, "I have found David", is expressed in (<sup>1982D</sup> Psalm 89:20) and yet the passage there seems to have respect to David's antitype; and to be understood not literally of David, but mystically and typically of Christ, David's son, with whom the whole psalm agrees; rather therefore this is implied in (<sup>0134-1</sup> Samuel 13:14) where also the next words, "a man after mine own heart", are to be met with; where it is thus expressed, though not by the Lord, but by Samuel; "the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart"; and as he sought one, so he found one, which was his servant David; but then what follows, is not recorded there nor any where else, in express terms, concerning David, "which shall fulfil all my will"; what comes nearest to them, are the words of the Lord to Cyrus, (<sup>234B</sup> Isaiah 44:28) "and shall perform all my pleasure"; and Cocceius is of opinion, that the above words are taken from hence by the apostle, and applied to David, because of his concern in the building of the temple; his heart was set upon it, and he made great preparations for it according to the will of God, and did fulfil all it was the pleasure of God he should, respecting this affair; upon the whole, the apostle seems not to have any reference to anyone particular passage of Scripture, bearing a testimony to David's character, but to what is to be collected from them in general, as a divine testimony in favour of him.

**Ver. 23.** *Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise*, etc.] In (<sup>1072-2</sup> Samuel 7:12 <sup>1921B</sup> Psalm 132:11,17 <sup>2235-5</sup> Jeremiah 23:5,6) raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus; even Jesus of Nazareth, whose name signifies a Saviour, who is the son of David, according to the flesh; the word "Jesus" is left out in some copies, and so it is in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions,

which only read, “salvation” or “redemption”; the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read, “he hath brought forth unto Israel”, etc. the sense is, that as God had promised that the Messiah should spring out of David’s loins, so in the fulness of time he had sent him, or caused him to come by the assumption of human nature, or by taking flesh of a virgin, who was of the house and lineage of David; and who was sent, and came first to the people of Israel, though they for the most part slighted and rejected him; however, he was raised up for the mystical Israel of God, all the elect, whether Jews or Gentiles; and that to be the Saviour of them, from sin, Satan, and the law, and every enemy, with a spiritual and eternal salvation, and that both of body and soul; and a very able, willing, and suitable Saviour he is, as well as a perfect and complete one. This Saviour, Jehovah, in his infinite wisdom, found, and in his purposes appointed him to be his salvation, and in his covenant provided and settled him as such; and in the prophecies of the Old Testament spoke of him as the Saviour and Redeemer of his people; and in the fulness of time sent him, and raised him up of David’s seed, according to his promise to him. The first promise of a Saviour was made to our first parents, under the character of the seed of the woman; he was next promised to Abraham, that he should be of his seed; and then to Judah, that he should be of his tribe; and after that to David, that he should be of his family; and all this has been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, the true Messiah, who is sometimes called David and David’s son. Now it was for the sake of this, that the apostle begins with the choice of the Jewish fathers, and relates so many favours bestowed upon the people of Israel; his view was to lead on to observe this special mercy promised them, and now fulfilled, on which he intended to enlarge in his discourse, as follows.

**Ver. 24.** *When John had first preached before his coming*, etc.] Or, “before the face of his entrance”; that is, on his public ministry; for John did not preach before the coming of Christ in the flesh, being born but half a year before him; but before he came forth and was manifest to Israel; before he entered upon his work and office, as a prophet and teacher of the people: and this points out the business of John the Baptist, who was the forerunner of Christ, and went before his face to prepare his way, who gave notice of his coming, and bore testimony to him; and whose testimony the apostle here produces, as being what the Jews could not well reject and deny, he being of so much probity and integrity, and so great a prophet, as

he was accounted by all the people; and whom he prepared for the reception of the Messiah, by first preaching;

*the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel:* he not only administered the ordinance of baptism, but he preached the doctrine of it, opened the nature and design of it, and required repentance and fruits meet for it, in those who came to have it administered to them: for which reason it is called the baptism of repentance; and this he did publicly before all the people, when the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, came unto him; (see ~~4004~~ Mark 1:4 ~~4012~~ Matthew 3:2,3,5,7,8).

**Ver. 25.** *And as John fulfilled his course,* etc.] Or race, the work of the ministry he was called to; as he was preaching and baptizing, which were the race set before him to run, and in which he ran well; he made full proof of his ministry. The life of every Christian is a race, and especially of a minister of the Gospel, and which requires strength, courage, agility, patience, and perseverance; this world is the place in which they run; and this is only the running time; in heaven they will sit down on the throne with Christ; the way in which they run, is the way of their duty, the way of God's commandments; the mark they have in view, which they keep their eye on, and to which they direct their course, is Christ; and glory is the incorruptible crown they run for, and which, when they have finished their course, will be given them by the chief shepherd and righteous judge; (see ~~5012~~ 2 Timothy 4:7,8) and this is to be understood, not of the end of John's race, or ministry, but rather of the beginning of it; for it was then, he said,

*whom think ye that I am? I am not he;* that is the Messiah. The apostle seems to refer to (~~8019~~ John 1:19,20) when the Jews asked him who he was, and he freely declared he was not the Christ; there the question is put by them to him, here by him to them; doubtless the questions were put by both; however the sense is the same, that he was not the Messiah, but he bore testimony to him that was:

*but behold there cometh one after me;* meaning Jesus, who was the Messiah, and who when John spoke these words, was coming after him from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized by him, and who in a little while after that came forth in the public ministry of the word: John was to come forth first, and then Jesus after him, because he was the harbinger of the Messiah, whose coming he was to proclaim and prepare men for, and whose person he was to point out; for though he is said to be after him, he

was not in any sense inferior to him: John was born into the world before Christ, as man, was born, yet he as the eternal Son of God was before John, was from the beginning, even from eternity; John entered on the office of his ministry before him, but Christ was not below him; as not in the dignity of his person, so neither in the nature and excellency of his office; and John takes care to secure the honour and glory of Christ, and to prevent any low opinion that might be entertained of him from what he had said, by adding,

*whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose*; suggesting hereby, that he was unworthy to be his servant, to perform the meanest part of service for him that could be thought of; so far was he from assuming any preference to him on account of his being before him, as his forerunner; (see [Matthew 3:11](#) [John 1:27](#)). (See Gill on "[Matthew 3:11](#)"). (See Gill on "[John 1:27](#)").

**Ver. 26.** *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham*, etc.] This address is made to them in the synagogue, who were Jews by birth, and in a form very grateful and pleasing; he calls them "men", perhaps not only from the common nature of mankind in them, but because they took this name peculiarly to themselves, and denied it to the nations of the world; and which they gather from ([Ezekiel 34:31](#)) and he styles them "brethren", because they were his countrymen; and "children of the stock of Abraham", with respect to their lineage and descent, and of which they gloried:

*and whosoever among you feareth God*; these were the proselytes among them; (See Gill on "[Acts 13:16](#)")

*to you is the word of this salvation sent*; meaning either the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the essential and eternal "Logos", or word of God, and whom the Syriac and Ethiopic versions here style, "the word of life", as in ([1 John 1:1](#)) who is the author of salvation, and who was in the first place sent unto the Jews; or rather the Gospel, which gives an account of the author of spiritual and eternal salvation, of his person, and of his manner of obtaining it, and of the nature of salvation, and who the persons are to whom it belongs. The Gospel is not a proposal of terms, by complying with which men may be saved, as faith, repentance, and good works, which are not terms of salvation, but either blessings, parts or fruits of it; but it is a declaration of salvation itself, as being a thing done by Christ; it declares him to be the alone able, willing, and all sufficient

Saviour, and the salvation he has wrought out to be a great one, complete, spiritual, and everlasting; and that those that believe in him shall be saved with it. It is the word preaching salvation by him, showing, that he has wrought out an everlasting righteousness for the justification of his people; hence it is sometimes called the word of righteousness; and that he has made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, for which reason it is styled the word of reconciliation; and that eternal life is in him, and by him, and therefore it is called the word of life: for the salvation it publishes includes all the blessings of grace, and everlasting glory, and happiness; it is the means of applying the salvation it declares; the Spirit of God comes by it, who, whilst it is preaching, falls upon, and conveys himself into the hearts of men: regeneration is ascribed to the word of truth; faith comes by hearing; and sanctification is promoted and increased by it, as an instrument; and after men believe in it, they are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; all which shows what a wonderful blessing the Gospel is: and this was now sent not to the Jews only, though to them in the first place, but to the Gentiles also; the Alexandrian copy, in the two last clauses, instead of “you”, reads “us”.

**Ver. 27.** *For they that dwelt at Jerusalem, and their rulers,* etc.] The inhabitants of that city, and the great sanhedrim which sat there: because they knew him not; that is, either Jesus the Saviour, whom God had raised of the seed of David, and to whom John bore witness; and which must be understood, not of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and members of the sanhedrim; for though some were ignorant, yet there were others that knew that Jesus was the Messiah, and notwithstanding rejected him; but the apostle chooses to take no notice of these, because he would not irritate and provoke, but rather of others, that were really ignorant of Christ: or else this may be understood of the Gospel, the word of salvation, that the Jews knew not “that”; and so the Syriac version renders it; and to which agrees the Ethiopic version, which reads thus, “they knew not this word of the prophets”, joining the word of salvation, and what follows, together:

*nor yet the voices of the prophets:* “or the writings of the prophets”, as the Syriac version, and some copies read; their prophecies concerning the Messiah, particularly in (<sup>4920</sup>Psalm 22:1-31) (<sup>2530</sup>Isaiah 53:1-12) (<sup>700</sup>Daniel 9:1-27) which are read every sabbath day; (See Gill on “<sup>4435</sup>Acts 13:15”)

*they have fulfilled them;* the word, of the prophets:

*in condemning him*; Jesus Christ, for these prophets testified, in the places referred to, of the sufferings and death of Christ, to which he was condemned by them.

**Ver. 28.** *And though they found no cause of death in him*, etc.] That is, no crime that deserved death; they sought for such, but could find none; they suborned false witnesses, who brought charges against him, but could not support them; wherefore Pilate, his judge, several times declared his innocence, and would have discharged him:

*yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain*; they were urgent and importunate with him, that he would order him to be put to death; the power of life and death being then in the hands of the Romans; the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read, “that they might slay him”; and the Arabic version, “that he might slay him”; and the Ethiopic version renders the whole quite contrary to the sense, “and they gave power to Pilate to hang him”; whereas the power of putting him to death was in Pilate, and not in them: and therefore they were pressing upon him, that he would order his execution, notwithstanding his innocence.

**Ver. 29.** *And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him*, etc.] When they had vilified and reproached him in the most opprobrious manner; buffeted and scourged him, and pierced his hands and his feet, by nailing him to the cross; when they had crucified him between two thieves, and parted his raiment and cast lots on his vesture; when they had pierced his side, and it was sufficiently evident that his life was taken from the earth; all which were written of him in the Psalms and Prophets:

*they took him down from the tree*; the cross, on which he was crucified: it may be rendered impersonally, “he was taken down from the tree”; for not the same persons that desired he might be slain, and fulfilled all that was written of him, took him down, but others; though they were some of the rulers, as Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, yet such as did not consent to his death:

*and laid him in a sepulchre*; in a new one, in which never man lay; a sepulchre which Joseph had hewed out of a rock for himself, and which was both sealed and guarded.

**Ver. 30.** *But God raised him from the dead*.] Though his life was taken away by man, and it was a clear case that he was certainly dead, and he was taken down from the cross as such, and buried; yet he could not be

held with the cords of death, but God the Father raised him from the dead by his power. The Vulgate Latin version adds, “the third day”.

**Ver. 31.** *And he was seen many days*, etc.] Forty days, at certain times, *of them which came up with him from Galilee*; which though true of several women who followed him from Galilee, and to whom he appeared after his resurrection, as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome the mother of Zebedee’s children, and others; yet is chiefly to be understood of the apostles of Christ, who were Galilaeans, and came with Christ from that country to Jerusalem, when he came thither to suffer and die:

*who are his witnesses unto the people*; not only of his resurrection, though of that chiefly, but of all that he did and suffered in Galilee and Judea.

**Ver. 32.** *And we declare unto you glad tidings*, etc.] The whole of the Gospel, concerning the incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the benefits arising from thence, as peace, pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; all which are good news and glad tidings to sensible sinners; and which are declared and published by the ministers of the Gospel, according to the commission given them, as here by Paul and Barnabas:

*how that the promise which was made unto the fathers*; not barely and solely that which respects the resurrection of Christ, but the mission of him, the exhibition of him in human nature, his incarnation, his work and business he was to do, namely, to obtain salvation for his people; it chiefly regards the promise of his coming into the world to do the will of God, which promise was made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, (<sup><41228></sup>Genesis 22:18 26:4 28:14 49:10).

**Ver. 33.** *God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children*, etc.] The natural descendants of them, as Paul and Barnabas, and the Jews in the synagogue, were:

*in that he hath raised up Jesus again*; which may not be understood of his resurrection from the dead, since the promise made, and now fulfilled, has not a single respect to that; but of his being raised up, and sent forth into the world, to be a Saviour and Redeemer, and to sit upon the throne of David, as in (<sup><41220></sup>Acts 2:30 3:26 13:23) of which raising of him up to regal dignity, mention is made in (<sup><41011></sup>Psalms 2:1-12), (<sup><41011></sup>Psalms 6:1-7:17) which



is produced as a testimony of it; and the rather this seems to be the sense, since the article of the resurrection of the dead is spoken of in the next verse, as distinct from this; and other passages of Scripture are produced, as speaking of it; though admitting that Christ's resurrection from the dead is here intended, as the Alexandrian copy reads, what follows is very applicable to it, without any detriment to the doctrine of Christ's eternal generation and sonship, as will be hereafter made to appear:

*as it is written in the second psalm:* Beza's most ancient copy, and other very ancient copies, read, "in the first psalm"; for the first and second psalms seem to have been reckoned by the ancient Jews but one psalm, or one section; for so they say <sup>f677</sup>

““blessed is the man”, etc. and “why do the Heathen rage”, etc. **ayh hçrp adj**, are one “parasha”, or section: and they further observe <sup>f678</sup>, that “every section that was dear to David, he began it with “blessed”, and ended it with “blessed”; he began with “blessed”, as it is written, (~~3000~~ Psalm 1:1) “blessed is the man”, etc. and he ended it with “blessed”, as it is written, (~~3022~~ Psalm 2:12) “blessed are all they that put their “trust in him”.” though it is elsewhere said <sup>f679</sup>, “blessed is the man”, etc. ((~~3000~~ Psalm 1:1-6)) “and why do the heathen rage”, etc. ((~~3000~~ Psalm 2:1-12)) are two sections; and “to the chief musician on Muth Labben”, ((~~3000~~ Psalm 9:1-20)) and “why standest thou afar off”, etc. ((~~3000~~ Psalm 10:1-18)) are two sections.”

And Kimchi calls <sup>f680</sup> this psalm, as the generality of copies here do, saying,

“this psalm is **ynçh rwmz mh**, “the second psalm.””

And that this psalm belongs to the Messiah, is evident from the mention made of him in (~~3022~~ Psalm 2:2) from the mad counsel, and vain attempts of the kings of the earth against him, (~~3000~~ Psalm 2:1-3). God's decree and resolution to make and declare him King of Zion, notwithstanding all their efforts upon him, (~~3000~~ Psalm 2:4-6) from his asking and having the Gentiles, and uttermost parts of the earth for his inheritance, which is true of no other, (~~3008~~ Psalm 2:8,9) and especially from that reverence, worship, and adoration, which are to be given to him, and that trust and confidence to be placed in him, (~~3020~~ Psalm 2:10-12) which can by no means agree with David, nor with any mere creature whatever; and as for (~~3007~~ Psalm 2:7) which is here cited, what is said in that is inapplicable even to angels,



(~~SOME~~ Hebrews 1:5) and much more to David, or any mere man. The whole psalm was, by the ancient Jews, interpreted of the Messiah, as is confessed by some of their later doctors. R. David Kimchi says <sup>f681</sup>,

“there are that interpret it of Gog and Magog, and the Messiah, he is the King Messiah; and so the Rabbins of blessed memory interpret it.”

And Jarchi confesses the same, and is somewhat more open in giving his reason for interpreting it otherwise.

“Our Rabbins (says he) expound this affair concerning the King Messiah; but according to its literal sense, and for an answer to the heretics (or Christians), it is right to explain it concerning David himself.”

he clause, “and for an answer to the heretics”, is left out in later editions, but was in the more ancient ones; it being so open and barefaced, that the Jews did not choose to let it stand. Aben Ezra is in a doubt whether to interpret the psalm of David, or of the Messiah; though he thinks the former is best; and particularly this seventh verse is, by several of their ancient writers, applied to the Messiah; in one of their writings, esteemed very ancient, are these words <sup>f682</sup>;

“from thence shall come forth, in that day, the Messiah of David; and this is the mystery of, “I will declare the decree, the Lord said unto me, thou art my Son”, etc.”

And this is the sense of R. Ame <sup>f683</sup>, a famous ancient doctor of theirs: upon mention of those words in (~~2812~~ Jeremiah 31:22) “the Lord hath created a new thing”, etc.

“says R. Hone, in the name of R. Ame, this is the King Messiah, as it is said, (~~1917~~ Psalm 2:7) “this day have I begotten thee”.”

And in like manner in the Talmud <sup>f684</sup>, it is understood of the Messiah, where are these expressions;

“the Rabbins teach, that Messiah, the son of David, who shall be revealed in haste in our days, the holy blessed God said unto him, ask anything of me, and I will give it thee, as it is said, (~~1917~~ Psalm 2:7) “I will declare the decree, etc. this day have I begotten thee”.”

And that this was the sense of the Jews in the times of the apostle, need not be doubted, since the apostle cites these words before a Jewish assembly, in one of their synagogues, and applies them to the Messiah, without any hesitation, or any further reasoning upon it, as being a thing generally agreed on, and out of doubt; wherefore the Jew <sup>f685</sup> has no reason to charge the apostle with an error in citing a passage in this psalm, and applying it to Christ, since their ancient doctors have allowed, that it belongs to him, and even the very passage which the apostle produces; which passage Maimonides <sup>f686</sup> himself applies to the Messiah. This objector would have it, that David spoke the whole psalm by the Holy Spirit concerning himself, and that he calls himself the Lord's anointed; and that being anointed by the will of the Lord, what was against his kingdom, was against the Lord himself; and that he is called the Son of God, because he attended to the worship of God; and that the begetting of him refers to the time of his unction by Samuel; and that it can by no means agree with Jesus of Nazareth, who never ruled in any place, but others ruled over him, when they condemned him to death as the meanest of the people; and who himself says, that he came not to be ministered unto, (~~at~~ Matthew 20:28) especially he thinks those words, "ask of me, and I will give the Heathen", etc. greatly militate against the application of the psalm to Jesus; for if he is God, what need has he to ask of another? But since the Jewish doctors themselves have applied this psalm to the Messiah, the apostle ought not to be blamed for making such an application; and there are many things which cannot be applied to David himself; for whatever may be said of his anointing, begetting, and sonship, the uttermost parts of the earth were never given for his possession; and much less can he be the son the kings of the earth are called upon to kiss and worship, or he be the object of trust and confidence; and though Jesus in the days of his humiliation was not ministered unto, but ministered to others, and ruled not over others, but submitted to the death of the cross; he has since been made and declared Lord of all, and his kingdom has taken place in the nations of the world, and ere long all the kingdoms of it will become his; and though he is God, it is no ways inconsistent with him, as man and Mediator, to ask anything of his Father, and especially what has been agreed between them shall be given: the words cited by the apostle are, "thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee"; in Beza's ancient copy, the verse following these words is added, "ask of me", etc. The words are to be understood of the eternal filiation of Christ, and are produced, to set forth the greatness and dignity of his person; whom God had raised and sent forth in human nature, to be

the Saviour and Redeemer of his people: though should they be applied to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, it will no ways prejudice the doctrine of Christ's proper and natural sonship, as being the only begotten of the Father; since the resurrection of Christ is not the cause of his sonship, or the reason why he is called the Son of God, but a manifestation of it; Christ was the Son of God, before his resurrection from the dead; he was declared to be so by a voice from heaven, was believed on by his disciples as such, and confessed by others, both men and devils: besides, if his resurrection was the cause of his sonship, he must beget himself, which is absurd, for he was himself concerned in his resurrection from the dead; more over, his sonship would not be proper, but figurative and metaphorical, whereas he is God's own, or proper son; besides, on this account he could not be called God's only begotten Son, because there are others that have been, and millions that will be raised from the dead besides him: but the reason why these words are applied to the resurrection of Christ, allowing them to be so, is not because he was then begotten as the Son of God, but because he was then manifested to be the eternally begotten Son of God; things are said to be, when they are only manifested to be; so Christ is said to be that day begotten, because he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead", (~~ROM~~Romans 1:4) Hence these words are applicable to any time or thing wherein Christ is manifested to be the only begotten Son of God, and accordingly are applied to different times and things; (see ~~HEB~~Hebrews 1:3-5, 5:5).

**Ver. 34.** *And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead,* etc.]

This, as it is differently expressed from the raising him up, spoken of in the preceding verse, so seems to be a distinct article from it, and is supported by other passages of Scripture: the apostle having shown that God had fulfilled his promise to the fathers, concerning the raising up, or sending the Messiah into the world, who is no other than the eternal Son of God, proceeds to prove his resurrection from the dead, as man, which was in such sort, as

*now no more to return to corruption*; so as not to die any more, and be laid in the grave, and there corrupted; as was the case of those who were raised from the dead by the prophets, under the Old Testament, or by Christ himself, before his death and resurrection; for these were raised to a mortal life, and died again, and were buried, and saw corruption; but Christ was raised up from the dead, never to die more, but to live forever, having in

his hands the keys of hell and death, and being the triumphant conqueror over death and the grave; in proof of which some passages are produced out of the Old Testament, as follow: “he said on this wise”; that is, God said so, or after this manner, (<sup>281B</sup> Isaiah 55:3) “I will give you the sure mercies of David”; that is, of the Messiah; by which are meant the blessings of the sure and well ordered covenant of grace, which the Messiah by his sufferings and death was to ratify and secure for all his people: now had he only died, and not been raised from the dead, these blessings had not been ratified and made sure unto them; therefore, when God promises his people, that he will give them the sure mercies of David, or the Messiah, he promises that the Messiah shall not only die to procure mercies and blessings for them, but that he shall rise again from the dead, to make them sure unto them; so that these words are pertinently produced in proof of Christ’s resurrection. David is a name frequently given to the Messiah, as in (<sup>281B</sup> Jeremiah 30:9 <sup>284B</sup> Ezekiel 34:23,24, 37:24,25, <sup>288B</sup> Hosea 3:5) David being an eminent type of Christ, and the Messiah being a son of his; and who must be meant here; and which is owned by several Jewish commentators <sup>f687</sup> of the best note; and which appears from his being called a witness to the people, a leader and a commander of them, in the next verse: the blessings of the covenant are fitly called “mercies”, because they spring from the grace and mercy of God, and wonderfully display it, and are in mercy to his people; and these are the mercies of David, or of Christ, because the covenant being made with him, these blessings were put into his hands for them, and come through his blood to them; and hence they are said to be “sure” ones; they are in safe hands; Christ, who is intrusted with them, faithfully distributes them: but then, as by his death he has made way for the communication of them, consistent with the justice of God; so he must rise again, and live for ever, to distribute them, or see that there is an application of them made to the persons for whom they are designed: besides, it is one of the sure mercies promised to David, to the Messiah himself, that though he died, and was laid in the grave, he should not continue there, but rise again, as the next testimony most clearly shows.

**Ver. 35.** *Wherefore he saith also in another psalm*, etc.] (<sup>296D</sup> Psalm 16:10) or “in another place”, as the Syriac version supplies; or “in another section”, as the Arabic version; or “elsewhere”, as Beza’s most ancient copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read:

*thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption*; which cannot be understood of David: the term “Holy One”, is not so applicable to him,

who was a man subject to infirmities; at least not in such sense as to Christ, who was holy in his nature, and without sin in his life and conversation; besides, David was laid in his grave, and saw corruption, as the apostle afterwards proves: the former part of this passage is not cited, “thou wilt not leave my soul in hell”; which was not absolutely necessary to be mentioned, it being clearly implied in what is produced; for if he should not be suffered to see corruption, then he could not be left in the grave: moreover, the apostle cites that which he intended to reason upon, as he afterwards does, and by it makes it manifestly appear that the words do not belong to David, but the Messiah, and are a clear and pertinent proof of his resurrection from the dead. The Jew <sup>f688</sup> objects to the apostle’s version of these words, rendering **tj ç**, by “corruption”, whereas he says it signifies a “pit”; but it ought to be observed, that the word in its first proper, and literal sense, signifies “corruption”; and a pit or grave is only called by this name, because dead bodies, or carcasses, are therein corrupted; and instances may be given, wherein the word cannot be understood in another sense than in that of corruption, as in (<sup>18225</sup>Leviticus 22:25 <sup>18523</sup>Psalm 55:23). (See Gill on “<sup>4127</sup>Acts 2:27”).

**Ver. 36.** *For David, after he had served his own generation*, etc.] Or the men of that age and generation in which he lived, the subjects of his kingdom; by governing them with wholesome laws, protecting them in their rights and properties, defending them against their enemies, and regulating and promoting the worship of God among them:

*by the will of God*; this clause may be read in connection with the preceding words, as it is in the Syriac version thus, “after he had in his own age served the will of God”; acted according to it, fulfilled it, and did what the Lord declared to him, or he knew to be the will of God; or with the following words, as in the Vulgate Latin version, “by the will of God fell on sleep”, or died; and then the sense is, that after he had done the work of his generation, which was appointed and cut out for him, he died by the decree and counsel of God, which has set bounds to man’s life, and has fixed the time of his death; no man dies before, or lives longer than the time it is the will of God he should. David lived according to the will of God’s command, and he died by the will of his decree. Death is expressed by falling asleep; a way of speaking very common with the eastern nations, and which represents it in an easy and familiar manner: it is not an annihilation of men; the dead are only fallen asleep, and will wake again in the resurrection; till which time the grave is their restingplace, and out of

which the saints will rise fresh and cheerful; and yet, as a time of sleep is a time of inactivity, so no work is done in the grave; and therefore whatever we find to do, should be done in life. It is a long sleep; David has been many hundred years, even thousands, in it; and there will be no awaking out of it till Christ comes again: but this is to be understood of the body only, which only is capable of sleeping the sleep of death, and not of the soul, which dies not with the body, nor continues with it in the grave in a state of insensibility and inactivity, but immediately returns to God; and being happy, is employed in the vision of God, and Christ, in the fellowship of saints and angels, and in the work of praise and thanksgiving: thus, though David is fallen asleep in his body, he is present in spirit with the Lord; and that sweet psalmist of Israel is singing the songs of God in a much better manner than when here on earth. Blessed are they that sleep in Jesus, for they not only sleep quietly and safely, but shall surely rise again, for God will bring them with him; Christ is the first fruits of them, and they shall awake in his likeness. It is further said of David, “and was laid unto his fathers”, or was buried; his sepulchre is said to be in Mount Zion <sup>f689</sup>, where the kings of the house of David were buried; and his sepulchre Peter saw in (<sup><402></sup>Acts 2:29) remained till his time.

*And saw corruption*; his body putrefied in the grave, became the repast of worms, and was reduced to rottenness and dust; and therefore the words could not be spoken of him cited from (<sup><4960></sup>Psalm 16:10).

**Ver. 37.** *But he whom God raised again*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin version adds, “from the dead”; meaning the Lord Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead by God the Father: and

*saw no corruption*; he did not lie so long in the grave as to corrupt and putrefy, but was raised from the dead the third day; wherefore the passage, before cited, is very applicable to him, and is a clear proof that the Messiah was to rise from the dead, as Jesus did.

**Ver. 38.** *Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren*, etc.] The apostle having discoursed concerning the incarnation of Christ, his death and resurrection, proceeds to take notice of some particular benefits and blessings of grace arising from thence, which are published and made known to the sons of men in the everlasting Gospel, as were now to the Jews by Paul and Barnabas; such as forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ, and justification by his righteousness; the former of them is mentioned in this verse, the latter in the next:

*that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins;* forgiveness of sins, which is sometimes expressed by a non-imputation of them, a non-remembrance of them, a covering and putting them away, and a blotting them out, is an act of free grace and mercy, and yet is through the blood of Christ; through that believers have it; Christ is exalted as a Prince and a Saviour to give it, having by his blood procured it; and this is a principal doctrine of the Gospel, which is published in his name, and which the light of nature and law of Moses know nothing of, and cannot ascertain; the prophets bear testimony to this truth, that everyone that believes in Christ shall receive the remission of sins, of all his sins. That there is a God is known by the light of nature, and that sin is an offence unto him; but by it is not known in what way offended Deity is appeased; nor does it, nor can it assure any that God will forgive sin on any account whatever; not on account of mercy in him, nor on account of good works, or of repentance in them; God, as the God of nature, does not forgive sin, but as the God of grace: and though the law of Moses declares what is good, and gives knowledge of evil, yet admits not of repentance as a satisfaction for sin committed; nor does it represent God as merciful, but as just, and so accuses, condemns, and kills: the doctrine of forgiveness is a pure doctrine of the Gospel; and when it is preached aright, it is preached through Christ, not through the works of the law, not through repentance, nor through faith, nor through the absolute mercy of God, but through Christ, through the blood of Christ, which was shed to obtain it in a way consistent with the justice of God; and through his hands it is given. When Christ is called a “man”, it must not be thought that he is a mere man; he is God as well as man; had he been a mere man, forgiveness of sin could not have been by his blood, or through his name, or for his sake; it is because he is God, truly and properly God, that there is a virtue in his blood to take away sin, and cleanse from it; (see ~~ROM7~~ 1 John 1:7) Besides, the word “man” is not in the original text, it is only “through this is preached to you”; that is, through this glorious and divine person, who, though he died as man, and was buried, yet saw no corruption, and is now raised from the dead, and is at the right hand of God. Some copies read **διὰ τοῦτο**, because of this, or for this reason; seeing he is raised from the dead, therefore the doctrine of the remission of sins is preached; for if he had died, and had not risen again, there could have been no pardon by his blood, nor justification by his righteousness; (see ~~ROM5~~ Romans 4:25).



**Ver. 39.** *And by him all that believe are justified from all things,* etc.]

Christ, as God, is not only the justifier of his people, who pronounces them righteous in the sight of God; but his righteousness imputed to them is the matter of their justification, or that by which they are justified; and not the works of the law, or obedience to the Gospel, or internal holiness, either in whole or in part, or the grace of faith, but the object of it, Christ, and his righteousness: and justification by this is complete and perfect; it is from all sin, original and actual, secret and open, greater or lesser sins; sins of presumption and ignorance, of omission or commission; from all things the law can charge with, as breaches of it; from all things which the justice of God can demand satisfaction for; and from all things that Satan, or a man's own conscience, can justly accuse him of. And those that believe in Christ with the heart unto righteousness, are openly and manifestly justified in their own consciences, and can claim their interest in it, and have the comfort of it, as well as they were before secretly justified in the mind of God, and in their head and representative Jesus Christ. And from all sin these are justified of God, as Beza's ancient copy reads, "for it is God that justifies", ( ~~8:33~~ Romans 8:33) against whom men have sinned, and whose law they have violated, and whose justice they have affronted, by reason of which they are liable to condemnation; but God justifies them, by imputing the righteousness of his Son to them, in which he views them as without fault, unblamable and irreprovable; and though all men are not justified, yet many are; even all the seed of Israel, all the elect of God, everyone that believes in Christ, as all do who are ordained to eternal life; Christ's righteousness is imputed and applied to all these, and therefore they shall never enter into condemnation, but shall be acquitted and discharged from all things,

*from which,* it is added,

*ye could not be justified by the law of Moses;* that is, by the works of the law, or by obedience to it, because such obedience is imperfect; and therefore the law cannot justify, discharge, and acquit upon it, but instead thereof, must curse and condemn; as it does everyone, that does not do all things commanded in the law, and in the manner that requires; besides, if righteousness was hereby, the grace of God in justification would be frustrated, the death of Christ would be rendered null and void, and boasting would not be excluded; all which are contrary to the scheme of the Gospel. It may be observed, that pardon of sin and justification are two distinct blessings, or the apostle must be guilty of a great tautology; since



having spoken of forgiveness of sin in the preceding verse, he speaks of justification in this, as another blessing enjoyed by and through Christ, and published in the Gospel, styled therefore the word and ministration of righteousness. And indeed they are distinct; in pardon the man is considered as a sinner, in justification as a righteous man; pardon takes away his sin, justification gives him a righteousness; pardon frees from punishment, but justification besides that gives him a title to eternal life; to pardon, the blood of Christ is sufficient; but to justification are required the holiness of Christ's nature, the perfect obedience of his life, as well as his suffering of death; moreover, justification passed on Christ as the head and representative of his people, but not pardon; he may be said to be justified, but not pardoned: these two blessings make a considerable figure in the ministry of the word.

**Ver. 40.** *Beware therefore*, etc.] Of rejecting the Gospel, and those excellent truths of it; since forgiveness of sin and a justifying righteousness are said to be had in no other way, but in and through Christ; take heed therefore,

*lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the Prophets*: some think that the apostle refers to two places in the Prophets, which he puts together, and therefore uses the plural number; the one in (<sup>2384</sup>Isaiah 28:14) from whence the character of the persons is taken, “ye despisers”, or scornful men, who are addressed; and the other in (<sup>3005</sup>Habakkuk 1:5) where is to be found what is said to them; but rather the latter place is what is only referred to, and is said to be, “in the Prophets”, that is, in one of the prophets; (See Gill on <sup>4065</sup>John 6:45) or in the book of the Prophets, the lesser prophets, which were together in one book, among which Habakkuk stands; the Ethiopic version reads in the singular number, “lest should come upon you the word of the prophet, saying”, as follows.

**Ver. 41.** *Behold, ye despisers*, etc.] In (<sup>3005</sup>Habakkuk 1:5) from whence these words are taken: we render it with others, “behold ye among the Heathen”; as if the word  $\mu\gamma\omega\beta$ , was compounded of  $\beta$  “in”, and  $\mu\gamma\omega$ , “nations” or “Heathens”; and so reads the Chaldee paraphrase, “look among the people”; but the Septuagint version renders it, “behold, ye despisers”; which the apostle is thought to follow; wherefore some have imagined a different reading, and that the Septuagint, instead of  $\mu\gamma\omega\beta$  reads  $\mu\gamma\delta\gamma\omega\beta$ , the singular of which is used in (<sup>3005</sup>Habakkuk 2:5) and there rendered a “despiser” in the same version: but it should be observed,

that the Septuagint is not the only version that so renders the word; for the Syriac version renders it, “behold, ye impudent”; and the Arabic version, “behold, ye negligent”; and Dr. Pocock<sup>f690</sup> has shown that this word comes from the root *agb* which though not to be found in the Bible, yet in the Arabic language, among other things, signifies to behave proudly, or insolently, and so is very properly rendered “despisers”, without supposing any different reading or corruption in the text: and as in Habakkuk the proud and haughty Jews are there spoke to, who neglected and despised the law; this is accommodated by the apostle to the Jews in his time, who were very much disposed to despise the Gospel, as they generally did. It follows, “and wonder, and perish”; or disappear, or change countenance, through shame for their sins, and amazement at the judgments of God upon them:

*for I work a work in your days, which you shall in no wise believe though a man declare it unto you;* which, in Habakkuk, refers to the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; and here it is suggested, by the citation and application of it, that in a short time a like work would be done in their days; the city and temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Romans, which when told to the Jews in foreign parts, as here in Pisidia, would not be believed by them, though it should be told them by men of probity and credit.

**Ver. 42.** *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue,* etc.] The time of worship there being over; or being offended at the apostle’s discourse concerning Jesus: the words will bear to be rendered, “when they were gone out of the synagogue of the Jews”; and the sense be, when Paul and Barnabas were come out from thence, Paul having finished his discourse: the word “Jews”, and the phrase, “out of the synagogue”, are left out in Beza’s ancient copy, and in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; and so may be interpreted either of the Jews, or of Paul and Barnabas; the Ethiopic version leaves out the whole clause: “the Gentiles besought that these words might be spoken unto them the next sabbath”; that is, the proselytes from among the Gentiles, who attended on the synagogue of the Jews, and who stayed behind when the Jews were gone out, being exceedingly delighted with the apostle’s doctrine, most earnestly entreated that the same subject might be insisted upon the next sabbath: or, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, the words may be rendered, “they besought the Gentiles”; that is, the apostles, when they saw the Jews go out, being offended, addressed the Gentiles, and entreated

them to come the next sabbath day, and patiently hear these doctrines: though in the above copies and versions there is no mention made of the Gentiles, any more than of the Jews; so that this may be understood either of the rulers of the synagogue, who first invited them to speak a word of exhortation to the people, or of the whole body, Jews and proselytes, who, when they were departing, entreated they might hear them again the next sabbath; about which “next sabbath”, there is some difficulty; the words may be rendered, “between the sabbath”, and so may regard what we call weekdays, or working days; and which the Jews call **μυγτνβς μμγμ**, “the intermediate days”, or the days between one sabbath and another <sup>f691</sup>; and on some one of these days it was desired that the apostles would give them another discourse on the same subject; and it may be particularly, that either Monday or Thursday, the second or fifth day of the week, might be pitched upon; since on these days the Jews met together in the synagogue, and read the law, according to the order of Ezra, that they might not be three days without the law <sup>f692</sup>; and these were the days on which they fasted, (~~4132~~ Luke 18:12). Others choose to render the words, “on the sabbath day after”; and so the Syriac version renders it, “on the other sabbath”; and the Ethiopic version, “the sabbath following”; and so the Vulgate Latin, with which ours, and others agree; and to this reading and sense, (~~4134~~ Acts 13:44) greatly inclines; though they might meet together on one of the days between, when being so delighted with what they heard, and of which they so much talked, that the next sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear: but what pleases me best, and which, I think, has never been observed by any, is, that there was one sabbath in the year which was called **μγτνβ τβς**; which may be rendered by **το μεταξυ σαββατον**, “the sabbath between”, or the intermediate sabbath; and this sabbath was on one of the ten days before the day of atonement; and was so called, because it was between the first of Tisri, which answers to part of our September, and was the beginning of the year, and the tenth of the same month, which was the day of atonement; and was a sabbath very much taken notice of by the Jews <sup>f693</sup>: and now this might be the sabbath following, and so all agrees; and a reason may be given for the different phrases in this verse, and (~~4134~~ Acts 13:44) and if so, this also points out the time of the year that Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch in Pisidia, and when that remarkable period began, that the apostles turned from the Jews, and preached to the Gentiles.

**Ver. 43.** *Now when the congregation was broken up*, etc.] Or “the synagogue”; not the place, but the people that met in it; when they were “dismissed”, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; either in a disorderly manner, through the offence the Jews took at Paul’s preaching; or if in an orderly way, this was done by *mgrwth*, “the interpreter”; so it is said <sup>f694</sup>, that

“R. Hotzpith the interpreter dismissed the people.”

*Many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas*; who were converted by this sermon, and believed in Christ, and cordially embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, that had been preached. Piscator thinks that the word “religious” does not belong to the text, but some way or other crept into it, since it supposes some proselytes not to be religious; whereas, though all religious persons were not proselytes, at least proselytes of righteousness, yet all proselytes were religious persons; but it is retained in all copies and versions:

*who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God*; meaning, not that the Jews and proselytes spoke to Paul and Barnabas, and entreated and persuaded them to persevere in preaching the doctrine of the grace of God, notwithstanding the offence some might take at it, and the ill usage they might meet with on account of it; but that Paul and Barnabas took notice of them, and by their following them, and by the conversation they had with them, found that the word had reached their hearts, and that they had embraced the doctrine of the Gospel; wherefore they spoke a word of exhortation to them, beseeching them to continue in it, it springing from the grace of God, and being a declaration of it; and particularly in those special doctrines of grace, which had been insisted on, namely, remission of sins, and free justification by the blood of Christ; for it is more likely, and was more necessary, that these should be exhorted by the apostles, and not the apostles by them.

**Ver. 44.** *And the next sabbath day*, etc.] The same which is before called the “sabbath between”, which was between the first and tenth of Tisri, or between the beginning of the year, and the day of atonement:

*came almost the whole city together*. The Syriac and Ethiopic versions leave out the word “almost”, and read, the whole city came together; some out of curiosity, having heard much said of these men and their doctrines, others to cavil and quarrel, and others from a true affection to the Gospel,

and an earnest desire of knowing more of it, and of receiving more advantage from it: though the end in all was,

*to hear the word of God*; or “of the Lord”, as the Alexandrian copy; that is, the doctrine of the Gospel, which comes from God, and, concerns the Lord Jesus Christ, his person, offices, grace, and righteousness.

**Ver. 45.** *But when the Jews saw the multitudes*, etc.] The vast number of people, the inhabitants of the city, the Gentiles, that were assembled together to hear the word. This must be understood of the unbelieving Jews, who came with no good design:

*they were filled with envy*; at the Gentiles, that they should have the word equally preached to them, as to themselves, to whom the oracles of God were committed; or at the popularity of the apostles, that such numbers should follow them; and they might fear many converts might be made by them, from among them:

*and spoke against those things which were spoken by Paul*; concerning Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah, which they denied; and concerning free justification by his righteousness, which they affirmed to be by the works of the law: and they went on

*contradicting and blaspheming*; publicly opposing him, and speaking evil of him, and of his doctrines; and not only so, but belching out their blasphemies against the Lord Jesus Christ. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word “contradicting”, as redundant, it having been before said, that “they spoke against”, or “contradicted” what Paul delivered; though it may not be superfluous, but express their continuance in their contradiction and opposition; and which was attended with, and issued in blasphemy: such a spirit of reproach and blasphemy is with the Jews a sign of the Messiah’s coming;

“says R. Jannai <sup>f695</sup>, when you see generation after generation reproaching and blaspheming, look for the feet of the Messiah, according to (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 89:51).”

This they have been doing one age after another, even for many ages; and therefore, according to one of their own signs, the Messiah must be come.

**Ver. 46.** *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold*, etc.] They were not at all daunted at the opposition they met with, but rather grew more courageous, and used great liberty of speech, and spoke out freely, plainly, and openly: and said,

*it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you*; as it was by Christ and his apostles, whilst he was on earth; and though, after his resurrection, the commission to his apostles ran, to preach the Gospel to all nations, yet they were ordered to begin at Jerusalem, and preach to the Jews first; and this they hitherto strictly observed:

*but seeing ye put it from you*; with loathing, indignation, and contempt:

*and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life*; no man is worthy of everlasting life, on account of anything done by him, for it is the free gift of God; and all who are sensible of themselves, and of the just demerit of sin, conclude themselves unworthy to inherit eternal life; but this was not the case of these Jews, nor is it the sense here: but the meaning is, that the Jews, by this act of theirs in rejecting the Gospel, did as it were pass sentence upon themselves, and determine against themselves that they ought not to be saved, since they despised the means of salvation; or that they were not worthy to have the Gospel preached to them any more, which may be called eternal life, because it is brought to light by it, and revealed in it; and because it points out the way unto it, as well as gives some account of it:

*lo, we turn to the Gentiles*; to preach the Gospel to them only, or chiefly; now the words of Christ began to be fulfilled, (<sup><421></sup>Matthew 21:43).

**Ver. 47.** *For so hath the Lord commanded us*, etc.] For though Christ in his first commission restrained his disciples from going into the Gentiles, and preaching to them, yet when he enlarged their commission after his resurrection, he bid them go into all nations, and preach the Gospel to every creature; and told them, that they should be his witnesses to the uttermost part of the earth; (see <sup><418></sup>Matthew 28:19 <sup><416></sup>Mark 16:15 <sup><400></sup>Acts 1:8) unless this should rather be thought to refer to what follows:

*saying*; or “as it is written”, as the Syriac version supplies; or “because so saith the Scripture”, as the Ethiopic version, namely in (<sup><230></sup>Isaiah 49:6).

*I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles*; to enlighten the Gentiles that sit in darkness, by the preaching of the Gospel to them, and the Spirit of

God attending it: this supposes the Gentiles to have been in darkness; as they were about divine things, before the times of the Gospel: they had no true knowledge of God himself; for though they knew there was a God, they did not know, at least but few of them, that there was but one God; and none of them knew anything of him as in Christ; they had not a revelation of his will, they were without the written law, and were strangers to the true manner of worshipping the divine Being; they knew nothing at all of the Messiah, and of his righteousness and salvation by him; nor of the Spirit of God, and the operations of his grace, nor of the resurrection of the dead, and were very ignorant of a future state: it was therefore an unspeakable mercy to them, that Christ was appointed to be a light to them; not in a way of nature, as he is that light which lightens every man that comes into the world; but in a way of grace, through the ministration of the Gospel, and by the special illuminations of the divine Spirit; whereby they see there is a righteous judge, and that there will be a righteous judgment; and that sin is exceeding sinful, and cannot be atoned for by them, and therefore they are in themselves miserable and undone; and they further see, that pardon and righteousness are only by Christ, and that salvation is alone in him. The words are spoken by God the Father to his Son, and express the eternal decree of God, and the designation of Christ to be the light of his people; the mission of him in time as the light of the world, and the exhibition of him in the Gospel, for the illumination of men by his Spirit and grace. In the Hebrew text it is, "I will give thee", etc. for all this springs from the free grace of God; Christ in all respects is the gift of God, as he is the head of the church, and the Saviour of the body, so as he is the light of men; and it is necessary that he should be light, in order to be salvation, as follows; for though men may go to hell in the dark, yet not to heaven; the way of the wicked is darkness, but the path of just is shining light: those whom God rives, he enlightens with the light of life:

*that thou shouldest be for salvation to the ends of the earth;* impetratively as the author of it, and applicatively by means of the Gospel, which publishes salvation by Christ; and is the power of God unto salvation, to Gentiles as well as Jews, even to all that believe, in what part of the world soever they live: thus what was decreed and resolved on by God the Father, and was declared by him to his Son, is applied to his ministers and ambassadors, who represented him; so that what they did, he may be said to do; and who by them was to go, and did go to the Gentiles, and enlighten them with the light of the Gospel, and became salvation to them;



so that this prophecy is produced by the apostles, to vindicate their conduct, as well as to show the agreement between the command of Jesus Christ to his disciples, and the decree of God the Father; as also to illustrate and confirm the particular order, which the Apostle Paul had, to go to the Gentiles, and to which he may have a regard here; (see <sup><4137></sup>Acts 26:17). In the Hebrew text it is, “my salvation”: provided, promised, and sent by God, the Saviour of his people.

**Ver. 48.** *And when the Gentiles heard this*, etc.] That it was the will of God, and the command of Christ, that the Gospel should be preached to them; by whom are to be understood the Pisidians, the inhabitants of Antioch, who had never been proselytes to the Jewish religion:

*they were glad*; not that the Jews were likely to have the Gospel taken away from them, and be utterly deprived of it, but that it was to be preached to them:

*and glorified the word of the Lord*; not the Lord Jesus Christ, the essential word of the Lord, whom they might not as yet have such a distinct knowledge of; but rather God himself, for his word, particularly his word of command, (<sup><4137></sup>Acts 13:47) as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read; or the sense is, they spake well of the Gospel, and gave glory to God, or the Lord, who had sent it among them: Beza’s most ancient copy reads, they “received the word of the Lord”, which seems to be a more agreeable reading; to glorify the word of the Lord, is an unusual phrase:

*and as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed*; faith is not the cause, or condition of the decree of eternal life, but a means fixed in it, and is a fruit and effect of it, and what certainly follows upon it, as in these persons: some would have the words rendered, “as many as were disposed unto eternal life believed”; which is not countenanced by the ancient versions. The Arabic renders it as we do, and the Syriac thus, “as many as were put, or appointed unto eternal life”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “as many as were pre-ordained”. Moreover, the phrase of being “disposed unto”, or “for eternal life”, is a very unusual, if not a very improper, and an inaccurate one; men are said to be disposed to an habit, or to an act, as to vice or virtue, but not to reward or punishment, as to heaven or hell; nor does it appear that these Gentiles had any good dispositions to eternal life, antecedent to their believing; for though they are said, (<sup><4132></sup>Acts 13:42) to entreat the apostles to preach the same things to them the next sabbath, yet the words as there observed, according to their natural order, may be



rendered “they”, i.e. the apostles, “besought the Gentiles”; and in some copies and versions, the “Gentiles” are not mentioned at all: and as for their being “glad”, and “glorifying the word of the Lord”, it is not evident that this was before their believing; and if it was, such things have been found in persons, who have had no true, real, and inward dispositions to spiritual things, as in many of our Lord’s hearers; besides, admitting that there are, in some, good dispositions to eternal life, previous to faith, and that desiring eternal life, and seeking after it, be accounted such, yet these may be where faith does not follow; as in the young rich ruler, that came to Christ with such an inquiry, and went away sorrowful: as many therefore as are so disposed, do not always believe, faith does not always follow such dispositions; and after all, one would have thought that the Jews themselves, who were externally religious, and were looking for the Messiah, and especially the devout and able women, were more disposed unto eternal life, than the ignorant and idolatrous Gentiles; and yet the latter believed, and the former did not: it follows then, that their faith did not arise from previous dispositions to eternal life, but was the fruit and effect of divine ordination unto it; and the word here used, in various places in this book, signifies determination and appointment, and not disposition of mind; (see <sup><445D></sup>Acts 15:2 22:10 28:23) The phrase is the same with that used by the Jews, **מל װ[ ךײ ׀ װנװתאד**, “who are ordained to eternal life”<sup>f696</sup>; and **ײײ ׀ בײתכד ׀ כ אמל [**, “everyone that is written to eternal life”<sup>f697</sup> i.e. in the book of life; and designs no other than predestination or election, which is God’s act, and is an eternal one; is sovereign, irrespective, and unconditional; relates to particular persons, and is sure and certain in its effect: it is an ordination, not to an office, nor to the means of grace, but to grace and glory itself; to a life of grace which is eternal, and to a life of glory which is for ever; and which is a pure gift of God, is in the hands of Christ, and to which his righteousness gives a title: and ordination to it shows it to be a blessing of an early date; and the great love of God to the persons ordained to it; and the certainty of enjoying it.

**Ver. 49.** *And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.*] That is, of Pisidia, in which Antioch was; not by the Apostles Paul and Barnabas, who seem to go directly to Iconium, after they were expelled the city and suburbs of Antioch; but by some of those who were converted under their ministry, and had gifts bestowed on them, qualifying them to preach the Gospel to others, which they did with success. There were no doubt several churches planted in this country, and particularly

there was one at Antioch, of which these new converts were the beginning, and which continued: in the “fourth” century, this church was a patriarchate, for it is said, under Valentinian and Theodosius, Optimus obtained the patriarchate of Antioch in Pisidia; in the “fifth” century, it was the metropolitan of Pisidia; in this age, mention is made of several bishops of this place; Candidianus, bishop of Antioch in Pisidia, was present at two synods, one at Constantinople against Eutyches, and another at Ephesus; Dionysius, bishop of the same place, assisted in the synod at Chalcedon, and Pergamius at that which was at Constantinople, under the Emperor Theodosius, and at another at Chalcedon, under the Emperor Marcianus: there were also in this century, bishops of other churches in Pisidia; as Severus, bishop of Sozopolis in Pisidia, who was present in the council at Ephesus, against Nestorius; and Olympius, bishop of Mount Hem in Pisidia, who was at the Chalcedon council; and Paulinus bishop of Apamea, Eortius bishop of Nicopolis, and Alexander bishop of Seleucia, and Longinus bishop of Talbondana, all in Pisidia: in the “sixth” century, there were churches in Pisidia embracing the truth of Christ; Bacchus was bishop of Antioch, and John of another place, who both were in the fifth synod at Constantinople: in the “seventh” century, we read of the church at Antioch, as the metropolitan of Pisidia, and of a bishop of it in the sixth council at Constantinople: in the eighth “century”, Gregory, bishop of this place, condemned in a synod the worship of images, but afterwards recanted; and in the same century, this city was taken by the Turks, and spoiled<sup>f698</sup>; and after this, we read no more of its church state.

**Ver. 50.** *But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women,* etc.]

These seem not to be Jewish women; could they be thought to be such, they might easily be concluded to be of the sect of the Pharisees, which was the strictest and most devout sect among the Jews; for there were women Pharisees, as well as men; so we read of *hçwꝛp hça*, “a woman Pharisee”<sup>f699</sup>; but these were Gentile women, proselyted to the Jewish religion, and were in their way very religious and devout, and were also “honourable”: the word used signifies, not only that they were of a comely form, of a decent habit, and of good manners, as it is by some interpreted; but that they were persons of figure and distinction, of good families; the Syriac version renders it “rich”, whose husbands were the principal men of the city; wherefore the Jews applied to these women, and stirred up them to work upon their husbands, who seem to be those next mentioned:

*and the chief men of the city;* the magistrates and officers in it:

*and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas*; raised the mob, and set them upon them:

*and expelled them out of their coasts*; drove them out of their city and suburbs.

**Ver. 51.** *But they shook off the dust of their feet against them*, etc.] As Christ directed his apostles to do; (See Gill on “~~4004~~ Matthew 10:14”).

*And came unto Iconium*, a city in Lycaonia; here it is placed both by Ptolomy<sup>f700</sup> and Strabo<sup>f701</sup>; Pliny says<sup>f702</sup>, that

“there was a tetrarchy granted out of Lycaonia, on that part which borders on Galatia, consisting of fourteen cities, the most celebrated city being Iconium.”

It was called by the Syrians an[ qyh, “Ik-ona”, which signifies “the bosom of sheep”; the country round about it being famous for feeding great numbers of sheep; and here afterwards was a church of Christ, a bosom for his sheep; it is now in the hands of the Turks, and is called “Conia”, or “Cogne”.

**Ver. 52.** *And the disciples were filled with joy*, etc.] Meaning either the “apostles”, as the Ethiopic version renders it, Paul and Barnabas; who rejoiced, both at the success they had met with, and because they were counted worthy to suffer reproach and persecution for the sake of Christ and his Gospel: or rather the disciples at Antioch, and other parts of Pisidia, the new converts; who were filled with joy at the Gospel being preached unto them, and at the constancy and courage of the apostles in suffering for it:

*and with the Holy Ghost*; which, with the former, designs the same thing as spiritual joy, or joy in the Holy Ghost; or else the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which they had both for their own comfort, and the advantage of others.

# CHAPTER 14

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 14

**Ver. 1.** *And it came to pass in Iconium*, etc.] When the apostles were got thither, and as soon as they were there; at least the first opportunity they had:

*that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews*; which was in Iconium; hither Paul and Barnabas went together, in like manner as they had done at Antioch:

*and so spoke*; such words, and doctrines of grace, with so much power, authority, and demonstration of the Spirit, with so much plainness, clearness, and evidence, as well as with so much boldness and courage:

*that a great multitude, both of the Jews, and also of the Greeks, believed*: the doctrines they preached, and in Christ the sum and substance of them; and these were not a few, but a great multitude; and not of one sort, of the Jews only, who expected the Messiah, but of the Greeks, or Gentiles also, who never heard of any; for by Greeks here are meant, not Jews born in Greece, speaking the Greek tongue, and using the Greek Bible, for these were called Hellenists, and not Greeks, but Heathens. These converts laid the foundation of a Gospel church state in this place; for that there was a church here, is certain from (~~4401~~ Acts 14:21-23) In the “first” century, Sosipater is said to be bishop, or pastor of this church, and also Tertius, who are both reckoned among the “seventy” disciples of Christ; (See Gill on “~~201~~ Luke 10:1”). In the “third” century, Celsus was bishop of this church; and in the same century, several synods were held here, about the error of Novatus; and in the same century, Nicomes bishop of this place, assisted at the council at Antioch, which condemned the heresy of Samosatenus<sup>f703</sup>: in the “fourth” century there was a church in this place, and Amphilochius was bishop of it, of whom Jerom<sup>f704</sup> makes mention; and who read to him a book, concerning the deity and worship of the holy Spirit: in the “fifth” century, it was the metropolitan church of Lycaonia, and Valerianus and Onesiphorus presided over it: in the “sixth” century, a bishop of this church was present at the fifth Roman council under

Symmachus: in the “seventh” century, it bore the character of metropolitan, and a bishop of it assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople, whose name was Paul: in the “eighth” century, Leo was bishop of it, who was present at the synod of Nice<sup>f705</sup>; and after this we hear no more of it, the place falling into the hands of the Turks, who are now possessed of it: here, according to the Roman martyrology, Tryphena and Tryphosa, mentioned in ( ~~6162~~ Romans 16:12) heard the Apostle Paul preach; and here the famous virgin and martyr, Thecla, was converted.

**Ver. 2.** *But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles*, etc.] That part of the Jews, which continued in unbelief, and rejected the doctrine of the apostles, concerning Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah; these stirred up the Gentiles, who had no knowledge of, nor faith in this matter:

*and made their minds evil affected against the brethren*; either in general against all those that embraced the Gospel of Christ; who being of the same faith and family, having the same God to be their Father, and equally related to, and interested in Christ Jesus, are called brethren; or in particular against the Apostles Paul and Barnabas, by representing them as seditious persons, and of bad designs.

**Ver. 3.** *Long time therefore abode they*, etc.] At Iconium, undaunted and not discouraged, at the treatment they met with: but continued,

*speaking boldly in the Lord*; using great freedom of speech, and showing great courage and intrepidity of mind; speaking out, without fear, the doctrines of the Gospel, in the name of the Lord, and depending upon strength, assistance, and support, from him:

*which gave testimony unto the word of his grace*; the Gospel, so called, because it is a publication of the grace and favour of God to the sons of men; in the choice of some of them to everlasting life, in the mission of his Son to redeem them, in the justification of them by his righteousness, and in the forgiveness of them through his blood, in the regeneration of them by his Spirit, in adopting them into his family, and making them heirs of eternal life; and because it is a means of implanting his grace in their souls; to this he bore witness, by giving it success, notwithstanding the opposition made against it, and by miracles wrought in confirmation of it, as follows:

*and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands*; such as healing the sick, curing the lame, casting out devils; and the like, whereby a testimony was given to the truth of the doctrine they preached: and it may

be observed, that these miraculous works were not wrought by the power of the apostles, but by the power of God; they were only instruments by whom they were done; it was owing to a grant from the Lord, and to his power, that they were performed.

**Ver. 4.** *But the multitude of the city was divided*, etc.] In their sentiments, about the apostles, their doctrines, and miracles; some approving them, others condemning their doctrines as false, and their miracles as delusions:

*and part held with the Jews*; that did not believe, but rejected the apostles, despised their doctrines, and disparaged their miracles:

*and part with the apostles*; these were the Jews and Greeks, that believed; which divisions in families, towns, and cities, though the common consequence of the preaching of the Gospel, are not owing to any fault in that, but to the depravity and corruption of human nature; and are what our Lord declared was, and foretold would be the case, (<sup><025></sup>Luke 12:51).

**Ver. 5.** *And when there was an assault made*, etc.] Or a strong bias and inclination were in the minds,

*both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews, with their rulers*; who encouraged them in it:

*to use them despitefully, and to stone them*; not only to give them reproachful language, but to smite, buffet, and scourge them, and to stone them for blasphemy, which was a punishment among the Jews for such causes.

**Ver. 6.** *They were ware of it*, etc.] They understood it, were apprised of it, and well weighed it, and considered it in their minds, and what was best to be done at this juncture:

*and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia*; according to the orders and command of Christ, (<sup><023></sup>Matthew 10:23) not so much to save their lives, as to spread the Gospel in other parts. Lycaonia was a province in the lesser Asia, near Phrygia, separated from it by the mountains; on the east it bordered on Galatia, and had on the west Pamphylia and Pisidia, and on the south Cilicia, unto Mount Taurus. Some say it had its name from Lycaon, the son of Pelasgus; others, seeing it was not a Greek colony, chose to fetch the name of the country from the Syrians, who used to call their neighbour's country Leikonia, or in the Greek pronunciation

Lycaonia; that is, the country of Iconium, which city was the metropolis of Lycaonia<sup>f706</sup>: Lystra is by Ptolomy<sup>f707</sup> placed in Isauria, and so Derbe is said by Strabo<sup>f708</sup> to be upon the coast of Isauria; wherefore the words may be read thus, as they are in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, “and they fled to the cities of Lycaonia, and to Lystra, and to Derbe”; by which reading, they are not necessarily made the cities of Lycaonia: according to Jerom<sup>f709</sup>, they were both cities of Lycaonia. Lystra is the same with **hrtç[l]**, “Lehesthera”; which, in the Hebrew and Syriac languages, signifies “a flock of sheep”, or “a city of flocks”; it being a place that abounded with sheep, as the country of Lycaonia in general did<sup>f710</sup>. Derbe was sometimes called “Delbia”, which, in the language of the Lycaonians, signifies a “juniper tree”; and Delub, and Dulbe, with the Targumist<sup>f711</sup> and Talmudists<sup>f712</sup>, signify a chesnut tree; and with the Arabians, “Dulb” is a plane tree, or poplar; it seems as if it had its name from one or other of those trees, which might grow in large quantities near it:

*and unto the region that lieth round about; the said cities.*

**Ver. 7.** *And there they preached the Gospel.*] They did not sit still, nor hide themselves in these places; but, as in others, they preached the Gospel, the good news and glad tidings of the incarnation of Christ, of redemption, peace, and pardon, through his blood, justification by his righteousness, and spiritual and eternal salvation through him: in Beza’s most ancient copy, and in one of Stephens’s, these words are added, and which Bede also says were in the Greek copies in his time, “and the whole multitude were moved at their doctrines, and Paul and Barnabas continued at Lystra”; which agrees with what follows. It is very likely that many were converted in each of these cities, and in the adjacent country, and that churches were raised in these places; this seems manifest, from (~~444~~ Acts 14:20-23 16:1,2) Artemas, of whom mention is made in (~~302~~ Titus 3:12) and is said to be one of the seventy disciples, is reported to be bishop of Lystra; (see Gill on “~~200~~ Luke 10:1”), though we meet with nothing in ecclesiastical history, concerning the churches in either of these places, until the “sixth” century; when in the fifth Roman synod under Symmachus, there were present the bishops of Lystra and Derbe, as also of Iconium and Larandas, which were likewise cities in Lycaonia<sup>f713</sup>.

**Ver. 8.** *And there sat a certain man at Lystra,* etc.] Where the apostle was preaching; and perhaps he sat there to beg, where there was a great concourse of people, and which might be in the open street: this man was

*impotent in his feet*; so weak, as not to be able to walk, and even to stand on them, and therefore is said to sit:

*being a cripple from his mother's womb*; he was born lame, as was the man cured by Peter, (~~4RD~~ Acts 3:2)

*who never had walked*; these circumstances are mentioned, to show that his case was incurable by any human art, and to illustrate the following miracle.

**Ver. 9.** *The same heard Paul speak*, etc.] That is, preach the Gospel; he was one of his hearers, and faith came to him by hearing; the Arabic version adds, “he cried unto him”; that is, to Paul, whom he heard:

*who steadfastly beholding him*; not the lame man beholding Paul, but Paul beholding the lame man, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions both express it, as also Beza's ancient copy and others; so Peter looked on the man he cured, (~~4RD~~ Acts 3:4).

*And perceiving that he had faith to be healed*; as he might by his looks, his gestures, his attention in hearing, and it may be by somewhat that he said, as well as by revelation, or a spirit of discerning, which he had.

**Ver. 10.** *Said with a loud voice*, etc.] Not only that the man, but that all might hear and attend to the miracle about to be wrought:

*stand upright on thy feet*; in five of Beza's manuscripts, and in other copies, and in the Complutensian edition, and in the Syriac version, this clause is introduced with these words, “I say unto thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ”; which is much such a form that Peter used, (~~4RD~~ Acts 3:6) whereby the virtue of the miracle is ascribed to Christ, and not assumed by the apostle:

*and he leaped and walked*; he sprung up directly from his seat, and leaped about for joy, and walked as well as any other man could.

**Ver. 11.** *And when the people saw what Paul had done*, etc.] In curing the lame man in so marvellous a manner, and concluding it to be a divine work, and what a mere creature could never perform:

*they lift up their voices*; not in indignation and wrath, but as persons astonished:



*saying in the speech of Lycaonia*; by which it should seem that Lystra was a city of Lycaonia, since the Lycaonian language was spoken in it; the Arabic version reads, “in their own tongue”; and the Syriac version, “in the dialect of the country”; very likely a dialect of the Greek tongue;

*the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men*; they had a notion of deity, though a very wrong one; they thought there were more gods than one, and they imagined heaven to be the habitation of the gods; and that they sometimes descended on earth in human shape, as they supposed they now did.

**Ver. 12.** *And they called Barnabas Jupiter*, etc.] The supreme God; it may be because that Barnabas was the oldest man, of the tallest stature, and largest bulk, and made the best figure; whereas Paul was younger, of a low stature, and mean appearance:

*and Paul Mercurius*, because he was the chief speaker; Mercury was the god of eloquence, and the messenger of the gods, and the interpreter of their will<sup>f714</sup>; Paul being chiefly concerned in preaching and speaking to the people, they called him by the name of this God: the Jews had a doctor in their schools, whom they called *μυρbdmh çad*, “the chief of the speakers”<sup>f715</sup>.

**Ver. 13.** *Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city*, etc.] Not that the priest was before the city, but Jupiter; and the phrase denotes either his presidency over the city, and so the Arabic version renders it, “who was the chief god of their city”; or the place where his image stood, which was out of the city, and so may be said to be before it; accordingly the Syriac version renders it, “who was without the city”; he who officiated as priest to him:

*brought oxen and garlands unto the gates*; either “of the city”, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions add, where was the statue of Jupiter; or else, and which is most likely, he brought them to the gates of the house, where Paul and Barnabas were; and to this sense the Syriac version renders it, “to the door of the dwelling place where they abode”: what the oxen were brought for is easy to conceive, had it not been expressed; but for what should garlands or crowns be brought? These were used in sacrifices, for different purposes; sometimes they crowned the gods<sup>f716</sup>, to whom they sacrificed, and these might be brought to be put upon the heads of Paul and Barnabas; and sometimes the priests wore them<sup>f717</sup>, and which seems to be

in imitation of the mitre, wore by the high priest among the Jews; and sometimes even those who came to sacrifice, and implore the assistance of their deities, wore them <sup>f718</sup>; likewise the altars on which they offered sacrifice were crowned with these garlands <sup>f719</sup>; and the sacrifices themselves, and which last seems to be the case here: the garlands were brought to be put upon the oxen; and these were for the most part made of cypress; sometimes of the pine tree, and sometimes of other leaves and flowers, such as were peculiar to the gods <sup>f720</sup>: and there was something like this among the Jews, at the offerings of their first fruits, which were done in this manner <sup>f721</sup>;

“they that were nearest (to Jerusalem) brought green figs and grapes; and they that were more remote brought dried figs and raisins; and an ox went before them, whose horns were covered with gold, *tyz l ç trj [w*, “and a crown of olives” on his head; a pipe sounded before them, till they came near to Jerusalem, and then they sent some before them, who “crowned” their first fruits.”

*And would have done sacrifice with the people*; that is, the priest and the people with him, would have offered sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas, as to two deities; and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add, “to them”; to both the apostles, with which agrees the Arabic version.

**Ver. 14.** *Which when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of*, etc.] As they quickly did, such a multitude being about the doors of the house, where they were: it may be observed, that Barnabas is here called an apostle, as in (<sup>440b</sup> Acts 14:4) and is placed before Paul, not as being greater than he, but because of the opinion these Heathens had of him: they rent their clothes; as the Jews did, and were obliged to do, when they heard any blasphemy; (See Gill on “<sup>446b</sup> Matthew 26:65”).

*And ran in among the people*; in great haste, showing great concern of mind, and much indignation and resentment, at what they were about to do:

*crying out*; aloud, and with great vehemence, that all might hear, and to express the greater dislike of the action.

**Ver. 15.** *And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things?* etc.] That is, bring these oxen and garlands, and attempt to offer sacrifice; this they said, not as arguing with them calmly and mildly, but with a mixture of indignation,

heat, and zeal, as displeas'd with, and detesting and abhorring what they were about to do:

*we also are men of like passions with you*; men, and not gods; of the same human nature, and that as corrupted, alike sinful men, and need a sacrifice better than these; frail mortal men, subject to frailty, imperfection, afflictions, troubles, diseases, and death itself; and so very improper objects of worship:

*and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities*; from these deities, Jupiter and Mercury, and the rest of them; which were vain, useless, and unprofitable, and could do their votaries no manner of service; and from the worshipping of them, which were so many acts of vanity, folly, and weakness, yea, of sin and wickedness: the apostles were so far from being these gods, that their business was to show men the sin and folly of adhering to them; and to persuade them to relinquish the worship of them, and turn

*to the living God*; who has life in himself, and is the fountain of life to others; whereas these deities were dead men, and the lifeless images of them; who neither lived themselves, nor could give life to others, or do them any service of any kind: but the living God is he,

*which hath made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein*; which comprehends all created beings, the whole universe, and all that is in it, angels, men, beasts, fowls, fish, and whatever exists; and therefore is only deserving of religious worship.

**Ver. 16.** *Who in times past*, etc.] For many hundred years past; even ever since God chose and separated the people of Israel from the rest of the nations, to be a peculiar people to himself: from that time he

*suffered all nations to walk in their own ways*; of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry; which they devised, and chose, and delighted in: not that he gave them any licence to walk in these ways, without being chargeable with sin, or with impunity; but he left them to themselves, to the dim light and law of nature, and gave them no written law, nor any external revelation of his mind and will; nor did he send any prophets or ministers of his unto them, to show them the evil of their ways, and turn them from them, and direct them to the true God, and the right way of worshipping him; but left them to take their own methods, and pursue the imagination of their own hearts: but the apostle suggests, that the case was now

altered, and God had sent them and other ministers of his, among all nations of the world, to protest against their superstition and idolatry; and to reclaim them from their evil ways, and to direct them to the true and living God, and his worship, and to preach salvation by his Son Jesus Christ.

**Ver. 17.** *Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness*, etc.] Of his kindness and goodness to them, during this long interval and period of time; for they had not the written law, yet they were not destitute of the law of nature; and had, besides, many instances of providential goodness, by which they might have known God: and should have been thankful to him, and glorified him as God, and not have worshipped the idols of their own hands; the goodness of God should have led them to repentance, and not have been abused to so many wicked purposes as it had been:

*in that he did good*; in a providential way, to persons very undeserving of it, of which some particular instances follow:

*and gave us rain from heaven*, which none of the gods of the Gentiles could, do, (<sup>2442</sup>Jeremiah 14:22). So  $\mu\text{y}\text{m}\text{c}\text{g}\ \text{j}\ \text{t}\ \text{p}\text{m}$ , “the key of rains”, is by the Jews <sup>f722</sup> said to be one of the keys which God has in his own hands, and which he does not commit to any other: and a wonderful blessing is this to mankind, and which God gives to the just and to the unjust, and did give to the ignorant and idolatrous Gentiles. Beza’s most ancient copy, and four other ancient copies of his, and some others, read “you”, instead of “us”; which reading seems most agreeable:

*and fruitful seasons*; spring, summer, harvest, and autumn, at which several times, different fruits of the earth appear:

*filling our hearts with food and gladness*; giving a sufficiency of food, and even an abundance of it, and that for pleasure and delight, as well as for support and refreshment: the Syriac version reads, “their hearts”; some copies read, “your hearts”.

**Ver. 18.** *And with these sayings*, etc.] Concerning themselves, and concerning the living God, his creation of all things, and his providential goodness:

*scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them*; so resolute were they upon it, that it was with great difficulty that

they persuaded them from it: in four of Beza's manuscripts, and in some other copies, it is added, "but everyone went to his own house", etc.

**Ver. 19.** *And there came thither certain Jews*, etc.] Either just at the same time, or however whilst the apostles were in this city: in four manuscripts of Beza's, and in some other copies, it is read, "as they abode there, and taught, there came", etc. These Jews were inveterate enemies of the apostles, and seemed to have followed them from place to place, on purpose to oppose them, and to stir up the people against them, and to hinder the success of their ministry all they could: for these came

*from Antioch*; not Antioch in Syria, but in Pisidia: where they had contradicted and blasphemed the word of God, and was the reason why the apostles turned to the Gentiles, (~~4135~~ Acts 13:45,46).

*And Iconium*: where also the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles against the apostles, and both of them made an assault upon them, to use them ill, (~~444D~~ Acts 14:2,5)

*who persuaded the people*; in the above manuscripts of Beza's, and in some other copies, are these words,

"and they disputing confidently, persuaded the people to depart from them, saying, that they said nothing true, but in all things lied;"

which though they may not be considered as the text, are a good gloss upon it: they persuaded the people not to hearken to them, told them that they were deceivers and jugglers, and instead of having honours conferred upon them, they ought to be severely punished; and to these Jews they hearkened, as appears by what follows:

*and having stoned Paul*; even the same persons that just before were for sacrificing to him as a god; which shows the fickleness and inconstancy of the populace, and how little they are to be depended on; for they were the Gentiles that stoned Paul, at the instigation of the Jews; though the latter might probably join with them in it: a like instance we have in the conduct of the Jews towards Christ, who cried "Hosanna" to him one day, and on another, very quickly after, with great importunity say, Crucify him, Crucify him; of this stoning, the apostle makes mention, (~~47125~~ 2 Corinthians 11:25 ~~5811~~ 2 Timothy 3:11) When they had stoned him,

*they drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead*; which is an addition to their barbarity and inhumanity; for they not only stoned him until he was dead, as they supposed, but they dragged his body through the streets of their city, in contempt of him, and indignation against him, and cast him out of it, where they left him as unworthy of a burial.

**Ver. 20.** *Howbeit as the disciples stood round about him*, etc.] Weeping over him, and lamenting for him, and it may be praying to God, that he would restore him to life: however, they got about him, in order to take care of him, and provide for his interment: these were the young converts at Lystra, who, under the ministry of the apostles, were now brought to the faith of Christ; unless it can be thought, that they were such who followed them from other places, and attended them in their travels; but the former seems most probable, and which shows their affection to their spiritual Father, and their constancy in the faith of Christ, notwithstanding this ill treatment of his servant:

*he rose up and came into the city*; which was no less than a miracle, and was no doubt the effect of the mighty power of God, put forth upon him; for though he was not really dead, yet he was left as such, and thought to be so by both friends and foes: and when it is considered what wounds and bruises he must receive by stoning, and his being dragged through the streets of the city, and left in such a miserable condition without it, that he should at once rise up in the midst of the disciples, and walk into the city as one in perfect health and strength, has something extraordinary and miraculous in it; and it shows great resolution, courage, and strength of mind, to go into the same city again, where he had been so ill used; though he did not choose to continue there, nor were the inhabitants worthy of such a favour:

*and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe*; where they had been before, and had preached the Gospel, and whither they fled from Iconium, when in great danger, (<sup>4406</sup>Acts 14:6,7).

**Ver. 21.** *And when they had preached the Gospel to that city*, etc.] To the inhabitants of it, as they did in every place where they came, even the pure Gospel of Christ, the good news, and glad tidings of life and salvation by him:

*and had taught many*; or made them disciples, their ministry being blessed to bring many to the faith of Christ:

*they returned again to Lystra*; where Paul had been stoned:

*and to Iconium*; where both Jews and Gentiles, and the magistrates of the city, had attempted to use them ill, and to stone them:

*and Antioch*; that is, in Pisidia, as before; where a persecution was raised against them, and from the coasts of which place they were expelled; so fearless were they of danger, and so zealous to promote the interest of Christ, and the good of souls.

**Ver. 22.** *Confirming the souls of the disciples*, etc.] Not wicked men in their wickedness, nor self-righteous persons in an opinion of their own righteousness, as sufficient for justification, both being contrary to the nature and tendency of the ministry of the word; the Gospel being a doctrine according to godliness, and a revelation of the righteousness of Christ; but the disciples and followers of Jesus, whom they had already made in those places, these they confirmed in the doctrines of the Gospel, and fortified them against the contradictions and blasphemies of the Jews, and the reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions they met with, by which they might be staggered: they did not confirm the bodies of these disciples, and the health of them, which is the business of the physician to confirm; nor their estates and civil property, to secure and defend which belongs to the civil magistrate; but their souls, their more noble and valuable part, their hearts, which are apt to be unstable; the frames of their hearts, which are precarious, and so as not to be too much depressed when disagreeable, or be too much elated when agreeable, placing too much trust and confidence in them; and also the graces of the Spirit in their hearts, as to act and exercise, as faith, hope, and love; and likewise their judgments and understandings in the truths of the Gospel, in what relates to the love of God; the covenant of grace, the person of Christ, and their interest in them:

*and exhorting them to continue in the faith*: in the exercise of the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of faith, and in the profession of both, whatever they might meet with on the account thereof, and which they were to expect:

*and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God* either into a Gospel church state, which is sometimes so called, there being much trouble often attending an entrance into it, both from within, from the corruption and unbelief of the heart, and from without, from the temptations of Satan, and from the revilings and insults of men, and even

from friends and relations; or into the heavenly glory, the way to that lying through many tribulations; and which, though a rough, is a right way: so it “must” be, there is a necessity of it, partly on account of the decrees of God, who has appointed afflictions for his people, and them to afflictions; and partly on account of the predictions of Christ, who foretold his disciples, that in the world they should have tribulation; as also, that there might be a conformity to him, that as he the head must, and did suffer many things, and enter into his glory, so must they his members: as well as likewise for the trial and exercise of the several graces of the Spirit, and to make the saints meet for heaven, and to make that the sweeter to them.

**Ver. 23.** *And when they had ordained them elders in every church,* etc.]

As soon as ever any number of disciples were made, or souls were converted to Christ in any place, they were at once formed, by the apostles, into a church state; and as the gifts, as well as the grace of the Holy Ghost, attended the ministry of the word, so among those that were converted, there were some that were honoured with ministerial gifts, qualifying them to preach the Gospel, and take upon them the care of the churches: these the apostles directed the churches to look out from among themselves, as in the case of deacons, an inferior office, who by joint suffrages declared their choice of them by the stretching out, or lifting up of their hands, as the word here used signifies, and not the imposition of them; and the apostles presiding in this affair, they were installed into the office of bishops, elders, or pastors over them; which expresses the great regard the apostles had to the order, as well as to the doctrine of the Gospel, and the concern they had for the welfare of souls converted under their ministry, by making a provision for them when they were gone.

*And had prayed with fasting;* for the elders ordained, that they might have a larger measure of gifts, and might be kept faithful to the trust committed to them, and be succeeded in their ministry; and for the members of the church, that they might abide by the truths of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, and walk worthy of it in their conversations, and behave aright in their church state, both to their elders, and to one another, and that they might persevere to the end:

*they commended them to the Lord;* both the elders and the churches, to be blessed by him with fresh supplies of grace, to be kept by his power, and to be preserved by him safe to his kingdom and glory. The Lord Jesus Christ seems to be intended by “the Lord”, to whom the apostles commended



them; and who is every way qualified, and fully able to answer such a commendation; (see <sup><40E></sup>Acts 20:32) on whom they believed; meaning Christ, whom they received by faith, in whom they trusted, and on whom they believed with the heart for righteousness, life, and salvation: this was true, both of the apostles, who commended the elders and churches to the Lord, and was the reason why they commended them to him, because they believed on him themselves; and of the churches and elders commended, who could be commended to none better than to him, on whom they had believed.

**Ver. 24.** *And after they had passed throughout Pisidia*, etc.] The country where Antioch, the last place mentioned, was; (see <sup><4134></sup>Acts 13:14) they came to Pamphylia; (See Gill on "<sup><4133></sup>Acts 13:13") (See Gill on "<sup><4120></sup>Acts 2:10")

**Ver. 25.** *And when they had preached the word in Perga*, etc.] A city in Pamphylia, (<sup><4133></sup>Acts 13:13). The Alexandrian copy, and others, and three manuscripts of Beza's, read, "the word of the Lord"; as do the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions: they went down into "Attalia"; not Italia or Italy, as some Latin copies, and as the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; but a city in Pamphylia, bordering on the sea, as Ptolomy writes <sup>f723</sup>; as this place did, as appears by what follows. So Jerom says <sup>f724</sup>, that Attalia is a city of Pamphylia, on the sea coast; it was formerly the metropolis of it: it is now in the hands of the Turks, and is called Sattalia; near it is a bay, called Golfo di Sattalia, where there is a considerable mart for the whole country: it is famous for tapestry, which is made in it: it had its name from Attalus, king of Pergamus, the first founder of it. Beza's ancient copy here adds, "preaching the Gospel to them"; to the inhabitants of Attalia, and doubtless with success, though no mention is made of it here, nor elsewhere, nor of any church in this place; nor do we read of any in ecclesiastical history until the "sixth" century, when Dionysius, bishop of Attalia, is said to be present in the fifth synod at Rome <sup>f725</sup>; unless Attalia, called a city of Lycia, can be thought to be the same with this, of which another Dionysius was bishop in the fifth century; and assisted at the council of Chalcedon <sup>f726</sup>.

**Ver. 26.** *And thence sailed to Antioch*, etc.] In Syria,

*from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God*; by the prophets: from this place they first set out on their travels; here they were separated by the order of the Holy Ghost to the work of the ministry, and

by them they were sent forth, after they had in prayer commended them to God, and to his grace to assist them, and succeed them, as well as to fit them

*for the work which they fulfilled*; that is, for the work of the ministry, for the preaching of the Gospel in several places; and which they had now gone through, and finished with great integrity and faithfulness, and with much success, though through many afflictions and persecutions.

**Ver. 27.** *And when they were come*, etc.] To Antioch:

*and had gathered the church together*: which was in that place, and who came together at their request; for as they were sent out by them, they judged it proper to call them together; and give them an account of the issue of their work they were recommended by them to the grace of God to fulfil: and being come together at their usual place of meeting,

*they rehearsed all that God had done with them*; and by them, as instruments; what grace and strength he had given them to preach the Gospel; what numbers of souls were everywhere converted by it; what miracles were wrought by them for the confirmation of it; and what persecutions and sufferings they had endured for the sake of it; and what deliverances were vouchsafed unto them:

*and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles*; the phrase, “the door of faith”, seems to be Jewish; it is to be met with in Jewish writings: it is said <sup>f727</sup>,

“there are two women found in the world, that express the praise of God, so as all the men of the world have not; and who are they? Deborah and Hannah: Hannah, according to (~~4118~~1 Samuel 2:2) “there is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee” and all proclaim that she [aml \[l atwnmyhmd aj tp tj tp](#), “opens the door of faith to the world”, as (~~4148~~Acts 14:8) “he raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, lo, the door of faith; to set them among princes”, lo, the faith that is above.”

The sense here seems to be, that God had given an opportunity to the apostles to preach the doctrine of faith unto the Gentiles, and the Gentiles had had an opportunity of hearing and embracing it; God had opened the mouths of his ministers to preach to them, and he had opened their hearts

to attend unto it, and receive it; for it may be understood of his giving of them the grace of faith, by which they received Christ, and his Gospel, into their hearts: so a like phrase is used by the Targumist on (<sup>24316</sup>Jeremiah 33:6) who paraphrases the words thus;

“behold, I will bring unto them healing and redemption, and I will heal them, and I will reveal, or “open to them”, *abwyt [rt]*, “the door of repentance”;

that is, I will give them repentance: so here, when God is said to open the door of faith to the Gentiles, the sense is, that he had given the grace of faith to them, which came by hearing the word of the Gospel, which he sent them; and gave them encouragement to believe in Christ; so the phrase a door of hope is used in (<sup>24125</sup>Hosea 2:15).

**Ver. 28.** *And there they abode long time with the disciples.*] That is, Paul and Barnabas continued a considerable time at Antioch with the believers there, before they set out on another journey; and what might detain them the longer, might be the disputes they had with some “judaizing” Christians, concerning the observation of the law; of which, and the issue of them, an account is given in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 15

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 15

**Ver. 1.** *And certain men which came down from Judea*, etc.] To Antioch; they were not sent by the apostles, they came down of “themselves”; who they were, is not certain; that they were “judaizing” Christians, and teachers among them, is plain from the following account: according to Epiphanius<sup>f728</sup> they were Cerinthus, and some of his followers: these

*taught the brethren*; the Gentile converts at Antioch, who are styled “brethren”, though they were Gentiles, because they were regenerated by the grace of God, and were of the same faith with the believing Jews, and in the same church state with them at Antioch: and said,

*except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses*; or custom of Moses, which had been used from the time of Abraham, and was revived and reinforced by Moses; wherefore the Syriac version renders it, “the law of Moses”; (See Gill on “~~John~~ John 7:19”)

*ye cannot be saved*; these men were not only for retaining circumcision, which was now abolished, but they made it necessary to salvation; which was carrying the matter further than even the unbelieving Jews themselves did, at least some of them: for though indeed it is a notion with them, that no circumcised persons go to hell, but are all saved; and some of them say, that God rejects uncircumcised persons, and brings them down to hell<sup>f729</sup>; yet others of them speak of the godly among the nations of the world, and of the proselytes of the gate, who keep the seven precepts of Noah, as persons that shall be saved; so Ananias the Jew, preceptor to King Izates, when he signified his great desire to be circumcised, in order to put him off of it, told him, that if he was determined to follow the customs of the Jews, he might worship God without circumcision, which was more peculiar to the Jews than to be circumcised<sup>f730</sup>.

**Ver. 2.** *When therefore Paul and Barnabas*, etc.] Who were the ministers of the uncircumcision, and were just returned from preaching the Gospel among the Gentiles, with success, and were advocates for them, being

witnesses of the grace that was bestowed on them, and therefore opposed the sentiments of these men:

*and had no small dissension and disputation with them;* which was attended with much heat and sharpness, and continued some time, and occasioned much disturbance and uneasiness; nor could the affair be decided and issued: wherefore

*they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them;* that is, the members of the church at Antioch, taking this matter into consideration, and finding that the difference could not be composed, for the peace of the church, wisely came to a resolution, and made an order, that Paul and Barnabas, with others, as Titus, who went with Paul at this time, as appears from (~~<800>~~Galatians 2:1) and some others of the brethren, and it may be also certain, on, the other side of the question; that these

*should go up to Jerusalem, unto the apostles and elders, about this question;* concerning circumcision, and the necessity of it to salvation, that they might have the sense of James, and Peter, and John, who particularly were at Jerusalem at this time, as appears from (~~<413>~~Acts 15:7 ~~<800>~~Galatians 2:9) and other apostles that might be there; and also of other ministers of the word, who are called elders. And the church of Jerusalem being the most ancient church, and several of the apostles residing here, who had seen Christ in the flesh, and had received their mission and commission from him, and had been extraordinarily endowed with the Holy Ghost; and here being many other preachers of the Gospel, and there being in a multitude of counsellors safety, the church at Antioch judged it advisable to send to them for counsel and direction; and it becomes churches to assist each other in this way.

**Ver. 3.** *And being brought on their way by the church,* etc.] That is, either being accompanied by some of the brethren of the church some part of the way, out of respect unto them, or being provided by them with things necessary for their journey; (see ~~<503>~~Titus 3:13)

*they passed through Phenice and Samaria;* which both lay between Syria and Judea; in the former of which places those that were scattered upon the death of Stephen had preached, and a great number were converted and believed in Christ who were Jews, (~~<411>~~Acts 11:19) and in the latter Philip the evangelist had preached with much success, (~~<405>~~Acts 8:5,12) as

therefore their way to Jerusalem lay through these places, they called upon the brethren as they passed;

*declaring the conversion of the Gentiles*; in the several places where they had been, as in Syria, Pisidia, Pamphylia, and Lycaonia, how by their ministry they were turned from darkness to light, from Satan unto God, from their superstition and idolatry to the worship of the true God, and to faith in Christ Jesus:

*and they caused great joy unto all the brethren*; the believing Jews in those parts, who being truly believers in Christ, rejoiced at the spread of his Gospel, and the increase of his interest, even among the Gentiles; for if angels rejoice, much more should saints rejoice at the conversion of sinners, let them be who or where they will; and where there is true grace, there will be joy when this is the case. There were churches in each of these places, of which “the brethren” here mentioned were members, and which continued for many ages afterwards: the foundation of the churches in Phenice was first laid by the converts made by them, who were scattered abroad through the persecution at the death of Stephen, (<sup><44119></sup>Acts 11:19). Quartus, mentioned in (<sup><51623></sup>Romans 16:23) is said to be bishop of Berytus in this country. In the “second” century there were churches at Tyre and Ptolemais, two cities in Phoenicia; Cassius was bishop of the one, and Clarus of the other<sup>f731</sup>: in the “third” century several Phoenician bishops suffered martyrdom, as Tyrannio, bishop of the church of Tyre, Zenobius, presbyter of that at Sidon, and Sylvanus, bishop of Emisa<sup>f732</sup>: in the “fourth” century, at the beginning of it, there were present, at the council of Nice, the bishops of Ptolemais, Damascus, Tripolis, Paneas, and Emisa; as they were also at a synod held at Jerusalem in the same century, on account of the Arians, and at another at Antioch on the same account: in the fifth century there were churches in Phoenicia reformed by Chrysostom, by whose means also the temples of the idols were destroyed, and many were converted in these countries; and in this age lived several persons of note here, as Antiochus bishop of Ptolemais, Eustathius bishop of Berytus, Paulus bishop of Emisa, Pompeianus and Uranius of the same place, and Damianus bishop of Sidon, and other Phoenician bishops, who assisted at the council of Chalcedon; as Olympius bishop of Atrapolis, Theodorus bishop of Tripolis, Joseph bishop of Heliopolis, Valerius bishop of Laodicea, Thomas bishop of Euroma, and Theonas bishop of Enria or Enaria, all in Phoenicia: in the sixth century, mention is made of the bishops of Ptolemais, Tyre, Sidon, and Berytus, in the acts of the synod at

Rome and Constantinople; and though Phoenicia was seized upon, and wasted by the Arabians and Persians, in the seventh century; yet we read, in the eighth century, of Adeodatus, a bishop of Berytus, who baptized many converted Jews <sup>f733</sup>. As for Samaria, our Lord himself preached and converted many persons there; and after his resurrection he gave his apostles a commission and directions to go there; and here Philip preached with great success. Nicolaus, the deacon, is said to be the first bishop of Samaria; and though in after ages Heathenism very much prevailed in those parts; yet there were Christians and churches, more or less, for several centuries; even in the sixth century there was a bishop of Neapolis in Samaria, killed with the sword, and some presbyters who were taken and fried in a pan, with the remains of some martyrs, by the Samaritan Jews <sup>f734</sup>.

**Ver. 4.** *And when they were come to Jerusalem*, etc.] Paul and Barnabas, and the rest that came from Antioch with them:

*they were received of the church*; that is, that was at Jerusalem, in a very kind and respectful manner; they were received into their houses, and accommodated with everything convenient for them:

*and of the apostles*; particularly James, and Cephas, and John, who gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, in token of their approbation of them, affection for them, and agreement with them:

*and elders*: the other ministers of the Gospel who preached in that place:

*and they declared all things that God had done with them*: just as they did to the church at Antioch, when they returned from their travels, (see Gill on "~~44:27~~ Acts 14:27"), the Arabic version here adds, as there, "and that God had opened to the Gentiles the door of faith."

**Ver. 5.** *But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees*, etc.] Which was the strictest sect of religion among the Jews:

*which believed*; that Jesus was the Messiah, and professed their faith in him, and were members of the church, though they still retained many of their pharisaical tenets, and are therefore said to be of that sect: these rose up in opposition to Paul and Barnabas, as they were relating their success among the Gentiles, and giving an account of the difference that had happened at Antioch, and their own sense of that matter:

*saying, that it was needful to circumcise them*: the Gentiles that believed:

*and to command them to keep the law of Moses*; both moral and ceremonial; the observance of which they reckoned was absolutely necessary to salvation. Some think these are not the words of Luke, relating what happened at Jerusalem, when Paul and Barnabas gave in their account of things to the apostles and elders; but that they are a continuation of their account, how that in the controversy raised at Antioch, certain Pharisees that came thither from Judea, rose up and asserted the necessity of the, Gentiles being circumcised, and of their keeping the law of Moses in order to their being saved; which is favoured by the Syriac version, especially by the Latin interpreter of it, who supplies the words thus, “but say they” (i.e. Paul and Barnabas) “there arose men”, etc.

**Ver. 6.** *And the apostles and elders came together*, etc.] And also the brethren, or private members of the church, even the whole church, as appears from (<sup><4152></sup>Acts 15:22,23). Whether all the apostles were here present, is not certain; Peter, James, and John were; but who else, cannot be said: these met together

*for to consider of this matter*; to hear what was to be said on both sides of the question, and then to judge what advice was proper to be given to the Gentiles.

**Ver. 7.** *And when there had been much disputing*, etc.] Pro and con upon this subject; many had spoken; and much had been said, and a great deal of time had been taken up about the thing in controversy:

*Peter rose up*; not only out of respect to this venerable assembly, but to signify that he had something to say; and he stood up that he might be the better heard. Beza’s ancient copy reads, “rose up in spirit”;

*and said unto them, men and brethren*: an usual form of address with the Jews; (<sup><4110></sup>Acts 7:2)

*ye know how that a good while ago*; or “from ancient days”; or “from the beginning”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; from the beginning of the preaching of the Gospel, after the ascension of Christ; quickly after the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost: it is thought, by some, to be ten or eleven, and, by others, to be twenty years ago, or thereabout:



*God made choice among us*; the apostles; the Alexandrian copy reads, “among you”; the sense is the same, for Peter must be supposed as directing his discourse chiefly to the apostles:

*that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel*, and believe; referring to the case of Cornelius, and his family: and his sense is, that some years ago it pleased God, in his providence, to single him out from the rest of the apostles, and in a very extraordinary manner to call him to go to Caesarea, and preach the gospel to Cornelius, and those that were in his house, that hearing they might believe in Christ.

**Ver. 8.** *And God which knoweth the hearts*, etc.] Of all men; he being omniscient, the searcher of the hearts, and the trier of the reins of the children of men, knew with what sincerity Cornelius sent for Peter; and with what vehement desire and longing expectation he and his family and friends waited for his coming; and with what earnestness, diligence, and affection they attended to what he said:

*bore them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us*; God bore a testimony, and showed his well pleasedness in the whole of this affair, by bestowing upon them not only the regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Spirit; but his extraordinary gifts, such as speaking with divers tongues, even in like manner as these were bestowed on the apostles themselves, on the day of Pentecost, though they were uncircumcised persons; for the drift of Peter’s oration is to show, that circumcision was not necessary to salvation.

**Ver. 9.** *And put no difference between us and them*, etc.] Neither in the extraordinary gifts, nor special grace, of the Spirit; giving them the same graces of faith, hope, and love, admitting to the same privileges and immunities of the house of God, and giving them a right and title to the same inheritance of the saints in light, though the one were circumcised, and the other were not. God puts no difference as to matters of religion under the Gospel dispensation between Jews and Gentiles, neither on account of Abraham’s seed, or of circumcision, or of the ceremonial law, or of national adoption; nor would he have any made with respect to conversation, civil or religious; all which Peter knew full well: nor has he made any difference in his eternal choice of persons to eternal salvation, on any of the above accounts, having ordained Gentiles to eternal life as Jews, who in consequence of it believe in Christ; nor in redemption, Christ having redeemed by his blood men out of every kindred, tongue, people,

and nation; nor in the effectual calling, for they that were called in the first times of the Gospel, were not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also, to whom the Gospel was alike sent, and made effectual to saving purposes: these shared in the same blessings of pardon, justification, and adoption; their sins were forgiven through the same blood, their persons were justified by the same righteousness, and they were taken into the same family, and were no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; having the same access to God, being built on the same foundation, enjoying the same privileges, and having the same hope of eternal glory.

*Purifying their hearts by faith*; which was done by implanting faith in them, and leading that faith to the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin, original and actual, with which men are defiled; for faith has not this efficacy in itself, but as it has to do with the blood of Jesus: and this spiritual purification being what answered to circumcision, made that unnecessary; for this is the circumcision of the heart, of which the other was only typical. The hearts of men are filthy, and need purifying; they are originally polluted with sin; this is the case of all men; and this defilement reaches to all the members of the body, and the faculties of the soul; and especially the heart is the seat of this impurity, which God only can cleanse: he promises to do it, and does do it; and he only can do it, men cannot; for though, they are exhorted to it, in order to make them sensible of their pollution, and their need of cleansing, that they may apply where it is to be had, yet it is not in their power to effect it; to make a clean heart is a creation work, which is peculiar to God: the heart cannot be purified, neither by ceremonial ablutions, nor by works of moral righteousness, nor by humiliations and tears, nor by submission to Gospel ordinances, as water baptism, but only by the grace of God, and the blood of Christ; which the Spirit of God sprinkles upon the heart, and which faith looks to and deals with, and so it is freed from an evil conscience; and this blessing the believing Gentiles enjoyed in common with the believing Jews.

**Ver. 10.** *Now therefore why tempt ye God*, etc.] By hesitating about this matter, by disputing upon this point, and by seeking for further proof and evidence of the will of God in this affair; when it is so plain a case, that it has been his will that the Gospel should be preached to Gentiles, without obliging them to circumcision; that he has given his Spirit both in his extraordinary gifts, and special grace, to uncircumcised persons; particularly he has bestowed faith in Christ upon them, whereby they have

been led to the blood of Christ, typified in circumcision, and are thereby purged from all their filth and pollution, and so are the true circumcision: wherefore it is no other than tempting God, a manifest opposition to him, and what must give him offence, to debate about a point so clear; and especially to attempt

*to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.* It is common with the Jews to call the law a yoke; frequent mention is made of *aydyqp ryn* and *twxm l w* [ , “the yoke of the commandments”<sup>f735</sup> , and *hrwth l w* [ , “the yoke of the law”<sup>f736</sup> : and by it here is meant, not circumcision only and barely, for that the Jewish fathers had been able to bear, and had bore it; nor the whole ceremonial law only, which consisted of a multitude of commands and ordinances very heavy and hard; but even the whole moral law, which circumcision obliged those who submitted to it to keep it perfectly; (see ~~xxx~~ Galatians 5:3), which neither the apostles, nor their fathers, were ever able to do, nor any mere man whatever; and therefore this yoke was intolerable and insupportable, and not to be put upon the necks of the Gentile believers; who here are called disciples, being taught the doctrine of the Gospel, and the way of salvation; which was not by circumcision, nor by any works of the law, but by the grace of Christ, as in the following verse.

**Ver. 11.** *But we believe*, etc.] Who are circumcised; the Arabic version adds, “and are sure”; for what follows is a sure and certain article of faith:

*that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*; not through circumcision, or by any works of the law, moral or ceremonial; but through the grace of Christ undertaking for them, assuming their nature, and dying in their room and stead; through his redeeming, justifying, and pardoning grace: salvation is by Christ; Jehovah the Father appointed him to be his salvation; he sent him, and he came to save sinners; and he has obtained salvation for them; and it is in him, and in no other: and this salvation is by “the grace” of Christ; it was grace moved him to engage in this work before the world began; it was good will to men that caused him to come down from heaven, and appear on earth in the form of a servant; it was pure love that influenced him to lay down his life for them; through the grace in his heart he did all this for them; and it is the fulness of grace in his hands, out of which they receive abundance, whereby they are entitled to, and are made meet for eternal glory:

*we shall be saved, even as they*; either as the disciples, the Gentile converts, who without circumcision, and the works of the law, were saved by the pure grace and love of Christ, in dying for them, and on which they alone depended for salvation; or else as the Jewish fathers were, for they were justified, pardoned, accepted, and saved in the same way, as the saints under the New Testament are: they could not keep the law perfectly, nor was there then, nor now, salvation by it, only by the grace of Christ; and in that way, and that only, Old and New Testament believers, Jews and Gentiles, whether circumcised or uncircumcised, are saved. The Gentiles were not saved by the light of nature, nor the Jews by the law of Moses; the one were not lost for want of circumcision, nor the other saved by it; the only way of salvation to both, and under all dispensations, is the Lord Jesus Christ; through whose sacrifice sin is atoned for, through whose blood it is pardoned, through whose righteousness men are justified before God, and are accepted with him; and through whom saints have communion with God; and by whom, and whose grace, and not by their own works, they shall be saved with an everlasting salvation, from sin, law, death, hell, and damnation: and the salvation of one and of another, even of all that are saved, Jews or Gentiles, is by grace; no one is deserving of it; they have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God; have done that which is abominable, and they themselves are abominable in the sight of God; they have destroyed, and cannot help themselves; nor have they anyone good thing but what they have received from the Lord, and therefore ought to ascribe all to his grace; it is by that they are what they are, have what they have, and do what they do. Salvation, in all its parts and branches, is owing to grace; and so it is with respect to all persons that are saved; some are not saved by their works, and others by the grace of Christ, but they are all saved by grace; and none have any room to boast of themselves against others.

**Ver. 12.** *Then all the multitude kept silence*, etc.] Upon this oration of Peter's, there was a profound silence in the whole assembly, among all the brethren of the church, who were come together on this occasion; they were all satisfied with, and by their silence acquiesced in, what Peter said; and waited to hear what might be further said about this matter, by other persons in the assembly; and even those who were on the other side of the question, were confounded and nonplussed, and knew not what to say, and the more so, when they perceived that the rest of the apostles and elders were of the same mind; for Beza's most ancient copy introduces this clause

thus; “then the elders agreeing to the things that were said by Peter, the whole multitude was silent”: and this gave Paul and Barnabas an opportunity of being heard; who, perhaps, could not so well be heard before, for the clamour of the people against them, who might not have so good an opinion of them, and of their practices:

*and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul*; Barnabas is mentioned first, he being most known to the Jews, and of whom they might have the better opinion; and who probably gave the account of their proceedings and success among the Gentiles:

*declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them*; what wonders of grace were wrought in the conversion of multitudes of them, wherever they came; and what miracles in nature were wrought for the confirmation of the Gospel, such as the striking blind Elymas the sorcerer, at Paphos in Cyprus, and curing the cripple at Lystra; and which they ascribe not to themselves but to God, whose instruments they only were.

**Ver. 13.** *And after they had held their peace*, etc.] Meaning not the multitude, but Paul and Barnabas; when they had finished their account, and had done speaking:

*James answered*; or rose up, as the Syriac version reads, he stood up and began to speak. This was James the son of Alphaeus, one of the twelve apostles, sometimes called the brother of the Lord; for the other James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, was dead, being killed by Herod, (<sup><4112></sup>Acts 12:2) but this was the brother of Jude, and the same that wrote the epistle that bears his name: whether he was now bishop or pastor of the church at Jerusalem, is not certain; nor whether he was president in this council; the speeches made in it do not appear to be directed to him: he began his oration thus,

*saying, men and brethren, hearken to me*; the titles he uses, and the manner of desiring audience, were what were common with the Jews; (see <sup><4114></sup>Acts 2:14,22,29, 7:2).

**Ver. 14.** *Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles*, etc.] James begins with taking notice of Peter’s speech, and agrees to it, and confirms it; for by Simeon is not meant, as some have thought, the Simeon that took Christ in his arms, (<sup><4125></sup>Luke 2:25) who had been dead long ago; but Simon Peter, who had spoken before. Simon and Simeon are

one and the same name; the former is only a contraction of the latter in the Syriac language; Simeon was his pure Hebrew name, and James speaking to an assembly of Hebrews, uses it; and observes, that he had given a very clear and distinct narrative, how God at the first preaching of the Gospel, quickly after the day of Pentecost, was pleased to look upon the Gentiles, and show favour to them, and visit them in a way of grace and mercy, by sending the Gospel to them, and his Spirit to make it effectual: this was a gracious visit; he came and looked upon them, quickened them, and spoke comfortably to them, and bestowed special favours upon them; the set time for such a visit being come: the Arabic version renders it, “how God first promised”; referring to the promises concerning the calling of the Gentiles, which James afterwards confirms by citing a passage out of the prophets to the same purpose: the Syriac version, “how God began to choose out of the Gentiles”: that is, by calling them by his grace; and the Ethiopic version, “how God first had mercy on the Gentiles”; who before had not obtained mercy:

*to take out of them a people for his name*; for himself, for his own glory, to call upon his name, and to be called by his name, to bear his name, and support his Gospel, cause and interest: the distinguishing grace of God may be seen herein; it was grace to visit them, to look upon them, when for many hundreds of years he had overlooked them, he had taken no notice of them; and it was distinguishing grace to take some out of them, to be a special and peculiar people to himself; to separate them from the rest by his powerful and efficacious grace, and form them into a church state, that they might show forth his praise and glorify him.

**Ver. 15.** *And to this agree the words of the prophets*, etc.] In several of the prophecies of the Old Testament, which plainly speak of the calling of the Gentiles; though James thought it sufficient to produce only one instead of many:

*as it is written*; in (<sup><3091></sup>Amos 9:11,12) and this is agreeably to the Jewish way of citing Scriptures, as Surenhusius observes; so it is said <sup>1737</sup>, in twenty four places the priests are called Levites, and this is one of them, (<sup><3445></sup>Ezekiel 44:15) where only one place is mentioned, instead of the twenty four.

**Ver. 16.** *After this I will return*, etc.] That is, after the Lord had destroyed the sinful kingdom from off the face of the earth, and had sifted the house of Israel among all nations, and the sinners of his people were slain with

the sword; after all this he promises to return and show favour to them: this is the sense of the prophet which James gives; for these words are not at length in Amos; there it is only said, “in that day”; upon which Jarchi’s note is,

“after all these things shall have come upon them, that day shall come which is appointed for redemption;”

which well agrees with James here, and the manner in which he introduces this passage:

*and will build again the tabernacle of David, that is fallen down:* that is, as the Jewish <sup>f738</sup> writers themselves interpret it, the kingdom of the house of David, though in a temporal sense, which was now in a most ruinous condition; the sceptre was departed from Judah; all; power and authority were falling off apace from the Jews, into the hands of the Romans; David’s family were quite sunk, and almost gone, and had no share at all in the civil government; Jesus, who was descended from him, and was of the blood royal, and right heir to his throne, was born of a poor virgin; and his supposed father was a carpenter; and he himself the King of the Jews, was crucified by them; yet notwithstanding all this, David’s tabernacle was to be rebuilt, and his kingdom to be restored by the Messiah, but in a spiritual way; for the tabernacle of David designs the spiritual kingdom or church of Christ, who is here called David, as in (<sup>2323</sup> Ezekiel 34:23,24, 37:24,25 <sup>2385</sup> Hosea 3:5) and of whom David was an eminent type: and the church may be called a tabernacle, being in the present state of things, as to its place, uncertain and moveable, though ere long it will be a tabernacle that will not be taken down, (<sup>2330</sup> Isaiah 33:20) and Christ’s tabernacle, being of his building, and where he dwells and keeps his court, as King of saints; (see <sup>2365</sup> Isaiah 16:5) and which was in a fallen ruinous condition when he came on earth, through the corrupt principles of the Pharisees and Sadducees, the bigotry and superstition of the one, and the deism of the other; and through the great decay of spiritual worship and powerful godliness, and the bad lives of professors, and the small number of truly godly persons: the Jews <sup>f739</sup> themselves refer this prophecy to the times of the Messiah, yea, one of the names by which they call the Messiah is taken from hence <sup>f740</sup>: it is asked,

“who is Bar Naphli? it is replied, the Messiah; the Messiah is called Bar Naphli (the son fallen, or of the fallen); is it not written, “in that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen down?””



one of their own commentators <sup>f741</sup> on this text, has this note,

“if we interpret this of the Messiah, the matter is clear:”

but then this must be understood in a spiritual sense, for Christ’s kingdom is not a worldly one; the raising up and rebuilding of this tabernacle, must design the reviving of true religion, the doctrine and practice of it, the enlargement of the church of God, by the conversion both of Jews and Gentiles:

*and I will build again the ruins thereof*, and I will set it up; which has been done by breaking down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and letting in the latter into the Gospel church with the former, whereby it grows up to be an holy temple in the Lord; (see <sup><350></sup>Isaiah 54:2,3 61:4,5 2:2) and to this sense the Jews themselves <sup>f742</sup> interpret it;

“the holy blessed God will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, as it is said, (<sup><309></sup>Amos 9:11) in that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David; for all the world shall be *tj a hdwga*, “one bundle”; as it is said, (<sup><308></sup>Zephaniah 3:9)”

**Ver. 17.** *That the residue of men might seek after the Lord*, etc.] The rebuilder and proprietor of this tabernacle, and who dwells in it; that is, attend his worship, pray unto him, and seek unto him for life and salvation: in Amos these are called, “the remnant of Edom”: and design the remnant according to the election of grace among the Gentiles; the Jews generally call all other nations, and especially the Roman empire, Edom:

*and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called*; for God is the God of the whole earth, of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; and his Gospel was now spread among them, and many of them were converted and called Christians, and the children and people of God: the Jews <sup>f743</sup> understand this of the people of Israel, who are called by the name of the Lord, or on whom his name is called; and some think the words are to be transposed <sup>f744</sup> thus,

“that Israel on whom my name is called might possess the remnant of Edom, and all the people;”

and is true of their possessing or enjoying them in a Gospel church state:

*saith the Lord, who doth all these things*; raises up the tabernacle of David, revives the interest of religion, resettles the church, and increases it, calls



and converts the Gentiles, causes them to seek after the Lord, and unites them in one church state with the Jews; the word “all” is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and is not in Amos.

**Ver. 18.** *Known unto God are all his works*, etc.] These are the words of James, and not of Amos; all the things which God does in the church and in the world, they were all foreknown and predetermined by him: from the beginning of the world; or from eternity; even all his works of creation, providence and grace: the Alexandrian copy, and Beza’s most ancient copy, and the Vulgate Latin version, read in the singular number, “his work”; the work of the conversion of the Gentiles; this was fixed and resolved on by God in eternity; he knew it would be, because he had determined it should be; and accordingly he foretold it, and spoke of it in various periods of time before it came to pass; and therefore it should not be looked upon as some new and strange thing, that was never known, spoken or heard of: and this holds true of every other work of God, and agrees with what the Jews sometimes say<sup>f745</sup>, that “every work which is renewed in the world, the holy blessed God has commanded (or ordered) it from the day the world was created.”

**Ver. 19.** *Wherefore my sentence is*, etc.] Opinion or judgment in this case, or what he reckoned most advisable to be done; for he did not impose his sense upon the whole body, but proposed it to them:

*that we trouble not them*; by obliging them to be circumcised, which would have been very afflicting and disturbing to them; not only because of the corporeal pain produced by circumcision, but because of the bondage their minds would be brought into, and they become subject to the whole law, and all its burdensome rites and ceremonies:

*which from among the Gentiles are turned to God*; the one true and living God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and from idols, and the worshipping of them.

**Ver. 20.** *But that we write unto them*, etc.] Or send an epistle to them, to this effect, concerning the following things:

*that they abstain from pollutions of idols*; that is, from eating things offered to idols; (see <sup><4152></sup>Acts 15:29) for not idolatry, or the worshipping of idols itself, is here spoken of; for that was no indifferent thing; and besides, these converted Gentiles were turned from that, and there was no danger of their returning to it; but eating things sacrificed to idols was an

indifferent thing; but yet inasmuch as it had a tendency to lead to idolatry, and gave offence to the Jewish believers in the churches, and was a stumbling block to weak minds, who by the example of stronger Christians, were led to eat them as sacrificed to an idol, and so their weak consciences were defiled, therefore it was very proper to abstain from them;

*and from fornication*; not spiritual fornication or idolatry, but fornication taken in a literal sense, for the carnal copulation of one single person with another, and which is commonly called simple fornication: the reason why this is put among, things indifferent is, not that it was so in itself, but because it was not thought to be criminal by the Gentiles, and was commonly used by them, and which must be offensive to the believing Jews, who were better acquainted with the will of God; this is omitted in the Ethiopic version:

*and from things strangled*; that is; from eating them, and design such as die of themselves, or are torn with beasts, or are not killed in a proper way, by letting out their blood; but their blood is stagnated or congealed in the veins: the Jews might not kill with a reaper's sickle, nor with a saw, nor with the teeth, or nail; because these  $\hat{y}q\eta wj$ , "strangled"<sup>f746</sup>: and what was not slain as it should be, was reckoned all one as what dies of itself; and whoever ate of either of these was to be beaten<sup>f747</sup>; the law respecting these things was of the ceremonial kind, and peculiar to the Jews, and was not binding upon the Gentiles; for that which died of itself might be given to a stranger, and he might eat it, or it might be sold to an alien, (<sup>(-614)</sup>Deuteronomy 14:21) this has been wanting in many copies, and it was not read by several of the ancient fathers:

*and from blood*: which is not to be understood of the blood of men and shedding of that, which is of a moral nature; but of the blood of beasts, and of eating of that. There were several laws about eating of blood, and which are different, and ought to be carefully distinguished. The first is in (<sup>(-000)</sup>Genesis 9:4) "but flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat"; which forbids the eating of flesh with the blood; but not the eating of flesh separately, nor the eating of blood separately, provided they were properly prepared and dressed, but the eating of them together without any preparation. As this was the first hint to man that we know of, that he might eat flesh, it was proper that the manner in which he should eat it, should be suggested to him; that he should not take the creature alive and eat it, or tear off any of its members and eat it whilst

alive, or eat raw flesh; but should prepare it by roasting or boiling, or some way, in which it might become proper food: and it is the constant sense of the Jewish synagogue <sup>f748</sup>, that this law is to be understood of the member of a living creature, torn from it, and eaten whilst alive; six commands, the Jews say, were given to the first man Adam, the first five forbid idolatry, blasphemy, shedding of blood, uncleanness, and theft, or robbery, and the sixth required judgment against offenders; to these were added, for the sons of Noah, a seventh, which forbid the eating of the member of a living creature, as it is said, (<sup><0094></sup>Genesis 9:4) <sup>f749</sup>. So that this law has nothing to do with eating of blood, simply considered, and no more forbids eating of it separately, than it does eating of flesh separately: in like manner is the law in (<sup><0123></sup>Deuteronomy 12:23) to be understood, and is so interpreted by the Jewish writers <sup>f750</sup>: another law is in (<sup><0196></sup>Leviticus 19:26) “ye shall not eat anything with the blood”; which according to our version, seems to be the same law with the former, but is not; for it is not said here, as before, **b**, “in”, or “with”, but **l** [ , “upon”, “over”, or “by” the blood. This is differently understood: some think the sense is, that no one should eat of the sacrifices, before the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar <sup>f751</sup>; or until it stands or is congealed in the basons <sup>f752</sup>; others, that it is a caution to judges, that they do not eat until they have finished judgment; for whoever judges or passes sentence after he has eat and drank, is as if he was guilty of blood <sup>f753</sup>: another observes <sup>f754</sup>, that next to this clause, it is said, “neither shall ye use enchantment”; meaning that they should not use enchantment by eating, in the way that murderers do, who eat bread over the slain, that the avengers of the slain may not take vengeance on them; this author smells something superstitious or diabolical in this matter; and indeed this is the case; the truth of the matter is, it refers to a practice among the Heathens, who fancied that blood was the food of the demons, to whom they sacrificed; and therefore when they sacrificed to them, they took the blood of the beast and put it into a vessel, and sat down by it, and round about it, and ate the flesh; imagining that whilst they ate the flesh, the demons eat the blood, and by this means friendship and familiarity were contracted between them; so that they hoped to receive some advantage from them, and be informed of things to come <sup>f755</sup>. Hence, this law is placed with others against enchantments and observing times, to which may be added, (<sup><0135></sup>Ezekiel 33:25) “ye eat with the blood”, or “over it”, or “by” it; “and lift up your eyes to your idols”: which is to be understood in the same light, and with these compare (<sup><0142></sup>1 Samuel 14:32 <sup><0178></sup>Leviticus 17:3-7). But besides these, there was a third law, which is frequently repeated,

(~~CRB7~~ Leviticus 3:17 7:26,27 17:10-12) which absolutely forbids the eating of blood, as well as fat; the Jews except the blood of fishes, and locusts, and creeping things, and the blood of men, and the blood that is in eggs, and that which is squeezed out of flesh, or drops from it, which a man may eat and not be guilty of the breach of this law<sup>f756</sup> the reason of this law was, because the blood, which is the life, was given in sacrifice for the life of men, to be an atonement for them; wherefore, to keep up a just reverence of the sacrifice, and to direct to the blood of the great sacrifice of the Messiah, blood was forbidden to be eaten, till that sacrifice was offered up; and then that blood itself was to be spiritually eaten by faith: and now if eating of blood in general was morally evil in itself, it would be a monstrous shocking thing in the Christian religion, that the blood of Christ is to be drank; though it be to be understood in a spiritual sense: the law against eating blood was very strictly enjoined the Jews, and severely punished; whoever ate of blood, but the quantity of an olive, if he ate it wilfully, was guilty of cutting off; if ignorantly, he was to bring a sin offering<sup>f757</sup>: James knew that the breach of this law would give great offence to the Jews, and therefore for the peace of the church he moves that the Gentiles might be wrote to, to abstain from blood; and which was agreed to and done: and this was attended to with much strictness by the primitive Christians, who seemed to have observed this advice in the form of a law, and thought it criminal to eat blood; but in process of time it was neglected; and in Austin's time abstinence from blood was derided, as a ridiculous notion; and it is at least now high time that this, and everything else of a ceremonial kind, was dropped by Christians; though where the peace of the brethren is in danger, this, and everything of an indifferent nature should be abstained from: Beza's ancient copy adds, "and whatsoever they would not have done to themselves, do not unto others"; and so two of Stephens's: the Ethiopic version is, "whatsoever they hate should be done to themselves, let them not do to their brethren".

**Ver. 21.** *For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him,* etc.] That is, for many years past, even from the times of Ezra, the law of Moses has been publicly expounded by them, whom the Jews call Derashim, preachers, or expounders, in every city where there was a synagogue; and every city belonging to the Jews, were obliged to build a synagogue, yea, they were obliged to do it where there were but ten Israelites<sup>f758</sup>: this is given by James as a reason why the Gentiles should be wrote unto concerning the above things; because that they hearing the law

read and expounded every week, would be ready to conclude that they were obliged to submit unto it, as to circumcision, and other things; unless they were told that they were free from it; only in order to maintain peace with their brethren the Jews, it would be necessary for them to abstain from the above things: and it may also carry in it a reason, why the Jews need not be wrote unto, and why they had no reason to complain for thus writing to the Gentiles; since they had the law read and explained to them every week, and there would be no attempt to make any alteration in that form of service:

*being read in the synagogues every sabbath day*; (See Gill on “<sup>4135</sup>Acts 13:15”).

**Ver. 22.** *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church,* etc.] The opinion, judgment, and advice of James, being approved of by the whole body of the apostles, ministers, and brethren of the church assembled together on this occasion; they unanimously agreed,

*to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas*; that is, they thought fit to choose some persons from among themselves, out of that assembly, or who were members of the church at Jerusalem; and send them to Antioch, where the difference began, along with Paul and Barnabas, to give an account of the sense of the apostles, elders, and brethren, about the affair in controversy, and what was their advice upon the whole: and the rather they took this step, to prevent all suspicion of Paul and Barnabas giving a partial account, or putting a wrong turn upon the sentiments of this assembly, they being parties concerned on one side, wherefore they thought fit to send some indifferent persons along with them, to confirm their narrative, and to compose differences among them, and to bring back an account of the state of the church:

*namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas*; (See Gill on “<sup>4123</sup>Acts 1:23”)

*and Silas*, the same with Sylvanus:

*chief men among the brethren*, leading men among them, who went before them, were guides to them, in doctrine and discipline; for these were prophets or preachers, as appears from (<sup>4152</sup>Acts 15:32) and these they pitched upon, partly out of respect to Paul and Barnabas, as being suitable companions for them, and partly out of respect to the church at Antioch, and chiefly because of their ability, and capacity, for such service they were sent upon.

**Ver. 23.** *And wrote letters by them after this manner*, etc.] Not that they made use of them as their amanuenses, to write their letters for them; but being written they put them into their hands, and sent them by them, and they were written in the following form:

*the apostles, and elders, and brethren*; which belonged to, or were members of the church at Jerusalem; they are severally set in their proper place and order: the apostles, Peter, and James, and John, and it may be some others first; for these God had set in the first place in the church; then the elders, or preachers of the Gospel, such as were Judas and Silas: and then the brethren, or private members of the church; who are called so, because they are of one family, and have one Father, and are partakers of the same grace and privileges: these,

*send greeting*; or their Christian salutation, wishing all peace and prosperity, both for soul and body, temporal, spiritual and eternal:

*unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria and Cilicia*; the brethren or members of the several churches in these parts, who were Gentiles, are particularly sent to; and not the brethren who were Jews; because they were especially concerned, and to them is the advice directed: Antioch is first mentioned, that being the place where the controversy began; but there being other churches in Syria, besides Antioch, in which were many Gentiles, and also in Cilicia, and particularly at Tarsus, Paul's native place, and where he had preached, (<sup><410></sup>Acts 9:30, <sup><402></sup>Galatians 1:21) they are therefore mentioned, and being countries near to one another, it is very likely that the controversy had spread itself among them.

**Ver. 24.** *Forasmuch as we have heard*, etc.] By the report of Paul and Barnabas, who were sent by the church at Antioch to Jerusalem, to acquaint them with the state of their case:

*that certain which went out from us*; (<sup><410></sup>Acts 15:1)

*have troubled you with words*, or doctrines:

*subverting your souls*; removing them from the doctrine of grace to another Gospel, and which deserved not the name of a Gospel; and was very destructive to their souls, at least to the peace and comfort of them: this shows what an opinion the apostles, and elders, and members of the church at Jerusalem had of these "judaizing" preachers, and their tenets;

they looked upon them as troublers of God's Israel, and upon their doctrines as subversive of spiritual joy and comfort.

*Saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law;* the ceremonial law; the Alexandrian copy, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions leave out this clause; (see Gill on "~~4150~~Acts 15:1"), (see Gill on "~~4155~~Acts 15:5").

*to whom we gave no such commandment:* it looks as if these "judaizing preachers" not only pretended to be sent out by the apostles, to preach; but that they had particularly this in their instructions from them, that they should insist upon it, that the Gentiles that were received into the churches, should be circumcised, and be obliged to keep the other parts of the ceremonial law, when they had no such orders from them.

**Ver. 25.** *It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord,* etc.] Or together; in one place, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions render it; (see ~~4100~~Acts 2:1) though certain it is, that as they were in one place, so they were in one mind; and their unanimity was proper to be mentioned, in order to engage a regard to their advice:

*to send men chosen unto you;* men chosen for this purpose; namely, Judas and Silas:

*with our beloved Barnabas and Paul;* who are commended thus, partly to express their affection to them; and partly to observe the wisdom of the church at Antioch, in sending two such agreeable persons; and chiefly to testify their approbation of the doctrine and conduct of these two men.

**Ver. 26.** *Men that have hazarded their lives,* etc.] As at Antioch, in Pisidia, where a persecution was raised against them, and they were expelled out of the coasts of that place; and at Lystra, where Paul was stoned, and left for dead, (~~4155~~Acts 13:50, 14:19) and this they did, not for any sinister and selfish ends, for any worldly gain, or vain glory, and popular applause, but

*for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;* for the sake of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his interest, and kingdom in the world; and therefore were worthy of esteem, and ought to be regarded and attended to, and greatly to be preferred to false teachers; who only sought themselves, their worldly honour, and ease, and would sacrifice nothing, nor hazard anything, for the sake of Christ.



**Ver. 27.** *We have sent therefore Judas and Silas*, etc.] The chosen men before mentioned,

*who shall also tell you the same things by mouth*; as are written in these letters; which would both confirm and explain things unto them.

**Ver. 28.** *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us*, etc.] By various things they had reason doubtless to conclude, that they were under the influence and direction of the Holy Ghost in this affair; as by the spirit of prayer that was among them; by that power and energy with which many of them spoke on this occasion, and that so agreeable to the word of God; and by that unanimity with which they came into the advice given. With respect to the form here used, compare (<sup><433D></sup>1 Chronicles 13:2) and the Targum on it, which renders the words thus;

“if it be beautiful before you, and acceptable before the Lord, let us send, etc.”

It follows here,

*to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things*; not that they were necessary to salvation, but necessary to secure the peace of the churches, and at least were necessary, at that present time; and therefore since it appeared to be necessary to enjoin them for the present, they hoped they would not refuse to bear them; and especially, since, though they must own they were burdens, and a part of the yoke of bondage, yet they were not many, nor very heavy, and for the future they should lay no other, nor more upon them; and what they did, was to prevent any other or greater burden to be laid; and so the Syriac version renders it, “lest any more, or greater burden should be laid upon you.”

**Ver. 29.** *That ye abstain from meats offered to idols*, etc.] Which explains what is meant by pollutions of idols, (<sup><445D></sup>Acts 15:20)

*and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication* (See Gill on <sup><445D></sup>Acts 15:20”)

In Beza’s most ancient copy, and in three other manuscripts, and in the Complutensian edition, it follows, “and whatsoever ye would not have done to yourselves, that do ye not to another”; in like manner the Ethiopic version also reads, as in (<sup><445D></sup>Acts 15:20) “from which if ye keep yourselves ye shall do well”; it will be doing a good thing, and make for the peace of



the churches; in Beza's most ancient copy it is added, "born", or "moved by the Holy Ghost": being influenced and assisted by him in this, and every good work:

*fare ye well*; the Syriac version adds, "in our Lord".

**Ver. 30.** *So when they were dismissed*, etc.] That is, Paul and Barnabas, with Judas and Silas, by the apostles, elders, and church at Jerusalem:

*they came to Antioch*; or "came down to Antioch", as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read, agreeably to (~~4150~~ Acts 15:1)

*and when they had gathered the multitude together*; the whole church, which consisted of many members; the company, or congregation of the faithful, as the Arabic version renders it: and as Paul and Barnabas were sent by the church at Antioch; and as the letter, which they, with Judas and Silas, brought from Jerusalem, was directed and sent to the brethren at Antioch, it was highly reasonable, and necessary, that they should be called together, and an account of the business they were sent upon be given them, and the letter be delivered to them, as it accordingly was:

*they delivered the epistle*; sent by the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem to them; this they put into the hands of some one or other of the brethren of the church, in order to be read.

**Ver. 31.** *Which when they had read*, etc.] That is, when the brethren of the church at Antioch had read the letter delivered to them; for not Paul and Barnabas, or Judas and Silas, who were sent with it, read it, but the brethren to whom it was sent, as was proper.

*They rejoiced for the consolation*, or "exhortation", as the word may be rendered, which was given them in the letter, to abstain from the above things, without being burdened with any other; and they rejoiced that there was such an agreement among the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem; and that their sentiments, and those of Paul and Barnabas, and other faithful ministers and saints at Antioch, were alike, and were opposed to the judaizing preachers and professors; and above all, they rejoiced that they were freed from the burdensome yoke of the law, and that the controversy which had been raised among them, was likely to be ended, and to issue so well.

**Ver. 32.** *And Judas and Silas being also prophets themselves*, etc.] As well as Paul and Barnabas, and others, that were at Antioch; (see ~~4431~~ Acts 13:1) and by prophets are meant, not only such who had the gift of foretelling things to come; though such there were, and these might have that gift; but such who were able to explain the prophecies of the Old Testament, give the true sense of the Scriptures, and open them to the edification of others; wherefore having such gifts, they made use of them; Beza's ancient copy adds, "full of the Holy Ghost":

*and exhorted the brethren with many words*; which does not so much design the prolixity of their discourses, and the frequency of their ministrations, though they might preach both long and often; as the richness of the matter of them, as the Syriac version suggests, rendering it, "with a rich word"; with copiousness, fulness, and abundance of Gospel truths, with which they comforted the brethren, giving them many useful instructions and exhortations:

*and confirmed them*; in the doctrines of the Gospel, and particularly in their Christian liberty, and freedom from the law of Moses, in which the false teachers had endeavoured to stagger them.

**Ver. 33.** *And after they had tarried there a space*, etc.] How long is not certain; the Arabic version renders it "a year"; and it is probable enough, they might stay there so long, till things were thoroughly settled, which were thrown into great disorder and confusion, by the pleaders for circumcision:

*they were let go in peace*; that is, they were dismissed, and went away with the leave and consent of the church; who returned them thanks for the service and good offices they had done them, and wished them all peace, prosperity, and happiness, both in soul and body, and great success in their ministrations wherever they went: and as they were dismissed in peace, they left the church in perfect peace; an end being put to the controversy about circumcision, which was raised among them; and the members of the church being agreed in their sentiments, and heartily united in their affections to one another: and thus Judas and Silas were honourably dismissed

*from the brethren*, at Antioch,

*to the Apostles*, at Jerusalem; the Alexandrian copy, and Beza's ancient copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions, read, "to them that sent

them”; and so include, with the apostles, the elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, who wrote the letter to the church at Antioch, and sent it by them; and it was proper that they should return to them, and give them an account of the success of it, how it was received, and what good it had done.

**Ver. 34.** *Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still*, etc.] Though he had leave to go, and was actually dismissed with Judas; and doubtless intended to have gone with him, but for some reason or another he changed his mind, and thought fit to continue at Antioch some time longer: and the design of Providence in it seems to have been this; that he might be a companion with the Apostle Paul in his travels among the Gentiles, as he afterwards was, and was very useful to him. This verse is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions; the Ethiopic version reads, “and Paul proposed”, or “determined to abide”, as he did some little time longer, as appears from the following verse: the Vulgate Latin version here adds, and “Judas went alone to Jerusalem”; and so it is read in one of Beza’s copies, and in one of Stephens’s.

**Ver. 35.** *Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch*, etc.] As well as Silas: teaching and preaching the word of the Lord; the Gospel of Christ; not the word of men, but the word of the Lord, of which he is both the author and subject: this they preached in season, and out of season, with power, purity, plainness, and faithfulness.

*And many others also*; who either came along with them from Jerusalem, when they brought the letter from thence, or were here before; who came hither upon the persecution raised at the death of Stephen, (<sup>4119</sup>Acts 11:19,20) or they were the prophets which afterwards came from Jerusalem thither, (<sup>4117</sup>Acts 11:27) such as Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, (<sup>4113</sup>Acts 13:1).

**Ver. 36.** *And some days after*, etc.] That Judas was gone to Jerusalem, and which they had spent in teaching and preaching the word of the Lord at Antioch:

*Paul said to Barnabas, let us go again and visit our brethren in every city, where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do*; by the “brethren in every city”, the apostle means the believers in Syria, Pamphylia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia; where he and Barnabas had preached the Gospel with success; where churches were planted and elders were

ordained; of which an account is given in the two preceding chapters: and it may be observed, what an affection the apostle had for the young converts, and members of these churches; he calls them “brethren”, they being partakers of the same grace, and of the same faith and family with himself, though they were not in the same office, nor had the same gifts; as also what care he took of them, and of those new planted churches: and which shows, that such are to be visited and looked after, and their cases inspected into; and inquiries should be made of them, how they do, how they go on; whether they continue in the faith, and grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; and whether they are lively in the exercise of the graces of faith, hope, love, humility, etc. and diligent and fervent in the discharge of duty; and this is a work becoming the ministers of the Gospel; and the example of the apostle is worthy of imitation.

**Ver. 37.** *And Barnabas determined*, etc.] Or consulted, and contrived in his own mind, and purposed within himself; the Alexandrian copy, and two of Beza’s, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, “he would”, or was willing; he had a mind, a very great desire,

*to take with them John, whose surname was Mark*; of whom (see <sup><412D></sup>Acts 12:12) he being his sister’s son, (<sup><510D></sup>Colossians 4:10) him they brought with them to Antioch, when they returned from Jerusalem thither, where they had been sent by the church at Antioch, with money for the relief of the poor saints; (see <sup><412D></sup>Acts 11:29,30, 12:25) and who seems to have come with them from Jerusalem again; for thither he went, when he parted from them at Pamphylia, (<sup><413B></sup>Acts 13:13).

**Ver. 38.** *But Paul thought not good to take him with them*, etc.] He did not think him worthy, or a fit and proper person to go with them, as the word used seems to signify, and therefore he refused to take him: the Syriac version renders it, “but Paul would not take him with them”; and, the Ethiopic version is very expressive, though it renders it in softer language, “Paul prayed, or entreated Barnabas that he would leave Mark”; that is, behind them at Antioch: his reasons were as follow:

*who departed from them from Pamphylia*, (See Gill on “<sup><413B></sup>Acts 13:13”); either through the fatigue of the journey, or fear of danger, or weariness in his work, or affection to his mother; or be it what it will, it seems in the apostle’s opinion of the matter, he was very blameworthy, and on account of it very undeserving, at least at present, of being a companion of theirs in their travels:

*and went not with them to the work*; the Arabic version adds, “of preaching”; that is, the Gospel, in the several places whither they went, and to which the Holy Ghost had called them, and for which the church at Antioch had separated, and sent them forth; but in the midst of this John deserted them; and which the apostle resented, he having, as yet, not given any evidence of his sense of his evil, and of his repentance for it, to his satisfaction; though it seems as if he afterwards did, since in (<sup>51010</sup>Colossians 4:10,11) he speaks of him with great respect, as one of his fellow workers, and who had been a comfort to him.

**Ver. 39.** *And the contention was so sharp between them*, etc.] About this matter; Barnabas insisting on it, that John Mark should go with them, he being a relation of his; and in whose favour it might be urged, that his mother Mary was an excellent good woman, who had received the saints into her house, in a time of persecution; and that it should be considered, that this her son was but a young man, and could not be thought to have that courage, resolution, constancy, and solidity, as older professors and ministers; and that his crime was not very heinous, and should be overlooked. Paul, on the other hand, opposing his going with them, as a very unworthy person, because he had behaved so cowardly, and had shown such a coldness and indifference to the work of the ministry, and had so shamefully left them; and thus they disputed the point till there was a paroxysm between them, as is the word used: they were irritated and provoked by one another, and were so warmed and heated on both sides,

*that they departed asunder one from another*; thus as soon almost as peace was made in the church, a difference arises among the ministers of the word, who are men of like passions with others; and though it is not easy to say which was to blame most in this contention; perhaps there were faults on both sides, for the best men are not without their failings; yet this affair was overruled by the providence of God, for the spread of his Gospel, and the enlargement of his interest; for when these two great and good men parted from one another, they went to different places, preaching the word of God:

*and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus*; (See Gill on “<sup>4110</sup>Acts 13:4”).

**Ver. 40.** *And Paul chose Silas*, etc.] To be his companion and assistant; this being the design of the Holy Ghost in influencing his, mind to stay

longer at Antioch, after he, with Judas, was dismissed by the church to go to Jerusalem, (~~4153~~ Acts 15:33,34)

*and departed*; that is, from Antioch:

*being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God*; (see Gill on ~~4135~~ Acts 13:26"). The apostle having such a recommendation by the brethren of the church at Antioch, when he departed from them, and nothing of this kind being said with respect to Barnabas, have induced some to think, that the church took the part of the apostle against Barnabas, in the dispute between them; since the one went away saluted by them, and the other not.

**Ver. 41.** *And he went through Syria and Cilicia*, etc.] Antioch was the metropolis of the former, and Tarsus, the apostle's native place, was in the latter; and in both these countries he had been before, and had been the instrument of converting many souls, and of planting churches, which he now visited, as he proposed to Barnabas to do: for it follows,

*confirming the churches*; in the Gospel, and the truths and ordinances of it, he had before instructed them in: of the church at Antioch, (See Gill on ~~41125~~ Acts 11:26"). And that there were also churches in Cilicia, is very manifest; and particularly there was one at Tarsus, the chief city in it. Herodian, of whom we read in (~~5161~~ Romans 16:11) and Jason, in (~~4175~~ Acts 17:5) who are reckoned among the seventy disciples, are said to be bishops or pastors of this church; (see Gill on ~~4200~~ Luke 10:1"). In the "second" century there was a church in that city, to which Ignatius wrote an epistle, still extant <sup>f759</sup>, in which he makes mention of Philo their deacon: in the "third" century Helenus presided over this church, and was present at a synod at Antioch, when Paulus Samosatenus was condemned for heresy <sup>f760</sup>: in the "fourth" century mention is made of several churches in Cilicia, and the bishops of them; there was a church at Apsis in Cilicia, Amphion was bishop of Epiphania, Theodorus of Mopsuestia, Cyriacus of Adanan, and Sylvanus of Tarsus, the metropolis; in which last place, in the beginning of this century, several martyrs suffered under Dioclesian, particularly Tharatus, Probus, and Andronicus: here the orthodox, in the times of Valens, would have convened a synod against the Arians, but were hindered by him; and in this century Diodorus, bishop of Tarsus, had the care of all the churches in Cilicia committed to him; in this age also we read of Antoninus, a presbyter of this church, afterwards made bishop of it: in the "fifth" century mention is made of the bishops of several churches in

Cilicia, as of Mopsuesta, Irenopolis, Epiphania, Tarsus, Anazarbus, Sebaste, and others who were present at several councils held at different places in this century; in the “sixth” century, out of the cities of Cilicia, Jotapa, Pisidia, Pompeiopolis, Tarsus, Coricus, Anemurius, bishops are said to come to the synod at Rome and Constantinople: in the seventh century, Tarsus was the metropolitan church of Cilicia; and mention is made of the bishops of that and of other cities in this country, who assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople: in the “eighth” century, notice is taken of a Church at Sida in Cilicia<sup>f761</sup>; so long the Christian name was in those parts. Beza’s ancient copy adds, “delivering the commandments of the elders”; and the Vulgate Latin version, “bidding” them to keep the commandments of the apostles and elders; (see ~~4464~~ Acts 16:4), namely; the decrees of the assembly at Jerusalem; which seems very agreeable, since the letters were directed and sent to the brethren of the Gentiles in Syria and Cilicia, as well as in Antioch; (see ~~4452~~ Acts 15:23).

# CHAPTER 16

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 16

**Ver. 1.** *Then came he to Derbe and Lystra*, etc.] Which were cities of Lycaonia, (<sup>4406</sup>Acts 14:6) after Paul had gone through Syria and Cilicia; in the last of these places, he had been stoned, and yet goes thither again; none of these things moved him from the preaching of the Gospel, and from the care of the churches, such zeal, courage, and intrepidity was he possessed of:

*and behold a certain disciple was there*: a converted person, a believer in Christ, one that had learned to know and deny himself, and understood the way of salvation by Christ, and was a follower of him; whether the apostle was an instrument of his conversion, when he was before in these parts, is not certain, though probable, since he often calls him his son; nor is it so evident whether he was at Derbe or at Lystra, though the latter seems most likely, since a report was given of him by the brethren there, and at Iconium, when no mention is made of Derbe, in the following verse:

*named Timotheus*; or Timothy, the same person to whom afterwards the apostle wrote two epistles: it is a name much used among the Greeks, and his father was a Greek; one of this name, who was an historian among the Greeks, is frequently mentioned by Laertius<sup>f762</sup>; and there was another of this name, the son of Conon, an Athenian general<sup>f763</sup>; and another that was a captain or general of Antiochus,

“Afterward he passed over to the children of Ammon, where he found a mighty power, and much people, with Timotheus their captain.” (1 Maccabees 5:6)

“Now Timotheus, whom the Jews had overcome before, when he had gathered a great multitude of foreign forces, and horses out of Asia not a few, came as though he would take Jewry by force of arms.” (2 Maccabees 10:24)

the name signifies one that honoured God, or was honoured by God; both were true in this disciple of Christ:



*the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed;* his mother was a Jewish woman, but a believer in Christ, her name was Eunice, (Acts 18:2 Timothy 1:5)

*but his father was a Greek;* a Gentile, an uncircumcised one, and so he seems to have remained, by his sons not being circumcised.

**Ver. 2.** *Which was well reported of,* etc.] Not the father of Timothy, but Timothy himself; to whose piety, virtue, and good conversation witness was borne,

*by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium;* the members of the churches which were in these places, and which were not far from one another; and as it is necessary that ministers of the Gospel should have a good report of them that are without, so likewise of them that are within; and the testimony of the latter is preferable to that of the former.

**Ver. 3.** *Him would Paul have to go forth with him,* etc.] Perceiving that he was a young man, that not only had the grace of God, but very considerable gifts, and abilities for ministerial service; and having a good testimony of his agreeable life and conversation, the apostle was very desirous he should go along with him, and be his companion in his travels, and be an assistant to him in the work of the ministry; and accordingly he was, and is often spoken of in his epistles, as his fellowlabourer, and one that served with him in the Gospel of Christ, and who was very dear unto him:

*and took and circumcised him;* which may seem strange, when there had been so lately a controversy in the church at Antioch about circumcision, from whence the apostle was just come; and when this matter had been debated and determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, where he was present, and he was now carrying about their decrees: but it is to be observed, that the apostle used circumcision not as a duty of the law, as what that required, and in obedience to it, which he knew was abrogated; much less as necessary to salvation, which the judaizing preachers urged; but as an indifferent thing, and in order to gain a point, and secure some valuable end, as follows

*because of the Jews which were in those quarters;* not the believing ones, for he brought along with him the decrees of the apostles and elders to satisfy them, that circumcision was not necessary; but the unbelieving ones, who he knew would not suffer an uncircumcised person to teach in their

synagogues, nor would they hear him out of them; wherefore having a mind to take Timothy with him to be assisting to him in the preaching of the Gospel, in point of prudence he thought it proper to circumcise him, that he might be received by them, and be the more acceptable to them; who would otherwise have taken such an offence at him, as not to have heard him: thus the apostle to the Jews became a Jew, that he might gain and save some, (<sup><400></sup>1 Corinthians 9:20) for they knew all that his father was a Greek; and that therefore he was not circumcised; for a woman might not circumcise, because she was not a fit subject of circumcision herself<sup>f764</sup>; though in case of necessity circumcision by women was allowed of<sup>f765</sup>.

**Ver. 4.** *And as they went through the cities*, etc.] Of Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, and others in Lycaonia, and in Phrygia and Galatia; the Arabic version reads, “they both”; that is, Paul and Barnabas:

*they delivered them the decrees for to keep*; they gave the churches, in these cities, the sentiments, and determinations to be observed and followed by them:

*that were ordained of the apostles which were at Jerusalem*; concerning the abstinence of the Gentiles from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication, (<sup><415></sup>Acts 15:20,29).

**Ver. 5.** *And so were the churches established in the faith*, etc.] Of Christ, both in the grace and doctrine of faith; and that both by the preaching of the Gospel by the apostle and his companions, and by the decrees of the elders delivered by him:

*and increased in number daily*; as well as in gifts and grace.

**Ver. 6.** *Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia*, etc.] (See Gill on <sup><410></sup>Acts 2:10”) To which may be added, that this country had its name either from the river Phryx, as Pliny<sup>f766</sup> observes, or from the word Phrygios, which signifies “dry”; this being a very dry and sandy country: it was famous for marble stone; hence we read<sup>f767</sup> of Phrygian Stone or marble, of which pillars and statues were made: according to Josephus<sup>f768</sup>, the original of the Phrygians was Togarmah the son of Gomer, and grandson of Japheth, (<sup><410></sup>Genesis 10:3), whom he calls Thygrammes, and his people from him, Thygrammeans, and who, adds he, as it seems by the Greeks, are called Phrygians. Herodotus<sup>f769</sup> reports, that the Phrygians (as the Macedonians say) were called Briges or Brygians, so long as they were

Europeans, and dwelt with the Macedonians: but when they went into Asia, together with the country, they changed their names, into Phrygians: of one Philip a Phrygian, whom Antiochus left governor at Jerusalem, mention is made in:

“And he left governors to vex the nation: at Jerusalem, Philip, for his country a Phrygian, and for manners more barbarous than he that set him there;” (2 Maccabees 5:22)

here dwelt Jews, as appears from (~~41210~~ Acts 2:10) and here the apostle preached and made converts.

*And the region of Galatia:* in Asia Minor: it had Cappadocia on the east, Bithynia on the west, Pamphylia on the south, and the Euxine sea on the north. The inhabitants of this country were originally Gauls, who under Brennus their captain, came out of some parts of France, and invaded Italy, and came to Rome, and took it all but the capitol; from whence being sallied out upon by the Romans at an unawares, they were obliged to retire; and from thence they sailed into Greece, and went into Asia, into this part of it where they settled, which was first called after them Gallo Graecia, and in process of time Galatia; though some say the Grecians called them Galatians from Gala, which signifies “milk”, because of their milky colour: of the Galatians, mention is made in,

“And he told them of the battle that they had in Babylon with the Galatians, how they came but eight thousand in all to the business, with four thousand Macedonians, and that the Macedonians being perplexed, the eight thousand destroyed an hundred and twenty thousand because of the help that they had from heaven, and so received a great booty.” (2 Maccabees 8:20)

here the Gospel was preached, and many believed; for we afterwards read of disciples both in this country and in Phrygia, (~~41823~~ Acts 18:23) and here were churches formed, and to whom the apostles preached, and delivered the decrees of the apostles and elders.

*And were forbidden of the Holy Ghost;* not by an articulate voice, but by a secret and powerful impulse upon their minds;

*to preach the word in Asia:* that is, in that country which was properly called Asia, or pro-consular Asia, otherwise Phrygia, and Galatia, were provinces in Asia Minor. Beza’s most ancient copy, and the Vulgate Latin

and Syriac versions read, “the word of God”: the reasons why it was prohibited to be preached here, at this time, cannot be said, and must be referred to the sovereign will of God; it seems, that at this instant, there were no chosen ones to be called by grace, and there was work for the apostle and his companions to do elsewhere, namely, in Macedonia.

**Ver. 7.** *After they were come to Mysia*, etc.] Another country in Asia Minor. It is divided by Ptolomy<sup>f770</sup> into two parts; superior Mysia is bounded by Dalmatia on the west, by Macedonia on the south, by part of Thrace on the east, and by part of the river Danube on the north; inferior Mysia is bounded on the west with part of the river Ciaber and the Danube, on the south with part of Thrace, on the north with the turn of the river Tyra, and on the east with the Euxine Pontus; but this was the European Mysia: the Mysia which seems here intended, was divided into the lesser Mysia by the Hellespont, and had Troas on the south; and into the greater Mysia by Olympus, which was bounded on the west with the lesser Mysia and Troas, on the east with Bithynia, and on the south with Asia, properly so called. By Pliny<sup>f771</sup> it is called Aeolis, and so Jerom says<sup>f772</sup>, it was in his times; sometimes it is called Abretta and Abrettina, and of later years Thya, or Thyria: some suggest it has its name of Mysia from Mysus, the brother of Car<sup>f773</sup>, the father of the Carions; but according to the Talmudists, it had its name from Meshech, the son of Japheth, (<sup>GEN</sup>Genesis 10:2) for they say<sup>f774</sup> Meshech, *ayswm wz*, “this is Mysia”; Pliny observes<sup>f775</sup>, that there are some authors who assert that the Mysians, Brygians, and Thynnians came out of Europe, from whom they are called Mysians, Phrygians, and Bithynians, in Asia. The inhabitants of Mysia were very despicable; hence the proverb, “ultimus Mysorum”, “the last of the Mysians”,<sup>f776</sup> is used for a very mean and contemptible person. The apostle was willing to preach to the wise and unwise, and disdained not to carry the Gospel to the meanest part of mankind.

*They assayed to go into Bithynia*; another country in Asia Minor; it makes one province with Pontus, and has the same boundaries; Pontus being at the east, and Bithynia at the west: it was bounded on the north with the Euxine sea, on the east with Galatia, on the south with Asia properly so called, and on the west with the Propontis; according to Pliny<sup>f777</sup> it was called Cronia, afterwards Thessalis, then Maliande, (perhaps Mariandyne), and Strymonis; and Herodotus<sup>f778</sup> reports, that the Thracians going into Asia were called Bithynians, who were first called (as they say) Strymonians, inhabiting Strymon; according to Jerom<sup>f779</sup>, it was formerly

called Bebrycia, then Mygdonia, and Phrygia Major, and by the river Iera, or, as Pliny calls it, Hieras, is divided from Galatia; to which agrees Solinus<sup>f780</sup> who says it was before Bebrycia, afterwards Migdonia, and now Bithynia, from Bithynus the king; the king; though others say, it was so called from Bithyne, a daughter of Jupiter;

*but the Spirit suffered them not*; the Alexandrian copy, and Beza's most ancient copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, "the Spirit of Jesus": so that it was not an evil spirit, or Satan, that hindered them, who sometimes did; but they were under the direction and guidance of the divine Spirit, called, in the preceding verse, the Holy Ghost; however, the Gospel was preached here afterwards, and churches formed; of which (See Gill on "~~1~~ Peter 1:1").

**Ver. 8.** *And they passed by Mysia*, etc.] Without stopping or staying there, though they came to it:

*came down to Troas*; either the country of Troas, as the Syriac version renders it; which, according to Solinus<sup>f781</sup>, is bordered on the north part of Galatia, and was near to Lycaonia, Pisidia, and Mygdonia on the south, and to Lydia on the east, and to Mysia and Caria on the north: or rather the city of Troas, which Pliny says<sup>f782</sup>, was formerly called Antigonion, now Alexandria, a colony of the Romans. Antigonion king of Asia called it Troas at first, because it was in the country, and near where Troy stood, but afterwards he called it, according to his own name, Antigonion; but Lysimachus king of Thrace having got this city into his hands, repaired it, and called it after the name of Alexander, Alexandria; and to distinguish it from Alexandria in Egypt, and other cities of the same name in other places, it was called Alexandria Troas.

**Ver. 9.** *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night*, etc.] Either in a dream, or, it may be, when he was awake:

*there stood a man of Macedonia*; an angel in the form of a man; the Syriac version reads, "as a man of Macedonia", and who might appear in a Macedonian habit, or speak in the Macedonian language; or the apostle might conclude him to be so, from his making mention of Macedonia, as the place where he requested him to come, and assist:

*and prayed him, saying, come over into Macedonia*; Macedonia was a very large country in Europe; which formerly consisted, as Pliny<sup>f783</sup> says, of a hundred and fifty people, or nations, and was called Emathia; it took

its name of Macedonia from Macedo, a son of Jupiter, and of Thyd, a daughter of Deucalion: according to Ptolomy<sup>f784</sup> it had on the north Dalmatia, superior Mysia and Thracia; on the west, the Ionian sea; on the south Epirus; and on the east, part of Thracia, and the gulfs of the Aegean sea. It had formerly other names besides Emathia and Macedonia, as Mygdonia and Edoma, and is now called Albania or Ronnelli. Troas, where the apostle now was, when he had this vision, was just by the Hellespont, over which he must go to Macedonia; and therefore the Macedonian prays him to “come over”, adding,

*and help us*; by praying and preaching, to pull down the kingdom of Satan, to destroy superstition and idolatry, to enlighten the eyes of men, and turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God, and save them from utter ruin and destruction. This shows what a miserable condition this country was in; and that God had some chosen people among them to gather in, whose time was now come; and of what use and service the angels, Christ’s ministering spirits, are, who are helpful in weakening the kingdom of Satan, and advancing the interest of Christ, and in spreading his Gospel, and particularly in directing the ministers of it where to preach it; though it follows not from hence, that this angel presided over the whole country, and was their tutelar angel, as some think.

**Ver. 10.** *And after he had seen the vision*, etc.] And considered it, and related it to his companions: and when they had well weighed it, and the circumstances of it:

*immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia*; they determined upon it, and took all the proper methods, and made the necessary provisions for it. Here Luke, the writer of this history, first appears, saying, “we endeavoured”; whether he came with the apostle from Antioch, since he is commonly said to have been a physician of Antioch; or whether he met the apostle at Troas, since here is the first hint of him, is not certain:

*assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them*; they concluded from the vision with great certainty, that they had a manifest call from God to go into Macedonia, and preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of it, not doubting but that they should meet with success. The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read “God”, instead of “Lord”.

**Ver. 11.** *Therefore loosing from Troas*, etc.] Or setting sail from thence, which, as before observed, was the Hellespont; which was a narrow sea that divided Asia from Europe, now called Stretto di Gallipoi, or Bracci di St. Georgio: and so Pliny <sup>f785</sup> speaking of Troas says, it lies near the Hellespont; and Jerom <sup>f786</sup> calls it a maritime city of Asia; and it further appears to be on the sea coast, by what is said in (~~4016~~ Acts 20:6), for from Philippi hither, the apostle and his company sailed in five days, and from hence they sailed to Assos, (~~4016~~ Acts 20:6,13)

*we came with a straight course to Samothracia*; which was an island in the Aegean sea, or Archipelago: it was formerly called Dardania <sup>f787</sup>, from Dardanus the, son of Jupiter by Electra, who fled hither from Italy, upon killing his brother Jasius; it had its name of Samothracia, from Thracia, near to which it was, and from the Samians who inhabited it; and it was called Samothracia to distinguish it from the island Samos in the Ionian sea; it is now called Samandrachi: Jerom <sup>f788</sup> calls it an island in the gulf of Pagasa; of this island of Samothracia, Pliny says <sup>f789</sup>, that it was free before Hebrus, was thirty two miles from Imbrus, twenty two and a half from Lemnus, thirty eight, from the shore of Thracia, and in circumference thirty two — and that it is fullest of good havens of any in those parts; and adds, that Callimachus calls it by its ancient name Dardania; it seems it was also called Leucosia, or Leucadia, because to spectators at a distance it looked white: according to <sup>f790</sup> Herodotus the Pelasgi first inhabited Samothracia, who with the Athenians dwelt there, and from them the Samothracians received their sacred rites and mysteries; for this island was famous for the worship of the Cabiri, or chief deities of the Gentiles, particularly Ceres, Proserpina, Pluto, Mercury, and the two brothers Castor and Pollux, Neptune, and all the sea gods; insomuch that it was called “the holy island” <sup>f791</sup>, and persons of other nations, and even of the greatest figure, were initiated into the mysteries of the Samothracians, which Pliny <sup>f792</sup> calls the most holy; for speaking of Venus, Potho, and Phaeton, adds, who are worshipped with the most holy ceremonies of Samothracia. The apostle did not stay to preach the Gospel in this place, nor do we read of its being preached here by him at any other time, or by any other, nor of any church in this place in after ages in ecclesiastical history. The apostle and his companions are said to come hither, “with a straight course”; not only because they might have a fair gale, which brought them at once hither; but because when they were over the Hellespont, this island lay directly in their way, in a straight line to Macedonia:



*and the next day to Neapolis*; the Alexandrian copy reads, “the new city”, as the word signifies; hence the Ethiopic version by way of interpretation renders it, “the next day we came to the new city, the name of which is Neapolis”: according to Ptolomy, it was a sea port of Edonis, a part of Macedonia, and was upon the borders of Thrace; it is now called Christopoli; and was not Neapolis in Campania, nor Sychem in Samaria, which is so called, but was at a great distance from either of these. Pliny places it in Thracia, as he also does Edonis, and even Philippi<sup>f793</sup>. Jerom calls<sup>f794</sup> it a city of Caria, but wrongly: and though we have no account of the apostles preaching in this place, and of making converts, neither now nor at any other time; yet it appears even in after ages that here was a church in this place: in the “sixth” century the bishop of it was sent to the fifth Roman synod; and in the “seventh” century one Andreas was bishop of this place, who was in the sixth synod at Constantinople<sup>f795</sup>.

**Ver. 12.** *And from thence to Philippi*, etc.] This place is by Appianus called Damos, which was its original name; and by Diodorus Siculus, Crenidae<sup>f796</sup>, from the fountains of water, which were many and wholesome, that were about it; and it had its name Philippi, from Philip king of Macedon, father of Alexander the great, who rebuilt it<sup>f797</sup>: it is now vulgarly called Chrixopolis, that is, Chrysopolis, from the veins and mines of gold found about it; it was famous for a battle here fought between Augustus Caesar and Anthony on the one side, and Brutus and Cassius on the other, in which the latter were vanquished:

*which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia*; which is called Edonis, in which Ptolomy places it;

*and a colony*: that is, of the Romans; (see <sup><4465></sup>Acts 16:37,38) and which Pliny<sup>f798</sup> also calls a colony:

*and we were in that city abiding many days*; without doing anything, having no opportunity, or door opened to them to preach the Gospel; which must be a great trial of their faith, after Paul had seen such a vision, by which they were so strongly assured it was the will of God they should come and preach the Gospel here, and after they had travelled so far by sea and land; though some observe, that the word used signifies not only to abide, but to exercise themselves, by teaching and preaching the word, which it is supposed they did with success; and that the women they after met with by the river side, were such, at least some of them, who had been converted under their ministry; but the former seems to be the truest sense.



**Ver. 13.** *And on the sabbath*, etc.] That is, as the Syriac version renders it, “on the sabbath day”; the Jewish sabbath, the seventh day of the week; though the words may be rendered, “on a certain day of the week” agreeably to (~~400~~ Acts 20:7) where the first of the sabbath means the first day of the week; but be this as it will, on this day,

*we went out of the city by a river side*; perhaps the river Strymon, which was near; the Alexandrian copy and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read,

*without the gate*; and the Syriac version, “without the gates of the city”; all to the same sense: it looks as if there was no synagogue of the Jews in this place, or otherwise the apostle and his companions would have gone into that, according to their custom; and this the rather seems to be the case, since it is so particularly remarked, that at Thessalonica, the next place they stayed at there was one, (~~410~~ Acts 17:1) and the reason might be, because that Philippi being a Roman colony, the Jews were not suffered to have one in it; wherefore Paul and his company, whether on the Jewish sabbath, or on any other day of the week, took a walk out of the city; either for the sake of a walk, or rather to converse together, and consider what was to be done, or to look out for an opportunity to preach the Gospel; and they came to a place,

*where prayer was wont to be made*; or as the words may be rendered, “where was thought to be a place of prayer”; a “proseucha”, an oratory, or a place built and made use of for prayer; that is, as they walked along, they saw a place, which in their opinion looked like a religious house, or a place for prayer, and so made up to it, where they found some persons assembled together on that account: this sense is confirmed by several versions; the Vulgate Latin version reads, “where there seemed to be prayer”, and so reads Beza’s most ancient copy; and the Syriac version is very express, “for there was seen” *atwl x tyb*, “an house of prayer”; to which agrees the Arabic version, “we went out to a certain place, which was thought to be a place of prayer”; to which may be added the Ethiopic version, “and we thought there was prayer there”; and that the Jews had their oratories, or prayer houses, is certain; (See Gill on “~~412~~ Luke 6:12”) and that these were without the cities, and in the fields, appears from a passage of Epiphanius <sup>f799</sup>, who says,

“there were anciently places of prayer, both among the Jews, “without the city”, and among the Samaritans, there was a place of prayer at Sichem, which is now called Neapolis, “without the city”, in the field, about two stones distance, in form of a theatre, open to the air, and without covering, built by the Samaritans, who in all things imitated the Jews:”

and if these were commonly built by fountains and rivers, and as some think, in imitation of Isaac, who went out into the field, “to meditate”; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders, “to pray”; and is also in the same place said to come, as the Jerusalem paraphrase renders it, *arabl* “to a well”, or “fountain”, (<sup>OLD</sup>Genesis 24:62,63) then this clause may be rendered, “where it was usual for a prayer house to be”: and then the sense is, there being no synagogue in the city, the apostle and those with him went out of it, to the river side, to look out for a prayer house; where such places were wont to be built, and they accordingly found one:

*and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither*; who seem to have been Jewish women, who met here to attend public prayer, there being no religious worship of the true God in the city; and among these worshippers of God was Lydia, hereafter mentioned; and worship not being begun, the apostle and his companions sat down among them, and entered into some religious conversation with them, and took the opportunity of preaching the Gospel, which was what they wanted, and were seeking after.

**Ver. 14.** *And a certain woman, named Lydia*, etc.] Whether this woman was a Jewess or a Gentile, is not certain, her name will not determine; she might be called so from the country of Lydia, which was in Asia minor, and where was Thyatira, her native place; Horace makes frequent mention of one of this name <sup>f800</sup> and it might be a Jewish name; we read of R. Simeon ben Lydia <sup>f801</sup>; and as these seem to be Jewish women that met at this oratory, she might be one:

*a seller of purple*; either of purple silks, much wore in the eastern countries; or of the purple dye, which in,

“Then Judas returned to spoil the tents, where they got much gold, and silver, and blue silk, and purple of the sea, and great riches.” (1 Maccabees 4:23)

is called “purple of the sea”, or “sea purple”; it being the blood or juice of a turbinated shell fish, which the Jews call <sup>^wzl j</sup>, “Chalson”: this they speak of as a shellfish; hence those words <sup>f802</sup>,

“go and learn of the Chalson, for all the while it grows, its shell grows with it:”

and that purple was dyed with the blood of it, appears from the following instances; “the best fruits in the land”, (<sup><0481></sup>Genesis 43:11) are interpreted <sup>f803</sup>, the things that are the most famous in the world, as the Chalson, etc. with whose blood, as the gloss on the passage says, they dye purple: and the purple dyed with this was very valuable, and fetched a good price; the tribe of Zebulun is represented <sup>f804</sup>, as complaining to God, that he had given to their brethren fields and vineyards, to them mountains and hills, to their brethren lands, and to them seas and rivers; to which it is replied, all will stand in need of thee, because of Chalson; as it is said, (<sup><f839></sup>Deuteronomy 33:19) “They shall suck of the abundance of the seas”; the gloss upon it, interpreting the word Chalson, is, it comes out of the sea to the mountains, and with its blood they dye purple, which is sold at a very dear price. The text in (<sup><f839></sup>Deuteronomy 33:19) is thus paraphrased by Jonathan the Targumist;

“at the shore of the sea they dwell (i.e. they of the tribe of Zebulun), and they delight themselves with (the fish) Tuny, and take Chalson, and with its blood dye purple the threads of their garments.”

And so Maimonides says <sup>f805</sup>, that they use this in dyeing the fringes on the borders of their garments; after they have scoured the wool, and the like, that it may take the dye, he says,

“they take of the blood of Chalson, which is a fish whose colour is like the colour of purple, and its blood is black like ink, and it is found in the salt sea,”

particularly about Tyre; so the husbandmen in (<sup><2526></sup>Jeremiah 52:16) are interpreted <sup>f806</sup>, they that catch Chalson from the ladder of Tyre to Chippah, or the shore; the gloss explains it, those that squeeze and press the Chalson, to fetch out its blood: and with all this agree the modern accounts given of purple, as follow;

“purple was much esteemed among the ancients, especially the Tyrian purple; which underwent more dyes than the rest, and which was almost peculiar to emperors and kings, yet this purple did not exceed that now in use. — The ancient purple was tinged, or given with the blood or juice of a precious turbinated testaceous sea fish, called by the Greeks **πορφύρα**, and by the Latins “purpura”. — In the seas of the Spanish West Indies, about Nicoya, is found a shell fish, which perfectly resembles the ancient “purpura”, and in all probability is the very same — these are gathered very plentifully in the spring, and by rubbing one against another, yield a kind of saliva, or thick glair, resembling soft wax; but the purple dye is in the throat of the fish, and the finest part in a little white vein — the chief riches of Nicoya consist in this fish; cloth of Segovia dyed with it, is sold for twenty crowns the ell. — In the Philosoph. Transact., we have an account of a purple fish discovered in 1686, by Mr. W. Cole, on the coasts of Somersetshire, South Wales, &c, where it is found in great abundance. — The fish is a kind of “buccinum”, a name given by the ancients to all fishes, whose shell bears any resemblance to a hunting horn; and it appears from Pliny, that part of the ancient purple was taken from this kind of shell fish. The Caribbee Islands have likewise their “purple” fish; it is called “burgan”, being of the size of the end of the finger, and resembling our periwinkles; its shell is of a brownish azure, its flesh white, its intestines of a very bright red, the colour whereof appears through the body; and it is this that dyes that froth, which it casts when taken, and which is at first of a violet hue, bordering on blue; to oblige them to yield the greater quantity of froth, they lay them on a plate, and shake and beat them against one another, upon which the plate is immediately covered with the froth, which is received on a linen cloth, and becomes “purple”, in proportion as it dries<sup>f807</sup>.”

It may be further observed, that the fringes which the Jews wore upon their garments, had on them a ribband of blue or purple, (<sup><0453></sup>Numbers 15:38), for the word there used, is by the Septuagint rendered “purple”, in (<sup><0047></sup>Numbers 4:7) and sometimes “hyacinth”; and the whole fringe was by the Jews called **tl kt**, “purple” :hence it is said<sup>f808</sup>,

“does not everyone that puts on the “purple” (i.e. the fringes on his garments) in Jerusalem, make men to wonder? and a little after, the

former saints, or religious men, when they had wove in it (the garment) three parts, they put on it **tl kt**, “the purple.”

And there were persons who traded in these things, and were called **tl kt yr kwm**, “sellers of purple”<sup>f809</sup>, as here; that is, for the Tzitzith, or fringes for the borders of the garments, on which the ribband of blue or purple was put, as the gloss explains it: the Jews were very curious about the colour, and the dying of it; that it should be a colour that would hold and not change; and that the ribband be dyed on purpose for that use. Maimonides gives rules for the dying of it<sup>f810</sup>, and they were no less careful of whom they bought it; for they say, that “the purple” was not to be bought, but of an approved person, or one that was authorized for that purpose<sup>f811</sup>; and a scruple is raised by one, whether he had done right or no, in buying it of the family of a doctor deceased<sup>f812</sup>: now since Lydia might be a Jewess, or at least, as appears by what follows, was a proselytess of the Jewish religion, this might be her business to sell the purple for their fringes, and it may be the fringes themselves; and if this was her employment, she was thoroughly a religious person in their way, since we find, that **tl kt yr kwm**, “sellers of purple”, were free from reading

“hear O Israel”, etc. (~~Exodus~~ Deuteronomy 6:4) and “from prayer”, and from the phylacteries, etc. for this reason, because he that is employed in the commandment (in any work for it) was free from the commandment<sup>f813</sup>;

and yet she attended at the place and time of prayer:

*of the city of Thyatira*; which was in Lydia, or as others say in Mysia, which was in Asia Minor; Pliny<sup>f814</sup> seems to place it in Ionia, by the river Lycus, and says it was formerly called Pelopia and Euhippa, and it was also called Semiramis; it had its name of Thyatira from Seleucus Nicanor, who being at war with Lysimachus near this place, and hearing he had a daughter born, called it Thygateira; though others say it was so called, because that when the Mysians were about to build a city, inquiring of the gods where they should build it, were told, that they should build it where a hart was struck, and appeared running; and **δία το ψυειν**, because of the sacrificing of the hart, they called it Thyateira. The Turks now call it “Ak hissar”, the white camp. This was Lydia’s native place, from which she was now at a great distance, being either wholly removed hither, or was

here upon business; for Thyatira was in Asia, and Philippi, where she now was, was in Europe:

*which worshipped God*; the true God, the God of Israel, and not the gods of the Gentiles, among whom she was; which shows, that she was either a Jewish woman, who had knowledge of the one true and living God, or at least a proselytess of the Jewish religion:

*heard us*; not alone, but with other women; and at first only externally, and not so as to understand and receive what she heard, until the efficacious grace of God was exerted upon her, signified in the following clause:

*whose heart the Lord opened*; which was before shut and barred, with the bars of ignorance, hardness, and unbelief. The heart of a sinner before conversion, is like a house shut up, and wholly in darkness; whatever degree of natural or moral light is in it, there is none in spiritual things; it is empty of the grace of God, of the fear of him, and love to him; it is without proper inhabitants, without God, Christ, and the Spirit; and is the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, who delight in dark and desolate places; it is bolted and barred with unbelief, and walled up, and even petrified and hardened with sin, and is guarded and garrisoned by Satan, and its goods are kept in peace by him: and this had been the case of Lydia; but now the Lord opened her understanding, and put light into it, which was before darkness itself; as to spiritual things; by which she saw her wretched, sinful, and miserable state by nature, the insufficiency of all ways and means, and works, to justify and save her, and the necessity, suitability, and fulness of grace and salvation by Christ; which was done by the same divine power, that at first created light in darkness: moreover, the Lord wrought upon her affections, and engaged them to divine and spiritual things; creating love in her soul to Christ, to his people, truths and ordinances; which was done by his almighty hand, taking away the stony heart, and giving an heart of flesh: he also removed the bar of unbelief, entered in himself, dispossessed Satan, and worked faith in her, to look to him, lay hold on him, and receive him, as her Saviour and Redeemer; making her willing in the day of his power, to be saved by him, and to serve him: it is a petition the Jews frequently make <sup>f815</sup>, in their prayers to God, *yabl j tptd*, “that thou wouldst open my heart”, in thy law; or as sometimes, open our hearts in the doctrine of thy law: not Lydia herself, nor the Apostle Paul, but the Lord opened her heart; Jehovah the Father, who commanded light out of darkness; Jehovah the Son, who has the key

of the house of David; Jehovah the Spirit, who convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment:

*that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul*; concerning the person and offices of Christ, concerning his truths and ordinances, concerning free justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and everlasting salvation by him; these things she hearkened unto in another manner than she had done; before she heard, but did not attend to what she heard; but faith coming by hearing, now she hears with the hearing of faith, and understands what she hears, and cordially receives and embraces it, and put into practice what she heard, submitting to the ordinance of Christ, as follows.

**Ver. 15.** *And when she was baptized*, etc.] In water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the commission of Christ, by the apostle, or some one of his companions; by whom she was instructed into the nature and use of this ordinance; and very likely it was performed in that river, by the side of which the oratory stood, where they were assembled:

*and her household*; they were baptized also, being converted at the same time; these seem to be her menial servants, who came along with her from her native place upon business, and who attended on her; accordingly the Ethiopic version renders it, “and she was baptized with all her men”; and these were believers, and are called “the brethren”, (<sup>4160</sup>Acts 16:40) hence this passage will by no means serve the cause of infant baptism: whether Lydia was a maid, a wife, or widow, cannot be said; it looks, however, as if she had no husband now, since she is mentioned as a trader herself; and whether she had any children or not, is not certain, nor can it be concluded from this clause, for there are many households that have no children; and if she had young children, it is not likely she should bring them with her to such a distant place, whither she was come upon trade and business: the pleaders for infant baptism must prove that she had children; that these were her household, or part of her household here spoken of; and that they were baptized; or this instance will be of no service to their cause:

*she besought us, saying, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord*; this she said, not as doubting whether they had so judged of her, but as supposing it, and taking it for granted, that they had; wherefore she reasons upon it, and argues from it; and the sense is this, that seeing the apostle and his company had judged her to be a believer in Christ, by admitting her to

the ordinance of baptism; and she had shown her faithfulness to him, by submitting to it, according to his will; therefore she earnestly entreated them to take up their residence at her house, whilst at Philippi: saying,

*come into my house, and abide there*; her faith soon worked by love; and by the fruits of righteousness which followed upon it, it appeared to be true and genuine: and she constrained us; Paul and Silas, and Timothy and Luke, and whoever else were in company; she not only invited them, but obliged them to go with her; she would take no denial, and by her arguments, entreaties, and importunity, as it were forced them, and prevailed upon them to go with her.

**Ver. 16.** *And it came to pass as we went to prayer*, etc.] That is, to the house of prayer, or to the oratory, as they were in the way to it; for this is not to be understood of their just going to the act, or duty of prayer; for the damsel that now met them, is said to follow them, and to do so for many days, one after another; and it was by their going to the prayer house, that she knew what they were; and besides, the phrase of “going to prayer”, as used by us, for the act or duty of prayer, is a mere Anglicism, and unknown to the eastern writers: now this their going to the oratory, was after they had been at Lydia’s house, and had been entertained and refreshed there; whether this was on the same day that she was converted and baptized, is not certain: however, so it was, that

*a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination, met us*; in the Greek text it is, “the spirit of Python”; the Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, “the spirit Python”; the same with Apollo, who was called Pythius, as was his oracle, from the people coming to him, πυψανεσψα, to inquire of him and consult with him, about difficult matters <sup>f816</sup>; or rather from the Hebrew word ִּטְפ, which signifies a serpent; and so Apollo is said to have his name Pythius, from his killing the serpent Typhon, or Python <sup>f817</sup>; hence the city of Delphos, where was the oracle of Apollo, was called Pytho <sup>f818</sup>; the prophetess that sat upon the golden tripos, and delivered out the oracles, Pythia; and the feasts and plays instituted to the honour of Apollo, were called the Pythian feasts and plays, and the place of the oracle Pythium <sup>f819</sup>: and so this maid, or the spirit in her, pretended to divine and foretell things to come; and the Arabic renders it, “an unclean spirit, foretelling future things”: the Jews <sup>f820</sup> make this spirit of Python, to be the same with Ob, which we render a familiar spirit, (<RB7>Leviticus 20:27 <581>Deuteronomy 18:11) and the Septuagint by



“Engastrimythos”, a ventriloquist, one that seemed to speak out of his belly, and pretended to predict future events; and most of the versions in the Polyglot Bible render it by “Python”, the word here used: so the Jews say <sup>f821</sup>, that a master of Obidiah (as the woman of Endor is called the mistress of Ob), **פּוּתְיֹת הַזֵּ**, this is “Python”: and so Jarchi on (<sup>f821</sup>Deuteronomy 18:11) explains the word, and adds, that it is one that speaks out of his arm holes, as those sort of people did from several parts of their bodies, and even from their secret parts: the word signifies a bottle, and they were called masters or mistresses of the bottle; either because the place on which they sat, and from whence they gave forth their oracles, was in the form of one; or they made use of a bottle in their divinations; or as Schindler <sup>f822</sup> observes, being possessed, they swelled and were inflated like bottles; and being interrogated, they gave forth answers out of their bellies, concerning things past, present, and to come: and this speaking out of their bellies might be done, without the possession of a real spirit, and much less was it from God, as Plutarch <sup>f823</sup>, an Heathen himself, observes;

“it is foolish and childish, to think that God, as the ventriloquists formerly called Eurycleans, and now Pythonists, should hide himself in the bodies of the prophets, using their mouths and voices as instruments to speak with, for this was done by turning their voices down their throats.”

The first of this sort was one Eurycles, of whom Aristophanes <sup>f824</sup> makes mention; and the Scholiast upon him says, that he was a ventriloquist, and was said by the Athenians to prophesy by a “demon” that was in him, when it was only an artificial way of speaking; Tertullian affirms he had seen such women that were ventriloquists, from whose secret parts a small voice was heard, as they sat and gave answers to things asked: Caelius Rhodiginus writes, that he often saw a woman a ventriloquist, at Rhodes, and in a city of Italy his own country; from whose secrets, he had often heard a very slender voice of an unclean spirit, but very intelligible, tell strangely of things past or present, but of things to come, for the most part uncertain, and also often vain and lying; and Wierus relates of one Peter Brabantius, who as often as he would, could speak from the lower part of his body, his mouth being open, but his lips not moved, whereby he deceived many by this cunning; and there was a man at court in King James the First’s time here in England, who could act this imposture in a very lively manner <sup>f825</sup>: but now whether the spirit that was in this maid was a cheat, an imposture of this kind, is not so easy to say; it seems by the dispossession that

follows, that it was a real spirit that possessed her; though some think it was no other than a deluding, devilish, imposture:

*which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying*: divining or prophesying; it seems she had many masters, who had a propriety in her, and shared the gain she brought; unless by them are meant her master and mistress: vast treasures were brought to the temple at Delphos, by persons that applied to the Pythian oracle there; and great quantities were got by particular persons, who pretended to such a spirit, by which they told fortunes, and what should befall people hereafter, or where their lost or stolen goods were, and such like things; and of such sort were the magical boys and servants Pignorius <sup>f826</sup> makes mention of, out of Apuleius, Porphyry, and others, who either for gain or pleasure, performed many strange things.

**Ver. 17.** *The same followed Paul and us*, etc.] Silas, Luke, and Timothy; the Arabic version reads, “the same followed Paul and Silas”; as they were going to the oratory:

*and cried, saying, these men are the servants of the most high God*; not of Python, or Apollo, as she and her masters were; or of any of the deities of the Gentiles; nor of sin, nor of Satan, nor of men, but of the one only true and living God, one of whose titles is <sup>^</sup>wyl [ , “Elion”, the “Most High”, (<sup><0142></sup>Genesis 14:22 <sup><0318></sup>Psalm 83:18) and these men were his servants, not merely by right of creation, as all men are, or should be; nor only through the power of divine grace upon their souls, bringing them into a willing obedience to him, as all the saints are; but by office, being ministers of the word: wherefore it follows,

*which show unto us the way of salvation*; which is not by the works of men; for by them the justice of God cannot be satisfied, nor his law fulfilled; God has declared against this way of salvation; it would make void the death of Christ, and frustrate the design of God in it; which is to magnify his grace, and exclude boasting in man: to which may be added, that the best works of men being imperfect, and attended with much sin, would rather damn than save; wherefore it is sinful, dangerous, and vain, to attempt salvation in this way. The only way of salvation is by the Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the law is fulfilled, satisfaction is made for sin, peace and pardon are procured, an everlasting righteousness is brought in, and through whom grace and glory are given: and this is a way of

salvation, agreeable to all the perfections of God; in which the vilest sinner made sensible of his sins, and of his need of this, has no reason to despair; it is exceeding suitable to his case, and is a way in which none ever perish, that are directed to it: and now this way of salvation is only shown in the Gospel, by the ministers of it; not by the light of nature, for to men who only have that, it is foolishness; nor by the law of Moses, for to such who are under that, it is a stumbling block; nor by the carnal reason of men, it is not of men, nor after men, but by divine revelation: and therefore the natural man receives it not, it is hid from such; and therefore they project various ways of salvation, which are pleasing in their own eyes, but the end of them are the ways of death; the way to life and immortality, is only brought to light in the Gospel: whether she said this of her own accord, or was obliged to it by divine impulse; and whether it was through fear of Paul, and in flattery to him, or was with a good or bad design, is not easy to determine: however, certain it is, what she said was truth; and sometimes the devil himself, the father of lies, is obliged to speak it.

**Ver. 18.** *And this she did many days*, etc.] As the apostle and his company passed to and from the oratory, being for that time at Lydia's house; she followed them, and repeated the above words. This she was suffered to do, time after time; not that the apostle and his friends wanted such a testimony, or that it was of any use to them; but that the expulsion of the evil spirit might be more manliest, and more taken notice of:

*but Paul being grieved*; at the unhappy condition the maid was in, being possessed with such a spirit: and that the people were so imposed upon and deluded by it; and that it should be thought that there was any combination and agreement between that and him:

*turned*; himself to her, who was behind him, she following him, as is said in the preceding verse; this is left out in the Syriac version:

*and said to the spirit*; or to that spirit, as the same version renders it; to the spirit of Python, or Apollo, or of divination, that was in the maid; the Ethiopic version reads, "and he said", "in", or "by the Holy Spirit"; being under a more than ordinary influence and impulse of his; but not the spirit by which he spake, but the spirit to which he spake, is here meant:

*I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, and he came out the same hour*; this is an instance of that power which Christ

gave to his apostles to cast out devils in his name, (~~400E~~ Matthew 10:1, ~~416T~~ Mark 16:17)

**Ver. 19.** *And when her masters saw*, etc.] As they might by her sedateness and composure; she not being wild and frantic, and not having such motions and agitations she had whilst under the possession of the evil spirit:

*that the hope of their gains was gone*; the Syriac version adds, “out of her”; namely, the evil spirit which was the ground and foundation of all their hope of gains, they expected to acquire for themselves; that being gone, they had no more work to do, nor tricks to play, nor profit to expect from the maid: wherefore

*they caught Paul and Silas*; they being the chief speakers, and principally concerned in the ejection of the evil spirit; they laid hold on them, took them by the collar, or held them by their clothes,

*and drew them into the market place*: or rather into the court of judicature, as the word also signifies; there to accuse them, and to have them tried, condemned, and punished:

*unto the rulers*; the judges of the court, it may be the Decuriones; for in a Roman colony as Philippi was, they chose out every tenth man, that was of capacity and ability, to make and establish a public council, and who therefore were called by this name.

**Ver. 20.** *And brought them to the magistrates*, etc.] The same as before; wherefore the Syriac version omits them there, and reads them both together here, calling them the magistrates and chief men of the city; though the word here used, properly signifies military captains, captains of the Roman militia: but that they were the same with the Decuriones, or ten men before mentioned, appears from what Harpocratian says <sup>f827</sup>, that every year were chosen “ten *στρατηγοι*, magistrates”, the word here used:

*saying, these men being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city*; they call Paul and Silas Jews, either because they knew them to be so, or because they attended at the Jewish oratory, or place of worship; and it was common with the Romans to call the Christians Jews; they were generally included in the same name; and this name of the Jews was become very odious with the Romans; a little after this, Claudius commanded them, the Jews, to depart from Rome, (~~448E~~ Acts 18:2) they were commonly looked

upon as a troublesome and seditious sort of people, and indeed this was the old charge that was fastened upon them, (<sup><13045></sup>Ezra 4:15, <sup><13048></sup>Esther 3:8). So that it was enough to say that Paul and Silas were Jews, to prove them to be disturbers of the public peace: and it is to be observed, that their accusers make no mention of the dispossessing of the maid, who was their private property, and which was a private affair; but pretend a concern for the public welfare, and bring a charge of public disturbance and detriment, to which their malice and revenge prompted them, hoping in this way the better to succeed: the Arabic version reads, “these two men trouble our city, and they are both Jews”.

**Ver. 21.** *And teach customs*, etc.] The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read in the singular number, “custom or law”; referring to the doctrine of salvation by Christ, in whose name the spirit of divination was cast out of the maid, and whom they took for a new deity; and so concluded that the apostle and his company were introducing a new religious law or custom, the worship of another God:

*which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans*; for the city of Philippi was a Roman colony, and so the inhabitants of it called themselves Romans; or these men might be strictly such, who were transplanted hither; and with the Romans, it was not lawful to receive, observe, and worship, a new or strange deity, without the decree of the senate <sup>f828</sup>.

**Ver. 22.** *And the multitude rose up together against them*, etc.] The crowd of people that were gathered together in the court on this occasion; being no doubt spirited up by the proprietors of the maid, out of whom the spirit of divination was cast, and encouraged by the rulers, and being provoked at the hearing of unlawful customs being introduced among them;

*and the magistrates rent off their clothes*; not their own clothes, as did the high priest, (<sup><4143></sup>Mark 14:63) but the clothes of Paul and Silas; and so reads the Arabic version, “and the rulers rent the garments of both of them”; which removes the ambiguity in the words; for at the whipping or beating of malefactors, they did not pluck off their garments, but rent and tore them off, and so whipped or beat them naked: this was the custom with the Jews <sup>f829</sup>; it is asked,

“how did they whip anyone? his hands are bound to a pillar here and there, and the minister of the synagogue (or the executioner)

takes hold of his clothes; and if they are rent, they are rent, and if they are ripped, they are ripped, (be it as it will,) until he has made his breast bare, etc.”

And in like manner the Lectors, or executioners among the Romans, used to tear the garments of malefactors, when they beat them; this the magistrates themselves did here, unless they may be said to do it, because they ordered it to be done, as follows:

*and commanded to beat them*; that is, with rods: this was one of the three times the apostle was beat in this manner, (<sup><47125></sup>2 Corinthians 11:25) and of this shameful treatment at Philippi, he makes mention in (<sup><5112></sup>1 Thessalonians 2:2).

**Ver. 23.** *And when they had laid many stripes upon them*, etc.] Even above measure, as in (<sup><47113></sup>2 Corinthians 11:35).

*They cast them into prison*; designing doubtless to inflict some greater punishment upon them, after they had further examined into their affairs:

*charging the jailer to keep them safely*; suggesting, that he must be answerable for them, should they escape, either through his favour or his negligence; and they might rather give this strict charge, because they perceived that they were uncommon men, possessed of a strange power, which they had exerted in the casting out of the evil spirit, which might come to their knowledge by some means or other; they might look upon them to be a sort of magicians, and therefore were to be narrowly watched, that they did not make use of their art to deliver themselves; however, they judged it necessary to use all the precautions they could, to secure them: some have thought this jailer to be the same with Stephanas, (<sup><40116></sup>1 Corinthians 1:16) but this is not certain, nor very probable.

**Ver. 24.** *Who having received such a charge*, etc.] So strict an one from the magistrates, was doubly careful and diligent:

*thrust them into the inner prison*: the innermost part of it, the lowest or furthest part of the prison; so that there were the more doors, bolts, and bars, to break open, and pass through, should they attempt to make their escape:

*and made their feet fast in the stocks*; or “wood”, a wooden machine, in which the feet of prisoners were put for security, and which we call “the

stocks”; some say it was such an one, in which the neck as well as the feet were put, and so might be the same with our “pillory”.

**Ver. 25.** *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed,* When others were asleep, and all things were still and quiet; (see Gill on “~~3962~~ Psalm 119:62”), and they prayed doubtless for themselves, for their deliverance in God’s time and way, and for support under their present afflictions; and for supplies of grace, to enable them to bear with patience and cheerfulness, until an issue was put to them; and for their enemies, and, particularly it may be for the jailer, who had used them so ill; and for the churches of Christ, for all the saints, and for the spread and success of the Gospel:

*and sang praises unto God;* or “sang an hymn to God”, very likely one of David’s psalms, or hymns: for the book of Psalms is a book, of hymns, and several of the psalms are particularly called hymns; this showed not only that they were cheerful, notwithstanding the stripes that were laid upon them, and though their feet were made fast in the stocks, and they were in the innermost prison, in a most loathsome and uncomfortable condition; and though they might be in expectation of greater punishment, and of death itself; but also that they were thankful and glorified God, who had counted them worthy to suffer for his name’s sake:

*and the prisoners heard them;* for it seems there were other prisoners besides them, and who were in the outer prison: and from hence it appears, that their prayer was not merely mental; nor was their singing praises only a making melody in their hearts, but were both vocal; and it might be chiefly for the sake of the prisoners, that they both prayed and praised in this manner, that they might hear and be converted; or at least be convicted of the goodness of the cause, for which the apostles suffered.

**Ver. 26.** *And suddenly there was a great earthquake,* etc.] An extraordinary and unusual one; which did not arise from natural causes, from wind being pent up in the earth, but from the prayers and praises of the saints, going up to heaven; when God was pleased to testify his presence and power this way; and the effects which followed upon this earthquake, show it to be a supernatural one:

*so that the foundations of the prison were shaken;* not the roof and walls only, as is common in earthquakes, but the very foundation also; and yet the edifice was not thrown down, as is usual when the foundation is shaken:

*and immediately all the doors were opened*; both of the outer and inner prisons, which is another unusual effect of earthquakes:

*and everyone's bands were loosed*; not only the bands of Paul and Silas, but of the rest of the prisoners; though the Arabic version reads, "all the fetters and bands of both were loosed", referring it only to Paul and Silas; this circumstance shows also, that the earthquake was miraculous, for when was it ever known that such an effect ever followed one?

**Ver. 27.** *And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep*, etc.] Not so much by the loud voices of Paul and Silas, as by the uncommon motion of the earth, which so shook him, as thoroughly to awake him:

*and seeing the prison doors open*; which was the first thing in his fright he was looking after, and careful of, and which he might perceive, though it was midnight, and though as yet he had no light:

*he drew out his sword*; from its scabbard, which was girt about him; for it may be he had slept with his clothes on, and his sword girt to him; or if he had put on his clothes upon awaking, he had also girt himself with his sword:

*and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled*; especially Paul and Silas, concerning whom he had received such a strict charge from the magistrates; and he knew that according to law, he must suffer the same punishment that was designed for them; and therefore in fear of the magistrates, and what they would inflict upon him, he was just going to destroy himself.

**Ver. 28.** *But Paul cried with a loud voice*, etc.] Knowing by divine revelation, what the jailer was about to do; though being in the innermost prison, in a dark dungeon, he could not see him, unless it can be thought, that the opening of the doors had let in light sufficient; and it may be also, that he knew in the same way, what designs of grace God had towards this man and his family:

*saying, do thyself no harm*; which is an instance of great tenderness, humanity, and love, to one that had used him and his companion with so much severity and cruelty:

*for we are all here*; not only Paul and Silas, but the rest of the prisoners also; who either being so intent upon hearing the prayers and praises of the



apostles, or so terrified with the earthquake, that they took no notice of their bands being loosed, and so never thought or attempted to make their escape; and as for Paul and Silas, all this happened to them, not for their deliverance in this way, as in the case of Peter, but to show the power of God, what he could do, and his presence with his servants.

**Ver. 29.** *Then he called for a light*, etc.] Or “lights”; he ordered his servants to bring in some candles; the Syriac version renders it, “he lighted a light for himself”; and the Ethiopic version, “he brought a light”: whilst he was under the influence of Satan, and going about a work of darkness, namely, to destroy himself, he was in no concern for a light; but when he was delivered from the temptation and snare, he calls for light:

*and sprang in*; leaped in at once, in all haste, into the inner prison:

*and came trembling*; not as before, because of the prisoners and their escape; nor merely or so much on account of the earthquake, though the terror of that might not be as yet over; but chiefly through the horror of his conscience, and the dreadful sense he had of himself as a sinner, and of his lost state and condition by nature; the law had entered into his conscience, and had worked wrath there; the Spirit of God had convinced him of his sin and misery, and there was a fearful looking for of fiery indignation in him:

*and fell down before Paul and Silas*; not in a way of religious adoration, for they would never have admitted that; but in token of civil respect unto them, and of his great veneration for them, as was the manner of the eastern people; the Syriac version renders it, “he fell down at their feet”, and so in Velesius’s readings; at those feet, which he had before made fast in the stocks: a strange change and sudden alteration this! what is it that almighty power and efficacious grace cannot do?

**Ver. 30.** *And brought them out*, etc.] Of the inner prison, to some part of the prison that was more free and open:

*and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* he treats them with great reverence now, and addresses them under a title and character of honour and respect; whom but a few hours ago he despised and abhorred, and perhaps knew no name bad enough for them; he now saw himself lost and perishing, and wanted their instructions, advice, and assistance; and as most persons under first awakenings are, so he was, upon the foot of works; thinking he must do something to procure his salvation, and desires to know what it was he must do, that he might set about it directly; and it

may be he had heard what the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination had frequently said of Paul and Silas, that they were the servants of the most high God, and showed unto men the way of salvation, (<sup><4467></sup>Acts 16:17) and therefore he desires that they would acquaint him with it: his language shows, he was in earnest, and expresses great eagerness, importunity, and haste.

**Ver. 31.** *And they said, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ*, etc.] Not with a bare historical faith, as only to believe that he was the Son of God, and the Messiah, and that he was come in the flesh, and had suffered, and died, and rose again, and was now in heaven at the right hand of God, and would come again to judge both quick and dead, for there may be such a faith and no salvation; but so as to look unto him alone for life and salvation, to rely upon him, and trust in him; to commit himself, and the care of his immortal soul unto him, and to expect peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life from him; the answer is much the same our Lord returned to the Jews, when they asked, though not with the same affection and sincerity as this man, what they must do to work the works of God, (<sup><4468></sup>John 6:28,29).

*And thou shalt be saved*; from sin, and all its miserable effects and consequences; from the curses of the law, from the power of Satan, from the evil of the world, from the wrath of God, hell and damnation: this is to be understood of a spiritual and eternal salvation; for it is said, after that the jailer was inquiring about it, being terrified in his conscience with a sense of sin and wrath; and between believing in Christ, and being saved with an everlasting salvation, there is a strict and inseparable connection, (<sup><4469></sup>Mark 16:16) though not faith, but Christ is the cause and author of salvation; faith spies salvation in Christ, goes to him for it, receives it from him, and believes unto it:

*and thy house*; or family, provided they believe in Christ also, as they did, (<sup><4470></sup>Acts 16:34) or otherwise there can be no salvation, for he that believeth not shall be damned.

**Ver. 32.** *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord*, etc.] That is, the Gospel; which comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, as the author of it; and is concerning him, as the subject matter of it, and is what was preached by himself when on earth; this is the word, which is called the word of salvation, the word of reconciliation and peace, the word of life, the word of righteousness, and the word of faith; because it publishes salvation by Christ, peace and reconciliation by his blood, life by his death, his

righteousness for justification, and proposes him as the object of faith, and encourages souls to believe in him; and faith comes by it, and it contains things to be believed: and this word Paul and Silas spake to the jailer, and opened and explained it to him for his comfort, and for the encouragement of his faith in Christ:

*and to all that were in his house*; his whole family, who were all alarmed by the earthquake, and were got together into the prison; for it seems as if, after this, the jailer had them into his dwelling house, (~~Acts~~ Acts 16:34). These appear to be adult persons, such as were capable of having the word of the Lord spoken to them, and of hearing it, so as to believe in it, and rejoice at it, for faith came to them by hearing.

**Ver. 33.** *And he took them the same hour of the night*, etc.] After they had done preaching to him, and to his family:

*and washed their stripes*; which were very many and heavy, and whereby they were covered with blood; and which by this time began to fester, and to produce corrupt matter; and all this in a pool, which Grotius supposes was within the bounds of the prison, he washed off from them: his faith worked by love, and showed itself in fruits of charity and righteousness, and in obedience to Christ, and submission to his ordinance, as follows:

*and was baptized, he and all his, straightway*; by immersion, that being the only way in which baptism was administered, or can be, so as to be called a baptism: and which might be administered, either in the pool, which Grotius supposes to have been in the prison; or in the river near the city, where the oratory was, (~~Acts~~ Acts 16:13) and it is no unreasonable thought to suppose, that they might go out of the prison thither, and administer the ordinance, and return to the prison again before morning unobserved by any; and after that, enter into the jailer's house and be refreshed, as in the following verse; and as this instance does not at all help the cause of sprinkling, so neither the baptism of infants; for as the jailer's family were baptized as well as he, so they had the word of the Lord spoken to them as well as he, and believed as well as he, and rejoiced as he did; all which cannot be said of infants; and besides, it must be proved that he had infants in his house, and that these were taken out of their beds in the middle of the night, and baptized by Paul, ere the instance can be thought to be of any service to infant baptism.

**Ver. 34.** *And when he had brought them into his house*, etc.] After he and his family had been baptized, either in the pool in the prison, or in the river near the city of Philippi:

*he set meat before them*; he spread a table for them, with provisions to refresh them after all their fatigue; partly by stripes and imprisonment, partly by the exercises of prayer and praise, and also by the ministration of the word, and the administration of the ordinance of baptism to the jailer and his family:

*and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house*; he and his rejoiced at the good news, of peace and pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation, which the Gospel brought unto them; they rejoiced in Christ Jesus, in his person, offices, grace and righteousness; believing in him who is truly and properly God, they were filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; with a joy that always attends true faith, and which a stranger intermeddles not with; and they rejoiced that they were admitted to the ordinance of Christ, and were among his baptized followers; so the eunuch, after baptism, went on his way rejoicing, (~~483~~ Acts 8:39).

**Ver. 35.** *And when it was day*, etc.] In one copy Beza says, these words are added,

“the magistrates came together in one place in the court, and remembering the earthquake that was made, they were afraid, and sent the sergeants;”

but they seem to be no other than a gloss, which crept into the text; however, it seems reasonable to suppose, that in the morning the magistrates met together, to consider what was further to be done with Paul and Silas; when upon cooler thoughts, they judged it best to be content with what punishment they had inflicted on them, and dismiss them; and if they had felt anything of the earthquake, or had heard of it in the prison, and of the converts that had been made there, they might be the more induced to let them go:

*the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, let these men go*; the Arabic version reads, “these two men”; that is, Paul and Silas: who these sergeants were, is not very certain; they seem to be so called in the Greek language, from their carrying rods, or little staves in their hands, and were a sort of apparitors; by these the magistrates sent orders, either by word of mouth, or in writing, to the jailer, to let Paul and Silas out of prison, and set them

at liberty, to go where they would; the same power that shook the foundations of the prison, and loosed the bands of the prisoners, wrought upon the hearts of the magistrates, to let the apostles go free.

**Ver. 36.** *And the keeper of the prison told this, saying to Paul*, etc.] The Ethiopic version adds, “and to Silas”; this was the same person with the jailer, whom Paul had baptized; and indeed, the same word is here used, though a little differently rendered, who no doubt reported this message to Paul with great joy:

*the magistrates have sent to let you go*; they have sent an order to let you out of prison:

*now therefore depart, and go in peace*; which expresses the jailer’s pleasure of mind, and joy of heart, in executing his orders; and his sincere and hearty wishes for peace and prosperity to go along with them wherever they went, who had been instrumental of so much good to him and his family.

**Ver. 37.** *But Paul said unto them*, etc.] The sergeants, who were present when the jailer reported to Paul the message they came with from the magistrates; though the Syriac version reads in the singular number, “Paul said to him”, to the jailer:

*they have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison*; what the magistrates ordered to be done to them, is reckoned all one as if they had done it themselves; and which was done “openly”, before all the people, in the most public manner; to their great reproach, being put to open shame, as if they had been the most notorious malefactors living; when they were “uncondemned”, had done nothing worthy of condemnation, being innocent and without fault, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render the word; nor was their cause heard, or they suffered to make any defence for themselves; and what was an aggravation of all this, that this was done in a Roman colony, and by Roman magistrates; and to persons that were Romans, at least one of them, Paul, who was of the city of Tarsus: for, according to the Porcian and Sempronian laws, a Roman citizen might neither be bound nor beaten<sup>f830</sup>; but these magistrates, not content to beat Paul and Silas, without knowing the truth of their case, had cast them into prison as malefactors, and for further punishment:

*and now do they thrust us out privily? nay, verily;* or so it shall not be: this shows, that the apostle was acquainted with the Roman laws, as well as with the rites and customs of the Jews; and acted the wise and prudent, as well as the honest and harmless part; and this he did, not so much for the honour of the Roman name, as for the honour of the Christian name; for he considered, that should he and his companion go out of the prison in such a private manner, it might be taken for granted, that they had been guilty of some notorious offence, and had justly suffered the punishment of the law for it, which would have been a reproach to Christianity, and a scandal to the Gospel: wherefore the apostle refuses to go out in this manner, adding,

*but let them come themselves, and fetch us out;* that by so doing, they might own the illegality of their proceedings, and declare the innocence of the apostles.

**Ver. 38.** *And the sergeants told these words unto the magistrates,* etc.] They returned to them, and acquainted them with what the prisoners said:

*and they feared when they heard that they were Romans;* they were not concerned for the injury they had done them; nor for the injustice and cruelty they had been guilty of; nor did they fear the wrath of God, and a future judgment; but they were put into a panic, when they found the men they had so ill used were Romans; lest they should be called to an account by the Roman senate, and be found guilty, and have their places taken away from them, and their persons punished.

**Ver. 39.** *And they came,* etc.] To the prison in person, as Paul had insisted on they should:

*and besought them;* that they would put up the injury that had been done them, and quietly depart out of prison:

*and brought them out;* that is, out of prison; took them by the arms, and led them out, as they had put them in, which was what the apostle required:

*and desired them to depart out of the city;* lest there should be any further disturbance about them: in Beza's most ancient copy, and in another manuscript copy, this verse is read thus, and which more clearly explains the passage;

“and they came with many friends unto the prison, and desired them to go out, saying, we are not ignorant of your case, that you are righteous men; and bringing them out they besought them, saying, go out of this city, lest they (the people) should turn again upon you, crying against you;”

which looks as if they took along with them some persons, who were friends to the apostles as well as to them, to prevail upon them to depart quietly; and they excuse themselves by attributing what had passed to popular rage and fury, and pretend they consulted the safety of the apostles, by desiring them to go out of the city.

**Ver. 40.** *And they went out of the prison*, etc.] In a public manner, with great honour and reputation, at the request of the magistrates that put them there:

*and entered into [the house] of Lydia*; whom Paul had baptized, (~~Acts~~ Acts 16:14,15). The word “house” is rightly supplied, for the sense is not, that they went into the country of Lydia, as some have been tempted to think; but they went to the woman Lydia, whose heart the Lord had opened, and was become a disciple and follower of Christ; they went to her house it being in the city of Philippi, where she now abode,

*and when they had seen the brethren*: the men of Lydia’s house, her servants, who were converted, and had been baptized with her, and are therefore called brethren; and whomsoever else they might have been instrumental in the conversion of, who might meet them in Lydia’s house: in Beza’s above mentioned copy, it is here added, “they declared what the Lord had done for them”; they related the earthquake and the effects of it, and how they had been useful for the conversion of the jailer and his family, who had been baptized by them, and by what means they were released from prison; all which they ascribe to the Lord, who has all power, and the hearts of all in his hands: and thus,

*they comforted them*; with what God had done for them, or exhorted them: to cleave to the Lord, to continue in the faith, and abide by the truths and ordinances of the Gospel:

*and departed*; that is, out of the city of Philippi; this is wanting in the Syriac and Arabic versions here, but is placed in the beginning of the next chapter: and now these two families, Lydia’s and the jailer’s, laid the foundation of a Gospel church in this city of Philippi, and which continued

for ages after; Erastus, of whom mention is made in (~~41922~~ Acts 19:22) is said to be bishop of this church, and it may be also Epaphroditus, for there were more bishops than one in this church in the apostle's time, (~~5000~~ Philippians 1:1 2:25 4:18), in the "second" century there was a church, to which Ignatius and Polycarp are said to send epistles; and there are epistles to the Philippians which go under their names, that are still extant: in the "third" century, Tertullian<sup>f831</sup>, among other churches, makes mention of the church at Philippi, as sound in the faith; and in the "fourth" and "fifth" centuries we read of a church in this place; in the "seventh" century, when it went by the name of Chrysopolis, there was a church in it, and a bishop of it, who was present at the sixth council in Constantinople; there were Christians dwelling here in the "ninth" century<sup>f832</sup>.



# CHAPTER 17

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 17

**Ver. 1.** *Now when they had passed through Amphipolls*, etc.] A city of Macedonia, where it is placed by Pliny<sup>f833</sup>; according to Ptolomy<sup>f834</sup>, it was in that part of Macedonia, which is called Edonis, and was near Philippi, and lay in the way from thence to Thessalonica; Harpocratian<sup>f835</sup> says, it was a city of Thrace, formerly called “the Nine Ways”; it was upon the borders of Thrace, and had its name Amphipolis from the river Strymon running on both sides of it, making it a peninsula; it was also called Crademna, and Anadraemum; it is now in the hands of the Turks, and by them called Empoli; this city was originally built by Cimon the Athenian, into which he sent ten thousand Athenians for a colony, as the writer of his life reports<sup>f836</sup>. The apostle only passed through this place; it does not appear that he at all preached in it, or at any other time, nor do we read of it in ecclesiastical history, nor of the following place:

*and Apollonia*; this is also placed by Pliny<sup>f837</sup> in Macedonia, and is said by him to have been formerly a colony of the Corinthians, and about seven miles from the sea; and by Ptolomy<sup>f838</sup>, in that part of Macedonia called Mygdonia, and with him its name is Apollonia of Mygdonia; it was situated by the river Echedorus, and was famous for Augustus Caesar’s learning Greek here, and is now called Ceres: there was another of this name in the region of Pentapolis, and was one of the five<sup>f839</sup> cities in it; and another in Palestine mentioned by Pliny<sup>f840</sup>, along with Caesarea; and by Josephus<sup>f841</sup>, with Joppa, Jamnia, Azotus, etc. but this was near Thessalonica; it is said to be about twenty miles from it: here also the apostle did not stay to preach the Gospel, nor is there any mention made of it elsewhere in the Acts of the Apostles, and yet Marcus, sister’s son to Barnabas, is said to be bishop of Apollonia; (see Gill on “~~2101~~Luke 10:1”), but whether the same place with this, or whether fact, is not certain;

*they came to Thessalonica*; a free city of Macedonia<sup>f842</sup>; it was formerly called Halis<sup>f843</sup>, and sometimes Therme; it had its name of Thessalonica from the victory which Philip king of Macedon obtained over the Thessalians; and not from his daughter Thessalonica, the wife of

Cassander, who also had her name from the same victory: in this place a sedition being raised, and some magistrates killed, Theodosius the Roman emperor suffered seven thousand men to be slain; and when he came to Milain, Ambrose bishop of that place having heard of it, would not suffer him to enter into the church and receive the Lord's supper, until he repented of his sin, and made public confession of it <sup>f844</sup>. Thessalonica has been since the head of a new kingdom erected by Boniface marquis of Montferrat; it was for some time in the hands of the Venetians, but was taken from them by Amurath emperor of the Turks <sup>f845</sup>. The Italians call it now Saloniki; it has been since inhabited by Christians, Turks, and Jews, and chiefly by the latter, their number, according to their own account, is fourteen thousand, and their synagogues fourscore. There always were many Jews in this place, and so there were when the apostle was here, for it follows;

*where was a synagogue of the Jews*; it seems as if there was none, neither in Philippi, nor in Amphipolis, nor in Apollonia: why these two last places should be passed through by the apostle, without making any stay at them, cannot be said; it is very likely he had, as in some other instances before, some particular directions from the Spirit of God, there being none of the chosen vessels of salvation to be called there, at least, at this time, when there were many at Thessalonica.

**Ver. 2.** *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them*, etc.] To the Jews in their synagogue; for though the Jews had put away the Gospel from them, and the apostle had turned to the Gentiles; yet he still retained a great affection for his countrymen the Jews, and as often as he had opportunity, attended their synagogues, in order to preach the Gospel to them;

*and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures*: that is, out of the Old Testament, concerning the Messiah, the characters of him, the work that he was to do, and how he was to suffer and die for the sins of men; and this he did three weeks running, going to their synagogue every sabbath day, when and where the Jews met for worship; and made use of books, which they allowed of, and of arguments they could not disprove.

**Ver. 3.** *Opening*, etc.] That is, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, explaining and expounding them, giving the true sense of them; so this

word is frequently used in Jewish writings<sup>f846</sup>, as that such a Rabbi j tp, “opened”, such a Scripture:

*and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead*; he set this matter in a clear light, and made it plain and manifest, from the writings of the Old Testament, that there was a necessity of the Messiah’s suffering and rising from the dead; or otherwise these Scriptures would not have been fulfilled, which have said that so it must be; for these things were not only necessary on account of God’s decrees, and the covenant transactions the Son of God entered into, and on the account of the salvation of his people; but because of the types, promises, and prophecies of the Old Testament: the Scriptures which the apostle opened and set before them, and reasoned upon, showing the necessity of these things, very likely were such as these, (<sup><00815></sup>Genesis 3:15, <sup><0221></sup>Psalm 22:1-31) (<sup><2810></sup>Isaiah 53:1-12, <sup><2901></sup>Daniel 9:1-27, <sup><0160></sup>Psalm 16:10, <sup><3112></sup>Hosea 6:2) with many others:

*and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ*; he showed that all the things which were spoken of Christ, or the Messiah, in those Scriptures, were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, who was the subject matter, the sum and substance of his ministry; and therefore he must be the Messiah, and the only Saviour and Redeemer of lost sinners.

**Ver. 4.** *And some of them believed*, etc.] That is, some of the Jews, power went along with the word, and faith came by it, and they believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, and that what the apostle preached concerning him was the truth; and this they received in the love of it, and cordially embraced it, and made a profession of it:

*and consorted with Paul and Silas*; associated with them, and privately conversed with them, as well as publicly attended their ministry; for when souls are converted, they love to be in company with believers, and especially with the ministers of the Gospel, to hear their discourses, and learn from them the doctrines of grace:

*and of the devout Greeks a great multitude*; these were Gentiles who were proselytes to the Jewish religion; and these in greater numbers believed, and joined themselves to the apostles, and became followers of them, than there were of the Jews, who were the most averse to the Gospel, and were more hardened, and incredulous:

*and of the chief women not a few*; some of the wives of the principal men of the city were become proselytes to the Jews, and these attending synagogue worship, and hearing the discourses of Paul from time to time, were convinced and converted, and professed faith in Christ Jesus; and these converts laid the foundation of a Gospel church in Thessalonica, of which church Silvanus is said to be the first bishop; (see Gill on “<sup>200</sup>Luke 10:1”). In the “second” century there were martyrs for Christ here; and to the inhabitants of this place, Antonintus Pius the emperor wrote in behalf of the Christians there, to give them no disturbance <sup>f847</sup>; in the “third” century there was a church here; Tertullian <sup>f848</sup> makes mention of it: in the “fourth” century <sup>f849</sup> Theodosius the emperor was baptized at Thessalonica, by Acholius bishop of that place; who first asked him what faith he professed, to which he replied, that he embraced and professed that faith which the churches in Illyricum, who were not yet infected with the Arian heresy, namely the same which was of old delivered by the apostles, and afterwards confirmed at the synod at Nice; in this century Ireminus, Paulinus, and Alexander, were bishops of Thessalonica: in the “fifth” century it was a metropolitan of Macedonia, and Anysius was bishop of it, and so were Rufus and Anastasius: and that there was a church here in the “sixth” century is manifest from hence, that their bishops, for fear of the emperor Anastasius, agreed with Timothy bishop of Constantinople, whom the council at Chalcedon had anathematized; and in this age Pope Gregory, among others, wrote to Eusebius bishop of Thessalonica, that he would not receive any of a military habit into monasteries within three years: in the “seventh” century a bishop of this place assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople; and in the same age it was the seat of an archbishop: in the “eighth” century there was one Thomas bishop of this place, and also Theophilus, who was present at the Nicene synod; in the ninth century a bishop of Thessalonica was beaten with two hundred stripes, for being against image worship.

**Ver. 5.** *But the Jews which believed not*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions leave out the words, “which believed not”; but whether this character is expressed or not, it is certain that the unbelieving Jews are here intended:

*moved with envy*; at the success of the apostles, many of their own people and of their proselytes, and some of the better sort being converted by them: or “with zeal”; for what they called the glory of God, but it was not according to knowledge; it was a blind and ignorant zeal, a zeal for the

rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, and for the traditions of the elders:

*took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort*; or of the market folks, who sat and sold things in the market, and were generally of the meaner and vulgar sort, as the word may signify; or who stood idle in the market place, squandering away their time in an idle manner, not caring to work, and so were fit persons, and who could easily be gathered together, for such service as the unbelieving Jews employed them in; or they were a sort of officers and servants, that attended courts of judicature, and cited persons thither, and assisted in the business done there, and who were commonly men of profligate and abandoned lives:

*and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar*; they raised a mob, and made a clamour, which brought people out of their houses to inquire what was the matter, and so gave great disturbance and uneasiness to the inhabitants:

*and assaulted the house of Jason*: who by what follows appears to have been a disciple of Christ, a believer in him, and the host of the apostle and his companions, who being an inhabitant of Thessalonica, at least having a dwelling house there, received them into it. This Jason is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and afterwards bishop of Tarsus, but this is not certain; nor whether he was a Jew or a Greek, very probably the former: we read of Jason the brother of Onias the high priest, a Jew, “But after the death of Seleucus, when Antiochus, called Epiphanes, took the kingdom, Jason the brother of Onias laboured underhand to be high priest,” (2 Maccabees 4:7)

whose name was Jesus, the same with Joshua, but as Josephus <sup>f850</sup> says, he called himself Jason; and so this man’s Hebrew name might be Jesus or Joshua, and his Greek name Jason; and very likely he was a believer in Christ before the apostle came to Thessalonica, and it may be is the same who is spoken of in ( <sup><61></sup>Romans 16:21). (See Gill on “ <sup><61></sup>Romans 16:21”). Some of the ancients <sup>f851</sup> make mention of a disputation between Jason, a Christian Hebrew, and Papiscus, an Alexandrian Jew, but there is no reason to believe that he is the Jason here spoken of:

*and sought to bring them out to the people*; they expected to have found Paul and Silas in Jason’s house, where they lodged, and their intention was to have dragged them out and exposed them to popular fury, to be beaten

or stoned by the people; and so the Arabic version reads, “requiring those two apostles, that they might set them before the people”; or put them into the hands of the mob, which they had gathered, to do as they would with them.

**Ver. 6.** *And when they found them not*, etc.] In Jason’s house, as they expected:

*they drew Jason, and certain brethren*: the Syriac version adds, “who were there”: in Jason’s house, who either came along with the apostle, and lodged with him there; or they were some of the inhabitants of Thessalonica, who were lately converted, and were come thither in order to have some Christian conversation; these with Jason the rabble seized on, and in a rude and violent manner dragged them out of the house, and had them,

*unto the rulers of the city*: the civil magistrates, the judges in courts of judicature, to which some of these belonged;

*crying* in a very noisy and clamorous way;

*these that have turned the world upside down*: the Syriac version reads, “the whole earth”: the apostles, according to the cry of these men, had thrown the whole world into disorder, and had made disturbances in kingdoms and cities, wherever they came; and had made innovations in religion, and turned men from their old way of worship to another; these; say they,

*are come hither also*; to make the like disorders and disturbances, as elsewhere.

**Ver. 7.** *Whom Jason hath received*, etc.] Into his house in a private manner, and has entertained, contrary to law, which forbids men to receive and entertain persons of seditious principles, and practices, for this is mentioned as a charge against Jason:

*and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar*; both the apostle and those with him, and Jason, and the brethren, whom they now had set before the magistrates, who were all of the same sentiments and practices; and which were opposite to the decrees of the Roman emperor, and the Roman senate, who suffered none to be called a king but whom they pleased; whereas these men taught, saying,

*that there is another king, one Jesus*; but then though they said he was a king, yet not a temporal one, but one whose kingdom was spiritual, and not of this world; and therefore asserted nothing contrary to the decrees of Caesar, or what was in the least prejudicial to his worldly interest and glory.

**Ver. 8.** *And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city,* etc.]

Fearing some revolution would be made, and some new king, or rather tyrant, would start up, and usurp a power over them; or that they should come under some suspicion or charge with the Roman government, and should be called to an account, for admitting such men and tenets among them; with such fears were they possessed,

*when they heard these things*; alleged against the apostle and his company.

**Ver. 9.** *And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other,* etc.]

That is, received satisfaction from them, by the defence which they made for themselves, and the apostles, by the account that they gave of them and of their doctrines; whereby it plainly appeared to the full satisfaction of the magistrates, that their principles had no tendency to move sedition, or to alter the form of their government, or to do anything detrimental to Caesar, as was suggested: the Syriac, and Arabic versions render it, “took sureties”; of them for their good behaviour, and that they would be forthcoming, whenever called for:

*they let them go*; about their business, to their own houses, and company, and did not inflict any punishment upon them, or commit them to prison.

**Ver. 10.** *And the brethren,* etc.] The believers in Thessalonica, the young converts there, who were full of love and affection to their spiritual fathers:

*immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea*; another city in Macedonia: and so it is placed by Pliny<sup>f852</sup> in the north part of it; and, according to Ptolomy<sup>f853</sup> it was, in that part of Macedonia called Emathia, and was not far from Pella, the native place of Alexander the great. It is now called Veria; some say it was called Berea from Beraea, daughter of Beres, son of Macedo, by whom it is said to have been built; others from Pheron; and some think it has some agreement with the Syriac word Barja and Baraitha; since what is called Berytus, is Beroe with others: there was besides this another Beraea, a city of Syria, which Josephus<sup>f854</sup> speaks of; and is mentioned by Pliny<sup>f855</sup> along with Hierapolis and Chalcis, and very likely is the same that is spoken of in:

“But the King of kings moved Antiochus’ mind against this wicked wretch, and Lysias informed the king that this man was the cause of all mischief, so that the king commanded to bring him unto Berea, and to put him to death, as the manner is in that place.” (2 Maccabees 13:4)

Hither the brethren sent Paul and Silas, when it was night and dark, and they could pass unobserved, in order to preserve them from the fury of the mob.

*Who coming thither*; to Berea; that is, Paul and Silas:

*went into the synagogue of the Jews*; which was in that city; not being at all daunted or discouraged with what they had met with at Thessalonica.

**Ver. 11.** *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica*, etc.] That is, the Jews at Berea were more noble than the Jews in Thessalonica, as the Syriac version expresses it; for the comparison is not between the native inhabitants of Berea and Thessalonica, but between the Jews that dwelt in these places: and the one being “more noble” than the other, does not refer to their birth, lineage, and descent, as in (~~4015~~ 1 Corinthians 1:26) few such were called; and besides, both sorts were Jews, and of the same descent; and as for the proselytes in both places, there were some of the chief and honourable women converted in each: but to their minds, dispositions, and manners; the one were more candid, and ingenuous, and open to conviction and susceptible of the word, than the other; and used the apostles with better manners, with more mildness and gentleness, willing to hear what they had to say, without contradicting and blaspheming, and to examine with patience and candour what they delivered. Not that there is in any man, nor was there in those men naturally a disposition to attend to, and regard the Gospel of Christ; for there is a natural enmity in the minds of men to it, and with them it is folly and nonsense; nor are there any previous dispositions in the minds of men qualifying them for the grace of God; nor is anything of this kind a reason why some, and not others, are called by grace, for all are children of wrath, and none better than others; but this more noble disposition of mind and conduct was owing to the grace of God bestowed upon them; and which showed itself in the following instance:

*in that they received the word with all readiness*; or “who received”, etc. which is a character, not of the Thessalonian Jews, as some think; though it



is true of them that they received the word with joy of the Holy Ghost, and not as the word of man, but as the word of God, it coming to them not in word only, but in power, (~~SOME~~ 1 Thessalonians 1:5,6 2:13) but of the Beran Jews, who exceeded them, who showed at once a readiness and eager desire to attend the Gospel, and embrace it. This is to be understood not of the essential word Christ; though as it is true of him, that he is the word, and he is said to be received, and that readily and willingly, so these Bereans did receive him by faith, they believed in him, and made a profession of him; nor of the written word, for that is designed by the Scriptures, which they searched daily, and by which they examined, tried, and judged of the word they received; but of the word spoken by the apostle, the word of truth, the Gospel of salvation: this they received into their understandings, not merely notionally, so as to give their assent to it; but spiritually and experimentally, so as to feel the power, and enjoy the comfort of it, their understandings being opened by the Spirit of God for this purpose; otherwise the Gospel is unknown unto, and rejected by the natural man: they received the love of the truth, or the word of truth into their affections, not with a mere carnal flashy affection, arising from a principle of self-love; but with a spiritual affection of the Holy Ghost, with real solid gladness, it bringing the good news of salvation by Christ to them who saw themselves miserable, and undone: they received it into their hearts, so that it had a place there, and worked effectually in them: they believed it, not with a mere historical faith, but from the heart obeyed this form of doctrine delivered to them; and this they did with all readiness, as an hungry man receives his food, and greedily feeds upon it, or as a man ready to perish receives and lays hold on anything that offers for his safety.

*And searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so:* they did not dispute with, and cavil at the apostle, as the Thessalonian Jews first did, (~~4HTD~~ Acts 17:2) nor did they receive the word, right or wrong, or with an implicit faith; but they immediately betook themselves to reading and searching the writings of the Old Testament, to see whether the things which the apostle preached, concerning the Messiah, his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, were agreeable to them, or no; determining, if they were not, to reject them, but if they were, to embrace them, as they did; (see ~~4RFD~~ John 5:39) and this they did continually day after day. They were neither backward to hear and receive the word, nor slothful to examine it.

**Ver. 12.** *Therefore many of them believed,* etc.] What the apostle preached, and in Jesus of Nazareth, as the true Messiah, and professed their faith in him, upon finding, through reading and searching the Scriptures, that the characters of the Messiah agreed in him, and that what the apostle delivered were entirely consonant to those writings:

*also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men not a few;* besides the Jews, there were Gentiles also, both men and women; who were proselytes to the Jewish religion, and who were persons of figure and credit, especially the women, who were also converted and believed in Christ. These converts were the beginning of a Gospel church state in this place, which continued many ages after. Timon, one of the first seven deacons of the church at Jerusalem, is said to be bishop of Berea; though, according to others, Onesimus, the servant of Philemon, was the first bishop of this church: even in the fifth century mention is made of Lucas, bishop of Berea, who was present in the synods of Chalcedon and Ephesus; yea, in the ninth century, there were Christians dwelling in this place<sup>f856</sup>.

**Ver. 13.** *But when the Jews of Thessalonica,* etc.] The unbelieving Jews there,

*had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea;* which they came at, either by persons that came from thence to Thessalonica, or by letters sent them:

*they came thither also;* as the Jews from Antioch and Iconium came to Lystra on a like account, (~~414B~~Acts 14:19)

*and stirred up the people;* the common people, the natives of the place, against the apostles; suggesting that they were wicked men, and enemies to all laws, human or divine, civil or religious.

**Ver. 14.** *And then immediately the brethren,* etc.] That were at Berea, the new converts there:

*sent away Paul,* whom they knew the Jews mostly sought after, and were offended with:

*to go as it were to the sea;* the Aegean sea, or Archipelago, near to which Berea was: this seems to have been done, in order to make the people conclude that he intended to take shipping, and go into some other parts of the world, when the design was to go to Athens by foot, and so be safe

from any lying in wait of his persecutors: the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and the Oriental versions read, “to go to the sea”; to the sea side, whither it seems he did go; and yet it looks as if he did not go by sea, but by land, to Athens:

*but Silas and Timotheus abode there still*; at Berea, to confirm and strengthen the young converts there made.

**Ver. 15.** *And they that conducted Paul*, etc.] From Berea to the sea side:

*brought him unto Athens*; a famous city in Attica, where both <sup>f857</sup> Pliny and Ptolomy <sup>f858</sup> place it, well known for the learning and wisdom of the ancient philosophers, who had their schools and universities in it; the former of these calls it a free city, and says, it needed no description nor commendation, its fame was so diffused everywhere. The account Jerom <sup>f859</sup> gives of it is,

“Athens, a city in Achaia, dedicated to the studies of philosophy, which though but one, is always used to be called in the plural number; its haven, called the Piraeum, is described as fortified with seven walls.”

The city itself stood about two miles from the sea; it had its name either from the Greek word *νησωνη*, which signifies the mind of God, as boasting of its divine knowledge; or rather from the word *ἄγτα*, “Athen”, which may be interpreted “strangers”, it being originally inhabited by the Pelasgi, who were a set of people that moved from place to place <sup>f860</sup>; or because of the great multitude of strangers which flocked from all parts hither for learning, of whom mention is made in (~~4171~~ Acts 17:21). The inhabitants of it have been called by different names; when under the Pelasgi, as Herodotus <sup>f861</sup> observes, they were called Cranai; when under King Cecrops, they went by the name of Cecropidae; when Erechtheus had the government, they changed their name into Athenians; from Ion, the son of Xythus, their general, they were called Ionians. This city has gone through different fates: it was burnt by Xerxes, about 480 years before Christ; some years after that it was taken by Lysander; and after that restored to its ancient liberty by Demetrius; after this the Romans were possessed of it; and now it is in the hands of the Turks, and goes by the name of Setines. In Beza’s ancient copy it follows, “but he passed through Thessalia, for he was forbidden to preach the word to them”; for as he came from Berea to Athens, he must come through Thessalia; but he made

no stay here, but passed through, being forbid to preach the Gospel here, as he had been before to preach it in Asia and Bithynia, (~~416~~ Acts 16:6,7) nor have we any account anywhere else of the Gospel being preached in Thessaly; and in the second century, we read of Heathenism prevailing there, and of many gross acts of idolatry, particularly at Pella in Thessaly, a man was sacrificed to the gods: though in the beginning of the fourth century there were bishops out of Thessalia at the synod of Nice; and so there were at the synod at Sardica, about the middle of the same century: in the sixth century, Dion, bishop of Thebes in Thessalia, was in the first synod at Ephesus; and Constantinus, bishop of Demetrias, and Vigilantius of Larissa, both cities in Thessalia, were in another at the same place <sup>f862</sup>.

*And receiving a commandment*; or “a letter from him” as one copy and the Syriac version read; that is, the brethren from Paul:

*unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed*; to Athens, where he now was: they departed; from Paul at Athens, and came back to Berea.

**Ver. 16.** *Now while Paul waited for them at Athens.* etc.] That is, for Silas and Timotheus:

*his spirit was stirred in him*; not only his soul was troubled and his heart was grieved, but he was exasperated and provoked to the last degree: he was in a paroxysm; his heart was hot within him; he had a burning fire in his bones, and was weary with forbearing, and could not stay; his zeal wanted vent, and he gave it:

*when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry*; or “full of idols”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it. So Cicero says <sup>f863</sup> that Athens was full of temples; and Xenophon <sup>f864</sup> observes that they had double the feasts of other people; and Pausanias <sup>f865</sup> affirms, that the Athenians far exceeded others in the worship of the gods, and care about religion; and he relates, that they had an altar for Mercy, another for Shame, another for Fame, and another for Desire, and expressed more religion to the gods than others did: they had an altar dedicated to twelve gods <sup>f866</sup>; and because they would be sure of all, they erected one to an unknown god; in short, they had so many of them, that one <sup>f867</sup> jestingly said to them, our country is so full of deities, that one may more easily find a god than a man: so that with all their learning and wisdom they knew not God, (~~412~~ 1 Corinthians 1:21).

**Ver. 17.** *Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews*, etc.] There being a synagogue of the Jews here, and there being many Jews settled in this place, hence we read in Jewish writings<sup>f868</sup> of men going from Jerusalem to Athens, and from Athens to Jerusalem; and hence it may be accounted for, how many of the Athenian philosophers came to be acquainted with the books and sentiments of the Jews, from whom they borrowed many things; since there were so many that dwelt among them, and doubtless had for years past, as well as by their travels into Egypt: and a Jewish synagogue being here, the apostle went into it, according to his usual manner, and began with them, as he was wont to do, preaching the Gospel to the Jews first, and then unto the Gentiles: with them he disputed, not about idolatry, or the worship of many gods, to which they were not addicted; nor about the one true and living God, whom they knew and professed; but about the Son of God, about the Messiah, contending and proving that Jesus of Nazareth was he:

*and with the devout persons*; that is, with the Gentiles, who were proselytes to the Jewish religion, and worshipped the God of Israel with the Jews, in their synagogues, but knew nothing of Jesus Christ, and the way of salvation by him:

*and in the market daily with them that met him*; where there was a concourse of people; and where, after the apostle had been once or twice, the people came purposely to meet with him, and to hear his discourses, and reason with him about points in religion: the Syriac version renders it, “in the street”; and then the sense seems to be, that as he met persons in the street, day by day, as he walked along, he would stop and talk with them, about religious things, and about their idolatry, vanity, and superstition.

**Ver. 18.** *Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans*, etc.] These were so called from Epicurus, the son of Neocles, who was born 342 years before Christ, and taught philosophy at Athens, in his garden; the principal tenets of which were, that the world was not made by any deity, or with any design, but came into its being and form, through a fortuitous concourse of atoms, of various sizes and magnitude, which met, and jumbled, and cemented together, and so formed the world; and that the world is not governed by the providence of God; for though he did not deny the being of God, yet he thought it below his notice, and beneath his majesty to concern himself with its affairs; and also, that the chief happiness of men

lies in pleasure. His followers were called “Epicureans”; of which there have been two sorts; the one were called the strict or rigid “Epicureans”, who placed all happiness in the pleasure of the mind, arising from the practice of moral virtue, and which is thought by some to be the true principle of “Epicureans”; the other were called the loose, or the remiss Epicureans, who understood their master in the gross sense, and placed all their happiness in the pleasure of the body, in brutal and sensual pleasure, in living a voluptuous life, in eating and drinking, etc. and this is the common notion imbibed of an Epicurean.

*And of the Stoics:* the author of this sect was Zeno, whose followers were so called from the Greek word “Stoa”, which signifies a portico, or piazza, under which Zeno used to walk, and teach his philosophy, and where great numbers of disciples attended him, who from hence were called “Stoics”: their chief tenets were, that there is but one God, and that the world was made by him, and is governed by fate; that happiness lies in virtue, and virtue has its own reward in itself; that all virtues are linked together, and all vices are equal; that a wise and good man is destitute of all passion, and uneasiness of mind, is always the same, and always joyful, and ever happy in the greatest torture, pain being no real evil; that the soul lives after the body, and that the world will be destroyed by fire. Now the philosophers of these two sects

*encountered him;* the Apostle Paul; they attacked him, and disputed with him upon some points, which were contrary to their philosophy:

*and some said, what will this babbler say?* this talking, prating fellow? though the word here used does not signify, as some have thought, a sower of words; as if they meant, that the apostle was a dealer in many words, a verbose man, and full of words, but not matter; but it properly signifies a gatherer of seeds; and the allusion is either to a set of idle people, that used to go to markets and fairs, and pick up seeds of corn, that were shook out of sacks, upon which they lived; and so the word came to be used for an idle good for nothing fellow, and for one that picked up tales and fables, and carried them about for a livelihood. So Demosthenes, in a way of reproach, called Aeschines by this name; and such an one was the apostle reckoned: or the metaphor is taken from little birds, as the sparrow, etc. that pick up seeds, and live upon them, and are of no value and use. Harpocratian says <sup>f869</sup>, there is a certain little bird, of the jay or jackdaw kind, which is called “Spermologos” (the word here used), from its picking

up of seeds, of which Aristophanes makes mention; and that from this a base and contemptible man, and one that lives by others, is called by this name: from whence we may learn in what a contemptuous manner the apostle was used in this polite city, by these men of learning.

*Other some, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods;* other than those worshipped in the city of Athens: this was the charge which Melitus brought against Socrates;

“Socrates (says he <sup>f870</sup>) has acted an unrighteous part; the gods, whom the city reckons such, he does not, introducing other and new gods.”

Aelianus <sup>f871</sup> represents him as censured by Aristophanes, as one that introduced *ξενας δαιμονας*, “strange gods”, though he neither knew them, nor honoured them. The reason why they thought the apostle was for bringing in other gods, than which nothing was more foreign from him, was,

*because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection:* the Syriac version reads, “and his resurrection”; that is, the resurrection of Christ; the Arabic version renders it, “the resurrection from the dead”; the general resurrection; both doubtless were preached by him, (see <sup><4173></sup>Acts 17:32) Jesus they took for one strange and new God, they had never heard of before, and “Anastasis”, or “the resurrection”, for another; which need not be wondered at, when they had altars erected for Mercy, Fame, Shame, and Desire, (see Gill on “<sup><4176></sup>Acts 17:16”).

**Ver. 19.** *And they took him,* etc.] Not that they laid hands on him, and carried him away by violence, as a derider of their gods, and an introducer of new ones, in order to punish him; but they invited him to go with them, and they took him along with them in a friendly manner, and had him to a more convenient place for preaching and disputation, and where were many learned men to hear and judge of his doctrine; and this appears from their desire to hear what his doctrine was, and from his quiet departure, after he had ended his discourse:

*and brought him unto Areopagus.* The Arabic version seems to understand this of a person, rendering it, “and brought him to the most skilful, and the judge of the doctors”; to be heard and examined before him, about the doctrine he preached, who was most capable of judging concerning it; and this might be Dionysius, who is called the Areopagite, and was converted



by the apostle, (~~4173~~ Acts 17:34). The Ethiopic version renders it, “they brought him to the house of their god”; to one of their idols’ temple, the temple of Mars, which is not much amiss; for we are told <sup>f872</sup>, that Areopagus was a street in Athens, in which was the temple of Mars, from whence it had its name; but the Syriac version renders it best of all, “they brought him to the house of judgment, or “court of judicature”, which is called Areopagus”; and so it is called “Martium judicium”, or Mars’s “court of judicature”, by Apuleius <sup>f873</sup>, and “Martis curia”, or the “court of Mars”, by Juvenal <sup>f874</sup>, for it was a court where causes were tried, and the most ancient one with the Athenians, being instituted by Cerops, their first king; and is thought to be near as ancient, if not fully as ancient, yea, as more ancient than the sanhedrim, or the court of seventy elders, appointed by Moses among the Jews. It was called Areopagus, because Ares, or Mars, was the first that was judged there <sup>f875</sup>. The case was this, Alcippe, the daughter of Mars, being ravished by Habirrhothius, the son of Neptune, and caught by Mars in the very fact, was killed by him; upon which Neptune arraigned Mars for the murder, and tried him in this place, by a jury of twelve deities, by whom he was acquitted <sup>f876</sup>. Hither Paul was brought, not to be tried in a legal manner; for it does not appear that any charge was exhibited against him, or any legal process carried on, only an inquiry was made about his doctrine, and that only to gratify their curiosity:

*saying, may we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?* for they had never heard of Jesus, nor of salvation by him, nor of the resurrection of the dead; these were all new things to them, and therefore they were the more curious to ask after them, new things being what they were fond of: wherefore they call his doctrine new, not so much by way of reproach, as suggesting it to be a reason why they inquired after it, and why they desired him to give them some account of it; and that it should be a new doctrine with them, or if they reproached it with the charge of novelty, it need not be wondered at in them, when the Jews charged and reproached the doctrine of Christ in like manner, (~~4107~~ Mark 1:27).

**Ver. 20.** *For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears*, etc.] Strange doctrines and strange deities, such as they had never heard of before:

*we would know therefore what these things mean*; they desire he would explain these things to them, and let them know the rise, and ground, and nature, and end, and design of them.



**Ver. 21.** *For all the Athenians*, etc.] The natives of Athens, who were born and lived there, and were inhabitants of the city, and free of it:

*and strangers which were there*; who came there from several parts of the world, to get wisdom and knowledge, to learn the several arts and sciences, and to attend the several sects of philosophers they made choice of:

*spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing*; that is, they did so for the most part; and this was the complexion and taste of the generality of them; and with this agrees what Demosthenes himself says of them <sup>f877</sup>,

“we, says he (for the truth shall be said), sit here, **ουδεν ποιουντες**, “doing nothing” — — inquiring in the court, **ει τι λεγεται νεωτερον**, “whether any new thing is said.””

The character of such persons is given, and they are described in a very lively manner by Theophrastus <sup>f878</sup>. The Jewish doctors, at this time, were much of the same cast in their divinity schools; the usual question asked, when they met one another, was, **ϙωδj hm**, “what new thing” have you in the divinity school today <sup>f879</sup>?

**Ver. 22.** *Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill*, etc.] Or of Areopagus, as it is better rendered in (<sup><44716></sup>Acts 17:19) for it is the same place, and it is the same word that is here used: Paul stood in the midst of that court of judicature, amidst the Areopagites, the judges of that court, and the wise and learned philosophers of the different sects that were assembled together:

*and said, ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious*; or “more religious”, than any other persons, in other places, which has been observed before on (<sup><44716></sup>Acts 17:16) they had more gods, and more altars, and more festivals, and were more diligent and studious in the worship of the gods, than others. And this manner of addressing them, both as citizens of Athens, and as very religious persons, and who, as such, greatly exceeded all others, must greatly tend to engage their attention to him.

**Ver. 23.** *For as I passed by*, etc.] Or “through”; that is, through the city of Athens:

*and beheld your devotions*; not so much their acts of worship and religion, as the gods which they worshipped; in which sense this word is used in (~~2~~<sup>2</sup> Thessalonians 2:4) and the altars which were erected to them, and the temples in which they were worshipped; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, “the houses”, and “places of your worship”; and the Ethiopic version, “your images”, or “deities”,

*I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.*

Pausanias<sup>f880</sup> speaks in the plural number of altars of gods, that were named unknown, at Athens; and so says Apollonius Tyanaeus to Timasion<sup>f881</sup> it is wisest to speak well of all the gods, especially at Athens, where there are altars to unknown gods: it may be, there were altars that had the inscription in the plural number; and there was one which Paul took particular notice of, in the singular number; or the above writers may speak of altars to unknown gods, because there might be many altars with this inscription: the whole of the inscription, according to Theophylact, was this;

“to the gods of Asia, Europe, and Lybia (or Africa), to the unknown and strange god;”

though Jerom<sup>f882</sup> makes this to be in the plural number: certain it is, that Lucian<sup>f883</sup> swears by the unknown god that was at Athens, and says, we finding the unknown god at Athens, and worshipping with hands stretched out towards heaven, gave thanks unto him: the reason why they erected an altar with such an inscription might be, for fear when they took in the gods of other nations, there might be some one which they knew not; wherefore, to omit none, they erect an altar to him; and which proves what the apostle says, that they were more religious and superstitious than others: or it may be they might have a regard to the God of the Jews, whose name Jehovah with them was not to be pronounced, and who, by the Gentiles, was called “Deus incertus”<sup>f884</sup>; and here, in the Syriac version, it is rendered, “the hidden God”, as the God of Israel is called, (~~23~~<sup>23</sup>515 Isaiah 45:15) and that he is here designed seems manifest from what follows,

*whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you*; which could not be said by him of any other deity. God is an unknown God to those who have only the light of nature to guide them; for though it may be known by it that there is a God, and that there is but one, and somewhat of him may be discerned thereby; yet the nature of his essence, and the perfections of his nature, and the unity of his being, are very little, and not

truly and commonly understood, and the persons in the Godhead not at all, and still less God in Christ, whom to know is life eternal: hence the Gentiles are described as such who know not God; wherefore, if he is worshipped by them at all, it must be ignorantly: and that they are ignorant worshippers of him, appears by worshipping others more than him, and besides him, or him in others, and these idols of gold, silver, brass, wood, and stone; and by their indecencies and inhumanity used in the performance of their worship: wherefore a revelation became necessary, by which men might be acquainted with the nature of the divine Being, and the true manner of worshipping him; in which a declaration is made of the nature and perfections of God, and of the persons in the Godhead, the object of worship; of the counsels, purposes, and decrees of God; of his covenant transactions with his Son respecting the salvation of his chosen people; of his love, grace, and mercy, displayed in the mission and gift of Christ to be the Saviour and Redeemer of them; of the glory of his attributes in their salvation; and of his whole mind and will, both with respect to doctrine and practice; and which every faithful minister of the Gospel, as the Apostle Paul, shuns not, according to his ability, truly and fully to declare.

**Ver. 24.** *God that made the world, and all things therein*, etc.] In this account of the divine Being, as the Creator of the world, and all things in it, as the apostle agrees with Moses, and the rest of the sacred Scriptures; so he condemns both the notion of the Epicurean philosophers, who denied that the world was made by God, but said that it owed its being to a fortuitous concourse of atoms; and the notion of the Peripatetics, or Aristotelians, who asserted the eternity of the world; and some of both sects were doubtless present.

*Seeing that he is the Lord of heaven and earth*; as appears by his being the Creator of both; hence he supports them in their being, and governs all creatures in them by his providence.

*Dwelleth not in temples made with hands*; such as were the idol temples at Athens; nor in any other edifices built by man, so as to be there fixed and limited; no, not in the temple at Jerusalem: but he dwells in temples that are not made with hands, as in the temple of Christ's human nature, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, and in the hearts of his people, who are the temples of the Holy Ghost. This strikes at a notion of the Athenians, as if God was limited, and circumscribed, and included within the bounds of a shrine, or temple, though it is not at all contrary to his

promises, or the hopes of his own people, of his presence in places appointed for divine worship, but is expressive of the infinity and immensity of God.

**Ver. 25.** *Neither is worshipped with men's hands*, etc.] Or “served” with them; or “ministered unto” by them, as the Syriac version renders it: and the sense is, that men by worshipping God do not give anything to him, that can be of any use or service to him; he, being God all sufficient, stands in need of nothing; for external worship is not here intended by worshipping with men's hands, in distinction from, and opposition to, internal worship, or to the worship of God with the heart; but that whether it be with the one or with the other, or both, nothing is given to God, as adding any thing to his essential glory and happiness:

*as though he needed anything*; for he does not, he is “El Shaddai”, God all sufficient; nor can anything be given to him, he has not; or otherwise all perfection would not be in him: but that he cannot be indigent of anything, appears from hence,

*seeing he giveth to all life and breath*; or “the breath of life”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; this God breathed into man at first, and he became a living soul; and every animate creature, everyone that has life and breath, have them from God; he gives them to them, and continues them:

*and all things*; that are enjoyed by them, and are necessary for their subsistence, and for the comfort of life, and for both their use and profit, and for their delight and pleasure; wherefore he that gives them all things, cannot want anything himself, nor receive anything at their hands. This clause is left out in the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions.

**Ver. 26.** *And hath made of one blood*, etc.] That is, of one man's blood; the Vulgate Latin version reads, “of one”; and the Arabic version of Deuteronomy Dieu reads, “of one man”; of Adam, the first parent of all mankind, and who had the blood of all men in his veins: hence the Jews<sup>f885</sup> say,

“the first man was  $\mu\iota\ w[\ I\ \zeta\ wmd$ , “the blood of the world”;

and this by propagation has been derived from him, and communicated to all mankind. They also say<sup>f886</sup>, that

“the reason why man was created alone (or there was but one man created) was, on account of families, that they might not be stirred up one against another;”

that is, strive and contend with one another about pre-eminence: and they add,

“that the righteous might not say we are the sons of the righteous, and ye are the sons of the wicked.”

And it is a certain truth that follows upon this, that no man has any reason to vaunt over another, and boast of his blood and family; and as little reason have any to have any dependence upon their being the children of believers, or to distinguish themselves from others, and reject them as the children of unbelievers, when all belong to one family, and are of one man’s blood, whether Adam or Noah: of whom are

*all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth*; for from Adam sprung a race of men, which multiplied on the face of the earth, and peopled the world before the flood; these being destroyed by the flood, and Noah and his family saved, his descendants were scattered all over the earth, and reseeded it: and this is the original of all the nations of men, and of all the inhabitants of the earth; and stands opposed to the fabulous accounts of the Heathens, which the apostle might have in his view, that men at first grew up out of the earth, or after the flood were formed of stones, which Deucalion and Prometheus threw over their heads; and particularly the Athenians boasted that they sprung out of the earth, which Diogenes ridiculed as common with mice and worms. But the apostle ascribes all to one blood:

*and hath determined the times before appointed*; how long the world he has made shall continue; and the several distinct periods, ages, and generations, in which such and such men should live, such and such nations should exist, and such monarchies should be in being, as the Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman, and how long they should subsist; as also the several seasons of the year, as seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night; and which are so bounded, and kept so distinct in their revolutions, as not to interfere with, and encroach upon each other; and likewise the several years, months, and days of every man’s life; (see <sup>800</sup>Job 7:1 14:5) to which may be added, the times of the law and Gospel; the time of Christ’s birth and death; the time of the conversion of

particular persons; and all their times of desertion, temptation, affliction, and comfort; the times of the church's sufferings, both under Rome Pagan and Rome Papal; of the holy city being trodden under foot, of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of their being killed, and their bodies lying unburied, and of their resurrection and ascension to heaven, (<sup><6120></sup>Revelation 2:10 12:6 11:2,3,9,11) (<sup><6112></sup>Revelation 11:12) the time of antichrist's reign and ruin, (<sup><6135></sup>Revelation 13:5) and of Christ's personal coming, and the day of judgment, (<sup><5165></sup>1 Timothy 6:15 <sup><4173></sup>Acts 17:31) and of his reign on earth for a thousand years, (Rev 20:4-6). All these are appointed times, and determined by the Creator and Governor of the world:

*and the bounds of their habitation*; where men shall dwell, and how long they shall continue there the age or distinct period of time, in which every man was, or is to come into the world, is fixed and determined by God; nor can, nor does anyone come into the world sooner or later than that time; and also the particular country, city, town, and spot of ground where he shall dwell; and the term of time how long he shall dwell there, and then remove to another place, or be removed by death. And to this agrees the Ethiopic version, which renders the whole thus, “and hath appointed his times, and his years, how long they shall dwell”; (see <sup><6518></sup>Deuteronomy 32:8) to which the apostle seems to refer.

**Ver. 27.** *That they should seek the Lord*, etc.] Or “God”, as the Alexandrian copy and others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read; their Creator, and kind Benefactor, and who has appointed their time of life, and their habitations for them; and this should engage them to seek to know him, who has done all this for them, and to fear and serve him, and to glorify his name:

*if haply they might feel after him, and find him*; which shows, that though it is possible for men, by a contemplation of the perfections of God, visible in the works of creation and providence, so to find God, as to know that there is one, and that there is but one God, who has made all things; and so as to be convinced of the vanity and falsehood of all other gods, and to see the folly, wickedness, and weakness of idolatrous worship; yet, at the same time, it very strongly intimates, how dim and obscure the light of nature is; since those, who have nothing else to direct them, are like persons in the dark, who “feel” and grope about after God, whom they cannot see; and

after all their search and groping, there is only an “haply”, a peradventure, a may be, that they find him:

*though he be not far from everyone of us*; not only by his omnipresence, and immensity, whereby he is everywhere; but by his power in supporting all in their being; and by his goodness in continually communicating the blessings of providence to them.

**Ver. 28.** *For in him we live, and move, and have our being*, etc.] The natural life which men live is from God; and they are supported in it by him; and from him they have all the comforts and blessings of life; and all motions, whether external or internal, of body or of mind, are of God, and none of them are without the concurrence of his providence, and strength assistance from him; though the disorder and irregularity of these motions, whereby they become sinful, are of themselves, or of the devil; and their being, and the maintenance of it, and continuance in it, are all owing to the power and providence of God.

*As certain also of your own poets have said*; the Syriac version reads in the singular number, “as a certain one of your wise men has said”; but all others read in the plural; and some have thought, that the apostle refers to what goes before, that being an Iambic verse of some of the poets, as well as to what follows, which is a citation from Aratus<sup>f887</sup> and whom the apostle might have called his own, as he was his countryman; for Aratus was a native of Solis, a city of Cilicia, not far from Tarsus yea, some say<sup>f888</sup> he was of Tarsus, where the apostle was born: but Aratus being an Heathen, and the apostle speaking to Heathens, calls him one of them; and the rather, that what is cited might be the more regarded by them: though the expression is also<sup>f889</sup> said to be in an hymn to Jove, written by Cleanthes, who taught at Athens; and so the apostle addressing the Athenians, might, with greater propriety, say, “as certain of your own poets say”: it is also said to be in Aratus the astronomer, and in the poet Homer; so that the plural number may well be used. Which is,

*for we are also his offspring*; the offspring of Jove, says Aratus; which the apostle applies to the true Jehovah, the Creator of all men, by whom, and after whose image, they are made, and so are truly his offspring; upon which the apostle argues as follows.

**Ver. 29.** *Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God*, etc.] In the sense before given; for the apostle is not here speaking of himself, and other

saints, as being the children of God, by adoption, and by regenerating grace, and faith in Christ Jesus, but as men in common with others, and with these Athenians:

*we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device*; for men themselves, who are the offspring of God, and made after his image, are not to be compared to graven images of gold, silver, and stone, but are vastly preferable to them, they being formed by their art, and the device of their minds; and much less then should God, the Creator of men, and from whom they spring, be likened to, or represented by, any such thing; for so to think of God, is to think very unworthily of him; for if to think thus of ourselves, who are descended from him, would be a debasing of us, then much more to think so of God, the Father of spirits, must be a depreciating of him; and which by no means ought to be done, and argues great stupidity: if living rational creatures are not to be equalled to, and compared with, senseless statues, much less God, the former of men and angels.

**Ver. 30.** *And the times of this ignorance God winked at*, etc.] Not that he approved of, or encouraged such blindness and folly, as appeared among the Gentiles, when they worshipped idols of gold, silver, and stone, taking them for deities; but rather the sense is, he despised this, and them for it, and was displeased and angry with them; and as an evidence of such contempt and indignation, he overlooked them, and took no notice of them, and gave them no revelation to direct them, nor prophets to instruct them, and left them to their stupidity and ignorance:

*but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent*; that is, he hath given orders, that the doctrine of repentance, as well as remission of sins, should be preached to all nations, to Gentiles as well as Jews; and that it becomes them to repent of their idolatries, and turn from their idols, and worship the one, only, living and true God: and though for many hundreds of years God had neglected them, and sent no messengers, nor messages to them, to acquaint them with his will, and to show them their follies and mistakes; yet now he had sent his apostles unto them, to lay before them their sins, and call them to repentance; and to stir them up to this, the apostle informs them of the future judgment in the following verse. Repentance being represented as a command, does not suppose it to be in the power of men, or contradict evangelical repentance, being the free grace gift of God, but only shows the need men stand in of it, and how necessary and requisite it



is; and when it is said to be a command to all, this does not destroy its being a special blessing of the covenant of grace to some; but points out the sad condition that all men are in as sinners, and that without repentance they must perish: and indeed, all men are obliged to natural repentance for sin, though to all men the grace of evangelical repentance is not given: the Jews <sup>f890</sup> call repentance *hbwçth twxm*, “the command of repentance”, though they do not think it obligatory on men, as the other commands of the law. The law gives no encouragement to repentance, and shows no mercy on account of it; it is a branch of the Gospel ministry, and goes along with the doctrine of the remission of sins; and though in the Gospel, strictly taken, there is no command, yet being largely taken for the whole ministry of the word, it includes this, and everything else which Christ has commanded, and was taught by him and his apostles; (~~4830~~ Matthew 28:20).

**Ver. 31.** *Because he hath appointed a day*, etc.] The day of judgment is fixed by God in his eternal purposes, and is sure and certain, and will come, though it is not known by men or angels; and this is a reason why God will have the doctrine of repentance everywhere published, both to Jews and Gentiles, since all must come to judgment: and the day for it is appointed by him,

*in the which he will judge the world in righteousness*; the whole world will be judged, and every individual in it, good and bad, righteous and wicked; and this judgment will be a righteous one; it will proceed according to the strict rules of justice and equity, and upon the foot of the righteousness of Christ, as that has been received or rejected by men, or as men are clothed with, or are without that righteousness:

*by that man whom he hath ordained*; Beza’s ancient copy reads, “the man Jesus”: not that the apostle means that Christ is a mere man; for then he would not be fit to be a Judge of quick and dead, and to pass and execute the definitive sentence; which requires omniscience and omnipotence: but preaching to mere Heathens, he chose not at once to assert the deity of Christ, though he tacitly suggests it: but intended, by degrees, to open the glories of his nature and office to them, he being the person God had from all eternity ordained, and in time had signified, should have all judgment committed to him, and by whom the last judgment shall be managed and transacted:

*whereof he hath given assurance to all men:* or full proof, both of his being the Judge, and of his fitness to be one, and also of the righteousness, according to which he will judge:

*in that he hath raised him from the dead;* whereby he was declared to be the Son of God; and when all power in heaven and in earth was given to him; and which was done for the justification of all those for whose offences he was delivered: and this seems to be the reason why the apostle calls Christ the Judge a man, that he might have the opportunity of mentioning his resurrection from the dead.

**Ver. 32.** *When they heard of the resurrection of the dead,* etc.] Of a certain man that the apostle said God had raised from the dead, though they knew not who he was:

*some mocked;* at him, and at the doctrine he preached: these very likely were of the Epicurean sect, who disbelieved a future state; though, as Tertullian observes <sup>f891</sup>, the doctrine of the resurrection was denied by every sect of the philosophers: it is a doctrine of pure revelation, and what the light of nature never taught men, and by which men being only guided, have declared against, and have treated it with the utmost ridicule and contempt. Pliny <sup>f892</sup> reckons it, among childish fancies, and calls it vanity, and downright madness to believe it; as does also Caecilius in Minutius Felix <sup>f893</sup>, and who even calls it a lie, and places it among old wives' fables; and Celsus in Origen <sup>f894</sup> represents it as exceeding detestable, abominable, and impossible.

*And others said, we will hear thee again of this matter;* some think these were of the Stoic sect, who held a future state, and that the soul would live after the body, and had some notions which looked inclining to this doctrine: however, these thought there might be something in what the apostle said; they could not receive it readily, and yet could not deny it; they were willing to take time to consider of it; and were desirous of hearing him again upon that subject; in which they might be very open and upright; and this might not be a mere excuse to shift off any further hearing at that time, like that of Felix, in (~~424~~ Acts 24:1-25:27).

**Ver. 33.** *So Paul departed from among them.*] As it was high time, when they fell to deriding and scoffing at him; for hereby they judged themselves unworthy of the Gospel ministry: the Ethiopic version adds, "from Athens"; but it does not appear that the apostle went directly out of the

city; we read afterwards of his departing from Athens, (~~480~~ Acts 18:1) but the sense is, that he went out of the Areopagus, from that court of judicature; and from among the judges of it, and the philosophers of every sect, that stood around him in it; they having no more to say to him, nor he to them. And this shows, that he was not brought to be tried and judged, in order to be punished, but only to be heard concerning his doctrine; of which, when they had heard enough, he departed quietly, no one molesting him, unless with scoffs and jeers.

**Ver. 34.** *Howbeit, certain men clave unto him, and believed,* etc.] There were some who were ordained to eternal life, to whom the Gospel came in power, and they received the love of the truth, and their hearts and affections were knit unto the apostle; and they followed him, and kept to him, and privately conversed with him, and believed his doctrine, and in Jesus Christ, whom he preached unto them; to these the Gospel was the savour of life unto life, when to the scoffers and mockers it was the savour of death unto death: and this is the fruit and effect of the Gospel ministry, wherever it comes:

*among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite;* a judge in the court of Areopagus: how many judges that court consisted of, is not certain, nor whether there was one who was superior to the rest; if there was such an one, Dionysius seems to have been he, since he is called the Areopagite. The business of this court was not only to try causes of murder, which seems to have been the original business of it; but by these judges the rights of the city were preserved and defended, war was proclaimed, and all law suits adjusted and decided; and they made it their business to look after idle and slothful persons, and inquire how they lived<sup>f895</sup>: they always heard and judged causes in the night, in the dark, because they would only know facts, and not persons, lest they should be influenced by their afflictions, and be led wrong<sup>f896</sup>; they were very famous in other nations for their wisdom and skill, and for their gravity and strict justice. Dolabella, proconsul of Asia, having a woman brought before him for poisoning her husband and son, which she confessed, and gave reasons for doing it, referred the matter to a council, who refused to pass sentence; upon which he sent the case to Athens, to the Areopagites, as to judges “more grave” and “more experienced”<sup>f897</sup>: and hence these words of Julian the emperor

“let an Areopagite be judge, and we will not be afraid of the judgment.”

This Dionysius the Areopagite is said, by another Dionysius, bishop of the Corinthians, a very ancient writer<sup>f899</sup>, to be the first bishop of the Athenians, which is more likely than that he should be a bishop in France. It is reported of him, that being at Heliopolis in Egypt, along with Apollophanes, a philosopher, at the time of Christ’s sufferings, he should say concerning the unusual eclipse that then was, that “a God unknown, and clothed with flesh, suffered”, on whose account the whole world was darkened; or, as, others affirm, he said, “either the God of nature suffers, or the frame of the world will be dissolved”: it is also related of him that when he was converted by the apostle at Athens, he went to Clemens, bishop of Rome, and was sent by him with others into the west, to preach the Gospel; some of which went to Spain, and others to France, and that he steered his course to Paris, and there, with Rusticus and Eleutherius his “colleagues”, suffered martyrdom<sup>f900</sup>. The books ascribed unto him concerning the divine names, and ecclesiastical hierarchy, are spurious things, stuffed with foolish, absurd, and impious notions, and seem to have been written in the “fifth” century.

*And a woman named Damaris*; some of the ancients, and also some modern writers, take this woman to be the wife of Dionysius; but had she been his wife, she would have been doubtless called so; however, by the particular mention of her name, she seems to have been a person of some note and figure: the name is a diminutive from  $\delta\alpha\mu\alpha\rho$ , Damar, which signifies a wife.

*And others with them*; with these two, as the Arabic version renders it; that is, with Dionysius and Damaris. These laid the foundation of a Gospel church at Athens. Dionysius, as before observed, was the first bishop, or pastor of it; it is also said that Narcissus, one of the seventy disciples, was bishop of this place; (see Gill on “~~200~~ Luke 10:1”). In the “second” century Publius was bishop of the church at Athens, who suffered martyrdom for Christ in the time of Hadrian; and was succeeded by Quadratus<sup>f901</sup>, who was famous for a writing he presented to the said emperor, in favour of the churches in common, and the success of it, about the year 128; at the same time, Aristides, a famous philosopher and Christian, flourished in the church at Athens, who wrote an apology for the Christian religion; and also Jovius, a presbyter and martyr, and a disciple of Dionysius; likewise

Athenagoras, a man of great learning and piety, who wrote also an apology for the Christians, and a treatise concerning the resurrection of the dead, which are still extant; the former was written to the emperors Antoninus and Commodus: in the “third” century mention is made of the church at Athens; and Origen<sup>f902</sup> speaks very honourably of it, as meek and quiet, and desirous of approving itself to God. In the “fourth” century it appears that there were Christians there, since Maximus the emperor stirred up wicked men to molest and distress them; and there was a Christian school there, in which Bazil and Gregory Nazianzen were brought up. In the “fifth” century there was a church in this place; and in the “sixth”, a Christian school, in which Boethius Patricius learned the liberal arts; and in the “seventh” century mention is made of a bishop of Athens, who was in the sixth council at Constantinople<sup>f903</sup>: thus far this church state is to be traced.

# CHAPTER 18

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 18

**Ver. 1.** *After these things*, etc.] The Arabic version renders it, “after these words, or discourses”; after the apostle’s disputation with the philosophers, and his sermon in the Areopagus, the effects of which are before related:

*Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth*; the metropolis of Achaia, or Peloponnesus. The city was formerly called Ephyra, from Ephyra<sup>f904</sup>, the daughter of Oceanus, and had its name of Corinth from Corinthus, the son of Maratho, who repaired it when destroyed; or, as others say, from Corinthus the son of Pelops, others of Orestes, and others of Jupiter: though more probably it was so called from the multitudes of whores in this place, as if it was *κοραι ενψα*, “corai entha, here are girls, or whores”; for in the temple of Venus there were no less than a thousand whores provided, to be prostituted to all comers thither; (see Gill on “<4722>2 Corinthians 12:21”). It was situated between two great seas, the Aegean and Ionean; hence<sup>f905</sup> Horace calls it Bimaris: it had a very strong tower, built on a high mount, called Acrocorinthus, from whence these two seas might be seen, and where was the fountain Pirene, sacred to the Muses: the city was about sixty furlongs, or seven miles and a half, from the shore<sup>f906</sup>: it was a city that abounded in riches and luxury. Florus<sup>f907</sup> calls it the head of Achaia, and the glory of Greece; and Cicero<sup>f908</sup>, the light of all Greece: it was in time so much enlarged, and became so famous, that it was little inferior to Rome itself, on which account it grew proud and haughty; and using the Roman ambassadors with some degree of insolence, who were sent into Greece, on some certain occasion, first Metellus, and then Mummius, were sent against it, which latter took it, and burnt it; and the city then abounding with images and statues of gold, silver, and brass, were melted down together in the fire, and made what was afterwards called the Corinthian brass, which became so famous, and is often spoken of in history<sup>f909</sup>: but Julius Caesar, moved with the commodious situation of the place, rebuilt it<sup>f910</sup>, and it became a colony of the Romans, as Pliny<sup>f911</sup> and Mela<sup>f912</sup> both call it: and so it was at this time when the apostle was there. After this it came into the hands of the Venetians, from whom it was taken

by Mahomet, the second son of Amurath, in the year 1458<sup>f913</sup>; but is now again in the hands of the Venetians; and that and the country about it are called the Morea. And as the Gospel was to be preached to the worst of sinners, among whom God's chosen ones lay, the apostle was directed to come hither; and it appears by the sequel, that God had much people here, even more than at Athens, among the wise and learned.

**Ver. 2.** *And found a certain Jew named Aquila*, etc.] This seems to have been his Roman name, which he had took, or was given him, while he was at Rome; very likely his Jewish name was דְּשֵׁן, “Nesher”, which signifies an eagle, as “Aquila” does: unless it should rather be thought to be a Greek name; and as “Olympas” is from “Olympios”, and “Nymphas” from Nymphios”; so “Akilas”, as it in the Greek text, from Akylios”, and this from ακυλος, “Akylos”, which signifies an acorn. There was a Jewish proselyte of this name, who translated the Bible into Greek, who is called by the Jewish writers אִיל יָקָא, “Akilas”<sup>f914</sup>; and Eusebius<sup>f915</sup> calls him ακυλας ο ποντικος, or “Akylas” or “Aquila” of Pontus, as here, but cannot be the same; for one was a Jew, the other a Gentile, then a Christian, and afterwards a Jewish proselyte, and lived after the destruction of Jerusalem many years, even in the times of Adrian: nor is it the same name with Onkelos, the famous Chaldee paraphrast, as some have thought, and much less the same person; for though their age better agrees, yet neither their name, nor their nation; for Onkelos was only a proselyte, not a Jew, as this man was; and the agreement the names of these proselytes may be thought to have with this, does but confirm it to be a Roman name; and in a decree of Claudius the Roman emperor, mention is made of Akylas, or Aquila, a Roman governor of Alexandria<sup>f916</sup>: and in the reign of Caius Caligula, there was a consul of Rome whose name was M. Aquila Julianus. This is said to be afterwards bishop of Heraclea; but that is not to be depended upon:

*born in Pontus*; a country in Asia; (see Gill on “~~Acts~~ Acts 2:9”) where many Jews lived; though he was born in an Heathen country, his parents were Jews:

*lately come from Italy*; a famous and well known country in Europe: (see Gill on “~~Hebrews~~ Hebrews 13:24”).

*with his wife Priscilla*; she and her husband are both highly spoken of in ( ~~510B~~ Romans 16:3,4 (see Gill on “ ~~510B~~ Romans 16:3”)), (see Gill on “ ~~510A~~ Romans 16:4”):

*because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome*; of which edict Suetonius <sup>f917</sup> makes mention, who says, that Claudius

“expelled the Jews from Rome, who were continually making tumults, being moved thereunto by one Chrestus,”

who is generally understood to be Christ; and it is thought that the reason of this edict was, that the Jews in Rome continually opposing and disputing with the Christians, about Jesus being the Messiah, Claudius, who was of a timorous disposition, was afraid of a tumult, and that it might issue in his detriment, and therefore banished all the Jews, with whom the Christians were involved; for by the Heathens they were all called Jews, the first Christians being Jews: though others say the reason was, that the Jews had contracted an acquaintance with Agrippina, the wife of Claudius, and had drawn her into Judaism: but be it as it will, such an edict was made, on account of which Aquila and Priscilla were obliged to leave Rome, and come to Corinth. It must be something that was very provoking to him, otherwise before he had shown much favour to the Jews; for he not only granted to the Jews at Alexandria, that they should continue in the observance of their laws and customs, but permitted the same to them in all parts of the empire, by a special decree, which runs thus <sup>f918</sup>;

“Tiberius Claudius Caesar, etc. decrees, seeing the Kings Agrippa and Herod, my dearest friends, have entreated me that I would suffer the Jews in every government under the Romans, to observe their laws as in Alexandria; I most willingly grant it, not only for the sake of gratifying those who ask it, but judging that those are worthy, for whom it is asked, because of their faithfulness and friendship to the Romans; especially accounting it most just that no Grecian city should be deprived of these rights, seeing they were kept for them by the divine Augustus; wherefore it is right also that the Jews throughout all our empire should observe the customs of their country without any hinderance, whom I now command that in love to us they would behave more moderately, and not despise the religion of other nations, but keep their own laws; and I will that governors of cities, and colonies, and freedoms, both in Italy and without, have this my edict transcribed, and also kings and



princes by their ambassadors, and that it be put in such a place in less than thirty days, from whence it may be plainly read.”

This Claudius was the “fifth” emperor of Rome; and this decree passed in the “ninth”, or, as others, in the “eleventh” year of his reign, and about the year of Christ 51, or, as others, 54.

*And came unto them:* that is, the apostle, having found out Aquila and Priscilla, he came and visited them, and took up his lodging with them.

**Ver. 3.** *And because he was of the same craft,* Art, occupation, or trade:

*he abode with them;* in the same house in which they were:

*and wrought;* with his own hands, to support himself, for he was a stranger in this place; and as yet here was no church to minister to him; and when there was, he would take nothing of them, that the false teachers, who rose up among them, might not make any handle of it against him, and to the prejudice of the Gospel; though otherwise he thought it his just due to receive a maintenance from the churches; and insisted upon it as an ordination of Christ. He learned a trade whilst among the Jews, with whom it was common for their greatest doctors to be brought up to some trade or another; (see Gill on “~~Mark~~ Mark 6:3”).

*for by their occupation they were tent makers;* either for the soldiers, and which were made of sack cloth of hair, or of leather, and of the skins of various animals<sup>f919</sup>, sewed together; hence the phrase, “sub pellibus”, “under the skins”, is used for to lie in tents<sup>f920</sup>: or those tents they made, were canopies made of linen, and other things, which were erected in the summer season to shade and screen from the heat of the sun; though others take them for a sort of tapestry, or hangings, which they made for theatres, palaces, and stately rooms; and according to the Syriac version, they were horses’ trappings which they made: perhaps they were of the same occupation with Menedemus the philosopher, who was *σκηνορραφος*, “a sewer of tents”<sup>f921</sup>.

**Ver. 4.** *And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath,* etc.] In Corinth there was a synagogue of the Jews, in which they met together for worship on the seventh day of the week, which was their sabbath; and hither Paul went, and took the opportunity of reasoning with them out of the Scriptures, concerning Christ, his person, and offices, his incarnation, obedience, sufferings, and death, and about redemption and salvation by

him: we may observe the diligence, industry, and indefatigableness of the apostle; on the sabbath day he went to the synagogue, and preached Christ to those who there attended; and on the weekdays he laboured with his own hands. Beza's most ancient copy, and the Vulgate Latin version add here, "interposing the name of the Lord Jesus"; frequently making mention of his name, or calling upon it, and doing miracles in it.

*And persuaded the Jews and the Greeks*; this was the effect of his reasoning, and the success that attended it; some, both of the Jews, who were so by birth, as well as religion, and of the Greeks, or Gentiles, who were Jewish proselytes, and attended synagogue worship, were convinced by his arguments, and were induced to believe the truth of his doctrine, and to embrace it; or at least he endeavoured to persuade them that they were lost sinners, and that there was salvation for them in Christ, and in him only.

**Ver. 5.** *And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia*, etc.] Not from Berea in Macedonia, for from hence they came to the apostle while at Athens, and from whence he sent them, at least Timothy, to Thessalonica, to know the state of the saints there, as appears from (<sup><small>S100</small></sup>1 Thessalonians 3:1,2) and from hence they now came to the apostle at Corinth: when

*Paul was pressed in Spirit*; either by the Holy Spirit, by which he was moved and stirred up to preach the Gospel more frequently, and more powerfully; for he had not always the same measure of the Spirit, or was not always under the same influence; or else in his own spirit, and so the Arabic version renders it, "grief beset the spirit of Paul"; his soul was filled with trouble and sorrow, when he observed the nonrepentance and unbelief, the contradiction and blasphemy of the greater part of the Jews; and being filled with zeal for their welfare, he continued preaching Christ unto them. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, instead of "in spirit", read "in speech", or "in word"; and the sense is, not that he was straitened in his speech, and knew not what to say to the Jews, or had not freedom of speech with them; but he was instant in preaching to them, and preached the word more frequently and fervently, upon the coming of Silas and Timothy to his assistance:

*and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ*; he continued to produce more testimonies out of the writings of Moses, and the prophets, to prove

that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, or Messiah, prophesied of in those writings, and promised to the Jews, and whom they expected.

**Ver. 6.** *And when they opposed themselves*, etc.] To the truth, and contradicted themselves in many instances, and their own prophecies; or those books which they themselves allowed to be the oracles of God, and blasphemed both Christ, and the apostle, and the doctrine which he taught; and railed at him, and spoke evil of him, and used him in a very contumelious and reproachful manner, as they were used from contradicting to go to blaspheming; (see <sup><4135></sup>Acts 13:45)

*he shook his raiment*; his outer garment, and the dust off from it, as a testimony against them; (see <sup><4104></sup>Matthew 10:14, <sup><4135></sup>Acts 13:51)

*and said unto them, your blood be upon your heads*; meaning, that they were the authors of their own ruin and destruction; that they could not impute it to any other, when it came upon them; and that they were left inexcusable, and must bear their own iniquities, and the punishment of them: this clause is wanting in the Syriac version.

*I am clean*; meaning from their blood; (see <sup><4106></sup>Acts 20:26). The apostle seems to allude to (<sup><2334></sup>Ezekiel 33:4-9) signifying, that he had discharged his duty as a preacher, and so had delivered his own soul from their blood being required at his hands; and that it rested entirely on themselves, and they were answerable for all their impenitence, unbelief, and blasphemy:

*from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles*; in that city, and preach the Gospel to them, and no more enter into their synagogue, as it is very likely he afterwards never did; for though Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, was afterwards converted, yet his conversion seems to have been not in the synagogue, but in the house of Justus, which was hard by it. Compare with this (<sup><4136></sup>Acts 13:46).

**Ver. 7.** *And he departed thence*, etc.]. Not from Corinth, but from the synagogue:

*and entered into a certain man's house named Justus*; he did not return to Aquila and Priscilla, because they were Jews, lest he should be thought not to abide by his words, that he would henceforth go to the Gentiles; wherefore as he came out of the synagogue, he turned into a house adjoining to it, which belonged to one Justus: in one copy of Beza's, and in some others, and in the Vulgate Latin version, he is called "Titus Justus";

and in the Arabic version, “Titus the son of Justus”; the Syriac version only reads “Titus”: whether this is not the same Titus, who afterwards was a companion of the apostle, and to whom he wrote an epistle, may be inquired.

*One that worshipped God*; a Gentile, but a religious man, such an one as Cornelius: he might be a proselyte either of the gate, or of righteousness; though if he was the same with Titus, he could not be the latter, because he was not circumcised, (~~400B~~ Galatians 2:3) whose house joined hard to the synagogue; had this man been a Jew, his house might very well have been taken for the house which was *tsnkh tybl Æwms*, “near to the synagogue”, in which travellers were entertained, and ate, and drank, and lodged <sup>f922</sup>; and that he was the person appointed to take care of them, and so a very suitable house for Paul, a stranger, to take up his lodging in. The Ethiopic version adds, very wrongly, taking it from the beginning of the next verse, “because he was the ruler of the synagogue”; as if Justus was the ruler of the synagogue; and this the reason why his house was so near; whereas not he, but Crispus, was the ruler, as follows.

**Ver. 8.** *And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue*, etc.] This was a Jewish name; frequent mention is made of R. Crispa in the Jewish writings <sup>f923</sup> this person, either through hearing Paul before he departed from the synagogue, or when in Justus’s house, which was hard by the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house: he believed the doctrine the apostle preached, concerning Jesus, and that he was the Messiah; and he believed in him for life and salvation, and made a profession of his faith in him, and so did all his family, upon which he was baptized by the apostle; (see ~~401H~~ 1 Corinthians 1:14)

*and many of the Corinthians hearing* not “his faith”, as the Arabic version adds; as if hearing of the faith of Crispus induced them to believe also; for the ruler of the Jewish synagogue had no such influence on the Gentile Corinthians, as these were: but these hearing the Gospel preached by the apostle, very likely in the house of Justus, to which they came,

*believed*; faith came by hearing; they believed the Gospel, and they believed in Christ, the sum and substance of it; and not with a bare historical faith, but with a spiritual and saving one, or such as is unto salvation, with their heart, and with their mouth made confession of it:

*and were baptized*; not by the apostle, for he baptized at Corinth none but Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas, but by some of his companions, as Silas, or Timothy, or both: this is a plain instance of believers' baptism; first they heard the word of God; then they believed, this word coming with power to them; and upon their believing, they are baptized. These laid the foundation of a famous church in this place, which continued for many ages after; Silas, who is reckoned among the seventy disciples, is said to be the first bishop or pastor of it; (see Gill on "~~200~~Luke 10:1"); in the "second" century Primus was bishop of this church, with whom Egesippus as he went to Rome stayed some days, and was much refreshed with the orthodox faith of him, and the Corinthians; in the same century Dionysius presided over this church, who was not only very useful to the church under his care, but to many others <sup>f924</sup>; in the same age, under Severus lived Bacchylus bishop of Corinth, who wrote a book concerning Easter in the name of all the bishops in Achaia <sup>f925</sup>; in the third century Tertullian <sup>f926</sup> makes mention of a church at Corinth; in the fourth century Epictetus was bishop of the said church, and was contemporary and familiar with Athanasius, to whom a letter is extant in the works of Athanasius <sup>f927</sup>; in the "fifth" century there was a church at Corinth, and a bishop of it was in the synod at Chalcedon, and it was then a metropolitan church; in this age Peregrinus bishop of Corinth was in the first synod at Ephesus, held against Nestorius, and Erisistratus, a bishop also of the same church, was in another synod at the same place, and Peter bishop of Corinth was in the Chalcedon council; in the "sixth" century mention is made of a bishop of the Corinthians, in the fifth synod at Constantinople, and in the same century Gregory instructed John bishop of the Corinthians rightly to govern the Lord's flock, and exhorted all the Corinthian bishops to concord. In this age Adrianus also was bishop of Corinth, he flourished under Mauritius the emperor; as likewise did Anastasius archbishop of the Corinthians; and he being removed from his office, John succeeded him in it; in the "seventh" century there was a Corinthian bishop in the sixth council at Constantinople <sup>f928</sup>; thus far this ancient church is to be traced in history.

**Ver. 9.** *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision*, etc.] On a certain night as he was asleep, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him in a dream, and spake after this manner to him:

*be not afraid*; it is very likely that after the baptism of Crispus and his family, and of many of the Corinthians, that both the Jews and the Gentiles

were exasperated against the apostle; and his life might seem to be in danger, and he might be thinking of removing from hence for his preservation and safety; and might be advised to it by his friends, or at least that he should be incognito, and not be seen publicly: wherefore the Lord appears to him, and bids him not indulge any fears, or conceal himself and be silent,

*but speak, and hold not thy peace*; preach freely and boldly the Gospel without fear of men; the fear of men should not stop the mouths of Christ's ministers.

**Ver. 10.** *For I am with thee*, etc.] According to his promise, (<sup>483D</sup>Matthew 28:20) not only to assist in the ministry of the word, to give light into it, and liberty to preach it, and success in it, but to keep and preserve him from being hurt by men:

*and no man shall set on thee*; attack thee, or lay hands on thee:

*to hurt thee*; to do any injury to thy person, to thy body, in any part of it: wicked men cannot strike a blow, or do the least damage to a servant of Christ without his permission; he can tie their hands, and restrain their rage.

*For I have much people in this city*; this wicked and luxurious city; there were many here who were yet in their sins, in a state of unregeneracy, whom God had chosen to be his people, and had taken into his covenant as such; were given to Christ as his peculiar people, and whom he had redeemed with his precious blood: they were his people both by gift and purchase, before they were called by grace; and because of this his interest in them, he will have his Gospel continued for the gathering them in to himself; for Christ will lose none of his, all shall come unto him: from all which it appears, that Christ has a people who are related to him, and he has an interest in, before they are effectually called by grace; for this refers not to the many Corinthians who had heard and believed, and were baptized, but to some that had not, and were yet to be called; not the Jews in this city, Christ's own nation, nor all the inhabitants of it who were in some sense Christ's people, being made and supported in their beings by him, are intended; but a special people among the Gentiles, the same with the other sheep Christ speaks of, (<sup>610E</sup>John 10:16) not yet of his fold; a people beloved of God, chosen in Christ, given to him, and with whom a covenant was made in him, for whom Christ undertook, in whose name he

acted, and for whom he received blessings and promises, as well as took the care and charge of their persons; for the sake of these he assumed human nature, and suffered and died; towards these his heart always is; his eye is upon them, and he knows them, and where they are; and therefore he will look them up and find them out, and they shall be brought to believe in him, and shall not perish, but have everlasting life: and it may be further observed, that Christ has “many” such, though they are but comparatively few, yet in themselves they are a great number; yea, he has sometimes many of these in the worst of places, and among the vilest of men; and for the sake of these, in order to select and separate them from the rest, is the Gospel preached and continued. The ministers of it are sent here and there, where such persons are, and there they are continued till they are gathered in; yea, on this account both the Gospel and its preachers are continued in the world; and even the world itself, for the sake of these, till they are brought in, and then it will be destroyed; and it may be also remarked, that for the encouragement of Gospel ministers, Christ promises his presence and protection, and which was fulfilled in the Apostle Paul at Corinth; who though he stayed there a year and six months, none were suffered to do him any injury; and when an insurrection was made within that time, yet the apostle escaped, and quietly departed elsewhere.

**Ver. 11.** *And he continued there*, etc.] At Corinth, as the Syriac version, and some copies, read; he was obedient to the heavenly vision: in the Greek text it is, “he sat” there, answerable to the Hebrew word **בָּעָי**, which signifies to sit, continue and abide: he stayed there in all a year and six months; which was a long time for the apostle to stay in one place, and longer than he did anywhere, unless at Ephesus, where he continued two years, (~~490~~ Acts 19:10) for as for his stay at Rome, that was by confinement: but here were many people to be called, and much work to do, a large church to be raised, and put in order; and this required time as well as care and labour:

*teaching the word of God among them*; he did not sit idle here, but preached the Gospel, which is the word of God, and not man, openly and publicly, among them all; and that frequently, in season and out of season, and with great boldness and faithfulness.

**Ver. 12.** *And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia*, etc.] This province, which was now become a Roman one, Pliny the younger<sup>f929</sup> calls true and mere Greece; it went by the name of Aegialus<sup>f930</sup>, and now it is called



Livadia: it has on the north the country of Thessaly, and on the west the river Acheloo, or Aracheo, on the east the Aegean sea, and on the south Peloponnesus, or the Morea. Gallio, who was now deputy of it, was brother to L. Annaeus Seneca, the famous philosopher, who was preceptor to Nero; his name at first was M. Annaeus Novatus, but being adopted by L. Junius Gallio, he took the name of the family. According to his brother's account of him <sup>f931</sup>, he was a very modest man, of a sweet disposition, and greatly beloved; and Statius <sup>f932</sup> calls him Dulcem Gallionem, "the sweet Gallio", mild and gentle in his speech, as Quintilian says. Seneca <sup>f933</sup> makes mention of him as being in Achaia; and whilst he was deputy there he had a fever, when as soon as it took him he went aboard a ship, crying, that it was not the disease of the body, but of the place.

*The Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul*; being provoked that so many of their people, as well as of the Gentiles, were converted by him to the Christian religion, and were baptized:

*and brought him to the judgment seat*; of Gallio, the deputy, to be tried and judged by him.

**Ver. 13.** *Saying, this fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.*] Meaning either to the law of the Romans, which forbade the bringing in of any new gods, without the leave of the senate; (see Gill on "~~the~~ Acts 16:21"); or rather to the law of Moses: the Arabic version reads, "our law"; though this was false, for Moses in his law wrote of Christ, and ordered the children of Israel to hearken to him.

**Ver. 14.** *And when Paul was now about to open his mouth*, etc.] In his own defence, and plead his own cause, and answer to the charge exhibited against him:

*Gallio said unto the Jews, if it was matter of wrong*; of injury to any man's person or property, as murder, theft, etc.

*or wicked lewdness*; as fraud, forgery, perjury, treason, etc.

*O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you*: his sense is, that it would be according to right reason, and agreeably to his office as a judge, to admit them and their cause, and try it, and hear them patiently, and what was to be said on both sides of the question, what the charges were, and the proof of them, and what the defendant had to say for himself. The Vulgate Latin version reads, "O men Jews"; and so Beza's ancient copy.



**Ver. 15.** *But if it be a question of words*, etc.] “Or of the word”, what the Jews called the word of God, which Gallio did not pretend to understand: “and names”; as the names of God, of Jesus, and of Christ, whether he is God, and the Messiah:

*and of your law*; concerning circumcision, whether these Christians, and the proselytes they make, are obliged unto it:

*look ye to it*; suggesting that this was a matter that lay before them, and they were the proper judges of, and might determine for themselves, since they had the free exercise of their religion, and a right of judging of everything that respected that within themselves, and for which they were best furnished, as having a more competent knowledge of them; as the Arabic version renders it, “and ye are more learned in these things”; and most conversant with them:

*for I will be no judge of such matters*; and it would be well if every civil magistrate would act the same part, and not meddle with religious affairs, any further than to preserve the public peace.

**Ver. 16.** *And he drave them from the judgment seat.*] He would not hear, and try the cause; but dismissed them with threatening them, if ever they brought an affair of that kind to him any more.

**Ver. 17.** *Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes*, etc.] These were not the Greeks or Gentiles that were devout persons, or converted to Christianity, and were on the side of Paul, and fell foul on Sosthenes, as being his chief accuser; for this is not agreeably to the spirit and character of such persons, but the profane and unconverted Greeks, who observing that Gallio sent the Jews away, with some resentment and contempt, were encouraged to fall upon the principal of them, and use him in a very ill manner; it is very likely that this person was afterwards converted, and is the same that is mentioned in (~~400~~1 Corinthians 1:1). The name is Greek, and there is one of this name mentioned among the executors of Plato’s will <sup>f934</sup>. This man was now

*chief ruler of the synagogue*; chosen in, very likely, upon Crispus becoming a Christian, and being baptized:

*and beat him before the judgment seat*; of Gallio; before he and his friends could get out of court:

*and Gallio cared for none of these things*; which might not be owing to any sluggishness in him, but to an ill opinion he had of the Jews, as being a turbulent and uneasy people, and therefore he connived at some of the insolencies of the people towards them; though it did not become him, as a magistrate, to act such a part, whose business it was to keep the public peace, to quell disorders, to protect men's persons, and property, and prevent abuse and mischief, and to correct and punish for it. The Arabic version renders it, "and no man made any account of Gallio"; they did not fear his resentment, he having drove the Jews from the judgment seat.

**Ver. 18.** *And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while*, etc.] A year and a half, as in (<sup><4818></sup>Acts 18:11) for this insurrection might follow immediately upon the vision the apostle had; and who by that was encouraged to continue in this city, notwithstanding the treatment he met with; he not doubting of the promise of God, and of his power and faithfulness to fulfil it, though this was a trial of his faith and constancy:

*and then took his leave of the brethren*; whom he had been instrumental in the conversion of, and had established and confirmed in the faith; and having now done his work in this place, at least for the time present, he takes his leave of them and departs:

*and sailed thence into Syria*; or towards Syria, for he took Ephesus by the way, which was in Asia, and stopped there a little while:

*and with him Priscilla and Aquila*; whom he had met with at Corinth, and with whom he had lodged and wrought at his trade, (<sup><4818></sup>Acts 18:2,3)

*Having shorn his head in Cenchrea*; which some understand not of Paul, but of Aquila, who is the last person spoken of; and the Ethiopic version reads in the plural number, referring this to both Priscilla and Aquila, "and they had shaved their heads, for they had a vow"; and so it was read in a manuscript of Baronius, and Bede observes, that it was read in like manner in some copies in his time; but the more authentic reading is in the singular number, and is more generally understood of the Apostle Paul; who being about to go into Judea, to the Jew became a Jew, that he might gain some: Cenchrea, where this was done, was a sea port belonging to the Corinthians, on the east of the Isthmus, as Lechea was on the west; according to Pliny<sup>f935</sup>, there were two gulfs, or bays, to the Isthmus, the one he calls the Corinthian bay, and others the Crissean and Alcyonian bay, and Golfo de Petras; the other the Saronic bay, now called Golfo de Engia;

Lechea was in the Corinthian bay, and Cenchrea in the Saronic bay; and both belonged to Corinth, and were the bounds of the Straights; the space between them was the Isthmus, which consisted of about five miles; and so Pausanias says <sup>f936</sup>, the Isthmus of the Corinthians is washed on both sides by the sea; on one side at Cenchrea, and on the other at Lechea, and this makes the island a continent; and likewise Philo <sup>f937</sup> giving an account of a voyage of Flaccus says, that passing over the Ionian gulf, he came to the sea (or shore) of Corinth — — — - and going over the Isthmus from Lechea, to the opposite sea, he came down to Cenchrea, a seaport of the Corinthians; of which Apuleius <sup>f938</sup> gives this account:

“this town is a most noble colony of the Corinthians, it is washed by the Aegean and Saronic sea, where there is a port, a most safe receptacle for ships, and very populous.”

Hither the apostle came from Corinth to take shipping, and from hence he sailed to Syria, as before observed: it has its name either from millet, for “Cenchros” signifies “millet”; and “Cenchrias” is “bread made of millet”; or from the bird “Cenchris”, which is a kind of hawk; (see Gill on “~~5101~~Romans 16:1”).

*For he had a vow*; this, some think, could not be the vow of the Nazarites, for then he should have stayed till he came to Jerusalem, and have shaved his head at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and cast the hair into the fire, under the pot in which the peace offerings were boiled <sup>f939</sup>; though he that vowed in the country, was not obliged to this: others think it was such an one as the Jews in travelling used, that they would not shave till they came to such a place; and so the apostle had made a vow that he would shave at Cenchrea; and accordingly did; but this is not likely, that the apostle should make a vow upon so light an occasion: others that it refers to his going to Jerusalem, to keep the feast there, (~~44821~~Acts 18:21) and so these think the words are a reason, not of his shaving of his head, but of his sailing to Syria; the first is most probable, that it was a Nazarite’s vow; (see ~~44214~~Acts 21:24).

**Ver. 19.** *And he came to Ephesus*, etc.] The metropolis of Asia; according to Pliny <sup>f940</sup>, it had been called by many names; at the time of the Trojan war, Alopes, then Ortygia and Morges, also Smyrna Trachea, Samornion and Prelea, and which he calls the work of the Amazons: some say <sup>f941</sup> it was called Ephesus, because Hercules permitted the Amazons to dwell in it, Ephesus in the Greek language signifying “permission”; Pausanias <sup>f942</sup>

denies, that the famous temple in it was built by them, but by Ephesus the son of Caystrus, and says that from him the city had its name; though others say it was built by Androclus, the son of Codrus, king of Athens, in the time of David king of Israel; and that having suffered by the sea, it was rebuilt by Lysimachus king of Thrace, who called it after his wife's name Arsinoe; but he being dead, it was called by its ancient name Ephesus: it is now a poor village in the hands of the Turks, and with them goes by the name of Aiasalik; though with others it still has the name of Epheso; the Syriac version reads, "they came"; not only Paul, but Aquila and Priscilla; and certain it is that they came with him thither, since it follows,

*and left them there*; unless this is to be understood of Cenchrea: this clause is not here read in the Syriac version, but is placed at the end of (~~4182~~ Acts 18:21), where it reads much better; as that he should leave them at Ephesus, when he departed from thence, than when he first came thither; unless the sense is, that he left them in some part of the city, whilst he went to the Jewish synagogue; since it follows,

*but he himself entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews*; concerning Jesus being the Messiah, and the abrogation of the law; and the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, and not by the deeds of the law: which were the principal things in debate, between him and the Jews: Beza's ancient copy reads, "and the sabbath following he left them there".

**Ver. 20.** *When they desired him to tarry longer time with them*, etc.] Either Aquila and Priscilla, whom he left here, for here they were, as is certain from ~~4182~~ Acts 18:24,26 or rather the Jews with whom he reasoned, who might be desirous of further conference with him, upon the subject they had disputed about; either in order to gain more knowledge, or in hopes of baffling and confounding him:

*he consented not*; for a reason afterwards given.

**Ver. 21.** *But bade them farewell, saying*, etc.] As follows:

*I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem*; which perhaps was the passover, since that often went by the name of the feast: the why he must by all means keep it, was not because it was obligatory upon him; nor did he always observe it, as appears from his long stay at Corinth, and other places; and besides, as a Christian, he had nothing to do with it; but either because of his vow, (~~4188~~ Acts 18:18) or because he knew

he should have an opportunity of preaching the Gospel to great numbers; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions omit this clause:

*but I will return again unto you, if God will*; he promises to return to them, but not peremptorily as knowing that he was altogether subject to the will of God, who disposes and orders all things according to his sovereign pleasure; (see <sup><3015></sup>James 4:15) and he sailed from Ephesus; which was near the Aegean sea: such was the situation of Ephesus, according to Apollonius <sup>f943</sup>; who says, that it stood out to the sea, which encompassed the land on which it was built; so Pausanias <sup>f944</sup> relates, that Lysimachus passing into Asia by shipping, took the kingdom of Antigonus from him, and built the city the Ephesians now inhabit near the sea; so Josephus <sup>f945</sup> reports of Herod and Agrippa, that travelling by land to Phrygia Major, they came to Ephesus, and again, **διεπλευσιν**, “they sailed from Ephesus” to Samos.

**Ver. 22.** *And when he had landed at Caesarea*, etc.] This was Caesarea Stratonis, formerly called Strato’s tower: it would have been nearest for the apostle to have landed at Joppa, in order to go to Jerusalem, but that haven was a dangerous one; this was the safest, and which therefore Herod had repaired at a vast expense, and in honour of Caesar had called it by this name: of the port at Caesarea, and what a convenient and commodious one, as it was made by Herod, Josephus <sup>f946</sup> gives a particular account, and who often calls this place Caesarea, **παραλιος**, “Caesarea by the sea” <sup>f947</sup>; and in other Jewish <sup>f948</sup> writings mention is made of this place as a sea port, and of **ἄρσυϗδ αμϗδ ατνωϗ**, “the shore of the sea of Caesarea”:

Josephus <sup>f949</sup> sometimes calls it the port Sebastus, or Augustus, it being, as before observed, made by Herod, and so called in honour of Augustus Caesar; and in another place <sup>f950</sup>, Sebastus the port of Caesarea: according to Jerom <sup>f951</sup>, or a writer under his name, this was neither Caesarea Philippi, which indeed it could not be, that being an inland town; nor Caesarea formerly called Strato’s tower, but a third Caesarea, the metropolis of Cappadocia: in which he must be mistaken, seeing that was no sea port, and the apostle could not be said to land there; nor did it lie in the way to Jerusalem from Ephesus; but this city was in Phenice, and lay between Joppa and Dora; which cities were maritime ones, but very disagreeable havens, because of the vehement strong winds from Africa: which rolling up the sand out of the sea upon the shore, would not admit of a quiet station <sup>f952</sup>; wherefore the apostle chose to land here, and not at either of the said ports;

*and gone up*; not to Caesarea, but to Jerusalem, from thence, which lay higher; and going to and from these places, is signified by a going up and down, (<sup><40B></sup>Acts 9:30, 25:1). Moreover, the apostle had told the Ephesians, that he must go and keep the feast in Jerusalem, as he undoubtedly did: and yet if this does not refer to his going up thither, it will not be easy to observe that he went thither at all before his return to Ephesus; and besides, to suppose him to go from Caesarea to Antioch, was all one as to go back to Ephesus; and so to go, as one observes, by the same place to Jerusalem, into which he promised, in his return from Jerusalem, to come again, if God would:

*and saluted the church*; at Jerusalem, the mother church:

*he went down to Antioch*; in Syria, from whence he first set out.

**Ver. 23.** *And after he had spent some time there*, etc.] At Antioch:

*he departed*; from thence:

*and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples*; that were in those parts, confirming them in the faith of Christ, and fortifying their minds against the temptations of Satan, and encouraging them to bear the reproaches and persecutions of men; which shows the affection, diligence, and industry of the apostle: it seems there were disciples in these countries of Galatia and Phrygia, which very likely were made by the apostle, when he passed through those places, (<sup><40B></sup>Acts 16:6) and who were the beginning of Gospel churches in these places, which continued for ages after: certain it is, there were churches in Galatia in the apostle's time, of whom he makes mention, and to whom he wrote, (<sup><40B></sup>1 Corinthians 16:1, <sup><40B></sup>Galatians 1:2). According to the apostolical constitutions, Crescens, mentioned (<sup><40B></sup>2 Timothy 4:10) was appointed by the apostles bishop of the churches of Galatia; and particularly it is said, that he was bishop of Chalcedon in Galatia; (see Gill on "<sup><40B></sup>Luke 10:1") and in the "second" century, there was a church at Ancyra, which was disturbed by the heresy of Montanus, and was established by Apolinarius, who makes mention of the elders of this church <sup>1953</sup>: in the "third" century there were churches in Galatia, which Stephen bishop of Rome threatened with excommunication, because they rebaptized heretics: in the beginning of the "fourth" century, there were bishops from hence, which assisted at the council of Nice, against Arius, and at the synod of Sardica, in the same century; and at the beginning of it, Clemens

bishop of Ancyra, after he had taught twenty nine years, suffered much in the persecution of Dioclesian, first at Rome, then at Nicomedia, and at last was put to death by the sword; in this age also lived Basil, bishop of Ancyra, under Constantius; he first came to the bishopric of that place under Constantine, but being deprived of it for four years, was restored by Constantius in the council of Sardica; under the former he disputed against Photinus, as Epiphanius<sup>f954</sup> relates; who makes mention of Anysius his deacon, and Eutyches and Theodulus his notaries; and the same writer<sup>f955</sup> takes notice of several elders and officers of the same church in that age, as Photinus, Eustathius, another Photinus, and Sigerius, elders, Hyginus deacon, Heracides subdeacon, Elpidus reader, and Cyriacus president of the church: in the “fifth” century, there were many churches in Galatia, yea, they are said to be innumerable; Leontius was bishop of Ancyra in the times of Arcadius and Honorius; and was succeeded by Theodotus, who was in the first Ephesine synod against Nestorius, as was also Eusebius bishop of the same church, at another synod in the same place; Anastasius was bishop of the said church, lived under the emperor Leo the first, and was at the synod of Constantinople; Meliphthongus, bishop of Juliopolis in the same country, assisted at several synods; Eusebius, bishop of Aspona in Galatia, was present in the first synod at Ephesus, against Nestorius; likewise Peter bishop of Gangrae, and Theoctistus bishop of Pessinus, both lived in the time of the two synods, the infamous one at Ephesus, and the other at Chalcedon: in the “sixth” century, there were bishops of Ancyra, Juliopolis, and other cities in Galatia, who were present at the Roman and Constantipolitan synod; in this age, under Anastasius the emperor, lived Dorotheus bishop of Ancyra: in the “seventh” century were present, at the sixth council at Constantinople, several bishops of the churches of Galatia; as of Sinope, Pessinus, Aspona, and others: in the “eighth” century, mention is made of Basil, bishop of the church at Ancyra, Nicodemus bishop of Didymi, Gregory bishop of Sinope: and even in the ninth century a garrison of Christians was placed in Ancyra, against the incursions of the Saracens<sup>f956</sup>; so long the Christian name remained in those parts: and that there were also churches in Phrygia is as evident; Aristarchus, a companion of the apostle Paul, is said to be bishop of Apamea, which was a city in Phrygia; (see Gill on “~~200~~ Luke 10:1”) the second century, Papias, a disciple of the Apostle John, was bishop of Hierapolis in this country<sup>f957</sup>; and in the same age there was a church at Philomelium in Phrygia, to which the church at Smyrna wrote a letter, still extant in Eusebius<sup>f958</sup>, which gives an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp; likewise the church at Lyons, in



France, sent a letter to the churches in Asia and Phrygia, giving an account of their martyrs, which is to be seen in the same writer <sup>f959</sup>; in this century lived Apolinarius, bishop of Hierapolis, who opposed the Phrygian heresy of Montanus; and who makes mention of Zoticus, of the village of Comana, and Julianus of Apamea, both in Phrygia, as his fellow elders and bishops <sup>f960</sup>: Dionysius, of Alexandria, speaks of a church, and of the brethren at Synnada, which was in Phrygia, in a letter of his to Philemon, a presbyter at Rome <sup>f961</sup>; at Lampsacus in Phrygia, there were martyrs that suffered under Decius: in the third century, there was a church at Hierapolis, famous from the times of the apostles. Tertullian makes mention of the believers in Christ in Phrygia, in his time <sup>f962</sup>: in the beginning of the “fourth” century under Dioclesian, a whole city in Phrygia of Christians was set on fire and burnt, men, women, and children, calling upon Christ the God of all <sup>f963</sup>; and at the council of Nice, under Constantine, were present bishops of many churches in Phrygia; as Ilium, Synnada, Eucarpia, Hierapolis, and others; at Lampsacus, in this country, was held a memorable synod against Eudoxus and Acacius, the chief of the Arian faction: in the “fifth” century there were churches in Phrygia; Theodosius and Agapetus were bishops of Synnada in Phrygia Pacatiana; Marinianus, bishop of the same place, was present at the several synods in this century; Nunechius of Laodicea, Gennadius of Acmonii, Thomas and Olympius, both of Theodosiopolis, Lucianus of Ipsa, Albertus of Hierapolis, Eusebius of Doryleus, with many others, all in Phrygia, are made mention of in history: in the “sixth” century, several bishops of Phrygia, as of Philomelium, etc. were present at the synod held at Rome and Constantinople: in the “seventh” century, bishops of several churches in this country, as of Hierapolis, Synnada, etc. assisted at the sixth synod at Constantinople: in the eighth century were many churches here, whose bishops were present at the Nicene synod, as Basil, bishop of Pergamus, Nicetas of Ilium, John of Synnada, and others <sup>f964</sup>.

**Ver. 24.** *And a certain Jew named Apollos*, etc.] Who by some is thought to be the same with Apelles, (<sup><5160></sup>Romans 16:10), his name is Greek, though he was a Jew, not only by religion, but by birth, being of a Jewish extract:

*born at Alexandria*; in Egypt, which was built by Alexander the great, from whence it had its name; it was the metropolis of Egypt, and the seat of the kings of it; great numbers of Jews were in this place; here lived Philo the famous Jew:



*an eloquent man*; in speech, as well as learned, wise, and “prudent”, as the Ethiopic version renders it:

*and mighty in the Scriptures*; of the Old Testament, particularly in the prophecies of them concerning the Messiah; he had thoroughly read them, and carefully examined them, and could readily cite them; as well as had great knowledge of them, and was capable of explaining them; he was “skilful in the Scriptures”, as the Syriac version renders it; or he “knew” them, as the Ethiopic; he had large acquaintance with them, and was well versed in them: it is a Jewish way of speaking; so Ahithophel is said to be **hrwtb rwbq**, “mighty in the law”<sup>f965</sup>; the same is said of the sons of Reuben<sup>f966</sup>: this man

*came to Ephesus*; after the departure of the Apostle Paul, and while Aquila and Priscilla were there; the reason of his coming hither was to preach the word, as he did.

**Ver. 25.** *This man was instructed in the way of the Lord*, etc.] Which John, whose baptism he only knew, came to prepare: the word here used signifies “catechised”; and suggests, that he was trained up by his parents in this way, who might have been the disciples of John, though afterwards removed from Judea to Alexandria; and that he only had been taught the rudiments of the Christian religion, or doctrine of the Gospel; here called the way of the Lord, or which directs and leads unto him, as the only Saviour, and is the path of faith and truth; or as some copies read, “the word of the Lord”; and which accounts for what is afterwards said of him:

*and being fervent in the spirit*; either in or by the Spirit of God, being made so by him, who is, compared to fire, and who, in the form of cloven tongues of fire, sat upon the disciples at the day of Pentecost, and upon others; among whom this Apollos is by some thought to be, though without any reason; however, he might be inspired with zeal by the Spirit of God: or “in his own spirit”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; his soul was inflamed with zeal for the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and the good of souls; his ministry was very affectionate, warm, and lively; (see <sup><6121></sup>Romans 12:11) He spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord; or “of Jesus”, as read the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; according to the measure of light and grace he had received, he spake out freely and fully, and taught the people with great

industry, and with all the exactness he could, the things he knew concerning the person, offices, and grace of the Lord Jesus:

*knowing only the baptism of John*; which must be understood, not of the ordinance of baptism singly, as administered by John, but of the whole ministry of John; as of that ordinance, so of his doctrine concerning repentance and remission of sins; and concerning Christ that was to come, and concerning his being come, and who he was, whom John pointed at, and taught the people to believe in: but perhaps he might know very little, if anything, of the miracles of Christ, or of his death and resurrection from the dead, and the benefits and effects thereof; and of the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, and the light and knowledge which were communicated thereby.

**Ver. 26.** *And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue*, etc.] Of the Jews at Ephesus; using great freedom of speech, and showing much intrepidity and greatness of soul, and presence of mind; not fearing the faces of men, nor the revilings and contradictions of the Jews:

*whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard*; they attending at the synagogue, and having observed what he delivered, that there was some deficiency in it, though they took no notice of it publicly; partly on their own account, it not being proper, especially for Priscilla, to speak in public, nor was it allowed in the Jewish synagogues for a woman to speak there; and partly on his account, that they might not put him to the blush, and discourage him; and chiefly on account of the Gospel, that they might not lay any stumblingblocks in the way of that, and of young converts, and give an occasion to the adversary to make advantages: wherefore

*they took him unto them*; they took him aside when he came out of the synagogue, and privately conversed with him; they had him “to their own house”; as the Syriac version renders it;

*and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly*; these two doubtless had received a considerable measure of evangelical light and knowledge from the Apostle Paul, during the time of their conversation with him; and as they freely received from him, they freely imparted it to Apollos, with a good design to spread the truth of the Gospel, and to promote it and the interest of Christ in the world: and as on the one hand it was a good office, and a kind part in them, to communicate knowledge to him, so it was an instance of a good spirit, and of condescension in him, to

be taught and instructed by them; especially since one of them was a woman, and both mechanics, and made but a mean figure: and from hence it may be observed, that women of grace, knowledge, and experience, though they are not allowed to teach in public, yet they may, and ought to communicate in private, what they know of divine things, for the use of others.

**Ver. 27.** *And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia*, etc. The chief city of which was Corinth, and whither Apollos went, as appears from (~~490~~ Acts 19:1). What disposed him to go thither, after he had received a greater degree of light and knowledge, was no doubt that he might communicate it, to the good of others, to which he was moved by the Holy Ghost, who had work for him to do there: according to Beza's most ancient copy, there were Corinthians sojourning in Ephesus, who when they had heard him (Apollos), besought him that he would go with them into their country; to which he agreeing, the Ephesians wrote to the disciples at Corinth to receive him, as follows:

*the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him*; that is, the brethren at Ephesus, among whom Aquila was a principal one, wrote letters of recommendation to the brethren of the churches in Achaia, particularly at Corinth, not only that they would receive him into their houses, and hospitably entertain him as a Christian man, but admit him, and behave towards him as a preacher of the Gospel:

*who when he was come*; into Achaia, and to Corinth:

*helped them much which had believed through grace*; the phrase "through grace", is omitted in the Vulgate Latin version, but is in all the Greek copies, and may be connected either with the word "helped"; as the Syriac version, "he helped through grace"; and then the sense is, that Apollos, through the gifts of grace bestowed on him, or by the assistance of the grace of God, or both, greatly helped and contributed much to the advantage of the believers in those parts; as to the encouragement of their faith, and the increase of the joy of it; for the quickening, and comforting, and establishing them in the truths and doctrines of the Gospel, by his affectionate, fervent, and nervous way of preaching: or it may be connected with the word "believed", as it is in the Arabic version and in ours; and the meaning is, that he greatly assisted such who were already believers; and who became so, not of themselves, but through the grace of God; for faith is not of nature, nor the produce of man's free will, but is the gift of God's

grace; it is a fruit of electing grace, an instance of distinguishing grace, it is owing to efficacious grace, and comes along with effectual calling grace, through the word preached, the means of grace; and is supported and maintained by the grace of God; the Ethiopic version renders it, “he preached much to them, who believed in the grace of God”; that is, in the Gospel, the doctrine of the grace of God, which they had received and professed; or in the love and favour of God, they were rooted and grounded in, and persuaded of.

**Ver. 28.** *For he mightily convinced the Jews*, etc.] His reasoning was so strong and nervous, his arguments so weighty and powerful, and the passages he produced out of the Old Testament so full and pertinent, that the Jews were not able to stand against him; they could not object to the texts of Scripture he urged, nor to the sense he gave of them, nor answer the arguments founded upon them; he was an overmatch for them; they were refuted by him over and over, and were confounded to the last degree:

*and that publicly*, in their synagogue, before all the people; which increased their shame and confusion; and was the means of spreading the Gospel, of bringing others to the faith of it, and of establishing them in it, who had already received it: showing by the Scriptures; of the Old Testament, which the Jews received and acknowledged as the word of God:

*that Jesus was Christ*; or that Christ, that Messiah, which these Scriptures spoke of, whom God had promised, and the church of God expected; and which was the main thing in controversy between the Jews and the Christians, as it still is.

# CHAPTER 19

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 19

**Ver. 1.** *And it came to pass that while Apollos was at Corinth*, etc.]

Whither he came after the Apostle Paul, and where he watered what the apostle had planted, and where he became very famous and eminent; insomuch that he was set up, though not with his will, at the head of a party, in opposition to the chief of the apostles, Peter and Paul; (see ~~<K&L>~~ 1 Corinthians 1:12 3:4-6, 4:6).

*Paul having passed through the upper coasts*; that is, of Phrygia, Galatia, Pontus, Bithynia, Lydia, Lycaonia, and Paphlagonia;

*came to Ephesus*; into Ionia, of which Ephesus was the chief city, and lay near the sea; wherefore the other countries are called the upper coasts; hither he came, according to his promise in (~~<K&L>~~ Acts 28:21)

*And finding certain disciples*; such as believed in Christ, made a profession of him, and had been baptized in his name, for such were commonly called disciples: these do not seem to be persons, who were either converted by Paul, when he was at Ephesus before, or by Apollos, who had been there since, and was gone; but rather some who came hither from other parts, since the apostle was at this place; though indeed his stay at Ephesus before was so short, that they might be here, and he not hear of them, or meet with them.

**Ver. 2.** *He said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost*, etc.]

Meaning, not the special regenerating and sanctifying grace of the Holy Ghost, for that is supposed in their being disciples and believers, but the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, for it follows,

*since ye believed?* that is, in Christ; which is taking it for granted, that they had received the special grace of the Spirit of God; for this believing is to be understood of true, spiritual, special faith in Christ:

*and they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*; by which they could not mean the person of the Holy

Ghost: for they must have known that there was such a divine person as the Holy Ghost, from the writings of the Old Testament, with which they were conversant: and from the ministry of John, into whose baptism they were baptized; who saw the Spirit of God descend on Jesus, and bore witness of it; and declared, that Christ who was to come after him, would baptize with the Holy Ghost: nor could they mean the special grace of the Spirit, which they themselves had received; but the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit of God, which they at present knew nothing of, and which were afterwards bestowed upon them: they knew that there were prophecies in the Old Testament, concerning the effusion of the Spirit in the last days, in the days of the Messiah; but they had not heard that these had had their accomplishment; they had heard nothing of the day of Pentecost, and of the pouring out of the Spirit upon the apostles then, nor of any instance of this kind since; they did not know that the Holy Ghost was yet, (~~John~~ John 7:39) they knew he was promised, but not that he was given; the Ethiopic version, to avoid the difficulty of the text, renders it, “we have only heard that there was an Holy Ghost”.

**Ver. 3.** *And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptized?* etc.] The apostle takes it for granted that they were baptized, since they were not only believers, but disciples; such as not only believed with the heart, but had made a profession of their faith, and were followers of Christ; but asks unto what they were baptized; either in whose name they were baptized, since Christian baptism was administered in the name of the Spirit, as well as in the name of the Father and of the Son; or what attended or followed their baptism, seeing sometimes the Holy Ghost fell upon persons, either before baptism, or at it, or after it:

*and they said, unto John's baptism;* some think they had never been baptized at all with water baptism, only had received the doctrine preached by John, concerning repentance and remission of sins, and so were baptized unto him, professing the same doctrine he did, just as the Israelites were baptized into Moses; others think they were baptized, but very wrongly, being baptized in the name of John, and not in the name of Jesus Christ; and so, as it was not Christian baptism they had submitted to, it was right to baptize them again: but neither of these are probable, for it is not likely that they should receive John's doctrine, and not his baptism; that they should be his disciples and followers, and not attend to the more distinguishing branch of his ministry; and it is still more unlikely that they should be baptized in his name, who preached Jesus Christ to his followers,

and pointed out to them the Lamb of God, and declared him to be greater than he; it seems rather that they were baptized, and that they were baptized in the name of Christ, as John's disciples were, as the apostle affirms in the following words.

**Ver. 4.** *Then said Paul*, etc.] In reply to their answer, understanding them that they were baptized by John, he takes it up, and gives an account of John's baptism: showing how agreeable it was, and that it was the same baptism with the baptism of Christ, being administered in his name:

*John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance*; which required repentance antecedent to it, and was a fruit and effect, and so an evidence of it:

*saying unto the people*; the people of the Jews, the common people, the multitude that attended on his ministry:

*that they should believe on him, which should come after him*, that is, on Jesus Christ; so that he preached faith in Christ, as well as repentance towards God; and made the one as well as the other a necessary prerequisite unto baptism; which shows, that his baptism and Christian baptism are the same.

**Ver. 5.** *When they heard this*, etc.] That is, the people to whom John preached, his hearers; when they heard of the Messiah, and that Jesus was he, and that it became them to believe in him:

*they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*; not the disciples that Paul found at Ephesus, but the hearers of John; for these are the words of the Apostle Paul, giving an account of John's baptism, and of the success of his ministry, showing, that his baptism was administered in the name of the Lord Jesus; and not the words of Luke the Evangelist, recording what followed upon his account of John's baptism; for then he would have made mention of the apostle's name, as he does in the next verse; and have said, when they heard this account, they were baptized by Paul in the name of the Lord Jesus: the historian reports two things, first what Paul said, which lies in (~~4490~~ Acts 19:4,5) then what he did, (~~4496~~ Acts 19:6) where he repeats his name, as was necessary; as that he laid his hands upon them, which was all that was needful to their receiving the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, having been already baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus: which sense is the more confirmed by the particles  $\mu\epsilon\nu$  and  $\delta\epsilon$ , which answer to one another in verses 4 and 5, and show the words to be a continuation of

the apostle's speech, and not the words of the historian, which begin in the next verse. Beza's ancient copy adds, "for the remission of sins".

**Ver. 6.** *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them*, etc.] They having been before baptized, not by him, but by John, or one of his disciples, in the name of the Lord Jesus; just as Peter and John laid their hands upon the believing Samaritans, who had been before baptized by Philip, (~~4814~~ Acts 8:14-17) and the same extraordinary effects followed:

*the Holy Ghost came on them*; in his extraordinary gifts, whose special grace they had before an experience of:

*and they spake with tongues*; with other tongues, or in other languages, which they had never learned, or had been used to, as the disciples did at the day of "Pentecost": and prophesied; preached, having an extraordinary gift at once, of explaining the prophecies of the Old Testament, and also foretold things to come.

**Ver. 7.** *And all the men were about twelve*.] The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, have not the word "about"; but affirm, that the men were twelve; and indeed the number being so small, the historian might be at a certainty about it: these seem to be the first materials of a Gospel church at Ephesus, which afterwards was very large and flourishing, and very likely were some of the elders of it.

**Ver. 8.** *And he went into the synagogue*, etc.] Of the Jews at Ephesus, for it seems to have been a private house, where he had met with the twelve baptized disciples, and had laid his hands on them; and these being Jews, as it seems most likely, by their having been baptized into John's baptism, the apostle went along with them to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his usual custom; having a very great desire, and an affectionate concern, for the welfare of his countrymen the Jews:

*and spake boldly for the space of three months*; that is, he used great freedom of speech, and showed much courage and intrepidity of mind, in preaching the Gospel at the synagogue every sabbath day as it returned, during this space of time; some manuscripts read, "three days":

*disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God*; the kingdom of the Messiah, the Gospel dispensation, the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and the Gospel church state, often signified by the kingdom of God, and of heaven, in Scripture; and concerning the glory



of a future state, the way and right unto it, and meetness for it; and these things he reasoned upon in such a strong and nervous manner, and made use of such powerful arguments, in proof and demonstration of them, as were very persuasive, and engaged many to believe them, and give their assent unto them.

**Ver. 9.** *But when divers were hardened and believed not*, etc.] For though some were affected with and convinced by the arguments the apostle used, others were but the more hardened and remained incredulous: for the Gospel, while it is the savour of life unto life to some, it is the savour of death unto death, to others; as the sun melts the wax, and hardens the clay:

*but spake evil of the way before the multitude*; the Syriac version and Beza's ancient copy read, "before the multitude of the Gentiles": the unbelieving Jews not only contradicted the Gospel preached by the apostle, but blasphemed it, and said all the evil things of it they could, and loaded it with reproaches, and charged it with all the bad consequences they could think of; and that publicly, before all the people, in order to prejudice them against it; for by "the way", is meant the doctrine of the Gospel, which the Vulgate Latin here reads, "the way of the Lord"; and so some copies; and two of Stephens's copies read, "the way of God", as does also the Syriac version; and the Arabic version, "the way of faith"; and the Ethiopic version, "the doctrine"; the doctrine, which shows the way of God's salvation by Jesus Christ:

*he departed from them*; the hardened, unbelieving, and blaspheming Jews, as being unworthy of the means of grace; he went out of their synagogue, and no more entered there: and separated the disciples; from them, the twelve disciples he had laid his hands on, and others who in this space of time, the space of three months, had been converted under his ministry; these he formed into a separate Gospel church state, as well as engaged them to quit the company and conversation of these blasphemers, and no more attend with them in their synagogue, that so they might not be infected and corrupted by them; a separation from such who contradict and blaspheme the truths and ordinances of the Gospel, is justifiable:

*disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus*: which was either built by him, and so went by his name, or which one of this name possessed, and made use of; for it seems to be the proper name of a man, and so the Syriac version renders it, "whose name was Tyrannus"; though by others it is taken to be an appellative, and to design some great person, who

patronised the apostle, and in whose house he taught; the word “tyrant”, being formerly used for a king, a prince, or nobleman; and so the Arabic version renders it, “in the dwelling house of one of the great men”; the chief of Asia, that were his friends, (~~4198~~ Acts 19:31) and so the Ethiopic version, “and he taught daily before the court and the governors”: some copies read “Tyrannius”; mention is made of a philosopher whose name was “Tyrannion”, who was so called, because he vexed and disturbed those that were brought up in the same school with him <sup>f967</sup>; this man it seems was a schoolmaster; there was one of his name a bishop of Tyre, a martyr under Dioclesian; and another whose name was Tyrannus, bishop of Antioch <sup>f968</sup>; Beza’s ancient copy, and one of Stephens’s, add, “from the fifth hour to the tenth”; as if he spent five hours in public teaching every day, and rest in his trade and devotion.

**Ver. 10.** *And this continued by the space of two years*, etc.] Reckoning from the end of the three months, which had been spent in teaching in the synagogue:

*so that all they which dwelt in Asia*; in the lesser Asia, called the proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the chief city:

*heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*; these, as they came to Ephesus, whether on account of religion, the Asiatic Jews to their synagogue, and the Greeks or Gentiles to the famous temple of Diana, or on account of trade and business, or for the sake of seeing this place, had the opportunity of hearing the Apostle Paul preach, concerning the person, offices, and grace of Christ; and dispute and reason concerning the more abstruse and difficult points of the Christian religion, in the above school, for two years together; so that the word of the Lord went out from hence, and was spread in all the cities and towns in Asia.

**Ver. 11.** *And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.*] For the confirmation of the doctrine which he preached, and of his mission, as an apostle; and these were not any sort of miracles, common and vulgar ones, and much less things of chance, and what were merely accidental, as the word may signify; but they were rare and uncommon ones, and in which there was a visible display of the power of God; to whom as the efficient cause they are ascribed, the apostle being only an instrument God made use of.

**Ver. 12.** *So that from his body were brought unto the sick*, etc.] The Ethiopic version renders it, “from the extremity”, or “border of his garment”; and the Syriac version, “from the garments which were upon his body”; were brought and put upon the sick; that is, of the clothes which the apostle wore, some of them were taken and carried to sick persons, and used by them: particularly “handkerchiefs” or “aprons”; the former were such as he might use to wipe his face with, and remove sweat, or any filth from the body; and the latter, what he might wear as a mechanic, when working at his trade:

*and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them*; who were afflicted and possessed with them; these were some of the special and uncommon miracles wrought by the hands of the apostle, and which were wrought in an uncommon way; and which most clearly showed that they were wrought by a divine power.

**Ver. 13.** *Then certain of the vagabond Jews*, etc.] Who strolled about from place to place, pretending to tell fortunes, cure diseases by charms, and dispossess devils by conjuration, and therefore are called as follows,

*exorcists*; such there were among the Jews, as Justin Martyr observes <sup>f969</sup>, who adjured by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: these

*took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus*; they imitated the Apostle Paul, and attempted to do as he did, using the same: name; hoping to get money or applause, or both, in this way; and it may be observed, that there were some who really did cast out devils in the name of Christ, who did not belong to him, (<sup><4072></sup>Matthew 7:22, <sup><4088></sup>Mark 8:38)

*Saying, we adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth*; that is, to come out the bodies of those men which they had possessed: and the Jews made use of the name of Jesus for healing diseases; for it is said of one <sup>f970</sup>, that

“he swallowed something which almost choked him, and one came, and muttered to him in the name of Jesus ben Pandira, and he was well”

The Alexandrian copy, Beza’s ancient one, and others, the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, read, “I adjure you”, etc.

**Ver. 14.** *And there were seven sons of one Sceva a Jew*, etc.] Who strolled about the country, and used exorcisms: and

*chief of the priests*; that were at Ephesus; not the high priest of the Jews, for he would have been at Jerusalem, and not at Ephesus; though indeed it does not necessarily follow from the words, that Sceva himself was there, only his seven sons: however, no such name appears in the catalogue of the Jewish high priests, nor is it reasonable to think, that seven sons of an high priest should follow such a vagabond course of life: Beza's ancient copy only calls him "a priest"; and the Alexandrian copy reads his name, Scuta, and the Ethiopic version omits it; it is the same with *hawks*, and signifies a spectator, or observer; see the Targum on (~~1034~~ 2 Samuel 13:34, ~~2206~~ Isaiah 21:6).

*which did so*; adjured the devils in the name of Jesus, to come out; at least they did so in one case, as follows.

**Ver. 15.** *And the evil spirit answered and said*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, add, "to them"; to the seven sons of Sceva:

*Jesus I know*; to be the Son of God and Messiah, and own that he has power of dispossessing spirits, of which there were many instances in the days of his flesh:

*and Paul I know*; and own to be a servant of the most high God, by whom miracles of this kind have been wrought:

*but who are ye?* you are not the disciples of Jesus, nor the servants of God, but the children of the devil, and have no power over us, but on the other hand are subject to us.

**Ver. 16.** *And the man in whom the evil spirit was*, etc.] Being agitated by him:

*leapt upon them*; with great agility and force, and laid hold on them, and struggled with them, and beat and wounded them, and stripped them naked:

*and overcame them, and prevailed against them*; the Alexandrian copy, Beza's most ancient one, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "and overcame both"; as if only two of these seven sons had made

this attempt, and were so used; though the Ethiopic version reads, “and overcame them all”; all the seven sons:

*so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded*; having their clothes tore off, and their bodies beat and bruised.

**Ver. 17.** *And this was known to all the Jews*, etc.] These men being Jews: and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus: for though it was done in a private house, yet there might be many spectators and witnesses, both Jews and Greeks, who spread this fact about the city, and who, were to be depended upon:

*and fear fell on them all*; on the enemies of Christ and his Gospel, so that others were deterred from making such an attempt for the future:

*and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified*; which had such power over evil spirits, and whose power they themselves acknowledged: this was done by them that believed in Christ, who thought and spake the more highly of him; and who more strongly believed in him, and so magnified him, and gave more glory to him; Christ is great in himself, and he is magnified and made great, when he is declared to be so, and is treated as such.

**Ver. 18.** *And many that believed*, etc.] In Jesus Christ, whose name was spoken of with great respect, and which spread fear in every person:

*came*; to the apostle:

*and confessed*; their sins; and acknowledged what a wicked life they had led:

*and showed their deeds*; their former evil deeds, which they had been guilty of; one copy reads, “their sins”; (see <sup>4016</sup>Matthew 3:6).

**Ver. 19.** *Many also of them which used curious arts*. etc.] Magic arts, soothsaying, necromancy, conjuration, and the like, being convinced of the folly and wickedness of them:

*brought their books together*; by which they had learned these arts; Ephesus was famous for this sort of learning; here Apollonius Tyaneus, in the beginning of Nero’s reign, opened a school and taught magic, and such like things: frequent mention is made of the Ephesian letters, which were

no other than enchantments; and even Diana, the goddess of the Ephesians, is said to be a magician<sup>f971</sup>:

*and burned them before all men*; to show their detestation of them, and the truth and genuineness of their repentance for their former sins; and that these books might not be a snare to them for the future, nor be made use of by others:

*and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver*; which is thought to answer to one thousand five hundred sixty two pounds and ten shillings of our money; reckoning a piece of silver, an Attic drachma; for such might be the silver pieces at Ephesus, a city of Greece, and which was of the value of our money seven pence halfpenny; but if Luke meant by pieces of silver, shekels, according to the Jewish way, (see Gill on “<sup>4065</sup>Matthew 26:15”) then the sum is much larger, for a shekel was about two shillings and six pence of our money; so that fifty thousand pieces of silver, amount to six thousand two hundred and fifty pounds; a large sum indeed for magic books! some manuscripts read “gold” instead of “silver”, which must greatly increase the value.

**Ver. 20.** *So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.*] Over conjuring books, conjurers themselves, yea, even the devils; the power of God going along with it, many were converted; which is meant by the increase of it, and were delivered from the power of darkness, out of the hands of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of Christ. Beza’s ancient copy reads, the “faith” of God; and the Syriac version, “faith in God”.

**Ver. 21.** *After these things were ended*, etc.] After that the apostle had disputed with the Jews in their synagogue, for the space of three months, and in the school of Tyrannus about two years; and after many souls had been converted at Ephesus, and were formed into a church state, and were established in the faith:

*when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia*: in the former of which were the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and in the latter, Corinth; where the apostle had already been, and preached the Gospel with success, and had laid the foundation of a Gospel church state in each place; but was willing to visit them again, both to confirm them in the doctrines of the Gospel, and, if it was the will of God, that he might be the instrument of converting others, and adding them to them, as well as to make some

collections among them, for the poor saints at Jerusalem: for through these places he intended

*to go to Jerusalem*; to visit the church there, and distribute to the poor what he had gathered, or should gather for them among the Gentile churches:

*saying, after I have been there, I must also see Rome*; the metropolis of the empire, and the glory of the whole world; and which to see was one of Austin's three wishes: but the apostle's desire was not so much to see the magnificence of the city, as the saints in it; and that he might impart some spiritual gift unto them, and have some fruit among them; and be a means of quickening and comforting them, and of gaining others to them; and it was the will of God that he should go there; and this he spake by a prophetic spirit, and as being under the impulse of the Spirit of God; (see <sup><421></sup>Acts 23:11).

**Ver. 22.** *So he sent into Macedonia*, etc.] To Philippi, or Thessalonica, or Berea, or some of the places there, to let them know of his coming, and to prepare for him:

*two of them that ministered unto him*; that were his assistants in preaching the Gospel:

*Timotheus and Erastus*; the former of these was a disciple he found at Lystra, and took along with him, and to whom he afterwards wrote two epistles; and the latter seems to be the same with him, who was chamberlain of the city of Corinth, and is said to abide there, ( <sup><563></sup>Romans 16:23, <sup><540></sup>2 Timothy 4:20) The Ethiopic version, instead of Erastus, wrongly reads Aristarchus; whereas it is certain, he was not sent into Macedonia, but was with the apostle at Ephesus in the tumult, ( <sup><442></sup>Acts 19:29).

*But he himself stayed in Asia for a season*; that is, at Ephesus, as the following narration shows.

**Ver. 23.** *And the same time there arose no small stir about that way*.] The Syriac version reads, "the way of God"; and the Vulgate Latin version, "the way of the Lord": that is, the Christian religion, and the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, which the saints were directed to walk in; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "about this doctrine"; which mightily grew and prevailed, and which such numbers embraced; and how great the stir

was about it, and from whence it arose, who began it, and what were the consequences of it, are hereafter related.

**Ver. 24.** *For a certain man, named Demetrius, a silversmith,* etc.] Who worked in silver, not in coining silver money, but in making silver vessels, in melting silver, and casting it into moulds, and forming it into different shapes; and particularly,

*which made silver shrines for Diana;* who Diana was, (see Gill on ~~“Acts 19:27”~~), these were not coins or medals of silver, struck by Demetrius, with the figure of the temple of Diana on them, nor images of Diana, as the Ethiopic version reads; but they were chaplets, or little temples made of silver, in imitation of the temple of Diana at Ephesus, with her image included in it; the words may be rendered, “silver temples”: in some manuscripts it is added, “like little chests”: which being sold to the people,

*brought no small gain to the craftsmen:* who were of the same trade with him; masters of the same business, who employed others under them, as appears by what follows.

**Ver. 25.** *Whom he called together,* etc.] That is, the craftsmen; “all his co-artificers”, as the Syriac version reads, all the chief of the trade, the masters of it, as he himself was:

*with the workmen of like occupation;* who were employed by him, and the rest of the masters in the several branches of the business; as founders, engravers, polishers, etc. some might make the images, and others the temples, or shrines; some do one part and some another, so that abundance of persons might be employed in this business:

*and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth;* the workmen not only had a comfortable and sufficient livelihood, but the masters of the trade grew rich: such a demand had they for their goods, and so profitable was this craft to them: this was a very strong and moving argument, to influence the masters and workmen; it so nearly touched them, and their worldly interest, than which nothing sticks closer to carnal men.

Demetrius’s way of address was very moving and persuasive, but his method manifestly betrayed what was his greatest concern, not religion, but his own secular interest; that which he should have mentioned last, if at all, he begins with: self is the leading and governing principle in a natural man.



**Ver. 26.** *Moreover, ye see and hear*, etc.] Demetrius appeals to their senses of seeing and hearing; they saw what was done in their own city, and they had heard how things were elsewhere; they might believe what they saw with their eyes, and they had reason to depend upon the report which was brought to their ears:

*that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people*; by “all Asia” is meant Ionia, that part of Asia, of which Ephesus was the metropolis; from whence great multitudes came to Ephesus, and heard Paul in the school of Tyrannus, (<sup><4190></sup>Acts 19:10) so that not only many in the city of Ephesus, but even in almost every city and town of Asia, had heard and received the Gospel preached by Paul; of whom Demetrius speaks very contemptibly, as if he was a worthless vagabond fellow, who had the art of persuading and deluding people; he prevailed upon them to believe in Christ whom he preached, and turned away much people from the worshipping of idols, to the living God:

*saying, that they be no gods which are made with hands*; such as was their Diana, and the images of her, which these workmen made; and consequently if his doctrine prevailed, as it had much already, their trade would be worth nothing, and their livelihood be lost, which was the grand thing they had in view; for one would think they could never believe themselves, that the images they made were really gods; but whether they did or not, certain it is, that the apostle’s doctrine was true, that such could not be gods, and which agrees both with reason and revelation.

**Ver. 27.** *So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought*, etc.] Or “to come into reproof”, as the words may be literally rendered, and as they are in the Vulgate Latin version; that is, if this notion prevails, that they are not gods, which are made with hands, this art and business of making shrines and images for Diana will be brought into contempt, and come to nothing; who will buy them, when once they believe there is no divinity in them? they will despise them, and the makers of them; yea, the latter will be in danger of being taken up, and charged, convicted, reprov’d and punished as idolaters, and blasphemers of deity; to which sense the Ethiopic version inclines, which renders it, “and not only for this thing we shall be in danger”; of being called to an account for making these shrines; our business will be put down, and we shall be treated with disgrace, if not with severity:

*but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised;* here religion is pretended, and a concern shown for that; partly on purpose to cover, as much as could be, the selfish and avaricious principles from which Demetrius acted; and partly the more to stir up the meaner and more ignorant sort of people, and irritate and provoke them, and set them against Paul and his doctrine, who generally speaking are the most bigoted. Diana is said to be the daughter of Jupiter, by Latona; she is often called the goddess of hunting, and is said to preside at births; the moon was worshipped by the Heathens under her name; she is here called the “great” goddess, for the Gentiles had their greater and their lesser gods, and she is reckoned among the former, which were in number twelve; Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Neptune, Vulcan, and Apollo: the temple of Diana at Ephesus is reckoned among the seven wonders of the world; it was about seven furlongs distant from the city <sup>f972</sup>, and was 425 feet long, and 220 feet broad, and had in it 127 pillars, 60 feet high; it was built on marshy ground, that it might not be affected with earthquakes; and yet that such a pile of building might not stand upon a slippery and unstable foundation, coals and fleeces of wool were laid in the foundation and trodden in it, according to Pliny <sup>f973</sup>, from whom this account is taken; who says it was two hundred and twenty years in building, and elsewhere he says it was four hundred years; the architect who first began it, he makes to be one Chersiphron; but it is commonly ascribed to the Amazons, and particularly to the Amazon Otrira, the wife of Mars; though Pausanias <sup>f974</sup>, as he observes that the temple of Diana of the Ephesians was built before the Ionians came into these parts, so he denies that it was built by the Amazons, but affirms that the builders of it were Cresus, and Ephesus, the son of Caystrus. Solinus <sup>f975</sup>, who calls it a fabric of the Amazons, says it was

“so magnificent, that Xerxes, when he burnt all the temples in Asia, spared this only; but (adds he) this clemency of Xerxes did not preserve the sacred temple from evil; for Herostratus set fire to this noble fabric with his own hands, for no other reason, as he confessed, than to get himself a name.”

At which the Ephesians were so enraged, that they got an order published by the common council of Asia, throughout all the neighbouring kingdoms and nations, that his name should not be once mentioned <sup>f976</sup>; which however, though it might be regarded for a while, was not always; for his name has since been both spoken of, and transmitted in writing to

posterity. The above historian observes, that the temple at Ephesus was burnt, the same day in which Alexander was born at Pella; which occasioned Timaeus facetiously to say, as is related by Cicero<sup>f977</sup>

“it is no wonder that the temple of Diana of the Ephesians should be burnt the same night that Alexander was born, seeing Diana, being desirous to be present at the delivery of Olympias, (the mother of Alexander,) was absent from her own house.”

However, the inhabitants of Ephesus being very rich, and also willing to communicate to the charge of rebuilding this edifice, the women even bringing their gold, silver, and other precious ornaments, the work was set about, and a fabric was raised much more beautiful than the former; the name of the architect by whom it was rebuilt was Dinocrates; and so it continued, to this time the apostle was at Ephesus, a very fine and grand building, and commanded great attention, veneration, and respect from men; and which Demetrius suggests would fall into contempt, through the doctrine of the apostle, should he be suffered to go on:

*and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth*; by “her magnificence” is meant, her deity; which must be denied her, as well as her temple despised, if Paul’s doctrine was true, and should obtain; so the Syriac version renders it, “the goddess herself”; and the Ethiopic version, “her divinity”: what Demetrius says of her, that she was worshipped by all Asia, and the world, was fact; not only all Asia was concerned in building her temple at Ephesus, as many writers affirm<sup>f978</sup>; but she was one of the highest class of deities, and received as such by the whole Gentile world; yea, Diana of the Ephesians, as distinguished from all other Dianas, was revered by all nations. There were temples of Diana of the Ephesians in other places, particularly at Corinth, as Pausanias relates; and who also affirms, that all the cities celebrate Diana of the Ephesians, and men in private honour her above other deities; the reasons are, the glory of the Amazons, from whom according to fame her image was, and because of the antiquity of the temple: three other things besides these, adds he, contribute to the glory of it; the magnificence of the temple, which exceeds whatever was done by man, and the splendour of the city of the Ephesians, and the renown of the deity in it<sup>f979</sup>: here the silversmith suggests the catholicism and universality of their religion, in favour of it.

**Ver. 28.** *And when they heard these sayings*, etc.] Both the masters and the workmen;

*they were full of wrath*; against Paul and his doctrine:

*and cried out, saying, great is Diana of the Ephesians*; this goddess is frequently called in Heathen writers, Diana of the Ephesians, or the Ephesian Diana, because of her famous temple at Ephesus; and to distinguish her from all other Dianas: Pausanias makes mention of sixty Dianas at least, and yet seems not to have taken notice of them all; all of them had different epithets, by which they were distinguished from one another; the images were in different shapes, and they were worshipped with different rites: what seems most of all to distinguish the Ephesian Diana from others, is her having many paps; hence she is called, “multi mammia”; so Minutius Felix observes <sup>f980</sup>, that Diana is sometimes girt about on high as an huntress, and the Ephesian Diana is “mammis multis & uberibus extracta”; Just as the Isis of the Egyptians, which, Macrobius <sup>f981</sup> says, signifies the earth; hence the whole body of the deity is covered with paps, because the whole universe is nourished by it: the priest of Diana of the Ephesians was an eunuch, and was obliged to abstain from all company; neither bathed, nor ate, nor drank with others, nor might he enter into the house of a private person; there was a feast kept every year in honour of her, at which young men in the flower of their age, and virgins well dressed, used to go to the temple in great pomp, keep the feast, and marry with each other. The temple was a sort of an asylum, as Heathen temples commonly were; and it had this particular privilege, that those that fled to it were freed from servitude <sup>f982</sup>. This goddess is called “great”, agreeably to her name, for, *anyd*, “Diana”, signifies “great” and venerable; because of her birth, being the daughter of Jupiter; and because of her great service, she was supposed to be of in assisting at births; and because of her magnificent temple and worship; and because she was worshipped by great persons: and here greatness is ascribed unto her, and a loud cry made of it, to animate one another, to gather a mob together, and to incense them and stir them up against the apostle and his companion: in the Arabic version, instead of Diana, it is Venus, both here and elsewhere, but wrongly.

**Ver. 29.** *And the whole city was filled with confusion*, etc.] For the workmen that made the silver shrines very likely ran up and down in the city, crying out, great is Diana of the Ephesians, which brought the people out of their houses to inquire what was the matter; and the mob gathering and increasing, as they went along, threw the whole city into confusion and disorder:

*and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia;* the latter of these was of Thessalonica in Macedonia, as appears from (~~400b~~ Acts 20:4) but of what place the former was, is not certain; however, being a Macedonian, he could not be the Gaius of Derbe, mentioned in the same place, nor the Gaius of Corinth, (~~401b~~ 1 Corinthians 1:14) but some third person. They are both Greek names; Aristarchus signifies the chief of princes, or the prince of chiefs; and Gaius is a name taken from the joy of parents, and is the same with the Roman name, Caius; they are both reckoned among the seventy disciples; the former is said to be bishop of Apamea in Phrygia, and the latter Bishop of Ephesus; (see Gill on ~~400b~~ Luke 10:1")

*Paul's companions in travel;* whom he brought with him out of Macedonia, and who had been with him to Jerusalem and Antioch, and were now returned with him to Ephesus, where they had been with him for the space of two years, or more: it is very much that this mob had not seized on Paul himself: it may be Paul was within doors, and these were without in the streets, and so were laid hold upon and carried away in a most forcible and violent manner by them: who having got them,

*they rushed with one accord into the theatre;* where the public plays were acted in honour of the goddess Diana, and where, among other things, men were set to fight with wild beasts; and very likely the intention of the mob, in hurrying Paul's companions thither, was to throw them to the wild beasts. A theatre is a spectacle or show, so called, because in them fights were shown, plays were acted, games exercised, and battles fought between men and men, and between men and beasts, and between beasts and beasts; concerning which, take the following account <sup>f983</sup>:

“Theatre, among the ancients, is a public edifice for the exhibiting of scenic spectacles, or shows to the people — under the word theatre was comprehended not only the eminence, whereon the actors appeared, and the action passed, but also the whole area, or extent of the place common to the actors and spectators: in this sense the theatre was a building encompassed with porticos, and furnished with seats of stone, disposed in semicircles, and ascending gradually over one another, which encompassed a space called the “orchestra”; in the front whereof was the “proscenium” or “pulpitum”, whereon the actors performed the “scena”, a large front adorned with orders of architecture; behind which was

“postscenium”, or the place where the actors made themselves ready, retired, etc. so that the “scena”, in its full extent, comprehended all the part belonging to the actors. In the Greek theatres, the “orchestra” made a part of the “scena”; but in the Roman theatres, none of the actors ever descended into the “orchestra”, which was taken up by the seats of the senators.”

For the better understanding the terms used, and the several parts of the theatre, let it be observed, that the “scena”, according to others<sup>f984</sup> was the place from whence the actors first went out; and it reached from one corner of the theatre to the other, and was threefold; “tragical”, which was adorned in a royal manner with pillars and signs; “comical”, which represented private buildings; and “satirical”, which exhibited trees, caves, mountains, etc. Likewise, the “scena” was either “versile”, when on a sudden the whole scene was turned by some machines; or “ductile”, when by drawing away the boards the inward face of the scene appeared, or by drawing curtains. The “proscenium” was a place lower than the scene, in which the actors chiefly spoke and acted: the “postscenium” was a place in which these things were done, which could not be done fitly, and with decorum in the scenes: the “pulpitum” was a higher place in the “proscenium”, in which those that recited stood: the “orchestra” was the last place, in which they danced, and near which the senators sat. Tarquinius Priscus was the first who introduced plays among the Romans; and the temple of Bacchus at Athens was the first theatre in the world, the remains of which are still to be seen. Of this theatre at Ephesus I have not met with any account; whether it was in the temple, or without, is not certain; very likely it might be a part of it, or adjoin unto it.

**Ver. 30.** *And when Paul would have entered in unto the people*, etc.] In the theatre, in order to have preached to the people, and to have removed their prejudices against him, and the Gospel preached by him, and to have shown them the error and evil of their idolatrous ways and worship, and to have reconciled them to him, and his friends, and to have persuaded them to do them no hurt; which shows the apostle’s greatness of soul, his firmness, constancy, and intrepidity, and his great concern and affection for his companions, to risk his life in this manner: but

*the disciples suffered him not*; the believers, the members of the church at Ephesus would by no means agree to it, but dissuaded him from it; who hereby, on their part, showed great love to him, and what a value they had

for him, and how much they esteemed the life of so great an apostle, and faithful preacher of the Gospel. The Ethiopic version renders it, “the apostles prohibited him”; but there were none of that office with him.

**Ver. 31.** *And certain of the chief of Asia*, etc.] Or the Asiarchs; these were not princes of Asia, rulers or governors of provinces, or cities, or civil magistrates; but priests who presided over the games and diversions at the theatre, and had the management and command of things there. Such an one was Philip the Asiarch, the church of Smyrna makes mention of in their account of the sufferings and martyrdom of Polycarp<sup>f985</sup>, whom the people entreated that he would send out the lion to Polycarp; that is, out of the theatre which he had the command of; but he replied he could not do it, because he had finished the theatrical exercises: from whence it appears that he was the governor of the theatre, and had his title of Asiarch from thence, as these men had, wherefore this word should not be rendered, the “princes of Asia”, as by the Vulgate Latin; nor the “chief of Asia”, as by the Syriac and Arabic versions, and by ours, but rather the “Asian priests”. The Ethiopic version not knowing who should be meant by them, only reads, “and some of Asia”.

*Which were his friends*; they had a good opinion of the apostle, and a good liking of his doctrines, and wished well to his person, and were concerned for his safety; though they might not have been really converted, and truly disciples, as those in the preceding verse; for otherwise one would think they would have relinquished their office and place. These

*sent unto him*, messengers or letters,

*desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre*; they observed to him the danger he would expose himself to, and entreated he would show a greater regard to his life than to risk it in such a manner, a life might be so useful to many; and though they were the governors at the theatre, yet such was the rage and fury of the mob, that it was not in their power to restrain them from doing mischief, till such time as they were appeased.

**Ver. 32.** *Some therefore cried one thing, and some another*, etc.] Not in the church at Ephesus among the disciples, and friends of the apostle, as if they were divided in their sentiments about his going into the theatre, some being for it, and others against it; but the people that were gathered



together in the theatre, these were not agreed about the reason of this tumult, some said it was on account of one thing, and some another:

*for the assembly was confused*; the multitude of people that were gathered together were made up of different persons, of different employments and sentiments, and were in no manner of form or order:

*and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together*; there was a noise and a hubbub in the city; but what was the reason and meaning of it, they were ignorant of; they were got together into the theatre in great numbers, but what was to be done there they knew not. And this is too often the case in religious assemblies, that the majority, at least many, can give no account of the reason, end, and design of their assembling together.

**Ver. 33.** *And they drew Alexander out of the multitude*, etc.] Or “some of the multitude brought forth Alexander”; into the theatre, in order to kill him, by casting him to the wild beasts. Some think this is the same with Alexander the coppersmith, who apostatized upon this danger he was exposed to, and became a blasphemer, and a great enemy of the apostle, and did him much evil, (<sup><500></sup>1 Timothy 1:20, <sup><501></sup>2 Timothy 4:14). This man, though his name was a Greek name, yet was a Jew, as is expressed in (<sup><488></sup>Acts 19:34) and from the times of Alexander the great, who was at Jerusalem, this name became common among the Jews; (see Gill on <sup><406></sup>Acts 4:6”).

*The Jews putting him forward*; being equally enemies to him, as being under a profession of Christianity, as the Heathens were; or as the Syriac version reads, “the people of the Jews”, that were there, out of themselves, pitched upon him as a proper person to still the uproar; and they brought him out of the multitude, to a convenient place, where he might be heard; and they the rather were forward to this, that he might lay all the blame of this confusion and uproar upon Paul and his companions, whom the Jews had an aversion to, as well as the Gentiles:

*and Alexander beckoned with the hand*; for silence, that he might be heard:

*and would have made his defence unto the people*; which looks as if he was a Christian, or at least was charged with being one, and was in danger of his life on that account; and therefore was desirous of being heard, that he might make an apology for the Christians, or remove such an imputation from himself, if he was not.



**Ver. 34.** *But when they knew that he was a Jew*, etc.] And so equally an enemy to their idolatry, as Paul and his companions were, whether he was a Christian or not.

*All with one voice about the space of two hours cried out*; all that were in the theatre lift up their voices at once to prevent Alexander's apology, or at least its being heard; and which they continued about two hours, which was a long time to keep hallooing out,

*great is Diana of the Ephesians*; (see Gill on "~~418B~~Acts 19:28").

**Ver. 35.** *And when the town clerk had appeased the people*, etc.] Caused them to cease their loud outcry, so as that he could be heard. This person seems to have been more than a "town clerk", as we render it; or a common "scribe", as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it; rather as the Syriac version, "a chief man of the city"; the Septuagint interpreters in (~~418B~~Exodus 5:6) use the word for the Egyptian officers that were over the Israelites; and the Babylonians used to call the priest of <sup>f986</sup> Isis by this name; and according to some learned men, this man's office was to register the conquerors' names, and their rewards in the theatre; and who was chosen into this office by the people, and was a man of some considerable authority, as it is very apparent by what follows that this man was:

*he said, ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana?* the word "Neocorus", translated "worshipper", signifies an officer in the temple, one that looked after it, beautified and adorned it; for "Neocorus" is from **κορῆω**, which signifies to beautify <sup>f987</sup>; though some etymologists would have the word to signify to sweep and clean, as if this officer was a sexton; rather, he answered to a churchwarden, and to this agrees the Syriac version; though this office belonged not to a single person, but to a city. Now to be a worshipper of Diana, was not peculiar to the city of Ephesus, as appears from (~~418C~~Acts 19:27) but to be Neocorus, a sacrist to the goddess, was a favour granted to some cities, and accounted a great honour; some had it twice, some thrice, some four times:

*and of the image which fell down from Jupiter*; or "of Diopetes"; so the Palladium, or image of Pallas, was called, because it was supposed to fall down from heaven, which Diomedes and Ulysses are said to take away from Troy; and here it seems to be something distinct from the goddess

Diana, and her image, and may design another deity worshipped along with her, and by them, since they make mention of more gods, (<sup>448B</sup>Acts 19:26). The Vulgate Latin version takes it to be the same with Diana, reading the words in connection with the preceding, “and the offspring of Jupiter”; she being said to be his daughter by Latona, as before observed; and the Ethiopic version understands it of her image, rendering them thus, “and of that molten image which was sent from Jupiter the great god”; and more expressly the Syriac version, which reads, “and of her image which fell from heaven”; and so was not made with the hands of men, and could not be objected to on that account, or denied to be a deity; and this the people might be the rather induced to believe, since it had been in the temple before the memory of any man. The Arabic version, reading these words in connection with the beginning of the next verse, gives a very different sense, “but neither indeed they that fell from heaven contradict the faith of this thing”; as if it was to be understood of the fallen angels, of which it can hardly be thought Demetrius had any knowledge. This image, Pliny says <sup>f988</sup>, it was doubted of what it was made; some said of the vine tree, others of ebony; but Athenagoras says, the old image of Diana of the Ephesians was made of olive <sup>f989</sup>.

**Ver. 36.** *Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against*, etc.] This officer intimates, in order to quiet the mob, and make them easy, that these things were so certain, and well known, that nobody would pretend to contradict them, and therefore they must be mistaken in the men, whom they had hurried into the theatre; it was impossible that they, or any men, should be capable of saying any thing against the truth of these things: therefore

*ye ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly*; to these men, to their hurt, but sit down, and compose yourselves, and think again, and consider of this matter, and not go into any hasty measures, which may, in the issue, be prejudicial to yourselves.

**Ver. 37.** *For ye have brought hither these men*, etc.] The Arabic version reads, “these two men”; that is, Gaius and Aristarchus, whom they had brought by force into the theatre to fight with wild beasts:

*which are neither robbers of churches*; or “temples”; or, as the Arabic version renders it, “robbers of the vessels of the temple”, sacrilegious persons; they have not stolen anything out of the temple of Diana, nor any other:

*nor yet blasphemers of your goddess*; they have not made mention of her name, much less said anything against her, at least this officer did not know that they had; and if he had, he did not stick to tell an officious lie to screen them, as did the Egyptian midwives in favour of the Hebrew women.

**Ver. 38.** *Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him,* etc.] Who were the ringleaders and encouragers of this tumult:

*have a matter against any man*; any accusation, or charge, any crime to accuse him of, and charge him with:

*the law is open*; or court days are kept; there are certain times fixed for the hearing and trying of causes, where and when such an affair should be regularly brought; and not use such disorderly methods, and throw a city into confusion, and break the peace as these men had done: the Syriac version renders it, “they are artificers”; that is, Demetrius and the craftsmen with him; they are tradesmen, and it does not belong to them, nor should they take upon themselves to judge and determine what is right or wrong:

*and there are deputies*; or “proconsuls”; the proconsul and his deputy, to whom such matters appertain, and who are judges in such cases, and to whom application should be made, and before whom such cases should be brought, and heard, and tried: the Syriac version reads in the singular number, “and there is a proconsul in the city”; a Roman governor and judge, whose province it is to determine such matters:

*let them implead one another*; let the plaintiff bring his accusation, and charge, and let the others defend themselves, and let things proceed in a due course of law, and so issue.

**Ver. 39.** *But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters,* etc.] Than what belongs to the craft and business of Demetrius, and the artificers:

*it shall be determined in a lawful assembly*; that is, called together according to law, and who have a right to hear, try, and judge causes, which such a confused lawless assembly as this in the theatre had not.

**Ver. 40.** *For we are in danger of being called in question,* etc.] Or are liable to be called to an account, reproved, and punished by the Roman proconsul, appointed over this city, or by the Roman emperor, or the Roman senate: for this day’s uproar; it being capable of being interpreted as a riot, tumult, and sedition:

*there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse:* or no reason can be assigned, why such a number of people should gather together; none can be given that will justify it, or that can be alleged in favour of it.

**Ver. 41.** *And when he had thus spoken,* etc.] Or delivered this oration, made use of the above arguments, reasonings, and expostulations:

*he dismissed the assembly;* he ordered them to break up, and every one to return home in peace, and go about his own business; and thus Paul, and his companions, were delivered from an imminent danger they were exposed to.

# CHAPTER 20

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 20

**Ver. 1.** *And after the uproar was ceased*, etc.] Which Demetrius, and the craftsmen, had raised at Ephesus, and which was put an end to by the speech of the town clerk, or register keeper of the theatre:

*Paul called unto him the disciples*; the members of the church at Ephesus, whom he convened, either at his own lodgings, or at their usual place of meeting:

*and embraced them*; or “saluted them”; that is, with a kiss, which was sometimes done at parting, as well as at meeting; (see ~~Acts~~ Acts 20:37) and so the Syriac version renders it, and “kissed” them, and so took his leave of them, and bid them farewell; the Alexandrian copy, and some other copies, and the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions before this clause insert, “and exhorted, or comforted” them; that is, exhorted them to continue steadfast in the faith, and hold fast the profession of it without wavering, and comforted them under all their tribulations, and in a view of what afflictions and persecutions they must expect to endure for the sake of Christ, with the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel:

*and departed to go into Macedonia*; to visit the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, and to establish them in the faith of the Gospel: he did not choose to leave Ephesus till the tumult was over, partly on his own account, that he might not bring upon himself an imputation of fear and cowardice; and partly on the account of the church at Ephesus, that he might not leave them in distress, and add to it; but now it was over, he judged it proper to take his leave of them, and visit other churches, the care of which equally lay upon him.

**Ver. 2.** *And when he had gone over those parts*, etc.] Of Macedonia, and the cities in it before mentioned;

*and had given them much exhortation*; to abide by the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel, and to walk worthy of it in their lives and conversations; and this exhortation he was frequently giving, as often as he

had opportunity, improving his time much this way, and continued long at it: and, having pursued it to a sufficient length,

*he came into Greece*; or Hellas; which, according to Ptolomy<sup>f990</sup> and Solinus,<sup>f991</sup> is properly true Greece; the former makes it to be the same with Achaia, where Corinth was; and the latter says it was in his time called Attica, where Athens was; so Pliny<sup>f992</sup>, who also says, that Thessaly was so called: this Hellas included Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly, Achaia, which is properly Greece, Peloponnesus, and the adjacent islands.

**Ver. 3.** *And there abode three months*, etc.] In Greece:

*and when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria*; from some part of Greece, in order to go to Jerusalem; which the Jews in the parts of Greece understanding, laid wait for him, either by sea or land, with an intention either to take the money from him, which he had collected in Macedonia, and in Greece, for the poor saints at Jerusalem, or to take away his life, or both; of which lying in wait for him, the apostle had some notice, either by divine revelation, or from somebody who was in the secret, or had got knowledge of it from such as were: upon which he

*purposed to return through Macedonia*; through which he came from Ephesus to Greece: this wicked design being made known to him, obliged him, in point of prudence, and both for his own safety, and the good of the churches, to alter his scheme, and steer his course another way, to the disappointment of his enemies; in which the wisdom of providence, the care of God over his ministers, and his concern for his churches manifestly appeared.

**Ver. 4.** *And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea*, etc.] This Sopater is thought to be the same with Sosipater in (~~612~~Romans 16:21) and in three of Beza's copies, and in as many of Stephens's, he is so called here; the Ethiopic version calls him Peter, a citizen of Berea; and the Arabic version Sopater of Aleppo. The Alexandrian copy, Beza's most ancient copy, and others, the Complutensian edition, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, Sopater of Pyrrhus, the Berean; that is, the son of Pyrrhus. He is reckoned among the seventy disciples, and is said to be bishop of Iconium; (see Gill on "~~211~~Luke 10:1"). This name was common among the Greeks; there was one of this name a native of Paphus, in the times of Alexander the great, a comical poet, and who also is sometimes called Sosipater, as this man was; there was another Sopater the sophist, who

wrote the affairs of Alexander; and there was another of this name, who, among other things, collected much concerning painters and statuaries. The name signifies “a father saved”. Pyrrhus is a Grecian name well known, being the name of a famous king of Greece who engaged in war with the Romans. This man went along with the apostle into Asia; and it seems, that of the persons here mentioned, he only accompanied him; for the verb is in the singular number, and the other six persons following did not go along with him, as Sopater did, but went before him to Troas, which was in Asia, and there waited for him; though the Syriac version reads in the plural number; but then it renders the words, “they went forth with him”, as they might do from Greece, and yet not accompany him into Asia: the phrase into Asia is left out in the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions.

*And of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus*; the former of these is before said to be a Macedonian, (<sup><4492></sup>Acts 19:29) and here he appears to be of Thessalonica, and his name is a Greek one; but Secundus is a Roman name, though he might be born at Thessalonica, or at least have lived there, and so be said to be of it. His name signifies “Second”; very likely was his father’s second son, and therefore so called; though the name was used among the Grecians. We read of Secundus an Athenian, the master of Herod the sophist, who flourished under the emperor Adrian, there are sentences under his name still extant; and another called Secundus the grammarian, a friend of Poleman, a philosopher at Athens, who corrected his writings; so that this man might be a Grecian, and a native of Thessalonica; mention is made of him nowhere else.

*And Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus*; the former of these is so called to distinguish him from Gaius the Macedonian in (<sup><4492></sup>Acts 19:29) and the latter by being joined with him should be of the same place, as he might be; (see <sup><4401></sup>Acts 16:1) though the Syriac version reads, “and Timotheus of Lystra”; and so does the Arabic version used by Deuteronomy Dieu; and this is mentioned with Derbe in the above cited place.

*And of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus*: of the former (see <sup><4061></sup>Ephesians 6:21, <sup><5047></sup>Colossians 4:7, <sup><5042></sup>2 Timothy 4:12) and of the latter (see <sup><5042></sup>2 Timothy 4:20) (<sup><4212></sup>Acts 21:29) where he is called an Ephesian, as they both are here in Beza’s most ancient copy; Ephesus being the metropolis of Asia, strictly so called. These are both of them said to be among the seventy disciples: Trophimus, we are told, taught at Arles in France, and suffered martyrdom with the Apostle Paul; and that Tychicus was bishop of

Chalcedon in Bithynia; and that another of the same name was bishop of Colophon; (see Gill on “<sup><<200></sup>Luke 10:1”). Trophimus signifies “nourished”, and is a name to be found in a funeral inscription of the Romans <sup>f993</sup>, though Greek, and in the fragments of the poet Menander: and Tychicus signifies “fortunate”; whether the same with Fortunatus in (<sup><<667></sup>1 Corinthians 16:17) may be inquired.

**Ver. 5.** *These going before*, etc.] The apostle into Asia, all but Sopater, who accompanied him:

*tarried for us at Troas*; a city in Asia Minor; (see <sup><<468></sup>Acts 16:8) whither they went before hand a nearer way, to provide for the apostle, and where they waited for him, and for Sopater, and for Luke, the writer of this history, who appears from hence to be in company with the apostle, and for as many others as were along with him.

**Ver. 6.** *And we sailed away from Philippi*, etc.] Which was in Macedonia, from whence they came in a straight course by Samothracia, over the Hellespont, to Troas, where the above six persons were waiting for them: and they set sail

*after the days of unleavened bread*; or the passover; which is mentioned only to observe the time of year when this voyage was taken; and not to suggest to us that Paul and his company stayed at Philippi, and kept this feast there; for the passover was only kept at Jerusalem, and besides was now abolished, and not to be observed by Christians:

*and came unto them to Troas in five days*; not that they were five days sailing from Philippi to Troas; but either they were so long in all, from their first setting out into Asia, to their arrival at Troas; or rather, they came to Troas within five days after the above six persons had got thither; so that they waited at Troas but five days for the apostle, and those that accompanied him.

*Where we abode seven days*; by what follows they came into Troas on the Lord’s day evening, or early on Monday morning, and stayed there till the next Lord’s day, or first day of the week; for it follows,

**Ver. 7.** *And upon the first day of the week*, etc.] Or Lord’s day, (<sup><<610></sup>Revelation 1:10) and which Justin Martyr calls Sunday; on which day, he says <sup>f994</sup>, all, both in city and country, met in one place for religious worship; and on this day, it appears from hence, and from other places, that



the apostles and primitive churches did meet together for religious exercises; (see <sup><419></sup>John 20:19,26 <sup><466></sup>1 Corinthians 16:2) and so they did at Troas at this time, as follows:

*when the disciples came together to break bread*; not to eat a common meal, or to make a feast, or grand entertainment for the apostle and his company, before they departed; but, as the Syriac version renders it, “to break the eucharist”, by which the Lord’s supper was called in the primitive times; or as the Arabic version, “to distribute the body of Christ”, which is symbolically and emblematically held forth in the bread at the Lord’s table. Now on the first day of the week, the disciples, or the members of the church at Troas, met together on this occasion, and the apostle, and those that were with him, assembled with them for the same purpose; the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, “when we were come together”; Paul and his company, together with the church at Troas; for it is plain from hence that there was a church in this place, not only by disciples being here, but by the administration of the Lord’s supper to them; and so there was in after ages. Who was the first pastor or bishop of this church, is not certain; perhaps Carpus, of whom mention is made in (<sup><5013></sup>2 Timothy 4:13) though he is said to be bishop of other places; (see Gill on “<sup><5013></sup>2 Timothy 4:13”). In the “second” century, in the times of Ignatius, there were brethren at Troas, from whence he wrote his epistles to the churches at Smyrna, and Philadelphia, and who are saluted in them by the brethren at Troas <sup>f995</sup>: in the third century, several martyrs suffered here, as Andreas, Paulus, Nicomachus, and Dionysia a virgin: in the “fifth” century, Pionius, bishop of Troas, was present at Constantinople at the condemnation of Eutyches, and afterwards he was in the council at Chalcedon; and even in the “eighth” century mention is made of Eustathius, bishop of Troas, in the Nicene council <sup>f996</sup>.

*Paul preached unto them*; to the disciples that were gathered together, either before, or after, or at the time of breaking of bread; for this ordinance was not administered without some instructions about the nature, use, and design of it.

*Ready to depart on the morrow*; this seems to be mentioned as a reason for what follows,

*continued his speech until midnight*: since he was about to take his leave of them, and not knowing when he should see them again, or whether ever any more, he delivered a long discourse to them; which not only shows that

he was full of matter, but that his affection for these saints, and his desire of doing them good, were very great, by imparting as much spiritual light and knowledge as he could unto them; and also his great zeal for the glory of God, and the interest of Christ, though he was to set forth on a journey the next morning.

**Ver. 8.** *And there were many lights in the upper chamber,* etc.] Which were lighted up, both for necessary uses, to see by, to read the word, and to administer the ordinance of the supper, and for the comfort and pleasure of the whole company, both preacher and hearers; as well as to remove all ground of suspicion, or occasion of reproach, as if it was a midnight society met for wicked practices: but this no ways countenances the use of lamps and wax candies in the daytime at divine worship, since this was in the night; of the upper chamber, in which it was usual to meet for religious exercises, (see ~~400~~ Mark 2:4, ~~401~~ Acts 1:13), where they were gathered together; the Alexandrian copy, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, “where we were gathered together”.

**Ver. 9.** *And there sat in a window a certain young man,* etc.] In the upper room, where he placed himself, either for air and refreshment, the chamber being suffocating, through the number of people, and of lights; or for want of room, the place being full:

*named Eutychnus;* a Greek name, which signifies one of good fortune:

*being fallen into a deep sleep;* which may be accounted for without aggravating the case; as from his youth, he was a young man, and so more subject to sleep, and more easily overcome with it, than persons in years, by reason of the humours of the body which incline to it; and also from the length of service, and the lateness of the season of the night, all which contributed to bring on this deep sleep: it can hardly be thought that he purposely composed himself to sleep, for had he, he would never have chose so dangerous a place to sit in as a window, and that at so great an height from the ground; but this sleep seemed to come upon him at an unawares; what hand soever Satan might have in it, with a view to the young man’s hurt, both as to soul and body, and to bring reproach and scandal upon the church, and the Gospel, it seems evident that the providence of God was in it, and which overruled it for a good end, even the greater confirmation of the Gospel, and very probably for the spiritual good of the young man.

*And as Paul was long preaching he sunk down with sleep*; being quite overcome, and bore down with it, not able to hold up his head, he either bowed down, or leaned backwards: and fell down from the third loft: or three story high, where the upper room was. It seems that he did not fall inward, for then he would have fallen no further than the floor of the upper room, but outward, out of the window into the street or yard; and this is the more evident from Paul's going down to him, mentioned in the next verse:

*and was taken up dead*; not only for dead, or as one dead, but he really was dead, as it is no wonder he should.

**Ver. 10.** *And Paul went down*, etc.] From the upper room, where they were assembled, into the court, yard, or street, where he fell; or into the lower room of the house, where he was brought when taken up. The apostle might see him fall, or he might be told of it, or he might have an intimation of it from the Spirit of God, by whom he might be impressed to go down, in order to work a miracle, for the confirmation of the Gospel he was preaching:

*and fell on him, and embracing him*; praying over him, as Elijah and Elisha did, (<sup><1172></sup>1 Kings 17:21, <sup><1184></sup>2 Kings 4:34) and the like effect followed:

*said, trouble not yourselves*; which speech perhaps was addressed to the friends and relations of the young man; or to the disciples present, who were concerned at this accident, both for the young man's sake, and lest it should be improved to the disadvantage of the Gospel by the enemies of it,

*For his life*, or "soul"

*is in him*; it being returned upon the apostle's falling on him, and praying over him; or he said this as being fully assured that it would return, in like manner as Christ said concerning Jairus's daughter, (<sup><1185></sup>Luke 8:52,55).

**Ver. 11.** *When he therefore was come up again*, etc.] Into the upper room, where he was before, and where the disciples were gathered together:

*and had broken bread and eaten*; administered the Lord's supper, and also eat for his bodily refreshment:

*and talked a long while*: about the ordinance and the doctrines of the Gospel, and spiritual experience, and such like divine things:

*even till break of day*; not knowing when to leave off:

*so he departed*; without taking any rest; though before he departed, what follows was done; it was at this time he left his cloak, books, and parchments here, (<sup>SMH3</sup>2 Timothy 4:13).

**Ver. 12.** *And they brought the young man alive*, etc.] Up into the upper room, and presented him alive to the disciples:

*and were not a little comforted*; that is, the disciples, at the sight of the young man, who was taken up dead, not only for his sake, but chiefly because by this miracle the Gospel, which the apostle preached, and who was about to depart from them, was greatly confirmed to them.

**Ver. 13.** *And we went before to ship*, etc.] That is, Luke, the writer of this history, and the rest of the apostle's company, went before him to a ship, which lay at Troas, and went aboard it:

*and sailed unto Assos*; a city of Aeolia, or Mysia; and is said by Pliny to be the same with Apollonia; and which he places on the sea shore, where it is evident this Assos was. His words are <sup>f997</sup>,

“on the shore Antandros, formerly called Edonis, then Cimmeris and Assos, the same with Apollonia.”

And in another place <sup>f998</sup> he calls it Assos of Troas; and says of it, that about Assos of Troas a stone grows, by which all bodies are consumed, and is called “sarcophagus”, (a flesh devourer,) of which he also makes mention elsewhere <sup>f999</sup>, and observes, that in Assos of Troas the stone sarcophagus is cut in the pits, in which the bodies of the dead being put, are consumed within forty days, excepting their teeth: and with him Jerom <sup>f1000</sup> agrees, as to the name and situation of this place, who says that Assos is a maritime city of Asia, the same that is called Apollonia. It is represented by Strabo <sup>f1001</sup> as a place very much fortified by art, and very difficult of ascent on that part which lies to the sea; unless another Assos in Lycia is designed by him: if this was the situation of the Assos in the text, it seems to furnish us with a reason, from the nature of the place, why the apostle chose to go on foot thither. Pausanias <sup>f1002</sup> speaks of it as in Troas, and near Mount Ida. Sodamos of Assos in Troas, which lies near Ida, was the first of the Aeolians, who conquered in the Olympic race of the boys. In this place was born the famous philosopher Cleanthes, a disciple and successor of Zeno; hence he is called Cleanthes the Assian <sup>f1003</sup>. No

mention is made of the Gospel being preached here, or of any church until the eighth century, when John, bishop of Assos, is said to be in the Nicene council <sup>f1004</sup>. Some exemplars read Thassos, as the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to have done:

*there intending to take in Paul*; who stayed behind, willing to have a little more Christian conversation with the saints at Troas.

*For so had he appointed*; that these should go before hand to Assos, and meet him there, and take him in:

*minding himself to go afoot*; from Troas to Assos, which were not very far off from one another; hence Assos is, by Pliny, called Assos of Troas; and by Pausanias, Assos, which is in Troas; that is, in the country of Troas, as before observed: what was his reason for going by foot thither, is not very evident; whether that he might have the opportunity of conversing with the disciples of Troas, who might accompany him thither; or whether that he might be alone, and have leisure for private meditation, and free converse with God.

**Ver. 14.** *And when he met with us at Assos*, etc.] According to appointment:

*we took him in*; to the ship, and so sailed on:

*and came to Mitylene*; a city in Lesbos <sup>f1005</sup>, an island in the Aegean sea, now Metelino: sometimes the island is so called, and is about seven miles and a half from the continent: of this city Vitruvius <sup>f1006</sup> says, that it was magnificently and elegantly built, but not prudently situated; for when the south wind blew, men were sick in it, and when the northwest wind blew they had coughs, and when the north wind blew, they were restored to health. Some say it had its name from Mitylene, the daughter of Macaria or Pelops; others from Myto, the son of Neptune and Mitylene; and others from Mityle, the builder of it. <sup>f1007</sup> Hillerus inquires, whether it may not be so called from the Chaldee word, **anl j m**, “Matlana”, used in the Targum on (<sup>38013</sup> Job 40:13) which signifies “a bar”, this city being as a bar to Lesbos, which shut it up. It was famous for being the native place of Pittacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece, a great philosopher and legislator, who, with others, conquered Melanchrus the tyrant of Lesbos, whom the inhabitants of Mitylene greatly honoured, and made him their governor; and a field, which they gave him, was called after his name

Pittacius<sup>f1008</sup>: of this place was Theophanes, a famous historian, who wrote the history of Pompey the great, and was familiar with him, and honoured by him, as Cicero<sup>f1009</sup> relates: other persons of note are said to be of this place, as Alcaeus a lyric poet, and Diophanes a rhetorician. It does not appear that the apostle stayed and preached the Gospel here, or that any Gospel church was here by him raised; no mention is made of it in ecclesiastical history until late: in the “second” century Heathenism prevailed in the island, the Lesbians sacrificed a man to Dionysius. In the “fifth” century we read of a bishop of this island in the Chalcedon council: in the “sixth” century there was a bishop of Mitylene, in the fifth Roman synod: in the seventh century, Gregory, bishop of Mitylene, assisted in the sixth council at Constantinople, and Theodorus of the same place: in the eighth century Damianus, bishop of the same place, was present in the Nicene council<sup>f1010</sup>.

**Ver. 15.** *And we sailed thence*, etc.] From Mitylene:

*and came the next day over against Chios*; which, according to R. Benjamin Tudelensis<sup>f1011</sup>, was three days’ sail from Mitylene; according to Pliny<sup>f1012</sup> it was sixty five miles from it, and is an island in the Icarian or Aegean sea, and lies between Lesbos and Samos, next mentioned; and has its name from the nymph Chione, so called from the exceeding whiteness of her skin, as snow: it was famous for marble; from hence came the best mastic, and good figs, and the wine called malmsey wine<sup>f1013</sup>. And of this place Jerom says<sup>f1014</sup>, Chios, an island before Bithynia, whose name in the Syriac language signifies “mastic”, because that mastic grows there; some add, he called it “Chia” from Chione the nymph: the reason of its name, as Pausanias<sup>f1015</sup> relates, was this; Neptune coming into a desert island, had carnal knowledge of a nymph, and in the time of her travail, a snow fell from heaven on the ground; and from this Neptune called his son Chius, from whom the island has its name. Others<sup>f1016</sup> conjecture, that it was called from *aywj*, “Chivja”, which signifies a serpent; this island having been very much terrified, as Aelianus<sup>f1017</sup> says, by the hisses of a serpent of a monstrous size, until it was consumed by fire. It was common to sail from Mitylene hither, and “vice versa”: so we read<sup>f1018</sup> of Herod seeking Agrippa, he came to Chios, and from thence to Mitylene. We read nothing of the apostle’s stay and preaching here, nor of any Gospel church here, till ages after: in the “fourth” century, Heathenism prevailed to such a degree in it, that Dionysius Omadius was worshipped here with human sacrifice; and yet, in the fifth century, a bishop of Chios was present in the council of

Chalcedon; and in the “sixth” century another assisted in the fifth Roman synod; and in the “seventh” century there was a bishop of this place at the sixth synod at Constantinople; and in the “eighth” century, Leon, bishop of Chios, was in the Nicene <sup>f1019</sup> synod. It is now called Chio or Scio, by the Turks Saches, and is inhabited by Italian Genoese.

*And the next day we arrived at Samos*; another island in the Icarian sea, not a very fruitful one, unless for olives <sup>f1020</sup>; and for nothing more famous than for being the birth place of Pythagoras <sup>f1021</sup>, hence called the Samian, and of Melissus. It was ninety three miles distant from Chios <sup>f1022</sup>; and, according to R. Benjamin, two days sail from it <sup>f1023</sup>; but Paul sailed hither in a day. Of this place Jerom <sup>f1024</sup> thus writes; Samos, an island in the Aegean sea, in which, it is reported, earthen vessels were first made. Herodotus <sup>f1025</sup> speaks of three things for which it was famous, a very high mountain in it, a bulwark about the haven in the sea, and a temple the largest of all he ever saw. Some say it has its name from the height of it, Samos signifying an high place. Pausanias <sup>f1026</sup>, from Asiuss, a Samian, suggests, that it was so called from Samus, the son of Ancaeus and Samia; and observes, that the inhabitants of it affirm, that Juno was born here; and here was a famous temple, said to be dedicated to her by the Argonautes. One of the Sybils dwelt here, called from hence Samia, and Polycrates, a noted tyrant. Lycurgus, the famous lawgiver, died in this place, as did also Pherecydes, the Syrian <sup>f1027</sup>. It is now called Samo. The apostle stayed not here to preach the Gospel; nor do we read of its being preached here by any: idolatry greatly prevailed in this place in the “second” century; and so it did in the “fourth”: though in the same we also read of some Christians here that suffered persecution; and so low as the “eighth” century, Heraclius, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod <sup>f1028</sup>.

*And tarried at Trogyllium*; which, according to Ptolomy <sup>f1029</sup>, was a promontory in the Icarian sea: it was about forty furlongs distant from Samos, according to Strabo <sup>f1030</sup>. It was a promontory of Mycale; and Trogyllias, called also Trogyllia, is mentioned with Mycale and Samos by Pliny <sup>f1031</sup>, as near to Miletus. It follows here, and the next day we came to Miletus; which was once the chief city of Ionia: it was famous for being the birth place of Thales, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and of Timotheus the musician, and of Anaximander, and Anaximenes, and the famous Democritus, philosophers <sup>f1032</sup>, and of Cadmus, the first inventor of prose <sup>f1033</sup>. Pliny says <sup>f1034</sup>, it was formerly called Lelegeis, Pityusa, and Anaetoria; and it seems it had its name Miletus from Miletus, the son of



Apollo, who is said to build it <sup>f1035</sup>; and Apollo himself is sometimes called Apollo Milesius, and who had a famous temple in this place <sup>f1036</sup>. Though rather it was so called from **atlym** “Milata”, or “Melote”, which signifies pure, white, fine, soft wool, for which this place was famous; which was used for carpets, but chiefly for cloth, which being dyed purple, was sent into divers parts: “Melote” in Greek signifies the same; it is used in (<sup><38137></sup>Hebrews 11:37) and translated “sheepskin”. Ptolomy <sup>f1037</sup> places this city in Caria, by the sea; and certain it is from this account, that it was a sea port: it is said to have four ports or havens, one of which would hold a fleet. Of it Jerom <sup>f1038</sup> says; Miletus, a maritime city in Asia, distant ten furlongs from the mouth of the river Maeander: by the apostle’s sending from hence to Ephesus, for the elders of the church there to meet him at this place, as is afterwards related, and taking no notice of any brethren, elders, or church here, it looks as if there were none at this time: and in the “second” century, Gentilism was embraced at Miletus; and in the “fourth” century Licinius consulted the oracle of Apollo Didymaeus in this place, concerning the event of the war against Constantine; but in the “fifth” century we read of a church here, a bishop of this place being in the Chalcedon council; in the “seventh” century a bishop of this church assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople, whose name is said to be George; and in the “eighth” century Epiphanius, bishop of Miletus, was present in the Nicene council <sup>f1039</sup>.

**Ver. 16.** *For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus*, etc.] That is, to sail by it, without calling at it, as he did, for it lay by the shore before he came to Miletus; but he chose not to stop there, fearing he should be detained by the brethren there:

*because he would not spend the time in Asia*; of which Ephesus was the metropolis:

*for he hasted, if it were possible, for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost*: which was near at hand; for it was but fifty days from the second day of the passover, which feast was over when he sailed from Philippi; and at Troas he stayed seven days, and he had been several days sailing already; (see <sup><4416></sup>Acts 20:6,13-15). And his great desire to be at the feast of Pentecost was not in order to keep that feast, according to the usage of the Jews; but that he might have an opportunity of preaching the Gospel to a great number of Jews, out of all countries, whom he knew would come to that feast.



**Ver. 17.** *And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus*, etc.] Which is said, by some, to be about four hundred furlongs from Miletus, and, by others, ten German miles.

*And called the elders of the church*; that is, at Ephesus; not the ancient members of the church, but the officers of it; the pastors, bishops, and overseers, as they are called, (~~Acts~~ Acts 20:28) and are so styled from their office, and not their age. The twelve disciples the apostle found in this place, and the numerous converts made by him here, first composed this church, which doubtless was formed into Gospel order by himself; to which he afterwards wrote an epistle, when at a distance from them, called the Epistle to the Ephesians; and in the latter end of the first century, another epistle was sent from Jesus Christ himself, by the Apostle John, to this church, (~~Revelation~~ Revelation 2:1) and which had an angel, pastor, or bishop over it; but who he was, is not certain; Caius, who is reckoned among the seventy disciples, is said to be bishop of it; (see Gill on "~~Luke~~ Luke 10:1"). Some say Timothy was the first bishop of this church, and after him Onesimus; but these accounts are uncertain, and not to be depended on: but certain it is, that the Apostle John dwelt here, and in the parts adjacent, unto his death, and was a superintendent and overseer in common of this church, and others near it; concerning whom Irenaeus <sup>f1040</sup>, a very ancient writer near his time, says, the church at Ephesus was founded by Paul; but John remained with them to the times of Trajan. In the "second" century Ignatius <sup>f1041</sup> wrote an epistle to this church, in which he speaks highly of it, saying, there was no heresy in it; and makes mention of Onesimus as bishop of it: in the "third" century there was a church in this place, and a very memorable affair happened here in the times of Decius; he having obliged all to sacrifice to the idols in the temple, seven persons, by name Maximianus, Malchus, Martinianus, Dionysius, Johannes, Serapion, and Constantine, were accused of Christianity, which they owned; but being soldiers, they had space given them to repent until the return of the emperor, who was going elsewhere: whilst he was gone they fled and hid themselves in the caves of Mount Caelius; upon the emperor's return they were inquired after, and found to be there; who, being provoked, ordered the mouth of the caverns to be shut up with stones, that they might be famished; and it is said, that what through fear and grief they fell asleep, and slept to a great age; some pretend to say to the times of Theodosius, and then awaked; and these are they that are called the seven sleepers: in the beginning of the "fourth" century there was a bishop of this church at

the council of Nice: in the “fifth” century Ephesus was famous for a general synod, convened in it against Nestorius; and in this age we read of several bishops of this place: at the time of that synod, Memnon was bishop of it, and before him Antonius and Heraclides, and after him Basil, Bassianus, Stephen, and Paul: in the “sixth” century there was a bishop of this church present at the synod of Rome and Constantinople; and in the same age Ruffinus was bishop at Ephesus, who flourished under Mauritius the emperor: in the “seventh” century a bishop of this place assisted at the sixth council at Constantinople; in this century it was a metropolitan church, and Theodorus was archbishop of it: in the “eighth” century, one Theodosius presided over the church here; to which church the emperor Constantine gave a hundred pounds of gold<sup>f1042</sup>: so far down Christianity is to be traced in this place.

**Ver. 18.** *And when they were come to him*, etc.] That is, when the elders or pastors of the church at Ephesus were come to the apostle at Miletus:

*he said unto them, ye know, from the first day I came into Asia*; to Ephesus the chief city in it:

*after what manner I have been with you at all seasons*; what was his conduct, conversation, and constant manner of life; which the apostle takes notice of, not to commend himself, or to obtain applause of men; but either in vindication of himself, against those that were ready to charge and censure him; or to recommend the doctrine which he taught; and chiefly for the imitation of these elders, he had sent for, and convened in this place; and he appeals to themselves, as eyewitnesses of what he was going to say.

**Ver. 19.** *Serving the Lord with all humility of mind*, etc.] Meaning, in the ministration of the Gospel, being conscious to himself of his own weakness and insufficiency in himself for such service; no ways elated with those excellent and extraordinary gifts bestowed upon him; ascribing all his success to the power, grace, and Spirit of God; treating no man with contempt and disdain; nor lording it over God’s heritage, or claiming a dominion over the faith of men; nor seeking honour nor riches for himself, nor even what he had a just right unto, a maintenance from the people; but laboured with his own hands, and to his own and the necessities of others:

*and with many tears*; at the obstinacy and unbelief of some, and at the distresses and afflictions of others, both corporeal and spiritual; as well as on account of the unbecoming walk of some professors:

*and temptations which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:* who were hardened against his ministrations, and believed not the Gospel preached by him, but spoke evil of it, and lay in wait to take away his life; by reason of which, his afflictions, which he calls temptations, because they were trials of his faith and patience, were very great.

**Ver. 20.** *And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you,* etc.] The Syriac version supplies, “to your souls”; to lead them into a true knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, and to confirm them in the same, and to preserve them from errors in principle, and immoralities in practice, and to encourage the exercise of every grace, and to instruct them in every branch of duty; nothing of this kind, or which had this tendency, did the apostle dissemble, conceal, or drop, either through sloth and indolence, or through fear of men, or for the sake of reputation, wealth, and friends. The things the apostle may have chiefly in view are the truths of the Gospel, which are very profitable to the souls of men; such as relate to the knowledge of God, his being, perfections, and persons; as that there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit, which is profitable to be known, in order to understand the economy of salvation, in which each person has his distinct concern; and that both the Son and Spirit are equally God with the Father, which accounts for the virtue and efficacy of the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ, and how safely he may be depended upon for salvation, and how equal the Holy Spirit is to his work and office; likewise such doctrines as relate to the sin of Adam and his posterity in him, to the imputation of the guilt of that sin unto them, and the derivation of a corrupt nature from him, and which respect the impurity and impotence of human nature; all which is profitable, since it accounts for the origin of moral evil, and many of the dispensations of providence in involving those that do not know the right hand from their left in public calamities; and since it shows the necessity of regenerating grace, tends to the humiliation of men, and makes for the magnifying the riches of God’s grace: also such doctrines as express the grace of God in man’s salvation as the doctrines of God’s everlasting love, of election, redemption, justification, pardon, reconciliation, union to Christ, and final perseverance; all which are exceeding profitable, for the peace, comfort, and refreshment of the souls of God’s people. Moreover, the ordinances of the Gospel, baptism, and the Lord’s supper, which are the privileges of believers, and the means of their spiritual profit, may be included, together with all the duties of religion; which though not profitable by way of merit,

yet contribute to the peace and pleasure of the mind; and none of these things did the apostle withhold from the elders and church at Ephesus, as his epistle to that church does abundantly show, in which, doctrines, ordinances, and duties are taken notice of: now to keep back these, is either to keep them back wholly, to say nothing of any of them, but in the room of them to deliver out morality and legal righteousness; or in part, to mix the truths of the Gospel with the doctrines of men, and not give out the sincere milk of the word; or to draw and fetch back what has been delivered through the fear of men, and in order to gain reputation and applause: but so did not the apostle, nor should any minister of the Gospel; and that for the reason in the words, because they are profitable; as also because they are the counsel of God; and because it is the will of Christ that nothing should be hid, but everything should be published, which he has signified to his servants; and this is enforced by his own example, who whatever he heard of his Father, he made known to his disciples; and for the ministers of Christ to do otherwise, would argue unfaithfulness in them both to Christ and to the souls of men:

*but have showed you*; all the doctrines of the Gospel, and pointed to every path of duty, and declared, as he says hereafter, the whole counsel of God:

*and have taught you publicly*; first in the Jewish synagogue, then in the school of Tyrannus, (~~490B~~ Acts 19:8-10) and in whatsoever place the church, when formed, might meet together for public worship; there the apostle taught them the truths of the Gospel openly, and without any reserve, before all the people, as Christ ordered his apostles to do, and as he himself did, (~~1002~~ Matthew 10:27, ~~818D~~ John 18:20)

*and from house to house*: as he visited the saints at their own houses, to know their personal cases, and the state of their souls, he instructed them privately and personally one by one; he taught the same publicly as privately, and privately as publicly: and took every opportunity of instilling Gospel truths into them, and of enriching them with a larger knowledge of them; which shows his affection and zeal, his laboriousness, industry, and indefatigableness in the ministry.

**Ver. 21.** *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks*, etc.] To the Jews first in their synagogue, and then to both Jews and Greeks, or Gentiles, in the school of Tyrannus; opening and explaining to both the nature and use, urging and insisting upon, and proving by undeniable testimonies the necessity,

*of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ:* the former of these is not a legal repentance, but an evangelical one; which flows from a sense of the love of God, and an application of pardoning grace and mercy, and is always attended with hope, at least of interest in it, and as here with faith in Christ Jesus: it lies in a true sight and sense of sin, as exceeding sinful, being contrary to the nature and law of God, and a deformation of the image of God in man, as well as followed with dreadful and pernicious consequences; and in a godly sorrow for it, as it is committed against a God of infinite purity and holiness, and of love, grace, and mercy; and it shows itself in shame for sin, and blushing at it, and in an ingenious confession of it, and forsaking it: and the latter of these is not an historical faith, or an assent of the mind to whatsoever is true concerning the person, office, and grace of Christ; but is a spiritual act of the soul upon him; it is a looking and going out to him, a laying hold and leaning on him, and trusting in him, for grace, righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation. Now these two were the sum of the apostle's ministry; this is a breviary or compendium of it; a form of sound words held fast and published by him: and as these two go together as doctrines in the ministry of the word, they go together as graces in the experience of the saints; where the one is, there the other is; they are wrought in the soul at one and the same time, by one and the same hand; the one is not before the other in order of time, however it may be in order of working, or as to visible observation; repentance is mentioned before faith, not that it precedes it, though it may be discerned in its outward acts before it; yet faith as to its inward exercise on Christ is full as early, if not earlier; souls first look to Christ by faith, and then they mourn in tears of evangelical repentance, (<sup><3120></sup>Zechariah 12:10) though the order of the Gospel ministry is very fitly here expressed, which is first to lay before sinners the evil of sin, and their danger by it, in order to convince of it, and bring to repentance for it; and then to direct and encourage them to faith in Christ Jesus, as in the case of the jailer, (<sup><4163></sup>Acts 16:29,30) and this is, generally speaking, the order and method in which the Holy Spirit proceeds; he is first a spirit of conviction and illumination, he shows to souls the exceeding sinfulness of sin, causes them to loath it and themselves for it, and humbles them under a sense of it; and then he is a spirit of faith, he reveals Christ unto them as God's way or salvation, and works faith in them to believe in him. Moreover, these two, repentance and faith, were the two parts of Christ's ministry, (<sup><4115></sup>Mark 1:15) and are what, he would have published and insisted on, in the preaching of the word, (<sup><4247></sup>Luke 24:47, <sup><4166></sup>Mark 16:16) so that the

ministry of the apostle was very conformable to the mind and will of Christ.

**Ver. 22.** *And now behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem,* etc.] Not in his own spirit, though the Ethiopic version reads, “in my spirit”; as if he was pressed and straitened, and troubled within himself, at what afflictions and bonds he was to endure at Jerusalem; for this is not consistent with what he says in (<sup><440B></sup>Acts 20:24) nor is the sense, that he was bound in conscience and duty to go to Jerusalem, to carry the collections of the churches made for the poor saints there, which the Gentile churches importuned him to take upon him, and which he undertook, and promised to perform, and so was under obligation to do it; but rather that he was resolved and determined in his own mind, within himself, or he purposed in his spirit, as in (<sup><440C></sup>Acts 19:21) to go to Jerusalem: but it is best to understand it of the Spirit of God; as that either the apostle, by the revelation of the Spirit of God, knew that when he came to Jerusalem he should be laid in bonds, and under a deep impression of that upon his mind, he went thither, as though he was bound already; or rather that he was under such a strong impulse of the Spirit of God, by which he was moved to such a vehement desire to go thither, that the bonds and afflictions he saw waited for him there, could not deter him, and all the entreaties of his friends could not dissuade him from it:

*not knowing the things that shall befall me there;* that is, the particular things he should suffer there, nor how they would issue with respect to life or death; and if the latter, whether he should suffer death, there or elsewhere; these things were not as yet revealed to him; he only in general knew, that bonds and afflictions would be his lot and portion, and which therefore he excepts in the next verse: after this it was revealed to him by Agabus a prophet, in the name, and under the influence of the Holy Ghost, that he should be apprehended at Jerusalem, and should be bound and delivered to the Gentiles; which was signified by the prophet’s taking his girdle and binding his hands and feet with it, but still he knew not whether he should die there or not, though he was ready for it, (<sup><441A></sup>Acts 21:10,11,13) afterwards when he was come to Jerusalem, and had been bound, and was in prison, the Lord himself appeared to him, and told him that he must bear witness at Rome, as he had testified of him at Jerusalem, (<sup><442A></sup>Acts 23:11) so that he was not to suffer death there, only bonds and imprisonment.

**Ver. 23.** *Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city,* etc.] As he passed along, where there was a church, or any number of saints: in the churches of those times there were prophets who foretold things to come, and by these the Holy Ghost testified to the apostle, as he travelled along, and called upon the churches in every city, what would befall him when he came to Jerusalem; this sense the natural order of the words requires, unless there should be a transposition of them, thus, “save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me, or wait for me in every city”; that is, this in general was only made known to him by the Spirit of God, that wherever he came, affliction and persecution would attend him, and he must expect bonds and imprisonment; these were ready for him, and he must prepare for them, as he did: and therefore, whenever they came, he was not surprised at them, they were no other than what he looked for; but the other sense seems best, for such a transposition is not very easy, and, besides, can by no means be admitted, if the sense is, as the words are read in Beza’s ancient copy, and in others, and in the Vulgate Latin version, “that bonds and afflictions abide me at Jerusalem”; however, since the Holy Ghost testified before hand of the afflictions and bonds of the apostle, whether in every city or in Jerusalem, or both; it is no inconsiderable proof of the proper deity of the Spirit of God, and is an instance of his affectionate regard to the apostle, to give him previous notice of these things.

**Ver. 24.** *But none of these things move me,* etc.] From the hope of the Gospel, nor from the ministry of the word, nor from his journey to Jerusalem; they did not shake his faith, nor inject fear into him, nor cause him to alter his purpose and design:

*neither count I my life dear unto myself:* life is a very valuable thing, no outward or temporal enjoyment can be dearer to a man than life; all that he has he will give for his life: this therefore must not be understood in an absolute sense, as if the apostle despised his life, and esteemed of it meanly, when it was the gift of God, and had been not only so eminently preserved in providence, but had been so useful in a way of grace to so many valuable purposes; but it must be taken in a comparative sense, with respect to Christ and his Gospel, and when it should be called for to be laid down for him; and that, in such circumstances, and under such considerations, he made no account of it at all, but preferred Christ and his Gospel to it: this sense appears by what follows,



*so that I might finish my course with joy*; the course and race of his life, ending it by suffering cheerfully and joyfully for Christ; or his Christian course and race, which began at his conversion, ending that with a joyful prospect of being with Christ in an endless eternity; or else the course of his ministry, sealing that with his blood, and rejoicing that he was counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, and so he did finish his course, (~~SM~~ 2 Timothy 4:7)

*and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus*; which seems to be explanative of the former, or of what is meant by his course, namely his ministry, the ministry of the Gospel: Beza's ancient copy, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "the ministry of the word"; this he had received from Christ, both the Gospel which he ministered, and gifts qualifying him for it, and a mission and commission to minister it; and which he was desirous of fulfilling in such a manner, as to give up his account with joy to him from whom he had received it, and to whom he was accountable; namely,

*to testify the Gospel of the grace of God*; to profess and preach it, to bear a constant and public testimony to it at death, as in life, and faithfully to declare it, and assert it to the last; which he calls not only the "Gospel", or good news of salvation by Christ; but the Gospel "of the grace" of God: which brings the account of the free grace, love, and mercy of God, displayed in the scheme of salvation of the grace of God the Father, in pitching his love upon any of the sons of men; not because they were better and more deserving of his favour, than others, but because of his sovereign will and pleasure, who will be gracious to whom he will be gracious; and in choosing them in Christ unto salvation, before they had done good or evil, and without any consideration or foresight of, or motive from good works hereafter done by them; in drawing the scheme and model of their salvation in Christ, appointing him to be the author of it; and in making a covenant of grace with him, stored with all the blessings and promises of grace; and in sending him, in the fulness of time, to suffer and die for them, not sparing him, but delivering him up for them all, and giving all things freely with him; and in accepting the sacrifice, satisfaction, and righteousness of his Son on their account, as if done by themselves. It also gives an account of the grace of Christ in undertaking the salvation of men; in assuming their nature, and becoming mean and low in it; in dying for their sins; in his intercession for them at the right hand of God; and in the care he takes of them in this world, until he has brought them safe home to himself. Likewise it gives an account of the grace of the Spirit in regeneration and



sanctification; in working faith in the hearts of men; in being a comforter to them, a witnesser of their adoption, the earnest of their inheritance, and the sealer of them unto the day of redemption. And the Gospel may be so called, because all the doctrines of it are doctrines of grace; it asserts election to be of grace, and not of works; and ascribes the justification of a sinner to the free grace of God, through the righteousness of Christ, imputed without works and received by faith, which faith is the gift of God, and it denies it to be of the deeds of the law; it represents the pardon of sin to be according to the riches of God's grace, though it is through the blood of Christ, and not owing to humiliation, repentance, confession, and new obedience, as causes of it; it attributes regeneration and conversion to the abundant mercy, the free favour of God, and to the efficacy of his grace, and not to the will of the flesh, or the will of man; and in a word, as the great doctrine of it is salvation, whence it is called the Gospel of salvation, it declares that the whole of salvation, from first to last, is all of grace. And it may also bear this name, because it is a means of conveying grace unto, and implanting it in the hearts of men; regenerating grace comes this way; God begets men by the word of truth, they are born again of incorruptible seed by it; the Spirit of God, as a spirit of sanctification, is received through it, and faith comes by hearing it; and both that and hope, and every other grace, are quickened, encouraged, and drawn forth into exercise by it; all which is, when it is attended with the Spirit of God and power: and this being the nature and use of the Gospel, made it so precious and valuable to the apostle, and made him so intent upon testifying it, and fulfilling the ministry of it, and to prefer it to life and everything in this world; and it cannot but be highly valued and greatly desired by all those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. Beza's ancient copy, and some others, read, "to testify to Jews and Greeks the Gospel of the grace of God".

**Ver. 25.** *And now behold*, etc.] This is not only a note of asseveration, but of attention, stirring up to observe what is here asserted:

*I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more*; the sense is, that none of them should ever see him again, none of the churches of Asia, or the members of them; among whom he had been some years preaching the Gospel, the things concerning the Messiah, his kingdom and glory, and the meetness of the saints for, and their right unto the heavenly inheritance, prepared by God, and given by him to all that love him: Beza's ancient copy reads, "the

kingdom of Jesus”: this the apostle knew by divine revelation, by the same spirit in which he was going bound to Jerusalem, though he knew not whether he should die there or elsewhere; however, he knew, and was persuaded, he should visit these parts no more.

**Ver. 26.** *Wherefore I take you to record this day*, etc.] This is a solemn appeal to the elders of the church at Ephesus, who knew his doctrine and manner of life for a considerable time among them:

*that I am pure from the blood of all men*: or “of you all”, as some copies, and the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read; which seems most natural, since they could only bear a testimony for him with respect to themselves, and the people at Ephesus, where he had so behaved both in the faithful discharge of his ministry, and in his exemplary life and conversation; as that the ruin and destruction of no one of them could be laid to his charge, or any one perish for want of knowledge, or through any negligence of his; (see <sup><4073></sup>Ezekiel 33:6).

**Ver. 27.** *For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God*.] By which is meant, not the purposes and decrees of God, latent in his own breast, these the apostle could not declare; but his revealed will in the Gospel, concerning the salvation of men by Jesus Christ, even the whole of the Gospel, every truth and doctrine of it, necessary to salvation, and to the peace, joy, and comfort of the saints; together with all the ordinances of it, and everything that had any tendency to promote the glory of God, and the good of souls; (see <sup><4073></sup>Luke 7:30) none of these things did the apostle withhold from the knowledge of the church at Ephesus, but freely imparted and communicated them to them; (see Gill on “<sup><4080></sup>Acts 20:20”).

**Ver. 28.** *Take heed therefore unto yourselves*, etc.] Since the blood of men may be required of those, who are negligent or partial in their office, and shun to declare the whole counsel of God: this exhortation is given them not merely as men, to take care of their bodily health, the outward concerns of life, and provide for themselves and families; nor merely as Christians, but as ministers of the Gospel; that they would take heed to their gifts, to use and improve them, and not neglect them; to their time, that they spend it aright, and not squander it away; and to their spirit, temper, and passions, that they are not governed by them; and to their lives and conversations, that they be exemplary to those who are under their care; and to their doctrine, that it be according to the Scriptures; that it be

the doctrine of Christ, and the same with the apostles; that it be according to godliness, and that it tends to edification; that it be sound and incorrupt, pure and unmixed, and all of a piece and consistent with itself; and that they be not infected and carried away with errors and heresies:

*and to all the flock*; the church and all the members of it, which are compared to a flock of sheep, which are to be looked after and watched over by the ministers of the word, who are as shepherds to them, lest they should be infected, or any damage done them. The people of God are compared to sheep on many accounts; before conversion, for their going astray, when they are as lost sheep; after conversion, for their meek and inoffensive carriage and behaviour, and for their patience in bearing sufferings, to which they are exposed: and a church of Christ is compared to a flock of them, being in Gospel order, folded together and feeding in the same pasture, attending the word and ordinances, under the care of shepherds appointed by Christ the chief shepherd; whose business it is to take heed unto them, and care of them, to learn to know their state and condition, to watch over them, and to feed them with knowledge and with understanding, for which they are qualified by Christ; and they are to take heed unto everyone in the flock, the poor of the flock as well as others, the lambs as well as the sheep, and the sick and the diseased, the torn, and straying, and driven away, as well as the fat and the strong: and this flock, though a little flock, is a holy and beautiful one, a flock of men, and of the souls of men dear to God, to Christ and the blessed Spirit; and a special regard should be had unto them, and that for reasons following:

*over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*; or “bishops”; this is said to the elders of the church, (~~Act~~ Acts 20:17) which shows that the office of an elder and a bishop is one and the same office; and this contains in it more than one argument why they should take heed to the flock; as because they are the overseers of it, who have the care and oversight of the flock, that is under their inspection, and is their proper province, and office; and this they were put into by the Holy Ghost, who gave them gifts to qualify them for it, and called, and inclined them to undertake it, as well as moved the people to make choice of them for this purpose; and since, therefore, this was an affair in which the Holy Ghost was so much concerned, it became them very diligently to attend it:

*to feed the church of God*; with knowledge and understanding; and discharge the whole office of faithful shepherds to the flock, by feeding the

flock and not themselves, strengthening the diseased, healing the sick, binding up the broken, bringing again that which was driven away, and seeking up that which was lost: and here is another argument suggested, to stir up to a diligent performance of this work; and that is, that this flock is the church of God, a set of men whom God has chosen for himself, and called by his grace out of the world, and separated for his own use and glory, and among whom he dwells; and therefore to be fed with the faithful word, with the finest of the wheat, and not with the chaff of human schemes, and with the wind of false doctrine, nor with anything that is vain, trifling, and deceitful; but with the solid doctrines of the Gospel, with the words of faith and good doctrine, with the wholesome words of Christ Jesus, which have in them milk for babes and meat for strong men, and with and by the ordinances of the Gospel, which are the green pastures they are to be guided into, and abide in; and in all they are to be directed to Christ, the sum of the word and ordinances, who is the bread of life, and food of faith; and that the church should be thus fed, is the will of Christ, who has appointed and ordered his ministers to feed his lambs and sheep, and has furnished them with what is necessary for this work; this is the design of the ministry of the Gospel, and the administration of ordinances; and the churches of Christ are placed where food may be had, where the word is faithfully preached, and the ordinances truly administered: some copies read, “the church of the Lord”; and others, and so the Complutensian edition, “the church of the Lord and God”:

*which he hath purchased with his own blood;* which being the blood not only of a pure and innocent man, but of one that is truly and properly God as well as man, was a sufficient ransom price to redeem the church and people of God from sin, the law, its curse and condemnation: so that this is no inconsiderable proof of the true and proper deity of Christ; and contains a fresh argument, or reason, why the flock of God and “church of Christ”, as the Syriac version reads; or “the church of the Lord and God”, as in five of Beza’s exemplars: or “of the Lord God”, as the Arabic version, should be taken heed unto and fed; because it must needs be dear to God and Christ, and precious to them, since so great a price has been paid for it. The purchaser is God, Christ who is God over all, blessed for ever, not a creature; that could never have made such a purchase, it could not have purchased a single sheep or lamb in this flock, no man can redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him, much less the whole flock; but Christ being God, was able to make such a purchase, and he has actually

made it, and given a sufficient price for it; not to Satan, with whom these sheep were a prey, and from whom they are taken in virtue of the ransom given; but to God, from whom they strayed, against whom they sinned, and whose law they broke; and this price was not silver and gold, nor men, nor people: but Christ himself, his life and blood; and which were his “own”, the human nature, the blood of which was shed, and its life given being in union with his divine person, and was in such sense his own, the property of the Son of God, as the life and blood of no mere man are theirs: and this purchase now being made in this way, and by such means, is a very proper one; it is not made without price, but with an invaluable one; and it is a legal purchase, a valuable consideration being given for it, perfectly equivalent to it; and therefore is a complete one, there is nothing wanting to make it more firm, it is a finished purchase; and it is a very peculiar one, it is a peculiar people that are purchased, called the purchased possession, (~~4014~~ Ephesians 1:14) and a peculiar price which is paid for it; there is no other of the same kind, nor any thing like it, and it is made by a peculiar person, one that is God and man in one person.

**Ver. 29.** *For I know this*, etc.] By divine revelation:

*that after my departing*; either out of this world, or after his leaving them now, and proceeding on, his journey:

*shall grievous wolves enter in among you*; false teachers, comparable to wolves, for their craft and cunning, and for their greedy, covetous, and voracious dispositions; and who would be very grievous, troublesome, and even intolerable to them; these, he knew, would enter privily, at an unawares, into their churches, and set up themselves for preachers, without being called or sent:

*not sparing the flock*; fleecing it instead of feeding it, making merchandise of it, and like the Pharisees, under religious pretences, devour widows' houses, and drain the purses of men; and having as little compassion upon their souls, poisoning them with their errors and heresies, subverting their faith, and bringing them into swift ruin and destruction, as much as would in them lie.

**Ver. 30.** *Also of your own selves shall men arise*, etc.] Not only false teachers from abroad should come and enter among them, but some would spring up out of their own communities, such as had been admitted

members of them, and of whom they had hoped well; such were Hymenseus, Philetus, Alexander, Hertoogenes, and Phygellus;

*speaking perverse things*; concerning God, and Christ, and the Gospel; distorted things, wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction, and that of others; things that are disagreeable to the word of God, and pernicious to the souls of men:

*to draw away disciples after them*; to rend away members from the churches, make schisms and divisions, form parties, set themselves at the head of them, and establish new sects, called after their own names; (see ~~418~~1 John 2:19, ~~458~~1 Timothy 5:19).

**Ver. 31.** *Therefore watch*, etc.] Meaning both over themselves, and the flock; to prevent, if possible, false teachers entering in, and to nip the buds of heresy and schism, as soon as they appear, and to preserve themselves, and the church, from being carried away with the error of the wicked.

*And remember that by the space of three years*; reckoning from his first coming to Ephesus, unto this time, that he now called at Miletus; (see ~~418~~Acts 18:19,20 19:8,10,22, 20:3,6,17) and

*I ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears*; that is, he was constantly and continually cautioning them against false teachers, and their doctrines, in the most tender and affectionate manner; shedding tears at the thoughts of what mischief would be done, and how many souls would be ruined by them; which gives a lively idea of the apostle, and his ministry, of his affection, zeal, and diligence, very worthy of the imitation of all the preachers of the Gospel. Several copies, and all the Oriental versions, read, “everyone of you”.

**Ver. 32.** *And now brethren*, etc.] So the apostle calls the elders of the church at Ephesus; though they had not the same gifts, and were not in the same high office as he was, yet he puts himself upon a level with them, as if he and they were fellow elders, as Peter calls himself, (~~418~~1 Peter 5:1) which is an instance of the apostle’s humility and affection:

*I commend you to God*; to God the Father; to his grace, to supply all their need; to his wisdom, to direct them in all their affairs; and to his power, to keep them from the sins and corruptions of the times, and from the errors and heresies now broaching, or to be broached.

*And to the word of his grace:* either the Gospel, before called the Gospel of the grace of God, (~~Acts~~ Acts 20:24) This is sometimes called “the word”, the word of faith, of truth, of righteousness, of reconciliation and salvation; and is “his” word, the word of God, and not of man; it comes from him, is concerning him, and is succeeded by him; and it is the word of “his grace”, since it publishes his free grace and mercy in Christ Jesus, and declares salvation to, be wholly of the grace of God; to which this church is commended by the apostle as a rule of faith and practice, to attend unto, and abide by, and as a preservative from those errors and heresies which he had observed would spring up among them, and which would be for their instruction, comfort, and establishment: or else the Lord Jesus is intended, who is the eternal and essential word of God; who, as the word, inwardly conceived, is the image of the mind, equal to it, and yet distinct from it, so Christ is the image of the invisible God, equal to him, and yet a distinct person from him; and as the word expressed is the interpreter of the mind, so Christ the word, who was in the beginning with God, and lay in his bosom, has spoke all things from him, declared his mind, and explained his will: besides, he is the word who in the everlasting council and covenant spoke on the behalf of all his people, asked for every blessing for them, and engaged to be the surety of them; and is the word, who, in the beginning of time, spoke all things out of nothing; and now is the advocate, and speaks for the saints in heaven, as well as he has been the word spoken of by all the holy prophets from the beginning of the world: and he may be thought the rather to be designed, since the saints never commend themselves, or others, either in life, or in death, to any but to a divine person; nor is any but a divine person capable of taking the care and charge of the saints, and of making it good; nor will they trust any other; nor are the saints ever said to be committed or commended to the Gospel, but on the other hand, that is said to be committed to them: the written word is committed to the care and keeping of the saints, but not the saints to the care and keeping of that; nor does it appear so agreeable to put the written word upon a level with the divine Being; a commendation of the saints, equally to the written word, as to God himself, seems to be a lessening of the glory of the divine Being, and an ascribing too much to the word, but suits well with Christ the essential word: and who may be called the word of his grace, because the grace of God is greatly displayed in him; and because all fulness of grace dwells in him; and he is the author, donor, and object of all grace, and so a proper person to be commended to; and what follows is very applicable to him:



*which is able to build you up*: in faith and holiness, and on himself, the sure foundation; for though the Gospel is an instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God, in building up saints on their most holy faith, yet Christ is the master builder; it is he that builds the temple, the church, and every particular believer, and must bear the glory. The saints, though they are built on Christ the foundation, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, and so are safe; yet they stand in need of building up, or of edification; and a church may be said to be built up, or edified, when additions are made unto it of such as shall be saved; and particular members are built up, when additions are made to their grace, or they grow in the exercise of it; when their spiritual strength increases, when their understandings are more enlightened, their judgments better informed, and their memories filled with divine truths and Gospel doctrines; when they are more and more confirmed in the faith of Christ, both as a grace, and as a doctrine; and their wills are brought to a greater resignation to the will of God, as well as their afflictions are set upon things in heaven, and their souls are more seeking after them: and now this is what God is able to do, and does do; for except he builds, in vain do the builders build; he causes all grace to abound; and so does his word, his essential word; he is the author and finisher of faith, and gives both grace and glory, as it follows:

*and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified*: by the inheritance is meant the heavenly glory, which is a free grace gift and not obtained by the works of the law, or the industry of men. It is a distribution by lot, as the land of Canaan was, even by the lot of God's eternal purpose and decree: it is what belongs to children, to the children of God, and them only; and therefore bears this name, and comes unto them upon, and in consequence of the death of Christ the testator: it is his righteousness which entitles unto it; and it is the grace of God which makes meet for it; and the Spirit of God is the earnest of it: it is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens, and is an eternal one; it lies in light, and among the saints there. God is able to give it; it is a gift of his grace, of his sovereign will, which he gives to whom he pleases; it is an inheritance of his preparing and disposing, which he calls unto, makes meet for, and bestows: and Christ, the word of his grace, is able to give it; it is in his hands, not only the promise of it, but that itself; he is in possession of it, and it is in his power to give it; and he does give it to all that the Father has given him, and who are here described from their sanctification; for this is only enjoyed by such, who are set apart



by God the Father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and to whom he is made sanctification, and who are sanctified by the blessed Spirit. Now though the Gospel, the written word, may be as a map, which shows where this inheritance lies, and which is the way to it; yet it is Christ, the living word, who gives the right unto it, the meetness for it, the earnest of it, and will put into the possession of it.

**Ver. 33.** *I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.*] This the apostle says, not merely in vindication of himself, and his character, from all charge or suspicion of avarice; but chiefly for the instruction of these elders, and all others of the same office, not to indulge the sin of covetousness, which is very disagreeable, and ought not to be in a minister of the word; and it may be observed, that many things which the apostle says before of himself to those elders, is said not to commend himself, nor so much in his own vindication, as for their imitation; compare with this (<sup><0465></sup>Numbers 16:15, <sup><042B></sup>1 Samuel 12:3) and to point out the character of false teachers that would come in, or spring up among them, who would make merchandise of them. Beza's ancient copy, and others, read, "the silver, etc. of none of you"; and so the Ethiopic version.

**Ver. 34.** *Yea, you yourselves know,* etc.] So far was the apostle from desiring to have other men's money, or to wear their apparel, or to eat their bread, that he could appeal to these elders for the truth of it, they having been eyewitnesses of it:

*that these hands have ministered unto my necessities;* meaning, that he had wrought with his hands, which he then held up, or stretched out, at tent making, along with Aquila and Priscilla, at Ephesus, as he had done before at Corinth, (<sup><481D></sup>Acts 18:2,3,18,19) and therewith supplied himself with necessaries for food and clothing; for though he had a power, as a minister of the Gospel, to forbear working, and to insist upon a maintenance from the churches, yet in some cases, and in some places, he chose rather to forego that, lest he should either any ways hinder the progress of the Gospel at the first preaching of it, or be burdensome to the churches, or give the false teachers any handle against him; and he not only supported himself in this way, but assisted others also:

*and to them that were with me;* as Luke, Timothy, and others; (see <sup><481D></sup>Acts 20:4).

**Ver. 35.** *I have showed you all things*, etc.] Both as to doctrine and practice, and had set them an example how to behave in every point, and particularly in this:

*how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak*; the sense of which is, that they should labour with their hands as he did, and so support the weak; either such who were weak in body, and unable to work and help themselves, and therefore should be helped, assisted, relieved, and supported by the labours of others, that were able; or the weak in faith, and take nothing of them, lest they should think the preachers of the word sought only their own worldly advantage, and so they should be stumbled and fall from the truth:

*and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus*; which the apostle had either collected as the sense of some passages of his, such as (<sup><0163></sup>Luke 6:30,35,38, 14:13,14, <sup><0254></sup>Matthew 25:34,35), etc. or which though not recorded in any of the Gospels, the apostle might have received from one or other of the twelve disciples, as what were frequently used by Christ in the days of his flesh; and which the apostle had inculcated among the Ephesians, and now puts them in mind of them, they being worthy of remembrance: how he said,

*it is more blessed to give than to receive*: it is more comfortable, honourable, pleasant, and profitable: the giver is in a more comfortable situation, having an abundance, at least a sufficiency, and something to spare; whereas the receiver is often in want and distress, and so uncomfortable: it is an honour to give; an honour is reflected upon the giver, both by the receiver, and others; when to receive is an instance of meanness, and carries in it, among men, some degree of dishonour: it is a pleasure to a liberal man to distribute to the necessities of others; and it cannot be grateful to a man to be in such circumstances, as make it necessary for him to receive from others, and be dependent on them; and great are the advantages and profit which a cheerful giver reaps, both in this world, and that to come: wherefore the conclusion which the apostle would have drawn from hence is, that it is much more eligible for a man to work with his own hands, and support himself, and assist others, than to receive at the hands of others.

**Ver. 36.** *And when he had thus spoken*, etc.] And finished his speech to the elders: he kneeled down: upon the floor, which was a prayer gesture, used by Christ, and others; for, it seems, the disuse of kneeling in prayer,

between the passover and pentecost, which Tertullian <sup>f1043</sup>, and other writers, speak of, had not yet obtained, which was in memory of Christ's resurrection from the dead, for this was now the time: (see ~~4016~~ Acts 20:6,16) and

*prayed with them all*: and no doubt for them all; the Syriac version renders it, "and he prayed, and all the men with him"; the apostle, and the elders, joined together in prayer.

**Ver. 37.** *And they all wept sore*, etc.] At the thoughts of parting with such a faithful and affectionate friend and servant of Christ; and no doubt but their affections were greatly moved by his prayers for them, as well as by his discourse to them. Christians are not Stoics, religion does not take away and destroy the natural affections, but regulates and governs them, and directs to a right use of them:

*and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him*; as Esau fell on Jacob's neck and kissed him, (~~0304~~ Genesis 33:4) and Joseph on his brother Benjamin's, and his father Jacob's, (~~0454~~ Genesis 45:14, 46:29). And it was usual with the eastern nations, particularly the Persians <sup>f1044</sup>, for friends and relations to kiss at parting, as well as at meeting; (see ~~8009~~ Ruth 1:9,14).

**Ver. 38.** *Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake*, etc.] In (~~4015~~ Acts 20:25) it filled them with sorrow to part with him; but this was increased, and made almost intolerable by what he said,

*that they should see his face no more*: could they have hoped to have seen him again, it would have made their parting with him more easy; but to be told they should never see him more in this world, it cut them to the heart; which shows what a share the apostle had in their hearts and affections, and not without good reason: however, that they might have a sight of him as long as they could, they went along with him to see him take shipping, and to see the last of him.

*And they accompanied him unto the ship*: which lay at Miletus waiting for him.

# CHAPTER 21

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 21

**Ver. 1.** *And it came to pass, that after we had gotten from them,* etc.]

Which was with great difficulty, with many tears, and much wringing of hands: the word signifies that they were “plucked from” them; they clung about them, as husband and wife, and parents and children do; so strong were their affections; and their parting was like the parting of such near relations, or like the plucking of the flesh from the bones, or the drawing and separating one member from another; such is the cement of true Christian love:

*and had launched;* the vessel into the sea, from the port at Miletus:

*we came with a straight course unto Coos;* an island in the Aegean sea. Pomponius Mela <sup>f1045</sup> calls it Cos in Carlo; and so Pausanias <sup>f1046</sup> reckons it a city of the Carians and Lycians, mentioning it along with Rhodes. It was famous for being the birth place of Apelles the painter, and Hippocrates the physician. Pliny <sup>f1047</sup> places it in Caria, and calls it most noble, and says that it was fifteen miles distant from Halicarnassus, was a hundred miles in circumference, as many think, and was called Merope: and who elsewhere observes <sup>f1048</sup>, that it is reported that the silk worms are bred in this island, and that a sort of raiment called “bombycine” was first made here by Pamphila, the daughter of Latoius. And so Solinus <sup>f1049</sup> from Varro, testifies, that this island first gave a fine sort of clothing for the ornament of women: hence because silks or bombycines, from the silk worms, were first wove here by women, some think the island had its name, for **hwqm**, which signifies something spun, in (~~1108~~-1 Kings 10:28, ~~4016~~-2 Chronicles 1:16) it is by us translated “linen yarn”; but the Vulgate Latin version renders it, “from Coa”. This island was taken by Hercules, and Eurypylus, the king of it, was slain by him <sup>f1050</sup>. It is now in the hands of the Turks, by whom it is called Stancora; but by others Lango. When, and by whom the Gospel was first preached here, is not certain; it does not appear that the Apostle Paul stayed to preach it now: however, in the beginning of the “fourth” century there was a church here, and a bishop of it was present at the council of

Nice; and in the “fifth” century, a bishop of the church here assisted in the council of Chalcedon; and in the “sixth” century, a bishop of the same place was in the fifth synod at Constantinople<sup>f1051</sup>. Hither Paul and his company came with a good wind, a prosperous gale, and nothing to hinder them; which perhaps is rather meant than a straight or direct line, in which they ran from Miletus to this place:

*and the day following unto Rhodes*, this is an island in Lycia, according to Mela<sup>f1052</sup>, and had in it these three cities, Lindos, Camitos, and Jalysos: it is said of it<sup>f1053</sup>, that the heavens are never so cloudy, but the sun is seen here in one part of the day, or another. R. Benjamin<sup>f1054</sup> makes this to be three days’ sail from Samos; and says, he found four hundred Jews in it, and almost three hundred at Samos. It is asserted by several writers<sup>f1055</sup>, that this island was once covered with the sea, and in process of time appeared out of it, and became dry land. The account which Pliny<sup>f1056</sup> gives of it is, that

“it is most beautiful and free, and was in circumference a hundred and thirty miles; or, if Isidorus is rather to be credited, a hundred and three: the cities in it were Lindus, Camirus, Jalysus, now Rhodes: it is distant from Alexandria in Egypt five hundred seventy eight miles, as Isidorus reports; but according to Eratosthenes, four hundred sixty nine; and according to Mutianus, five hundred; and from Cyprus it was a hundred and sixty six;”

a place after mentioned, which the apostle left on the left hand, having sailed from Petara to Phoenicia. The same writer proceeds and adds,

“it was before called Ophiusa, Astria, Aethrea, Trinacria, Cotymbia, Paessa, Atabyria, from the king of it, afterwards Macria and Oloessa.” Jerom<sup>f1057</sup> says of it, that

“it is the most noble of the islands Cyclades, and the first from the east, formerly called Ophiussa; in which was a city of the same name, famous for the brazen colossus, which was seventy cubits high: it was distant from the port of Asia twenty miles.”

This statue, called the colossus of the sun, was one of the seven wonders of the world, according to Pliny<sup>f1058</sup>, and was made by Chares, a disciple of Lysippus, at the expense of King Demetrius: it was twelve years in making, and cost three hundred talents: it was seventy cubits high (as Jerom before says): it fell by an earthquake, after it had stood fifty or sixty years (some

say 1360); and as it lay along it was a miracle, few men with their arms stretched out could embrace the thumb, and the fingers were bigger than most statues: and from this statue the Rhodians have been sometimes called Colossians; and some have fancied, that these are the persons the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle to under that name. This island, and the city in it, were called Rhodes, as some think, from roses, with which it might abound, or because of the beautifulness of the place; and others, that it had its name from *dwry* “Jarod”, which, in the Chaldee and Syriac languages, signifies a serpent; and so it was called Ophiusa from the multitude of serpents in it <sup>f1059</sup>; though others say it took its name from Rhodia, a fair and beautiful maid beloved by Apollo. This island, in the “seventh” century, about the year 653, was taken by Mauvia, king of the Saracens, who sold the colossus, which lay on the ground ever since the earthquake, to a merchant, who is said to load nine hundred camels with the brass of it: it afterwards came into the hands of the Christians, and in the year 1522 was taken by Solyman the Turk, after a siege of six months, being betrayed by Andreas Meralius, a Portuguese knight <sup>f1060</sup>. When the Gospel was first preached here, and a church state formed, cannot be said; but in the beginning of the “fourth” century there was a bishop of this place in the council of Nice; and in the “fifth” century there was a church here, and it was a metropolitan; and in the “sixth” century a bishop of this place was in the fifth Roman synod under Symmachus; and in the “seventh” century a bishop of Rhodes assisted in the sixth council at Constantinople; and in the same century it was taken by the Saracenes, as before observed, when the church here was the metropolitan of the Cyclades: and yet in the “eighth” century, Leo, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod; and even though in the ninth century it was grievously harassed by the Saracens, yet its church state was not quite destroyed <sup>f1061</sup>.

*And from thence to Patara*; Beza’s ancient copy adds, “and Myra”: (see ~~4275~~ Acts 27:5) a city of Lycia: hence it is called by Herodotus <sup>f1062</sup>, and Pliny <sup>f1063</sup>, Patara of Lycia, and mentioned with Rhodes: it was famous for the temple of Apollo, which was in it, in which answers were given six months in the year, and were on equal credit with the oracle at Delphos <sup>f1064</sup>; the Arabic version here calls it Sparta. According to Pliny <sup>f1065</sup> it was first called Sataros. Some say it had its name Patara from Paturus, the son of Apollo; Ptolomy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, having enlarged it, called it after his sister’s name, Arsinoe. How long the apostle stayed in this place is not known, nor whether he preached here, nor if he did, what success he

had: in the “second” century, the statues of Jupiter and Apollo were in this, place: in the “fourth” century, there was a church here, and a bishop of it: and in the “sixth” century, a bishop of the church at Patara was in the fifth synod at Rome and Constantinople: and in the “eighth” century, Anastasius, bishop of this place, was in the Nicene synod <sup>f1066</sup>.

**Ver. 2.** *And finding a ship sailing over unto Phoenicia*, etc.] For it seems that the ship they went aboard at Assos, (~~403~~ Acts 20:13) went no further, at least in the way the apostle was going, than Patara; but lighting on another ship, which was bound for Phoenicia, for the city of Tyre, which bordered on the land of Israel, and indeed originally belonged to Canaan; (see ~~411B~~ Acts 11:19).

*we went aboard*; the said ship:

*and set forth*; on the voyage.

**Ver. 3.** *Now when we had discovered Cyprus*, etc.] An island, as the Syriac version here calls it, which lay between Syria and Cilicia; (see Gill on “~~406~~ Acts 4:36”); and was, according to R. Benjamin <sup>f1067</sup>, four days sail from Rhodes, before mentioned:

*we left it on the left hand*, and sailed into Syria; that part of it called Phoenicia:

*and landed at Tyre*; the chief city of Phoenicia, famous for navigation and commerce: it stood about four furlongs distant from the shore, and was joined <sup>f1068</sup> to the continent by Alexander the great. The account Jerom <sup>f1069</sup> gives of it is this,

“Tyre, the metropolis of Phoenicia, in the tribe of Nephthalim, is near twenty miles from Caesarea Philippi; this was formerly an island, but made continent land by Alexander: — its chief excellency lies in shell fish and purple.”

It was a very ancient city, though it seems not so ancient as Sidon, from whence it was distant about two hundred furlongs. Herodotus <sup>f1070</sup> says, that in his time it had been inhabited two thousand three hundred years; Hiram was king of it in Solomon’s time; yea, mention is made of it in Joshua’s time, if the text in (~~693~~ Joshua 19:29) is rightly translated: some say it was built seventy six years before the destruction of Troy. It is to be distinguished into old Tyre, which was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and

the island of Tyre, which was conquered by Alexander, and new Tyre annexed, by him to the continent. In the Hebrew language it is called רצור, “Tzur”, or “Tzor”, which signifies a “rock”, being built on one; though some think it has its name from רצור, “Tzehor”, which signifies “brightness”; it is now called Sur or Suri, and is quite desolate, being only a receptacle of thieves and robbers: though R. Benjamin says, in his time, new Tyre was a very good city, and had a port within it, into which ships go between two towers; and that there were in it four hundred Jews, and some of them skilful in the Talmud; — who further observes, that if anyone ascended the walls of new Tyre, he might see Tyre the crowning city, (<sup>2238</sup>Isaiah 23:8) which was a stone’s cast from the new; but if a man would go in a boat on the sea, he might see towers, streets, and palaces in the bottom <sup>f1071</sup>:

*for there the ship was to unlade her burden*; which she had taken in, in the ports where she had been, but where is not certain; for that she had been at Ephesus, and took in her lading there, as Grotius thinks, does not appear; since this was not the ship the apostle and his company sailed in from Miletus, but which they went aboard at Patara, (<sup>420</sup>Acts 21:1,2).

**Ver. 4.** *And finding disciples*, etc.] At Tyre, for the Gospel had been preached in Phoenicia by the ministers of the word, who were scattered by the persecution raised at the death of Stephen; and here were brethren, such as had believed in Christ, embraced and professed his Gospel, and were baptized in his name; (see <sup>4119</sup>Acts 11:19, 15:3) and who also had extraordinary gifts, as appears by what follows; and there was no doubt a Gospel church founded in this place, though who presided over it in the first century, we have no account; in the “second” century there was a church here, and Cassius was bishop of it <sup>f1072</sup>; in the “third” century there were some martyrs in this place, who suffered under Dioclesian, and bore innumerable stripes with great courage and constancy, and after that fought with beasts, as bears, leopards, boars, and bulls, and at the same time Tyrannio, bishop of this church, also suffered martyrdom <sup>f1073</sup>; in the “fourth” century there was a synod at Tyre under Constantine, to which he wrote a letter <sup>f1074</sup>. There was a bishop of this church present at the council of Nice, in the times of the said emperor; in this age Paulinus and Dorotheus were bishops of Tyre; in the “fifth” century Irenaeus was bishop of Tyre, and then it was the metropolitan of Phoenicia; and in the “sixth” century, there was a bishop of the same church present at the fifth council



of Rome and Constantinople<sup>f1075</sup>. Of the bishops of Tyre in the several centuries, the learned Reland<sup>f1076</sup> gives a more particular account; according to him, Cassius, bishop of this church, was in the synod held at Caesarea, about the year 198. Paulinus, another bishop of Tyre, was in another council held at the same place, in the year 318. Zeno subscribed in the council of Nice, in the year 325, the first among the bishops of Phoenicia; Vitalis was in the council at Sardica, in the year 347. Uranius subscribed in the council held at Seleucia by the Semiarians, in the year 359; another Zeno bishop of this church was present at the second council at Constantinople, in the year 381; and mention is made of Photius bishop of Tyre, in the acts of the Chalcedon council, held in the year 451, as is also Eusebius in the acts of the council at Constantinople, in the year 553:

*we tarried there seven days*; either waiting for a ship to proceed on further; or in choice, to enjoy the conversation of the disciples, which was very delightful, and to confirm them in the faith:

*who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem*; not that the Spirit of God in these persons contradicted his own impulse in the apostle, by which he was moved to go to Jerusalem, (see ~~Acts~~ Acts 20:22). The sense is, that these disciples, by the spirit of prophecy, knew that if the apostle went to Jerusalem, many evil things would befall him; wherefore of their own spirit, and out of love to him, they advise him not to go.

**Ver. 5.** *And when we had accomplished those days*, etc.] The seven days before mentioned:

*we departed and went our way*; from their quarters where they lodged, or from some one house of the disciples, where they met, and had conversed together:

*and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city*; that is, the disciples, even all of them that dwelt in that city, with their whole families, their wives and children, accompanied the apostle and those that were with him, through the streets of the city of Tyre, till they came out of it to the shore, where lay the ship they were to go aboard; and which was a mark of their affection and respect to the apostle, as well as a token of their public spirit, that they were not ashamed of Christ and his ministers, nor of their profession of the Gospel:

*and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed*; which was agreeably to the custom of the Jews, who had, as Tertullian observes <sup>f1077</sup>, their “orationes litterales”, their prayers at the sea shore; (see Gill on “~~4463~~ Acts 16:13”).

**Ver. 6.** *And when we had taken our leave one of another*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy reads, “having prayed, we saluted one another”; with a kiss, as in (~~4467~~ Acts 20:37) and so parted:

*we took ship*; or went aboard the ship,

*and they returned home again*; to their own houses, as the Syriac version renders it; for by “their own”, as it is in the Greek text, cannot be meant their families, their wives, and children, for these were along with them, but their habitations; (see ~~4562~~ John 16:32, 19:27).

**Ver. 7.** *And when we had finished our course from Tyre*, etc.] Or sailed from thence,

*we came to Ptolemais*: the Syriac version calls it “Aco” or “Acu”: and the Arabic version, “Aco”; and Ptolemais, according to Pliny <sup>f1078</sup> and Harpocratian <sup>f1079</sup>, was called Ace. Frequent mention is made of Aco in the Jewish writings, and which according to them was a sea port, for they speak of **wk [d hl mn**, “the port of Aco” <sup>f1080</sup>, and of **wk [d ypyk**, “the banks of Aco” <sup>f1081</sup>, or its rocks: it was upon the borders of the land of Israel, and in the tribe of Asher to the north of it; part of it they say was without the land, and part of it within <sup>f1082</sup>: according to R. Benjamin, it was one day’s sail from Tyre, and who also says, it was upon the borders of Asher, and had a very spacious port <sup>f1083</sup>; it is said to be about two and thirty miles from Tyre; between that and Tyre, the shore was full of heaps of sand, from whence the sand that glass is made of was fetched; it is mentioned with Tyre, Sidon, and Galilee, in:

“And said, They of Ptolemais, and of Tyrus, and Sidon, and all Galilee of the Gentiles, are assembled together against us to consume us.” (1 Maccabees 5:15)

it had the mountainous part of Galilee on the east, the ladder of Tyre on the north, and Mount Carmel on the south, and thus it is described by Josephus <sup>f1084</sup>:

“Ptolemais is a city of Galilee on the sea coast, built in a large champaign country, but is surrounded with mountains, on the east

with the mountains of Galilee, sixty furlongs off; on the south with Carmel, distant a hundred and twenty furlongs; on the north with a very high mountain called the Climax, or ladder of the Tyrians, which is a hundred furlongs from it; two miles from the city runs a very small river called Beleus, near which is the sepulchre of Memnon, taking up the space of an hundred cubits, and is worthy of admiration; it is round and hollow (i.e. the river), casting up glassy sand, which ships in great numbers come and take up, and the place is filled up again.”

The account Jerom<sup>f1085</sup> gives of it is,

“Ptolemais, a maritime city in Judea, near Mount Carmel, which was formerly called so from one Ptolomy;”

from Ptolomy king of Egypt: it was called Ace or Aco, from its being a city of merchandise; though some say it was so called from Hercules being healed of the bite of a serpent, by an herb which grew near the river Beleus. It is now called St. John de Acra or Acri:

*and saluted the brethren*; that were at Ptolemais or Aco; for the Gospel had been preached here with success; some had believed and professed it, and very likely were in a church state: for there was a church here in the “second” century, and Clarus was bishop of it; and in the beginning of the “fourth” century, there was a bishop present in the synod at Nice; and in the “fifth” century there was a church here; in the time of Arcadius, the Emperor Antiochus was bishop of Ptolemais, a very eloquent man, called therefore by some Chrysostom; in the “sixth” century there was a bishop of this church, who assisted at the synod held both at Rome and Constantinople<sup>f1086</sup>. The bishops of this church are reckoned up, as Reland<sup>f1087</sup> says, as he found them thus; Clarus, who was in the council at Caesarea, held in the year 198; Aeneas, who was in the council at Nice, in the year 325, and in another at Antioch, in the year 341; Nectabus, who subscribed in the first council at Constantinople, held in the year 381; Paulus, who was present in the Chalcedon council in the year 451: and Joannes, who was in the council at Jerusalem, in the year 536: and perhaps these brethren might be Jews, since those who first preached the Gospel in Phoenicia preached only to Jews; and certain it is that there were many in this place; we often read of Jewish doctors here, as R. Tanchum the son of R. Chaja a man of Caphar Aco<sup>f1088</sup>, and R. Simeon ben Judah a man of Caphar Aco<sup>f1089</sup>, and R. Aba of Aco<sup>f1090</sup>, and R. Judah ben Gamdah<sup>f1091</sup>;

and in R. Benjamin's time, there were about two hundred Jews in this place <sup>f1092</sup>: these brethren Paul and his company visited, and saluted them;

*and abode with them one day*; conferring together about spiritual things, and employing their time, no doubt, in religious exercises.

**Ver. 8.** *And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed*, etc.] From Ptolemais, as Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Timotheus, Tychicus, Trophimus, and Luke, the writer of this history; (see ~~480~~ Acts 20:4)

*and came unto Caesarea*; not Caesarea Philippi, mentioned in (~~463~~ Matthew 16:13) but that Caesarea which was formerly called Strato's tower, and was a very good sea port; (see ~~480~~ Acts 8:40, 9:30, 10:1, 18:22).

*and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist*; not a writer of a Gospel, but a preacher of the Gospel, and perhaps not an ordinary one, but was one of those spoken of in (~~481~~ Ephesians 4:11) which was an office inferior to an apostle, and yet above an ordinary pastor and teacher; this man, very likely, was the same that taught in Samaria, and baptized the eunuch, and who after that settled at Caesarea; (see ~~480~~ Acts 8:40).

*which was one of the seven*; of the seven deacons of the church at Jerusalem, (~~465~~ Acts 6:5) and abode with him; so long as they continued at Caesarea.

**Ver. 9.** *And the same man had four daughters*, etc.] So that he was a married man, which may be observed against the Papists, who forbid marriage to ecclesiastics: and they were,

*virgins*: not under any vow of virginity, but they had not as yet changed their state of life, and were pure and incorrupt:

*which did prophesy*; not explain and interpret Scripture, or preach in public assemblies; for these were not allowed women, neither in the Jewish synagogues, nor in Christian assemblies; but they were endowed with a gift of foretelling future events, as was promised such should have in Gospel times, (~~402~~ Joel 2:28).

**Ver. 10.** *And as we tarried there many days*, etc.] How many days is not said, it could not be very many, if the apostle got to Jerusalem by Pentecost, as he desired, (~~406~~ Acts 20:6,15,16, 21:4,7)

*there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus*; of whom mention is made in (<sup><41128></sup>Acts 11:28) who is there said to come from Jerusalem, to Antioch, and here from Judea to Caesarea; he had been many years going about from place to place prophesying, for between that and this account must be a space of about sixteen or seventeen years.

**Ver. 11.** *And when he was come unto us*, etc.] In Philip's house:

*he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet*; and so prophesied by types and symbols, and gestures, as the prophets of old did; as Isaiah in (<sup><23112></sup>Isaiah 20:2,3) and Jeremiah in (<sup><24113></sup>Jeremiah 13:1-9, 27:2,3), and Ezekiel in (<sup><25114></sup>Ezekiel 4:1-13, 12:3,7) and Hosea in (<sup><26115></sup>Hosea 1:2,3), some understand this of his binding Paul's hands and feet, but it seems rather to design his own:

*and said, thus saith the Holy Ghost*; who was in Agabus, and spoke by him, and foretold some things to come to pass; and which did come to pass, and is a proof of the foreknowledge, and so of the deity of the blessed Spirit:

*so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this girdle*; meaning Paul, and who accordingly was bound in like manner, a very little time after this; (see <sup><42133></sup>Acts 21:33)

*and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles*; the Romans, as they afterwards did.

**Ver. 12.** *And when we heard these things*, etc.] These prophecies, concerning the binding of the apostle by the Jews, and the delivery of him to the Romans, and saw the symbolical representations of these things:

*both we*; the companions of the apostle, Luke and the rest:

*and they of that place*; of Caesarea, Philip and his daughters, and the disciples that lived there:

*besought him not to go up to Jerusalem*; which was an instance of weakness in them, though an expression of their affection to the apostle; in the disciples of Caesarea it might arise from pure love to him, and a concern for his safety, and the continuance of his useful life; and in his companions it might be owing partly to their sincere love to him, and partly to the fear of danger which they themselves might conclude they should be

exposed to; and this request was made with tears, as is evident from what follows.

**Ver. 13.** *Then Paul answered, what mean ye to weep*, etc.] For they were crying about him, both his companions and the disciples of Caesarea; which affected him, and gave him great uneasiness, even more than the prophecies of Agabus did:

*and to break my heart?* for though he was resolved to go to Jerusalem, and nothing could move him from it, his heart was firm as a rock; there was no shaking him, or making impressions upon him that way; yet their tears and importunity greatly afflicted him, and the more because he could by no means comply with their request:

*for I am ready not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*; for as yet, he knew not but he should die there; it was revealed to him that he should be bound there, but it was not yet suggested to him where he should suffer death, whether there or elsewhere; and since he knew not but it might be there, he was ready for it; bonds were so far from distressing his mind, and deterring him from his intended journey, that death itself could not do it; which showed great intrepidity, courage, and firmness of mind.

**Ver. 14.** *And when he would not be persuaded*, etc.] But was determined to go to Jerusalem at all events:

*we ceased*; both from tears and arguments:

*saying, the will of the Lord be done*; which was right, and to which they ought to have submitted, and acquiesced in at first, without using any arguments to have dissuaded the apostle from going to Jerusalem; since they might have concluded from Agabus's prophecy, that it was the will of the Lord he should go thither, and be bound; and the revelation was made to him, not to deter him from it, and to take methods for his own safety, which his friends would have put him upon, but to acquaint him with the will of God, and make him still more certain of it, and to prepare for it, and this effect it had upon him. This will of the Lord, is not the will of the Lord revealed in his word, either respecting the salvation, sanctification, and final perseverance of the saints, which is always accomplished; "for who hath resisted his will", or can resist it, so as to frustrate his designs, or hinder these things taking place? or the duty which is to be performed by them, the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God, which every gracious

soul desires may be perfectly done, even as it is done in heaven: but here the secret will of God relating to the events of providence is designed, and which is the rule of all the divine proceedings; and though it is unknown to men, until facts make it appear, it is ever fulfilled, and sometimes by persons who have no regard to the revealed will of God; and should be continually thought of; and everything that is determined, or attempted to be done, should be resolved upon, and undertaken in submission to it; and whilst it is performing should be patiently bore, even in things not so agreeable to the minds and wills of men: it becomes saints to be still and acquiesce in it, when things are not so well with them in spiritual affairs as to be wished for; and when their worldly circumstances are not so thriving and flourishing; yea, though they may be attended with much poverty and meanness, and be reduced to so low a condition as Job was; as also when they part with their near and dear friends and relations by death, and with the ministers of the Gospel, who have been their spiritual fathers, instructors, and comforters; and even when they are called to suffer in the severest manner, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel: not that they are to be indolent, unconcerned, and unaffected, with things of this nature; nor should they neglect the means of having things otherwise with them; but it becomes them to exercise patience, faith, and courage, under every dispensation of providence; as knowing that what is done by the Lord is done well and wisely, and is for the good of them; and when the people of God are helped, to act such a part, they are the most comfortable in themselves, and to all that are about them; such a spirit and disposition is very commendable, and what makes men like to Christ, who in the most disagreeable circumstances submitted his will to his Father's. Beza's ancient copy reads, "the will of God"; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

**Ver. 15.** *And after those days we took up our carriages*, etc.] Or prepared themselves, both for their journey, and for whatever trials and exercises they were to meet with; they took up their bundles, which hitherto were brought by sea, and now put them upon beasts, going by land from Caesarea:

*and went up to Jerusalem*; which stood on higher ground, and was, as Josephus<sup>f1093</sup> says, six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles distant.

**Ver. 16.** *There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea*, etc.] Members of the church at Caesarea; of the church here, (see Gill on

“~~4108~~ Acts 10:48”). To which may be added the account of the pastors or bishops of this church, as given by Reland <sup>f1094</sup>; Theophilus, who was in the council held at Caesarea, in the year 198; Agricola, who subscribed in the council at Ancyra, in the year 314; though some, he says, do not acknowledge this Agricola, but give the order of them after Theophilus thus; Theoctistus, Domnus, Theotecnus, Agapius, Eusebius; which last was in the council at Palestine, in the year 318, and in the council at Nice, in the year 325. Acacius succeeded him, and was in a little council at Seleucia, in the year 359, and in another at Antioch, in the year 363. Thalassius subscribed in the council at Constantinople, in the year 381. Eulogius, or perhaps Euzoius, was in the council at Diospolis, in the year 415. Glyco, bishop of this church, subscribed by Zozimus in the Chalcedon council, held in the year 451. Mention is made of Irenaeus, who presided over it in the acts of the same council; and Elias, another bishop of it, subscribed in the council at Jerusalem, in the year 536; and there is an account of John bishop of this church, in the acts of the council at Constantinople, in the year 553.

*And brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus*; the name of Mnason is Greek; there was one of this name among the disciples of Aristotle, who was of Phoea, or Phocis, a place in Greece <sup>f1095</sup>; and another called Mnaseas, which seems to be the same whom Ammonius <sup>f1096</sup> makes mention of; and we frequently read of Mnaseas, the name of an author in Greek writers, and Menestheus, in:

“Now when Apollonius the son of Menestheus was sent into Egypt for the coronation of king Ptolemeus Philometor, Antiochus, understanding him not to be well affected to his affairs, provided for his own safety: whereupon he came to Joppa, and from thence to Jerusalem:” (2 Maccabees 4:21)

all which are so called from remembrance, and signify one that has a memory, is mindful of, and remembers things; so Zachariah with the Jews, is a name that is taken from remembrance, as this: some copies read Jasson, for Mnason. This Mnason was an

*old disciple*; not of Aristotle, or of his sect of philosophers, or any other, but of Jesus Christ; probably he might have seen Christ in the flesh, and he is by some thought to be one of the seventy disciples; or at least he might be one of those who became disciples and followers of Christ; through the ministry of Paul and Barnabas in that island, (~~4110~~ Acts 13:4) though that



seems scarcely long enough ago, being but fifteen years before this time, to denominate him an old disciple:

*with whom we should lodge*; when come to Jerusalem; for though he was of the island of Cyprus, as Barnabas was, (~~4085~~ Acts 4:36), yet he dwelt at Jerusalem; and if he was one of the seventy disciples, it should seem that he had not sold his house at Jerusalem, when others did; nor did all that had houses and land, nor were they obliged to do it; or he might have bought or hired one since; however, he had one at Jerusalem, and here the apostle and his company were fixed to lodge, during their stay there; and there was the more reason to provide for a lodging at this time, because of the feast of Pentecost, when the city was full of people: unless this is to be understood of any place by the way, where they should lodge; since Beza's ancient copy adds, "and coming to a certain village, we were with one Mnason".

**Ver. 17.** *And when we were come to Jerusalem*, etc.] That is, Paul and his companions, attended with the disciples of Caesarea, and Mnason the old disciple with them:

*the brethren received us gladly*; readily, willingly, and cheerfully; they did not treat them with an air of coldness and indifference, or look shy on them, or show any resentment to them, notwithstanding the various reports which had been brought them, concerning the ministry of the apostle among the Gentiles.

**Ver. 18.** *And the day following*, etc.] After they were come into Jerusalem:

*Paul went in with us to James*; not the son of Zebedee and brother of John, for he was killed by Herod some years ago; but James the son of Alphaeus, and brother of our Lord, who presided over this church; it seems there were no other apostles now at Jerusalem, but they were all dispersed abroad that were living, preaching the Gospel in the several parts of the world: Paul took the first opportunity Of paying a visit to James, very likely at his own house, to give him an account of his success among the Gentiles, and to know the state of the church at Jerusalem, and confer with him about what might be most proper and serviceable to promote the interest of Christ; and he took with him those who had been companions with him in his travels, partly to show respect to James, and partly to be witnesses of what he should relate unto him:

*and all the elders were present:* by whom are meant, not the ancient private members of the church, but the ministers of the word in this church: who hearing of the coming of the apostle, and of his visit to James, assembled together to see him, and converse with him.

**Ver. 19.** *And when he had saluted them,* etc.] James and the elders with him; which was either done by a kiss, as the Arabic version adds; or by asking of their health, and wishing a continuance of it, and all prosperity to attend them: the Ethiopic version reads,

*they saluted him;* and no doubt the salutations were reciprocal:

*he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry;* it is very likely that this account begins where that ends, which he had delivered in the presence of James, and others, some years ago, (<sup>41512</sup>Acts 15:12) and takes in all his travels and ministry, and the success of it; not only in Syria, Cilicia, and Lycaonia, after he had set out from Antioch again, but in Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia; as at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and elsewhere: he declared, what multitudes of souls were converted, and what numbers of churches were planted; and this he ascribes not to himself, but to the power and grace of God, which had attended his ministry; he was only an instrument, God was the efficient, and ought to have the glory.

**Ver. 20.** *And when they heard it,* etc.] The narrative of the wonderful spread of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and the numerous conversions of them:

*they glorified the Lord;* or “God”, as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Ethiopic versions read; as Paul ascribed all to God, so they give the glory of it to him, and in this they were both agreed:

*and said unto him;* perhaps James in the name of them all, and as their mouth:

*thou seest, brother;* for so he was to James, both as a believer, and a minister of the word, and as an apostle:

*how many thousands of Jews there are which believe;* there were many thousands converted at Jerusalem upon the first preaching of the Gospel, after Christ’s ascension; (see <sup>44111</sup>Acts 2:41,47, 4:4,14, 6:7) and the number might be much increased since; though it may be, that reference is had not

only to the number of the members of the church at Jerusalem, but to all the believing Jews in Judea, who were now come up to Jerusalem, to keep the feast of Pentecost; since it is in the Greek, “how many myriads there are”, and one myriad contains ten thousand:

*and they are all zealous of the law*; of the law of Moses, of the ceremonial law, as Paul might see by their being at Jerusalem, to keep this feast; for though they believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah, yet they had not light enough to see, that he was the sum and substance of all the ceremonies of the law, and that they all ended in him; and therefore were zealous in the observance of them, and could not bear to hear of their abrogation.

**Ver. 21.** *And they are informed of thee*, etc.] By persons that came from the several parts of the Gentile world, where the apostle had been preaching; and by letters which came from the Jews in those parts, who were no friends to the apostle’s ministry:

*that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses*: or “apostatize from Moses”; that is, the law of Moses; that he taught the Gentiles not to regard the rituals of the law of Moses gave them no uneasiness; but that he should teach the Jews that were scattered among the Gentiles, and as many of them that believed in Christ, to disregard and drop the observance of them, who had been always brought up in them, this they could not bear; and that the apostle so taught, they had credible information: particularly,

*saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children*; though this does not appear; it is true the apostle taught that circumcision was abolished, and that it was nothing; yea, that to submit to it as necessary to salvation, was hurtful and pernicious; but as a thing indifferent, he allowed of it among weak brethren; and in condescension to their weakness, did administer it himself; in which he became a Jew to the Jew, that he might gain some:

*neither to walk after the customs*; either of the law of Moses, meaning other rites there enjoined, besides circumcision; or of their fathers, and their country, the traditions of the elders, which as yet they had not got clear of; the disuse of old customs is not easily brought about, or it is not easy to bring persons off of them.

**Ver. 22.** *What is it therefore?* etc.] Is it true or not? or what must be done in this case? what method must be taken to remove these objections, and reconcile the minds of the people? the multitude must needs come together; either the whole church at Jerusalem, or the great confluence of people, even of believing Jews, that were come from all parts thither; there is no hindering of their coming together, to see the apostle, and to hear what he has to say to the objections against him, and complaints of him;

*for they will hear that thou art come:* this can never be kept a secret, and as soon as they hear it, they will flock in great numbers; they will come open mouthed, and be loud in their complaints, and it will be difficult to pacify them; there is danger in the case, the consequence may be bad; and therefore something must be done, to remove the opinion they had formed of the apostle, and the prejudice they had entertained against him; and therefore what follows is advised to.

**Ver. 23.** *Do therefore this that we say to thee,* etc.] This is said not as commanding, but as advising; and not to what was a duty, and necessary to be done as such, but as a point of prudence:

*we have four men which have a vow on them;* that is, there were four men who were of the church at Jerusalem, believers in Christ, but weak ones, who were zealous of the law, and bigots to it, and who had voluntarily vowed a vow of the Nazarites; (see <sup><0406></sup>Numbers 6:2).

**Ver. 24.** *Them take, and purify, thyself with them,* etc.] That is, join thyself to them, make one of their number, and attend to the rules prescribed to a Nazarite, who is to be holy to the Lord; and in case of any ceremonial uncleanness, is to be cleansed, or purified in the manner directed, (<sup><0405></sup>Numbers 6:5,8,9).

*And be at charges with them;* join with them in the expense, for the offerings to be made at the end of the vows, or when the days of separation are fulfilled, (<sup><0403></sup>Numbers 6:13-15).

*That they may shave their heads;* according to the law in (<sup><0408></sup>Numbers 6:18). This was done in **պրշնհ տկլ**, the chamber of the Nazarites <sup>f1097</sup>; for there the Nazarites boiled their peace offerings, and shaved their hair, and put it under the pot, in the fire that was under it: Maimonides says <sup>f1098</sup>,

“if he shaved in the city it was excusable; but whether he shaved in the city or in the sanctuary, under the pot his hair must be cast; and he did not shave until the door of the court was opened, as it is said, “at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation”, (<sup>4168</sup>Numbers 6:18) not that he shaved over against the door, for that would be a contempt of the sanctuary.”

Moreover, it may be observed, that a person who had not made a vow, or fulfilled a Nazariteship himself, which was the apostle’s case, yet he might join in bearing the expenses of others, at the time of their shaving and cleansing: for so run the Jewish canons <sup>f1099</sup>;

“he that says, upon me be the shaving of a Nazarite, he is bound to bring the offerings of shaving for purification, and he may offer them by the hand of what Nazarite he pleases; he that says, upon me be half the offerings of a Nazarite, or if he says, upon me be half the shaving of a Nazarite, he brings half the offerings by what Nazarite he will, and that Nazarite perfects his offerings out of that which is his.”

*That all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee are nothing*; that there is no truth in them; that they are mere lies and calumnies; as they will easily judge by this single instance, in complying with the law concerning a Nazarite’s vow:

*but that thou thyself walkest orderly, and keepest the law*; and therefore can never be thought to teach others to walk disorderly, or to neglect the law, the rites and customs of it.

**Ver. 25.** *As touching the Gentiles which believe*, etc.] This is said, to show that the Jews were not offended with Paul, for not insisting upon the circumcision of the believing Gentiles, and their conformity to the ceremonial law; and to remove an objection that Paul might make, that should he comply with this advice, and the believing Gentiles should hear of it, it might be a stumblingblock and a snare to them; who by his example, might think themselves obliged to regard the law: Beza’s ancient copy adds, “they have nothing to say to thee”; for as it follows,

*we have written and concluded*; some years ago, at a meeting of the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, when Paul was present; and of which he reminds him, to prevent any objection of this kind; where it was unanimously agreed on and determined,

*that they observe no such things*; as circumcision, and other rites and customs of the law, and particularly the vow of the Nazarite, which Gentiles are free from: hence it is said <sup>f1100</sup>, “Gentiles have no Nazariteship;”

upon which one of the commentators says <sup>f1101</sup>, if a Gentile vows Nazariteship, the law of the Nazarite does not fall upon him, he is not obliged to it:

*save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols*, etc. (see ~~<4459>~~ Acts 15:19,20,28,29).

**Ver. 26.** *Then Paul took the men*, etc.] The four men that had the vow on them; he joined himself to them, and put himself in the same condition, and under a like vow: this he did, not as what he thought himself bound to do in obedience to the law, and much less as necessary to salvation; but to satisfy weak minds, and remove their prejudices, that he might gain them, and be useful to them; and in such a case he would very easily and readily condescend; but when such like things were insisted upon as points of duty, and especially when urged as necessary to salvation, no one more stiffly opposed them:

*and the next day purifying himself with them*; that is, not separating himself along with them, from what they were obliged by the vow of the Nazarite, as from drinking of wine and shaving, and from everything that was unclean by the law; for this was now done, but cleansing himself afterwards with them: he

*entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of the purification*: the sense is, that when the days of separation were fulfilled, which the four men had vowed, as everyone might vow what time he pleased, he went to the priests in the temple, to signify it to them, that the time of their purification was expiring:

*until that an offering should be offered for everyone of them*; as the law directs in (<sup>0413</sup>Numbers 6:13-20) when he proposed to pay the charges of it, or at least part of it.

**Ver. 27.** *And when the seven days were almost ended*, etc.] The Syriac version renders it, “when the seventh day was come”; from the time that Paul came to Jerusalem: some understand this of the seven weeks from the passover to Pentecost, and that it was when they were almost ended, and

the day of Pentecost was at hand, for which Paul came up to Jerusalem; but rather, the seven days of purification of the Nazarites are meant:

*the Jews which were of Asia*; and it may be chiefly of Ephesus, the metropolis of Asia; who knew Paul there, and were his implacable enemies; for this is to be understood of the unbelieving Jews, who were come up to the feast of Pentecost:

*when they saw him in the temple*; where he was come to bring his offering, on account of his vow:

*stirred up all the people*; against the apostle; incensed them with stories about him, how that he was an opposer of Moses and his laws, and was now defiling the temple, by bringing in Heathens into it:

*and laid hands on him*; in a violent manner, and dragged him out of the temple.

**Ver. 28.** *Crying out, men of Israel, help*, etc.] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, "help us"; to hold Paul, on whom they had laid their hands, and to assist in beating him: but why such an outcry for help against a single man, and he but little of stature, and weak in body, and so easily held and overpowered? it may be they chose to engage others with them, to give the greater countenance to their actions, and for their own security and protection, should they be opposed or called to an account;

*this is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people*; the people of the Jews, saying that they were not the only people of God; that God was the God of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews; that God had chosen, and called, and saved some of the one, as well as of the other; that the Gentiles shared in the favour of God, and the blessings of the Messiah; that the Gospel was to be preached to them, and a people taken out of them for his glory; and that the people of the Jews would be rejected for their unbelief and impenitence, and in a little time utterly destroyed as a nation; which, and the like, these Asiatic Jews interpreted as speaking against them; whereas no man had a stronger natural affection for his countrymen, or a more eager and importunate desire for their spiritual and eternal welfare, than the apostle had;

*and the law*; the law of Moses, both moral and ceremonial; for they not only were displeased with him for asserting the abrogation of the latter, but traduced him as an enemy to the former; representing him as an

Antinomian, because he denied justification to be by the works of the law, and asserted Christ to be the end of the law for righteousness; whereas he was so far from making void the law hereby, that he established it, and secured the rights and honours of it; yea, they went further, and represented him as a libertine, saying, let us do evil that good may come; but this was all calumny:

*and this place*: meaning the temple, in which they then were; the Alexandrian copy reads, “this holy place”; as it is expressed in a following clause; the reason of this charge was, because that he had taught, that the sacrifices of God were the sacrifices of prayer and of praise, and that these were to be offered up in every place; and that divine service and religious worship were not tied to the temple at Jerusalem, but that, agreeably to the doctrine of Christ, men might worship the Father anywhere, and lift up holy hands in every place; and perhaps he might have asserted, that the temple of Jerusalem would be destroyed in a short time, as Christ had predicted:

*and further, brought Greeks also unto the temple, and hath polluted this holy place*; that part of the temple, which they supposed Paul had brought Greeks or Gentiles into, could not be the most holy place, for into that only the high priest went, once a year; nor that part of the holy place called the court of the priests, for into that only priests went, and other Israelites were not admitted, unless on some particular occasions; as to lay hands on the sacrifice, for the slaying of it, or waving some part of it<sup>f1102</sup>; but it must be either the court of the Israelites, or the court of the women, into which Paul, with the four men that had the vow, entered; and as Dr. Lightfoot thinks, it was the latter; for in, the south east of this court was the Nazarite’s chamber, in which they boiled their peace offerings, shaved their heads, and put the hair under the pot<sup>f1103</sup>: now though Gentiles might come into the mountain of the house, which was all the outmost circumambient space within the wall, which encompassed the whole area, yet they might not come into any of these courts, no, nor even into what they call the “Chel”; for they say, that the Chel is more holy than the mountain of the house, because no Gentile, or one defiled with the dead, enters there<sup>f1104</sup>; now the Chel was an enclosure before these courts, and at the entrance into it pillars were erected, and upon them were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, signifying that no strangers should enter into the holy place<sup>f1105</sup>.



**Ver. 29.** *For they had seen before with him in the city,* etc.] Not of Ephesus, but of Jerusalem:

*Trophimus an Ephesian;* the same that is mentioned in (~~400~~ Acts 20:4) whom these Jews of Asia, and who very probably were inhabitants of Ephesus, knew very well to be a Gentile:

*whom they supposed Paul had brought into the temple;* for seeing him walk with the apostle very familiarly through the streets of Jerusalem, they concluded from thence, that he took him with him into the temple, which was a very rash and ill grounded conclusion; and which shows the malignity and virulence of their minds, and how ready they were to make use of any opportunity, and take up any occasion against him, even a bare surmise, and which had no show of probability in it; for it can never be thought, that while Paul was using methods to remove the prejudices of the Jews against him, he should take such a step as this, to introduce a Gentile into the holy place, which he knew was unlawful, and would greatly irritate and provoke them.

**Ver. 30.** *And all the city was moved, and the people ran together,* etc.] The outcry in the temple reached the ears of some that were without, and these alarmed others; so that the report of a disturbance in the temple soon went through the whole city; and brought people out of their houses, who ran together in great numbers, to see what was the matter:

*and they took Paul and drew him out of the temple;* as unworthy to be in that holy place; and that it might not be defiled with his blood; for their intention was nothing less than to take away his life:

*and forthwith the doors were shut;* not of themselves, as if there was something miraculous in it, as some have thought, but by the door keepers, the Levites; and which might be done, partly to prevent Paul's returning into it for refuge at the horns of the altar, and partly to keep out the Gentiles from coming in, they were alarmed with.

**Ver. 31.** *And as they went about to kill him,* etc.] In the manner as zealots did, without bringing him before any court of judicature, without any charge, trial, and condemnation:

*tidings came unto the chief captain of the band;* the Roman band of soldiers, who were placed near the temple, to keep the peace of the city, and persons in order; and who were more especially needful, at such a time

as the feast of Pentecost, when there was such a great concourse of people in the city, and indeed always were in arms at such times<sup>f1106</sup>; this chief captain was Claudius Lysias, as appears from (~~4236~~ Acts 23:26) to him the report of the disturbance was brought; or as it is in the Greek text, the “fame ascended” to him; who very likely might be in the tower of Antonia, which joined to the temple:

*that all Jerusalem was in an uproar*; or in confusion, and therefore it became him, as a Roman officer, to take care to quell it, lest it should issue in sedition and rebellion.

**Ver. 32.** *Who immediately took soldiers and centurions*, etc.] A very large number of soldiers, for they are called an army, in (~~4237~~ Acts 23:27) with a sufficient number of officers called centurions, who were each of them over an hundred men, to command them, and put them in order:

*and ran down unto them*: from the tower to the temple, the outer part of it; perhaps the mountain of the house, where they had dragged Paul, and were beating him; hither the captain, with his officers and soldiers, came in great haste; all which shows his vigilance, prudence, and quick dispatch; and in which there was a remarkable appearance of divine providence in favour of the apostle, who otherwise in all likelihood would have quickly lost his life:

*and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers*; coming down upon them in great haste, with sword in hand:

*they left beating of Paul*; this beating was what the Jews call **tydr̄m twkm**, “the rebels’ beating”; or beating, on account of rebellion and obstinacy; and differed from whipping or scourging, which was done by the order of the sanhedrim, and in measure with forty stripes save one; but this beating was without any order from a court of judicature, and was without measure and mercy: this was inflicted upon various offenders, particularly on such who received not admonitions given them, or transgressed by doing what was forbidden by the words of the wise men<sup>f1107</sup>; or if any defiled person entered into the court of the women; and such the people would fall upon at once, and beat them unmercifully with their fists, or with clubs and staves, and which often issued in death; so, for instance, when a priest ministered in his uncleanness, his brethren the priests did not bring him to the sanhedrim, but the young priests brought him without the court, and dashed his brains out with clubs<sup>f1108</sup>

**Ver. 33.** *Then the chief captain came near*, etc.] To the place where the Jews were beating Paul:

*and took him* the Arabic version adds, “from them”; he rescued him out of their hands, as he himself says, (<sup>4237</sup>Acts 23:27).

*And commanded him to be bound with two chains*: partly to appease the people, and partly to secure Paul; who, he supposed, had been guilty of some misdemeanour, which had occasioned this tumult; these two chains were put, one on one arm, and the other on the other arm; and were fastened to two soldiers, who walked by him, having hold on those chains, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left; and thus Agabus’s prophecy in (<sup>4211</sup>Acts 21:11) was fulfilled:

*and demanded who he was*; or asked and inquired about him, who he was, of what nation he was, what was his character, business, and employment: this inquiry was made, either of the apostle himself, or of the people; and so the Arabic version renders it, “he inquired of them who he was”; also

*and what he had done*; what crime he had been guilty of, that they used him in such a manner.

**Ver. 34.** *And some cried one thing, and some another, among the multitude*, etc.] For though they agreed to beat him, and even to kill him, yet some of them knew not for what; being led by a blind zeal for Moses, the law and temple, or rather by fury and madness:

*and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult*; could not come at the truth of the matter, or any certain knowledge of it, not anything that could be depended upon, because of the noise of the people, and the different notes they were in:

*he commanded him to be carried into the castle*; of Antonio, formerly called Baris, of which Josephus<sup>f1109</sup> gives this account;

“on the north side (of the wall) was built a four square tower, well fortified and strong; this the kings and priests of the Asmonaeon race, who were before Herod, built, and called it Baris; that there the priestly robe might be laid up by them, which the high priest only wore, when he was concerned in divine service:”

this tower King Herod made more strong, for the security and preservation of the temple; and called it Antonia, for the sake of Antony his friend, and

the general of the Romans: the description of it, as given by Dr. Lightfoot<sup>f1110</sup>, which is collected by him out of Josephus and other writers, is this;

“upon the north side, and joining up to the western angle (but on the outside of the wall), stood the tower of Antonia, once the place where the high priests used to lay up their holy garments; but in after times a garrison of Roman soldiers, for the a wing of the temple: when it served for the former use, it was called Baris (it may be from **rb**, “ad extra”, because it was an outer building), but when for the latter, it bare the name of Antonia; Herod the great having sumptuously repaired and called it after the name of the Roman prince Antony: it stood upon the north west point of Moriah, and was a very strong and a very large pile; so spacious a building with all its appurtenances, that it took up to two furlongs’ compass; the rock it stood upon was fifty cubits high, and steep, and the building itself was forty cubits above it; it was four square, encompassed with a wall of three cubits high, which enclosed its courts, and had a turret at every corner, like the white tower at London; but that it was more spacious, and that the turrets were not all of an height; for those at the north east and north west corners were fifty cubits high, but those on the south east and south west were seventy cubits high, that they might fully overlook the temple: it had cloisters or walks about it, and baths and lodgings, and large rooms in it; so that it was at once like a castle, and like a palace. There was a passage out of it, into the north and west cloisters of the mountain of the house, and by that the Roman garrison soldiers went down at every festival of the Jews, to take care against tumults and seditions, in those great concourses of the people.”

And it was by this passage that the chief captain, with the centurions and soldiers, came down so quickly and suddenly upon the Jews, while they were beating Paul in the temple; and this castle being on such an eminence as described, hence he with the soldiers is said to run down, (<sup><4013></sup>Acts 21:32) And it was in this way that the apostle was led up to the castle.

**Ver. 35.** *And when he came upon the stairs*, etc.] Or steps, which led up to the castle; for it was built upon a very high place, as appears from the account of it in the preceding verse; to which agrees what Aristaeas<sup>f1111</sup> says of it in the following words;

“in order to have knowledge of all things, we went up to a castle adjoining to the city, which is situated in a very high place, fortified with very high towers, built with large stones, as we supposed for the preservation of the places about the temple, if there should be any lying in wait, or tumult, or enemies should enter; so that none might be able to make way in at the walls about the temple; for in the towers of the castle lay very sharp darts and various instruments, and the place was upon a very great eminence.”

*So it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people:* the sense is, either that the crowd of the people was so great, and they so pressed upon Paul and the soldiers that conducted him, that he was even thrown upon them, and bore up by them; or else such was the rage of the people against him, that the soldiers were obliged to take him up in their arms, and carry him, in order to secure him from being tore in pieces by them.

**Ver. 36.** *For the multitude of the people followed after,* etc.] The captain and the soldiers, who had taken away Paul from them, and were carrying him to the castle:

*crying, away with him;* or “take him away”, that is, by death; or “lift him up”, upon the cross, crucify him, crucify him, as they said concerning Christ.

**Ver. 37.** *And as Paul was to be led into the castle,* etc.] Just as he was got up to the top of the steps, or stairs, that led up to the castle, and was about to go into the door of it:

*he said unto the chief captain, may I speak unto thee?* the apostle was one that had had a good education, and was a man of address, and this his modest and respectful way of speaking to the chief captain shows; and the question he put to him, was in the Greek language: hence it follows,

*who said to him, canst thou speak Greek?* or “dost thou know the Hellenistic language?” which the Jews who were born and lived in Greece spoke; hence such were called Hellenists; (see <sup><R00></sup>Acts 6:1) of this language we read in the Talmud<sup>f1112</sup>;

“R. Levi bar Chajethah went to Caesarea, and heard them reading “Shema”, (hear O Israel), etc. (<sup><R00></sup>Deuteronomy 6:4) *ˆytsynwl a* in the Hellenistic language; he sought to hinder them; R. Rose heard

of it, and was angry; and said, he that knows not to read in the Hebrew language, must he not read at all? yea, he may read in whatsoever language he understands.”

The nearest to this language spoken by the Jews dispersed in Greece, must be the Greek language, in which Jews have written; as the books of the Old Testament translated by the “seventy” interpreters, who were Jews; and indeed it was this Bible which the Jews called Hellenists made use of; and the writings of Josephus, and Philo the Jew of Alexandria, and even the books of the New Testament, which are written by Jews; and Paul being a Jew of Tarsus, and so an Hellenist, could speak this language; as he did, when he disputed against the Hellenists, in (~~409~~ Acts 9:29). This the chief captain said, either as wondering to hear him speak Greek, when he thought he had been a Jerusalem Jew, or rather an Egyptian, as in the next verse; or it may be he put this question to him, as choosing rather that he should speak in Greek, it being the language he might best understand himself, and was the least known to the people, who he might not care should hear what he had to say; since if he took him for the Egyptian, the Greek tongue was what was chiefly spoken by such.

**Ver. 38.** *Art thou not that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar,* etc.] Josephus speaks <sup>f1113</sup> of one that came out of Egypt to Jerusalem, and gave out that he was a prophet, and deceived the people, whom he persuaded to follow him to the Mount of Olives, where they should see the walls of the city fall at his command, and so through the ruins of it they might enter into the city; but Felix the Roman governor fell upon them, killed four hundred, and took two hundred prisoners, and the Egyptian fled: the account which he elsewhere <sup>f1114</sup> gives of him, and Eusebius <sup>f1115</sup> from him, is this; a certain Egyptian false prophet did much more mischief to the Jews; for he being a magician, and having got himself to be believed as a prophet, came into the country (of Judea), and gathered together about thirty thousand persons, whom he had deceived: these he brought out of the wilderness to the Mount of Olives, from thence designing to take Jerusalem by force, and seize the Roman garrison, and take the government of the people but Felix prevented his design, meeting him with the Roman soldiers, assisted by all the people; so that when they engaged, the Egyptian fled with a few, and most of those that were with him were destroyed or taken: now it was some little time before this, that this affair happened; and by these accounts of Josephus, though the Egyptian was discomfited, yet he was not taken; he had made his escape,

so that he might be yet in being; and therefore the captain could not tell but Paul might be he, who had privately got into the city, and was upon some bad designs:

*and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?* Josephus says, that he brought them out of the wilderness, or led them through it to the Mount of Olives, from thence to rush into Jerusalem, when the walls should fall down at his command; but he says, the number of men that he led out were about thirty thousand; it may be at first there were no more than four thousand, but afterwards were joined by others, and increased to thirty thousand; or among these thirty thousand, he had four thousand “murderers, or sicarii”: so called from the little swords which they carried under their clothes, and with them killed men in the daytime, in the middle of the city, especially at the feasts, when they mingled themselves with the people <sup>f1116</sup>.

**Ver. 39.** *But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus*, etc.] And not that Egyptian; he was not of that country, much less that man; but a Jew, both by birth and religion; he was born of Jewish parents, and brought up in the Jewish religion; though his native place was Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, where it is placed by Pliny <sup>f1117</sup>, Ptolomy <sup>f1118</sup>, and Mela <sup>f1119</sup>; and is by some thought to be the same with the Tarshish of the Old Testament:

*a citizen of no mean city*; Pliny <sup>f1120</sup> calls it a free city, and Solinus <sup>f1121</sup> says it is the mother, or chief of cities, and Curtius <sup>f1122</sup> speaks of it as a very opulent one; which when Alexander drew near to with his army, the inhabitants of it set fire to, that he might not possess their riches; which he understanding, sent Parmenio to prevent it: through this city, as the same historian, in agreement with Pliny and others, observes, ran the river Cydnus; and it being summer time when Alexander was here, and very hot weather, and being covered with dust and sweat, he put off his clothes, and cast himself into the river to wash himself; but as soon as he was in, he was seized with such a numbness of his nerves, that had he not been immediately taken out by his soldiers, and for the extraordinary care of his physician, he had at once expired. Josephus <sup>f1123</sup> calls this city the most famous of the cities in Gallicia; and derives it, and the whole country, from Tarshish, the grandson of Japheth, (<sup><0000></sup>Genesis 10:4) his words are,

“Tharsus gave name to the Tharsians, for so Cilicia was formerly called, of which this is an evidence; for the most famous of the

cities with them, and which is the metropolis, is called Tarsus; Theta being changed into Tau for appellation sake.”

Though some say it was built by Perseus, the son of Jupiter and Danae, and called Tharsus, of the hyacinth stone, which is said to be found about it: others think it was so called, *παρα το τερσαννηναι*, because the places of this country were first dried up after the flood: it was not only a city of stately buildings, as it was repaired by Sardanapalus, and increased after the times of Alexander; but there was a famous academy in it, which, for men of learning, exceeded Athens and Alexandria<sup>f1124</sup>; though these exceeded that in number of philosophers: here it is thought lived Aratus the poet, from whom the apostle cites a passage, in (~~417B~~ Acts 17:28) and of this place was the famous Chrysippus, who is called *ταρσευς*, “a Tarsian”,<sup>f1125</sup>, as the apostle is here. Hermogenes, a very celebrated rhetorician, some of whose works are still extant, came from hence<sup>f1126</sup>. Jerom<sup>f1127</sup> reports it as a tradition, that the parents of the Apostle Paul were of Giscalis, a town in Judea; which with the whole province being destroyed by the Romans, they removed to Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, whither Paul when a young man followed them; but certain it is, that the apostle was born there, as he himself says, in (~~421B~~ Acts 22:3). Ignatius, in<sup>f1128</sup> the “second” century, writing to the church at Tarsus, calls them citizens and disciples of Paul; citizens, because he was of this city; and disciples, because of the same faith with him; and very likely the first materials of the church in this place were converts of his; since it is evident that he went hither after he was a preacher; (see ~~408B~~ Acts 9:30, 11:25).

*And I beseech thee suffer me to speak unto the people*; first he desired to speak with the captain, and that was in order to obtain leave to speak to the people; and which he asks in a very handsome and submissive manner, and hopes to have his request granted him, since he was not the person he took him for, but was a Jew by birth, and a citizen of a very considerable Roman city; and was not a mean, sordid, vagabond creature, nor need he fear that he would sow any discord and sedition among the people.

**Ver. 40.** *And when he had given him licence*, etc.] To speak to the people, which he could not well deny him, after he had so freely declared who he was, and in so courteous a manner addressed him, and asked leave of him:

*Paul stood on the stairs*; on the steps of the ascent to the castle, on the top of them:



*and beckoned with the hand unto the people*; to desire silence, which he might be able to do, notwithstanding his chains; for his being bound with a chain to a soldier, did not hinder the moving and lifting up of his hand:

*and when there was made a great silence*; either through the authority of the captain, who might command it, or through the desire of the people, to hear what he could say for himself:

*he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue*; which the people he spoke to best understood, and was his own mother tongue; the Alexandrian copy reads, “in his own dialect”; this was not pure Hebrew that was spoke in common in those times, but the Syro-Chaldean language:

*saying*; as in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER 22

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 22

**Ver. 1.** *Men, brethren, and fathers*, etc.] A common form of address used by the Jews; (see <sup>4102</sup>Acts 7:2) but that the apostle should introduce his speech to these people in this manner, after they had treated him so inhumanly, as to drag him out of the temple, and beat him so unmercifully, is remarkable, and worthy of observation, when they scarcely deserved the name of “men”; and yet he not only gives them this, but calls them “brethren”, they being his countrymen and kinsmen according to the flesh; and fathers, there being some among them, who might be men in years, and even members of the sanhedrim, and elders of the people, that were now got among the crowd: this shows how ready the apostle was to put up with affronts, and to forgive injuries done him:

*hear ye my defence, which I make now unto you*; in opposition to the charges brought against him, of speaking ill of the people of the Jews, the law of Moses, and of the temple, and in order to clear himself of these imputations, and vindicate his character and conduct.

**Ver. 2.** *And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them*, etc.] (see Gill on <sup>4144</sup>Acts 21:40”).

*they kept the more silence*; it being their mother tongue, and which they best understood; and which the captain and the Roman soldiers might not so well understand; and chiefly because the Hellenistic language was not so agreeable to them, nor the Hellenistic Jews, who spoke the Greek language, and used the Greek version of the Bible; and such an one they took Paul to be, besides his being a Christian; wherefore when they heard him speak in the Hebrew tongue, it conciliated their minds more to him, at least engaged their attention the more to what he was about to say:

*and he saith*; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add, “to them”, as follows.

**Ver. 3.** *I am verily a man which am a Jew*, etc.] By birth, a thorough genuine one; an Hebrew of the Hebrews, both by father and mother side,

both parents being Jews, and so a true descendant from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

*born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia*; (see Gill on “<sup><4019></sup>Acts 21:39”).

*yet brought up in this city*; the city of Jerusalem; though Tarsus was the place of his birth, he had his education at Jerusalem:

*at the feet of Gamaliel*; of whom (see <sup><4054></sup>Acts 5:34) it was the custom of scholars among the Jews, to sit at the feet of their masters, when instructed by them; (see <sup><6318></sup>Deuteronomy 33:3) hence that saying of Jose ben Joezer <sup>f1129</sup>,

“let thy house be an house of resort for the wise men, and be thou dusting thyself, *μhyl gr rp[ b*, “with the dust of their feet”:

which by one of their commentators <sup>f1130</sup> is interpreted two ways, either

“as if it was said that thou shouldst walk after them; for he that walks raises the dust with his feet, and he that goes after him is filled with the dust which he raises with his feet; or else that thou shouldst sit at their feet upon the ground, for so it was usual, that the master sat upon a bench, and the scholars sat at his feet upon the floor.”

This latter sense is commonly understood, and adapted to the passage here, as illustrating it; though it may be, that the sense may only be this, that the apostle boarded in Gamaliel’s house, ate at his table, and familiarly conversed with him; which he modestly expresses by being brought up at his feet, who was a man that was had in great reverence with the Jews; and this sense seems the rather to be the sense of the passage, since his learning is expressed in the next clause; and since; till after Gamaliel’s time, it was not usual for scholars to sit when they learned; for the tradition is <sup>f1131</sup>, that

“from the times of Moses to Rabban Gamaliel, they (the scholars) did not learn the law but standing; after Rabban Gamaliel died, sickness came into the world, and they learned the law sitting; and hence it is said, that after Rabban Gamaliel died, the glory of the law ceased.”

It follows,

*[and] taught according to the perfect law of the fathers*; not the law which the Jewish fathers received from Moses, though Paul was instructed in this, but in the oral law, the “Misna”, or traditions of the elders, in which he greatly profited, and exceeded others, (~~ROM~~ Galatians 1:14).

*And was zealous towards God*; or “a zealot of God”; one of those who were called “Kanaim”, or zealots; who in their great zeal for the glory of God, took away the lives of men, when they found them guilty of what they judged a capital crime; (see ~~ROM~~ Matthew 10:4, ~~ROM~~ John 16:2). The Vulgate Latin version reads, “zealous of the law”; both written and oral, the law of Moses, and the traditions of the fathers:

*as ye all are this day*; having a zeal for God, and the law, but not according to knowledge.

**Ver. 4.** *And I persecuted this way unto the death*, etc.] That is, the Christian religion, and the professors of it; whom the apostle breathed out threatenings and slaughter against, haled out of their houses, and committed to prison; consented to their death, as he did to Stephen’s; and whenever it was put to the vote, whether they should die or not, he gave his voice against them; so that he was a most bitter enemy, and an implacable persecutor of them; which shows how very averse he was to this way, and how great his prejudices were against it; wherefore it must be a work of divine power, and there must be the singular hand of God in it, to reconcile him to it, and cause him to embrace and profess it:

*binding and delivering into prisons, both men and women*: (see ~~ROM~~ Acts 8:3, 9:2).

**Ver. 5.** *As also the high priest doth bear me witness*, etc.] Either Annas, or Caiaphas, who was at that time high priest; and it should seem by this, that he was still in being; or else that the apostle had preserved his letter, written with his own hand, which he was able to produce at any time, as a testimony of the truth of what he had said, or was about to say; since he speaks of him (as now) bearing him witness, or as one that could:

*and all the estate of the elders*; the whole Jewish sanhedrim, for this character respects not men in years, but men in office, and such who were members of the high court of judicature in Jerusalem;

*from whom also I received letters unto the brethren*; some render it “against the brethren”, as if the Christians were meant; whereas the apostle

intends the Jews of the synagogue at Damascus, whom the apostle calls brethren; because they were of the same nation, and his kinsmen according to the flesh; and, at that time, of the same religion and principles with him; and this is put out of doubt, by the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, which render it, “the brethren that were at Damascus”: and these letters were to recommend him to them, and to empower him to persecute the Christians, and to demand and require their assistance in it; the Ethiopic version calls them, “letters of power”; and it seems from hence, that these letters were received from the whole sanhedrim, as well as from the high priest, and were signed by both:

*and went to Damascus to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished:* with stripes, or with death, as they should be judged worthy; (see <sup><400></sup>Acts 9:2).

**Ver. 6.** *And it came to pass, that as I made my journey,* etc.] And had almost made an end of it:

*and was come nigh unto Damascus;* about a mile from it, as some say, *about noon;* this circumstance is omitted in the account in (<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:3) and is mentioned here, not so much to inform what time of day it was, that Saul came to Damascus, as to observe how extraordinary that light must be, which then appeared, as follows:

*suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me;* and not only about him, but those that were with him, (<sup><400></sup>Acts 26:13). This must be a great light indeed, to be distinguished at noon, and to be above the brightness of the sun, and to have such effect upon the apostle and his company as it had; (<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:3).

**Ver. 7.** *And I fell unto the ground,* etc.] And so did those that were with him, (<sup><400></sup>Acts 26:14).

*And heard a voice, saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* (See Gill on “<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:4”).

**Ver. 8.** *And I answered, who art thou, Lord?* etc.] (See Gill on “<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:5”).

**Ver. 9.** *And they that were with me saw indeed the light,* etc.] For it shone about them, as well as Saul:

*and were afraid*; the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions, have not this clause; but it stands in the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; the suddenness, greatness, and extraordinariness of the light surprised them, for it was even miraculous:

*but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me*: they heard the voice of Saul, but not the voice of Christ; at least they did not hear it so as to understand it; (see Gill on “<sup>4007</sup>Acts 9:7”).

**Ver. 10.** *And I said, what shall I do, Lord?* etc.] (See Gill on “<sup>4006</sup>Acts 9:6”).

**Ver. 11.** *And when I could not see for the glory of that light*, etc.] Which was above the brightness of the sun, and so dazzled his eyes, that he could not see his way into the city, some of his company took him by the hand, and led him: and

*being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came unto Damascus* but not with the same view he set out with: he took his journey thither, and pursued it, in order to persecute the saints there; but now he enters into it, to be informed by one of them what he must do for Christ, whom he had persecuted.

**Ver. 12.** *And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy, and Vulgate Latin version, read only, “a man according to the law”; one whose walk, life, and conversation, were agreeable to it: a strict observer of the law of Moses, both moral and ceremonial: he not only lived a holy life and conversation, according to the moral law, but he religiously and devoutly attended to the rituals of the ceremonial law; and this part of his character the apostle chose to mention, as what would recommend him to the notice of the Jews he now addressed: for though he was a disciple, a believer in Christ, yet as many of the believing Jews did, so he strictly observed the rituals of the law. The Ethiopic version adds, “who was of the apostles”; one of that number, and in that office, which is nowhere said that he was; and had he, it would not have been agreeable to the apostle’s design to have mentioned it; and he is said to be one of the seventy disciples, and bishop or pastor of the church at Damascus; (see Gill on “<sup>2001</sup>Luke 10:1”). Of this Ananias, his name and character, (see Gill on “<sup>4010</sup>Acts 9:10”).

*Having a good report of all the Jews that dwelt there*: that is, at Damascus, as the Ethiopic version reads; and so do the Complutensian

edition, the Alexandrian copy, and several other copies; for though he was a Christian, yet being not only a man of an unblemished life and conversation, but zealous and devout in the observance of the ceremonial law, was very much interested in the affections and esteem of the Jews.

**Ver. 13.** *Came unto me*, etc.] Being at the house of Judas, in that street of Damascus called Straight, (<sup><491></sup>Acts 9:11) and stood; at the side of him, or by him, putting his hands on him:

*and said unto me, brother Saul*; (see Gill on <sup><491></sup>Acts 9:17”).

*receive thy sight*, “or look up”,

*and the same hour I looked up upon him*; that is, immediately, directly: for so the phrase, “that same hour”, is frequently used by the Jews: the words in (<sup><492></sup>Numbers 16:21) “that I may consume them in a moment”, are rendered by Onkelos, “that I may consume them in an hour”; for an hour is used for a moment with them.

**Ver. 14.** *And he said, the God of our fathers hath chosen thee*, etc.] From all eternity, in his everlasting purposes and decrees; or “he hath taken thee into his hand”; in order to form, and fit, and qualify him for his service; and may design both his call by grace, and to apostleship. The apostle represents Ananias as speaking of God, as the God of the Jewish fathers, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to show that the Christian doctrine was not contrary to the faith of the one God of Israel; nor did it introduce any other, or any new deity. The ends of this choice or separation were,

*that thou shouldest know his will*; his revealed will, concerning the salvation of men by Jesus Christ, which is no other than the Gospel, of which the apostle had been entirely ignorant; for though he knew the will of God, as revealed in the law, or his will of command, yet not spiritually; and he was altogether a stranger, till now, to God’s will, way, and method of saving sinners by Christ, of justifying them by his righteousness, and of pardoning their sins through his blood, and of giving them eternal life by him; and the knowledge of this he came at by the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in consequence of his being chosen and called:

*and see that just One*: Jesus Christ the righteous, who is both as he is God, and as he is man, and also as he is Mediator, having faithfully discharged his office, and performed his engagements; him the apostle saw, both with the eyes of his body, when he met him in the way, and called unto him, and

with the eyes of his understanding beholding his beauty, fulness, and suitableness as a Saviour; the former of these was what many kings, prophets, and righteous men desired: and the latter is what is inseparably connected with eternal life and salvation.

*And shouldest hear the voice of his mouth;* both his human voice in articulate sounds, when he spoke to him in the Hebrew tongue, as in (<sup>427</sup>Acts 22:7) and the voice of his Gospel, of which he appeared to make him a minister; which is a voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, and is very powerful when accompanied by the Spirit, and is soul charming, alluring, and comforting.

**Ver. 15.** *For thou shalt be his witness unto all men,* etc.] Gentiles as well as Jews, an eye and an ear witness to them;

*of what thou hast seen and heard;* as that he saw him personally and alive, and so could witness to the truth of his resurrection; for after he had been seen by all the apostles, he was last of all seen of Paul; and also, that he heard him and received from him the Gospel, and a mission and commission to preach it; for what he preached he did not receive of man, nor was he taught it by any, but he had it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

**Ver. 16.** *And now why tarriest thou?* etc.] Though it might not be the apostle's case, yet it is often the case of many, to procrastinate and delay obedience to the commands of Christ, and particularly to the ordinance of baptism: the reasons of which delay are, the strength of their corruptions, and the weakness of their graces, which cause them to question whether they have any interest in Christ; as also fears of falling away, and so of dishonouring Christ, his Gospel, and ordinance: and in some the reproaches of men; and sometimes such a delay is made, waiting for more comfortable frames, or for a greater fitness; but no such delay, nor on such accounts, ought to be; for it is a command of Christ, and ought to be forthwith complied with, as soon as a man believes; and to obey it is a following of Christ, in which no time should be lost: and the consequences of a delay are very bad: it is a prevention of the glory of Christ, as well as shows ingratitude to him, and a bereaving of ourselves of that comfort, which might be hoped to be enjoyed; and it often induces a carelessness about the ordinance, and even a losing the sense of the duty:

*arise, and be baptized;* this shows that Ananias was a Christian, since he directs to an ordinance of Christ, and that he was a preacher of the word,



and had a right to administer baptism; for that it was administered by him, though not in express terms yet seems to be naturally concluded from (~~449B~~ Acts 9:18) as also this passage shows, that baptism was not administered by sprinkling, since Saul might have sat still, and have had some water brought to him, and sprinkled on him; but by immersion, seeing he is called upon to arise, and go to some place proper and convenient for the administration of it, according to the usage of John, and the apostles of Christ. “And wash away thy sins”; or “be washed from thy sins”; not that it is in the power of man to cleanse himself from his sins; the Ethiopian may as soon change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as a creature do this; nor is there any such efficacy in baptism as to remove the filth of sin; persons may submit unto it, and yet be as Simon Magus was, in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; but the ordinance of baptism, may be, and sometimes is, a means of leading the faith of God’s children to the blood of Christ, which cleanses from all sin;

*calling on the name of the Lord*; the name of the Lord is not only to be used by the administrator of baptism in the performance of it; but it should be called upon by the person who submits to it, both before and at the administration of it, for the presence of Christ in it; and this invocation of the name of the Lord in baptism, signifies an exercise of faith in Christ at this time, a profession of him, and obedience to him.

**Ver. 17.** *And it came to pass, that when I was come again to Jerusalem,* etc.] Which was three years after his conversion; for he did not immediately return to Jerusalem, but went into Arabia; and when he returned to Damascus, which was three years after he came to Jerusalem; (see ~~4017~~ Galatians 1:17,18)

*even while I prayed in the temple*; the temple was an house of prayer; hither persons resorted for that purpose; and as the apostle had been used to it, he continued this custom, and during the time of prayer he fell into an ecstasy:

*I was in a trance*: and knew not whether he was in the body, or out of the body: whether this was the time he refers to in (~~4712~~ 2 Corinthians 12:2) is not certain, though probable.

**Ver. 18.** *And I saw him saying unto me,* etc.] That is, the Lord Jesus Christ, that just One, whom he had seen in his way to Damascus, and

whose voice he had heard, and whose name he had called upon at his baptism:

*make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem*: not because his life was in danger, but because Christ had work for him to do elsewhere, which required haste; and that he might not continue here useless and unprofitable, as he would have been, had he staid;

*for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me*; Christ the omniscient God, and the searcher of the hearts, knew the hardness and unbelief of the Jews; and that they would continue therein, notwithstanding the ministry of the apostle; and that they would give no credit to any testimony of his, that he saw him, as he went to Damascus, and heard words from his mouth. The Ethiopic version renders it without the negative, “for they will receive thee, my witness concerning me”; as if Christ sent the apostle away in all haste from Jerusalem, lest he preaching there, the Jews should believe and be healed; compare with this (<sup>4034</sup>Matthew 13:14,15). Very likely this interpreter might be induced to leave out the negative, as thinking that the apostle’s reasoning in the following words required such a sense and reading.

**Ver. 19.** *And I said, Lord, they know, that I imprisoned*, etc.] Men and women, that made a profession of the Christian religion, (<sup>4035</sup>Acts 8:3)

*and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee*; in Jerusalem there were many synagogues, and in these scourging and beating of offenders were used; (see Gill on “<sup>4007</sup>Matthew 10:17”).

**Ver. 20.** *And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed*, etc.]

Stephen was a martyr for Christ, both by confession with his mouth, and by the effusion of his blood; he was the proto-martyr, or “the first martyr” that suffered for Christ; and there are copies, as one of Stephens’s, and the Complutensian edition, which so read in this place; his blood was shed by stoning:

*I also was standing by*; to see the inhuman action performed; nor was he an idle and indifferent spectator:

*and consenting unto his death*; being pleased and delighted with it, and rejoicing at it; (see <sup>4001</sup>Acts 8:1).

*and kept the raiment* of them that slew him; the accusers of him, and witnesses against him, whose hands were first on him, and cast the first stones at him, and continued to stone him, until they killed him: these laid their garments at the feet of Saul, who looked after them, that nobody stole them, and run away with them, whilst they were stoning Stephen; which shows how disposed he was to that fact, and how much he approved of it: and these things he mentions to suggest that surely the Jews would receive his testimony, since they knew what a bitter enemy he had been to this way: and therefore might conclude, that he must have some very good and strong reasons, which had prevailed upon him to embrace this religion against all his prejudices, and so might be willing to hear them; and it also shows what an affection the apostle had for the Jews, and how much he desired their spiritual welfare, for which reason he chose to have stayed, and preached among them.

**Ver. 21.** *And he said unto me, depart,* etc.] At once from Jerusalem, and out of the land of Judea:

*for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles;* to the nations afar off, even as far as Illyricum, Pannonia, or Hungary, where the apostle went and preached, ( <619>Romans 15:19) and so by a divine mission and commission he became the apostle of the Gentiles, and preached the Gospel among them with great success, to the conversion of many thousands of them, and to the planting of many churches in the midst of them.

**Ver. 22.** *And they gave him audience unto this word.* etc.] The Ethiopic version reads, “and I heard him so speaking unto me”; as if it was to be understood of the apostle hearing Christ speaking to him concerning his mission to the Gentiles; whereas the words refer to the Jews attending quietly to the apostle, till he came to that part of his oration. They heard him patiently, and did not offer to molest him, or hinder his speaking, and being heard, till he came to mention his mission to the Gentiles: all the rest they either did not understand, or looked upon it as an idle tale, as the effect of madness and enthusiasm, at least as containing things they had nothing to do with; but when he came to speak of the Gentiles, and to pretend to a divine mission to them, this they could not bear; for nothing was more offensive, irritating, and provoking to them, than to hear of the calling of the Gentiles, whom they were for depriving of all blessings, and for engrossing all to themselves; (see <610>Romans 10:20).

*and then lift up their voices*; in a very loud and clamorous manner, as one man:

*and said, away with such a fellow from the earth*; take away his life from the earth: this they said either to the chief captain, to do it, or as encouraging one another to do it:

*for it is not fit that he should live*; he does not deserve to live, he is unworthy of life; it is not agreeable to the rules of justice that he should be spared; it is not convenient, and it may be of bad consequence should he be continued any longer; he may do a deal of mischief, and poison the minds of the people with bad notions, and therefore it is not expedient that he should live.

**Ver. 23.** *And as they cried out*, etc.] In this furious manner:

*and cast off their clothes*; either like madmen, that knew not what they did, or in order to stone him; (see <sup><4075></sup>Acts 7:57,58).

*and threw dust into the air* either with their hands, or by striking the earth, and scraping it with their feet, through indignation and wrath, like persons possessed, or mad.

**Ver. 24.** *The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle*, etc.] Into the inside of it; for till now he was upon the top of the stairs, or steps, which led up to it; which might be done in order to save him from the rage of the people, and that he might privately examine him, and get the true state of his case, though he took a very wrong and unjustifiable method to do it in, as follows:

*and bade that he should be examined by scourging*; he gave a centurion, with some soldiers, orders to scourge and whip him, and to lay on stripes more and harder, until he should tell the whole truth of the matter, and confess the crime or crimes he was guilty of, which had so enraged the populace:

*that he might know wherefore they cried so against him*; for though he had rescued him out of their hands, when they would in all likelihood have beat him to death; and though he took him within the castle to secure him from their violence; yet he concluded he must be a bad man, and must have done something criminal; and therefore he takes this method to extort from him

a confession of his crime, for which the people exclaimed against him with so much virulence.

**Ver. 25.** *And as they bound him with thongs*, etc.] To a pillar, in order to be scourged, according to the Roman manner <sup>f1132</sup>. Nor was the Jewish form of scourging much unlike, and perhaps might be now used, which was this; when they scourge anyone they bind both his hands to a pillar, here and there — and they do not strike him standing nor sitting, but inclining <sup>f1133</sup>; for the pillar to which he was bound was fixed in the ground, and so high as for a man to lean upon <sup>f1134</sup>; and some say it was two cubits, and others a cubit and a half high <sup>f1135</sup>: and the word here used signifies an extension, or distension; perhaps the stretching out of the arms to the pillar, and a bending forward of the whole body, which fitly expresses the stooping inclining posture of the person scourged, and was a very proper one for such a punishment: now as they were thus fastening him with thongs to the pillar, and putting him in this position,

*Paul said unto the centurion that stood by*; to see the soldiers execute the orders received from the chief captain:

*is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?*

Though the apostle puts this by way of question, yet he knew full well what the Roman laws were in such cases; he did not put this through ignorance, or for information, but to let them know who he was, and to put them in mind of these laws, and of their duty; for, according to the Porcian law, Roman citizens were not to be beaten <sup>f1136</sup>. Hence, says <sup>f1137</sup> Cicero,

“it is a heinous sin to bind a Roman citizen, it is wickedness to beat him, it is next to parricide to kill him, and what shall I say to crucify him?”

And, according to the Valerian law, it was not lawful for magistrates to condemn a Roman without hearing the cause, and pleading in it; and such condemned persons might appeal to the populace <sup>f1138</sup>.

**Ver. 26.** *When the centurion heard that*, etc.] The question put by Paul, which strongly suggested that he was a Roman:

*he went and told the chief captain; what Paul had said: saying, take heed what thou dost*; or “art about to do”; lest some bad consequences should follow; lest he should affront the Roman people and senate, and lose his place, if not incur some corporeal punishment:

*for this man is a Roman*; and it can never be answered to bind and beat a Roman.

**Ver. 27.** *Then the chief captain came, and said unto him*, etc.] To Paul:

*tell me, art thou a Roman?* he had told him before that he was a Jew of Tarsus, and which was true, and had said nothing of his being a Roman; wherefore the chief captain desires that he would tell him the whole truth of the matter, whether he was a Roman or not:

*he said yea*; that he was one.

**Ver. 28.** *And the chief captain answered, with a great sum obtained I this freedom*, etc.] For, it seems, he was not a Roman born, but very likely a Grecian, or Syrian, by his name Lysias; and as all things were now venal at Rome, the freedom of the city was to be bought with money, though a large sum was insisted on for it: this the chief captain said, as wondering that so mean a person, and who he understood was a Jew by birth, should be able to procure such a privilege, which cost him so much money:

*and Paul said, but I was free born*; being born at Tarsus; which, as Pliny says <sup>f1139</sup>, was a free city, and which had its freedom given it by Mark Antony, and which was before the birth of Paul; and therefore his parents being of this city, and free, he was born so.

**Ver. 29.** *Then straightway they departed from him, which should have examined him*, etc.] By scourging; namely, the soldiers, who under the inspection of the centurion, and by the order of the chief captain, were binding him with thongs to scourge him, and thereby extort from him his crime, which was the cause of all this disturbance; but hearing that he was a Roman, either of their own accord, or rather at the order of their officers, either the centurion or chief captain, or both, left binding him, and went their way:

*and the chief captain also was afraid after he knew that he was a Roman*; lest he should be called to an account for his conduct, and his commission should be taken from him: chiefly,

*and because he had bound him*; not only had commanded him to be bound with thongs to a pillar, in order to be scourged, but he had bound him with two chains, when first seized him; and, as before observed, (see Gill on <sup><<4025></sup>Acts 22:25"); it was a heinous crime to bind a Roman.

**Ver. 30.** *On the morrow*, etc.] The next day; so that Paul was kept in the castle all night: because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews; which, as yet, he could not come at, some saying one thing, and some another; and which he ought to have known before he had bound him, and ordered him to be scourged:

*he loosed him from his bands* not from his being bound with thongs to the pillar, that he had been loosed from before, but from the two chains with which he was bound, and held by two soldiers; (see ~~42B~~ Acts 21:33,35).

*and commanded the chief priests, and all the council to appear*, the whole Jewish sanhedrim, which was now very much under the direction and influence of the Romans: and this he the rather did, because, though he could not come at the certainty of the charge and accusation, he perceived it was a matter of religion, and so belonged to them to examine and judge of:

*and brought Paul down*; from the Castle of Antonia, into the temple, and to the place where the sanhedrim sat, which formerly was in the chamber Gazith, but of late years it had removed from place to place, and indeed from Jerusalem itself, and was now at Jabneh; only this was the time of Pentecost, and so the chief priests and sanhedrim were at Jerusalem on that account:

*and set him before them*; or “among them”; in the midst of them, to answer to what charges should be brought against him.

# CHAPTER 23

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 23

**Ver. 1.** *And Paul earnestly beholding the council*, etc.] Fastening his eyes upon them, looking wistly and intently at them, and thereby discovering a modest cheerfulness, and a becoming boldness, confidence, and intrepidity, as being not conscious of any guilt, and well assured of the goodness of his cause:

*said, men and brethren*; (see ~~401~~ Acts 22:1).

*I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day*; not only from the time of his conversion, but throughout the whole of his life; for though, strictly speaking, there is no good conscience but what is awakened by the Spirit of God, and is unprincipled by his grace, and is purged from sin by the blood of Christ; in which sense he could only have a good conscience, since he believed in Christ; yet whereas in his state of unregeneracy, and even while he was a blasphemer, and persecutor, he did not act contrary to the dictates of his conscience, but according to them, in which his view was to the glory of God, and the honour of his law; he therefore says he lived before God, or unto God, in all good conscience, though an erroneous and mistaken one; he thought he ought to do what he did; and what he did, he did with a zeal for God though it was not according to knowledge: besides, the apostle has here respect to his outward moral conversation, which, before and after conversion, was very strict, and even blameless, at least unblemished before men; nobody could charge him with any notorious crime, though he did not live without sin in the sight of the omniscient God.

**Ver. 2.** *And the high priest Ananias*, etc.] This could not be the same with Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, but rather Ananus his son; though this is more generally thought to be Ananias the son of Nebedaeus, whom Josephus <sup>f1140</sup> speaks of. There is one R. Ananias, the sagan of the priests, often spoken of in the Jewish writings <sup>f1141</sup>, who lived about these times, and was killed at the destruction of Jerusalem; and in the times of King Agrippa, there was one Chanina, or Ananias the priest, who was a



Sadducee<sup>f1142</sup>; and from the number of Sadducees in this sanhedrim, who very likely were the creatures of the high priest, one would be tempted to think he might be the same with this: who

*commanded them that stood by him*: that is, by Paul, who were nearest to him, some of the members of the sanhedrim; unless they should be thought to be some of the high priest's officers, or servants, as in (~~4:182~~ John 18:22) though if they were, one would think they would be so called: these he ordered

*to smite him on the mouth*: or give him a slap on the face, by way of contempt, and as if he had spoken what ought not to be said, and in order to silence him; the reason of which might be, either because Paul did not directly address him, and give him such flattering titles as he expected, or because he set out with such declarations of his innocence, and spotless behaviour, and with so much courage and boldness.

**Ver. 3.** *Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee*, etc.] Which may be considered either as a prophecy of what would be, that God would smite him with some judgment here, or with death quickly, or with eternal damnation hereafter; taking up his own words, and suggesting that a retaliation would be made, and that the measure he meted, would be measured to him again; or else as an imprecation upon him; for the words may be rendered, “may God smite thee”; the future tense being often used by the Jews for the imperative, and that in this very phrase; for certain it is, that this is the form of an imprecation with them: for it is said, if anyone should say, **μωηλ α ηκκγ**, “may God smite”, or “so may God smite”; this is **ηλ α**, “a curse”, written in the law<sup>f1143</sup>; though this instance of the apostle ought not to be drawn into example, any more than those of other saints, who might be under a direction of the Holy Ghost to deliver out such things, which would come to pass in righteous judgment: and if this was Ananias, the son of Nebedaeus, as is generally thought, it is remarkable, that five years after this, in the beginning of the wars of the Jews with the Romans, this Ananias, hiding himself under the ruins of a conduit, was discovered, and taken out, and killed<sup>f1144</sup>: and no doubt but he very fitly calls him

*thou whited wall*; or hypocrite, in like manner as Christ compares the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees to whited sepulchres, (~~4:177~~ Matthew 23:27).

*for sittest thou to judge me after the law*; the law of Moses, which was the rule of judgment in the sanhedrim, at least professed to be, and which was allowed of by the Romans, especially in matters relating to the Jewish religion:

*and commandest me to be smitten contrary to law*? which condemns no man before he is heard, and much less punishes him, (<sup><475></sup>John 7:51) and which is contrary not only to the Jewish laws, but to the Roman laws, and all others founded upon the law of nature and reason.

**Ver. 4.** *And they that stood by*, etc.] The members of the sanhedrim that were next to the apostle; or the servants of the high priest, since they are said to stand, whereas those of that court sat: said,

*revilest thou God's high priest*? which seems to confirm that the apostle's words were not a bare prediction, but an imprecation, since they are charged with reproaching, reviling, and speaking evil of him; and the aggravation of which was not only that the person reviled was a priest, an high priest, but an high priest of God; though this could not have been proved, for there was now no high priest of God but Jesus Christ; the priesthood was changed and abrogated, and there were no more high priests among men of God's appointing and approving.

**Ver. 5.** *Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest*, etc.] Or I did not know that he was the high priest; and the sense is, that he did not really know him, either because he had been long absent from Jerusalem; and besides there were new high priests made, sometimes every year, and sometimes oftener, that it is no wonder he should not know him; or because he might not sit in his usual place; or chiefly because he was not, in his habit, an high priest; for the priests, both the high priest, and the common priests, only wore their priestly robes, when they ministered in their office, and at other times they wore other clothes, as laymen did, according to (<sup><3419></sup>Ezekiel 44:19) which the Targum paraphrases thus;

“when they (the priests) shall go out of the holy court into the outer court, to be mixed with the people, they shall put off their garments in which they ministered, and lay them up in the holy chamber, and shall clothe themselves with other garments, that they may not be mingled with the people, <sup>whyꝥwbl b</sup>, “in their garments”.”

For as soon as they had performed their office, there were servants that attended them, who stripped them of their robes, and laid them up in chests which were in the temple <sup>f1145</sup> till they came to service again, and put them on common garments; for they might not appear among the common people in their priestly garments; which when they were off of them, they were, as Maimonides says <sup>f1146</sup>, *μυρτζκ*, “as strangers”, or as laymen, like the rest of the people; for which reason Paul might not know Ananias to be the high priest: and this points to another sense of these words; for it was a rule with the Jews <sup>f1147</sup>, that

“at the time the priests’ garments were upon them, their priesthood was upon them, but when their garments were not on them, *ἤνυλ [ μτνωηκ ἤνα*, “there was no priesthood upon them”; for lo, they were as strangers.”

And then the sense is, Ananias not being in the discharge of his office, nor in his habit, the apostle did not know, or own him as an high priest, or consider him as in such a station; or rather, since the priesthood was changed, and there was no other high priest of God but Jesus Christ, he did not own him as one; had he, he should not have spoke to him in the manner he did. Moreover, if this was Ananias, the son of Nebedaeus, as is the opinion of many, he had no right to the office of the priesthood when he was first made an high priest; after which he was sent a prisoner to Rome; during which time several succeeded in the priesthood; and at this time not he, though he had got the management of affairs in his hands, was high priest, but Jesus the son of Gamaliel; so that the apostle’s sense might be, he did not own or acknowledge him high priest. Some take the apostle’s words in an ironical sense; he an high priest, I should not have known him to be an high priest, he looks and acts more like a furioso, a madman, an unjust judge, and a tyrant, than an high priest, who ought to behave in another guise manner. But what follows shows rather that the apostle spoke seriously, unless the words can be thought to be a citation made by Luke,

*for it is written*, in (<sup>40228</sup>Exodus 22:28) “thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people”; which the Jewish writers generally understand of the head of the great sanhedrim, as Ananias might be, or of a king <sup>f1148</sup>.

**Ver. 6.** *But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees*, etc.] That is, that one part of the sanhedrim consisted of Sadducees, which was

often the case; sometimes the high priest was of this sect, as Ananias probably was, and sometimes the greater part of the sanhedrim were Sadducees, and even sometimes the whole; (see Gill on “~~<4617>~~ Acts 5:17”), but this sanhedrim were only part of them Sadducees:

*and the other Pharisees*; of both these sects, (see Gill on “~~<4017>~~ Matthew 3:7”).

*he cried out in the council*; with a loud voice, that he might be heard by all:

*men and brethren, I am a Pharisee*; he was not only brought up in that sect from his youth, and lived according to it before his conversion, but he was still a Pharisee; wherefore he does not say, I “was”, but I “am” a Pharisee; for whatever distinguished the Pharisee from the Sadducee, whether in principle, or in practice, and manner of living, which agreed with Christianity, the apostle still retained; as the belief of the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, and strict holiness of life and conversation.

*The son of a Pharisee*; the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read in the plural number, “the son of Pharisees”; his father and his mother were both Pharisees; for there were women Pharisees<sup>f1149</sup>, as well as men; so that he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees, as well as an Hebrew of the Hebrews; and this is said to show that he was by education of that sect.

*Of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question*; that is, either for the hope of the resurrection of the dead, (~~<4215>~~ Acts 24:15) or for professing the hope of eternal life, and happiness in a future state, and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, when the soul and body will be reunited, and enjoy endless felicity together: not that these were the particular things now charged upon him, and for which he was now trying and judging; but that these were the ground and foundation of the hatred and persecution of him, because he preached the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and the resurrection of men through him, and that there was hope of eternal life and salvation by him. And in this the apostle showed the prudence and wisdom of the serpent, along with the innocence of the dove, hereby to divide the assembly, and free himself from them; and it was but just and right; for since they would not hear him about to make a fair and open defence of his cause, but ordered him to be smitten on the mouth, it was but justice to throw them into confusion, and save himself.

**Ver. 7.** *And when he had so said*, etc.] He stopped and made a pause:

*and there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees*; about the things which he had spoken of, particularly the resurrection of the dead; and this was what the apostle intended, so that his end was answered by the speech he made:

*and the multitude was divided*; that is, the members of the sanhedrim were divided, some being on one side of the question, and some on the other; for this multitude cannot design the multitude of the common people, who were not convened together on this occasion.

**Ver. 8.** *For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection*, etc.] Of the dead, being ignorant of the Scriptures, and the power of God; (see ~~4023~~ Matthew 22:23,29).

*neither angel nor spirit*; the Ethiopic version reads, “nor Holy Spirit”: but the sense seems to be, that they did not believe any such species of beings as angels, nor indeed any spirits whatever, which were immaterial or immortal; for as for the spirit or soul of man, they took that to be only the temperament of the body, and that it died with it, and did not exist in any separate state after this life: for so Josephus<sup>f1150</sup> says, that they deny the permanence of the soul, and rewards and punishments in the invisible state. And, according to the Talmudic<sup>f1151</sup> writers, they denied that there was any other world than this:

*but the Pharisees confess both*; the resurrection of the dead, and that there are spirits, both angels and the souls of men, which are immortal. Josephus, in the place before referred to, says, that they hold that every soul is incorruptible or immortal; and that they held the resurrection of the dead, is manifest from the Talmud<sup>f1152</sup>, and other writings of theirs; the Syriac version renders it, “the Pharisees confess all these things”; to which agree the Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

**Ver. 9.** *And there arose a great cry*, etc.] Or noise, a loud clamour; they began to be very noisy, and to talk loud, and in high spirits, one against another:

*and the Scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose*; there were Scribes in the sanhedrim, and these were some of them on the side of the Sadducees, and some on the side of the Pharisees; though, generally speaking, they agreed with the latter, and are often in Scripture mentioned

with them, and for them: however, that part in this sanhedrim that were on their side rose up from their seats,

*and strove*; that is, contended, disputed, and litigated the point with the Sadducees:

*saying, we find no evil in this man*; why he should be hated, persecuted, and punished:

*but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him*; that is, if the Holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version reads, has inspired him, or God by an angel has revealed anything to him, who has to say anything against it? This they said in agreement with their own principles, and more for the sake of establishing them, and in opposition to the Sadducees, than in favour of Paul:

*let us not fight against God*; as in (~~Acts~~ Acts 5:39). These words are not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

**Ver. 10.** *And when there arose a great dissension*, etc.] When that was come to a very great height, hot words were spoken, and they were ready to come to blows, and there was like to be a riot and tumult among them:

*the chief captain fearing lest Paul should be pulled in pieces of them*; either of the Sadducees, whom he had greatly offended and provoked, or of both Sadducees and Pharisees, the one laying hold on him to preserve him from the fury of the other, and the other endeavouring to pluck him out of their hands; and the fears of the chief captain were not so much out of affection to Paul, but lest there should be an uproar, which might issue in sedition, and rebellion against the Roman government, of which the Roman officers were always jealous; and because that Paul was a Roman, and should he suffer him to be destroyed in an illegal manner, he must be accountable for it: wherefore he

*commanded the soldiers to go down*: either from the castle of Antonia, or from a superior part of the temple, where he with his guards were, to hear this cause before the sanhedrim, to that part where it sat, and Paul was: and

*take him by force from among them*; if they refused to deliver him up, to make use of their arms:

*and bring him into the castle*; of Antonia, where he was before.

**Ver. 11.** *And the night following*, etc.] The day in which Paul was brought before the sanhedrim, and pleaded his own cause before them, and had thrown them into confusion and division:

*the Lord stood by him*; the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in a vision to him, and stood very near him, by the side of him, by the bed or couch on which he might lie: and said,

*be of good cheer, Paul*; though he was now a prisoner in the castle; and though the high priest, and the Sadducees especially, were enraged against him; and though a plot was about to be formed to take away his life; for this exhortation seems to be designed to prepare him for further trials, and to prevent discouragement under them; which shows the great care of Christ over him, his concern for him, and love to him: the word Paul is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; but the calling him by name seems to express not only singular knowledge of him, but greater familiarity and affection; it is in the Arabic version, and in other Greek copies:

*for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem*; not only in the Christian church, and before the Apostle James, and the elders, but in the Jewish sanhedrim, and before the high priest, Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, where and before whom, though not particularly recorded, he bore a testimony for Jesus, that he was the true Messiah; and that though he died, he was risen from the dead, and was at the right hand of God, and was the only Saviour of men:

*so must thou bear witness also at Rome*; as he had bore a public and faithful witness to the person, office, and grace of Christ at Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea; so it was necessary, by the decree of God, and for the glory of Christ, that he should bear a like testimony at Rome, the chief city in the whole world; hereby signifying, that he should not die at Jerusalem, and giving him a hint that he should appeal to Caesar, which he afterwards did.

**Ver. 12.** *And when it was day*, etc.] As soon as it was light, very early in the morning:

*certain of the Jews banded together*; these very likely were of the sect of the Sadducees, who had been exceedingly irritated and provoked by what Paul had said the day before in the council; these therefore gathered

together, entered into a conspiracy to take away Paul's life, and trailed in it, as one man:

*and bound themselves under a curse*; or "anathematized themselves"; the Hebrew word **מֵרֵךְ** , which answers to "anathema", is sometimes used for an oath, **הַיְבֹחַ אֵיךְ מֵרֵךְ** , "Cherem" or "anathema" is "an oath"<sup>f1153</sup> , a vow made to be punished with an anathema if not kept; so these men swore to it, bound themselves with an oath, or wished they might be an anathema, accursed of God, and cut off from his people; they imprecated the most dreadful evils upon themselves:

*saying, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul*: it was a common form of a vow or oath with the Jews<sup>f1154</sup> , **לֹא אֶכֶל** , "that I will not eat"; sometimes they only vowed abstinence from particular things, and then others were lawful; as for instance, if one vowed that he would not eat boiled meat, he might eat roast, or that he would not eat flesh, he might eat broth, or that he would abstain from milk, then he might drink whey,<sup>f1155</sup> ; but this oath and vow here were, that they would neither eat nor drink anything, till they had destroyed Paul: these were a set of zealots, who in imitation of Phinehas, and pretending the glory of God, took upon them to take away the lives of men, without any, judicial procedure, or the authority of the civil magistrate; of whom, (see Gill on ~~<000>~~ Matthew 10:4") it may be asked, what became of this vow? or how did they get clear of it, since they did not accomplish the fact? to which it may be answered, that it was a pretty easy thing to be freed from oaths and vows, among the Jews, whose doctors had a power to absolve men from them; and in such cases as this, and such a vow as this, might be loosed upon more accounts than one, as on account of keeping another law, the observing the sabbath and other festivals, when men were obliged to eat and drink: and thus it is said<sup>f1156</sup> ,

"if a man swears that he will not drink wine, or that he will not eat flesh, for so many days, then they say to him, if thou hadst known at the time of the oath, that the sabbath or a feast day were within these days, in which thou art obliged to eat flesh and drink wine, as it is said, (~~<2883>~~ Isaiah 58:13) "and call the sabbath a delight"; wouldst thou have sworn at all? if he says no, they loose his oath:"

and likewise it might be loosed on account of life, which a man is bound to preserve: for so they likewise say<sup>f1157</sup> , "if a man vows that he will not eat



anything, woe be to him if he eats, and woe be to him if he does not eat; if he eats he breaks his vow, if he does not eat he sins against his own soul, or life; what must he do? let him go to the wise men, *wrdn ta wl wrytyw*,

“and they will loose his vow for him”, as it is written, (~~2028~~ Proverbs 12:18) but the tongue of the wise is health;”

and no doubt but these men very easily got their vow loosed, since it was made on such a design.

**Ver. 13.** *And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.*] Who met together, formed this resolution, entered into this scheme, and bound themselves with this oath; the word rendered “conspiracy”, signifies an agreement by oath; such a number of them banded together, that they might have strength sufficient to take Paul out of the hands of the soldiers, as he was conducted by them from the castle to the temple.

**Ver. 14.** *And they came to the chief priests, and elders,* etc.] Who were members of the sanhedrim, to acquaint them with their designs:

*and said, we have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul:* these chief priests and elders, had they acted according to the character they bore, on such an information, would have taken up those men, and punished them, at least would have dissuaded them from so vile an action; but they knew the men to whom they applied, and very likely they were all of them of the sect of the Sadducees, whom Paul had so much offended the day before; and therefore were pleased with what they had done, approved of their scheme, and readily fell in with the following proposal.

**Ver. 15.** *Now therefore ye with the council,* etc.] The whole sanhedrim; their sense is, that they would have the sanhedrim convened by the chief priests and elders, and being met together, then to

*signify to the chief captain;* or let him know that they were assembled together, upon the affair of Paul, and that they here desirous he might be brought before them:

*that he bring him down unto you tomorrow;* from the castle of Antonia to the place where the sanhedrim met; the word “tomorrow” is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions; and then it should seem that they desired him to be brought down

forthwith, or otherwise they must propose to fast all that day, and so long on the morrow, till Paul was brought down; but that the common reading is right, appears from the chief captain's sending away Paul at the third hour of the night following, to prevent their designs on the morrow, (~~423~~ Acts 23:23). The pretence formed for his being brought down is,

*as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him;* what he had done, which had occasioned this uproar, what it was he was charged with, and whether he was guilty or not:

*and we, or ever he come near:* where the sanhedrim sat;

*are ready to kill him;* lying in wait in some private place between the castle and the temple, from whence they intended to rush out at once upon him, and murder him; far enough both from the temple and the council, that both the one might not be defiled, though they did not greatly stick at that in those times, and that the other might not be charged with having any hand in his death.

**Ver. 16.** *And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait,* etc.] Paul might have a sister living in Jerusalem; or this her son might be there on account of his studies; he might be a pupil to one of the doctors, by which means he might come at this secret, that such a number of men were in ambush, in order to take away his uncle's life: wherefore having got intelligence of it,

*he went and entered into the castle;* the Alexandrian copy reads, "the synagogue"; but Paul was not there, but in the castle of Antonia; the Ethiopic version renders it, "the prison"; though it is plain that he was not very closely confined, it was easy to have access to him; the reason might be, not only because he was a Roman, but because he was uncondemned, nor was any charge proved against him:

*and told Paul;* what he had heard, that such a number of men had entered into a conspiracy to take away his life, and lay in wait for him; and this was an instance both of duty and affection to his uncle, and worthy of imitation, whether it proceeded from natural relation, or from religion, or both.

**Ver. 17.** *Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him,* etc.] For under this chief captain there must have been ten of them, if the company of which he was captain consisted of a thousand men, as his title chief captain

or chiliarch imports; for a centurion was over an hundred men, as his title signifies; perhaps this might be the same, as in (~~4225~~ Acts 22:25,26)

*and said, bring this young man to the chief captain:* which was a very prudential step, not to let the centurion into the secret, but to desire him to introduce the young man to the chief captain; for had he trusted the centurion with it, he might not have acquainted his officer with it, but have informed the liers in wait of it: now though the apostle was assured by Christ that he should not die at Jerusalem, but should bear witness of him at Rome, and though he did not distrust the truth of Christ's words, but most firmly believed them; yet he thought it his duty to make use of the means, which providence had put in his way, for his preservation and safety; the Ethiopic version reads, "bring this young man by night to the chief captain"; that so he might not be seen, and observed to have carried any intelligence to him:

*for he hath a certain thing to tell him;* which was of some moment and importance, and proper for him to know.

**Ver. 18.** *So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain,* etc.]

Immediately, without any more to do, without curiously inquiring into the thing, or examining the young man about it; which showed him to be a man of a good disposition, and ready to do a kind office, even to a prisoner:

*and said, Paul the prisoner called me to him;* either vocally or by some gesture, beckoned him to him:

*and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee;* in which may be observed the apostle's manner of address to the centurion, on this occasion; it was by way of entreaty; he asked it as a favour of him, to introduce his nephew to the chief captain; and the honour and modesty of the centurion, he did not seek by any methods to get the secret out, either of Paul or the young man; but readily undertakes the affair, honourably performs it, acquaints the captain with the circumstances of it, tells him the young man had something to say to him, he could not tell what, and then departs.

**Ver. 19.** *Then the chief captain took him by the hand,* etc.] Some have thought that the reason of this was, that he expected that the young man had brought him a present in his hand, from Paul; but this is to represent him as a sordid mercenary man, which ought not to be said, without sufficient proof; rather this should be considered as an instance of civility

and humanity, and what showed him to be a man of breeding and good manners; and might be done partly out of respect to Paul, and partly to encourage the young man to use freedom in the account he was about to give him:

*and went with him aside privately*; concluding by his coming from Paul, and perceiving by the account of the centurion, that he had a secret to communicate to him; wherefore it was acting a wise and prudent part to take him into a private room, and hear what he had to say:

*and asked him, what is that thou hast to tell me?* thereby giving the young man an opportunity, and encouraging him to relate the secret to him.

**Ver. 20.** *And he said, the Jews have agreed to desire thee*, etc.] By the Jews are meant, the Jewish sanhedrim, for the young man had not only intelligence of the conspiracy, and lying in wait of the forty men or more; but also of the agreement which the sanhedrim at the motion of these men were come into, to make the following request to the chief captain; which seems to confirm the above conjecture, that this young man might be a student under the president of the council, or one of the doctors, whereby he came at the knowledge of these things:

*that thou wouldst bring down Paul tomorrow into the council*, etc. (See Gill on “<sup>42315</sup>Acts 23:15”).

**Ver. 21.** *But do not thou yield unto them*, etc.] Or be persuaded by them, to bring Paul down from the castle to the sanhedrim; this must not be imputed to the young man’s pride and vanity, in taking upon him to give advice to the chief captain; but to his great affection for his uncle, which moved him to entreat, rather than to direct him, for which he gives a good reason:

*for there lie in wait for him more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him*; (see Gill on “<sup>42312</sup>Acts 23:12”). (see Gill on “<sup>42313</sup>Acts 23:13”).

*and now are they ready*; to execute their designs, being met together, and lying in ambush in some place, between the castle and the place where the sanhedrim met:

*looking for a promise from thee*; that when the sanhedrim should apply to him, he would promise them to bring Paul down according to their request;

and for the making and performing of this promise, these men were waiting.

**Ver. 22.** *So the chief captain then let the young man depart*, etc.] After he had had the account from him, and was master of the whole affair:

*and charged him, see thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me*; which was prudently said; it was a right and wise thing to conceal this matter, that the men might go on with their designs, and an opportunity be taken to convey Paul away, before the time came fixed by them to execute them; for otherwise, should it have been known that their plot was discovered, they would have entered upon new measures.

**Ver. 23.** *And he called to him two centurions*, etc.] Who had each of them an hundred soldiers under them:

*saying, make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea*; which was formerly called Strato's tower, a sea port town, where Felix the Roman governor now was; it was six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles <sup>f1158</sup> from Jerusalem: these two hundred soldiers were foot soldiers, as appears by their being distinguished from horsemen in the next clause, and were just the number that the two centurions had the command of; the making of them ready, was their seeing to it, that they were properly clothed, and accoutred with arms and ammunition, and with sufficient provision for their journey:

*and horsemen threescore and ten*; the Ethiopic version reads, "a hundred"; but without support from any copy: "and spearmen two hundred"; who carried spears in their right hand; the word used signifies such who receive, lay hold on, or hold anything in their right hand: some think it designs such who were employed in the militia, to lay hold on guilty persons, and hold them; the Alexandrian copy reads, *δεξιοβολους*, "those that cast with the right hand"; and so reads the Syriac version, to which the Arabic agrees, which renders it "darters"; such as carried darts in their hands, and did not shoot out of a bow, but cast darts with their hands: now these being got ready, were ordered to march,

*at the third hour of the night*; at nine o'clock at night, that they might go out unobserved, and before the petition from the sanhedrim was presented to him.

**Ver. 24.** *And provide them beasts*, etc.] Horses or mules; the Syriac version reads in the singular number, “a beast”: and one being sufficient for Paul, here may be a change of number; the Arabic and Ethiopic versions leave out these words, but the following clause makes them necessary:

*that they may set Paul on*; on the beast, or on one of the beasts provided; if more than one were provided, they might be for his companions, to go along with him:

*and bring him safe unto Felix the governor*; this man, of a servant, was made a freed man by Claudius Caesar <sup>f1159</sup>, and by him appointed in the room of Cumanus governor of Judea <sup>f1160</sup>; he was the brother of Pallas, who had the chief management of affairs under the emperor; and this Felix married three persons successively, that were of royal families; hence Suetonius <sup>f1161</sup> calls him the husband of three queens; one of these was Drusilla, afterwards mentioned in (~~402b~~ Acts 24:24) who was sister to King Agrippa. Tacitus calls him Antonius Felix <sup>f1162</sup> which name he had from Antonia the mother of Claudius’, whose servant he was; Josephus <sup>f1163</sup> calls him Claudius Felix, which name he took from the Emperor Claudius, who from so low and mean condition raised him to such honour and dignity; his name Felix signifies “happy”: according to Tacitus <sup>f1164</sup>, when Felix was first sent into Judea, the government was divided between him and Cumanus; Felix had Samaria, and Cumanus the other part, which was called the nation of the Galilaeans; but Josephus takes no notice of any such division, he says <sup>f1165</sup>, that Cumanus was banished; and after that Felix was sent by Caesar, governor of Judea, of Galilee, Samaria, and Peraea; and so he seems to be governor of the whole country at this time; he was now at Caesarea, and it is plain that Judea was under his government, since Paul, a prisoner at Jerusalem, is sent down unto him; and in this his government he continued during the life of Claudius; and when Nero became emperor, and added four cities to the kingdom of Agrippa, he constituted Felix governor of the rest of Judea <sup>f1166</sup>; which character he bore till he thought fit to remove him, and put Festus in his room, of whom mention is made hereafter: after these words the following ones are added, in the Vulgate Latin version, “for he was afraid lest perhaps the Jews should take him by force and kill him, and afterwards he should bear the reproach, as if he had took money”; but they are not to be found in any Greek copies.

**Ver. 25.** *And he wrote a letter after this manner.*] The chief captain wrote a letter to Felix the governor, the form and sum of which were as follow; this letter he sent by one of the centurions to him.

**Ver. 26.** *Claudius Lysias, unto the most excellent Governor Felix,* etc.] This is the inscription of the letter, and by it we learn the name of the chief captain, so often spoken of in this and the two preceding chapters, which was Claudius Lysias; the first of these names is a Roman one, and which he might take from the Emperor Claudius, for he was not a Roman born; and the latter seems to be a Greek name, and was his proper name, and, he himself very likely was a Greek, since he purchased his freedom with money; one of this name was Archon of Athens <sup>f1167</sup>; and another is reckoned by Cicero <sup>f1168</sup>, among the famous orators of Greece, and is often cited by Harpocratian <sup>f1169</sup>; one of Antiochus's noblemen, and who was of the blood royal, and acted as a general against the Jews, was of this name <sup>f1170</sup>.

“So he left Lysias, a nobleman, and one of the blood royal, to oversee the affairs of the king from the river Euphrates unto the borders of Egypt:” (1 Maccabees 3:32)

The chief captain calls Felix the governor

*the most excellent*, which was a title of honour that belonged to him as a governor; the same is given to Theophilus, (~~LUKE~~ Luke 1:3) sendeth greeting; or wishes all health and prosperity.

**Ver. 27.** *This man was taken by the Jews,* etc.] Meaning Paul, who was presented by the centurions to the governor, and was in his presence when the letter was opened and read, and who was taken by the Jews in the temple, and from thence dragged out and beaten by them:

*and should have been killed of them;* and would have been killed, had it not been for the chief captain; he was very near being killed by them, he was nigh unto death:

*then came I with an army and rescued him;* he came with the Roman band, which he had the command of, perhaps a thousand soldiers; for such a number he should have under him by his title; with these he came upon the Jews on a sudden, as they were beating Paul, and took him out of their hands, and saved him:

*having understood that he was a Roman*; but this he did not know till afterwards, after he had bound him with two chains, and after he had ordered him to be bound with thongs, and examined by scourging; all which he covers and hides from the governor, and suggests that it was his great concern for the Roman name, and for a Roman citizen, which put him upon this enterprise.

**Ver. 28.** *And when I would have known the cause*, etc.] Or crime, he was guilty of:

*wherefore they accused him*: which they charged him with, and for which they beat him almost to death:

*I brought him forth into their council*; their court of judicature, the great sanhedrim.

**Ver. 29.** *Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law*, etc.] As about the resurrection of the dead, and a future state, which some in the council denied, and some asserted, which with this heathen man were idle and foolish questions; or about the defiling of the temple, and speaking contemptibly of the law of Moses, the people of the Jews, and the holy place, which was the cry of the populace against him, and were things the captain knew little of:

*but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death, or of bonds*: by the laws of the Romans; and yet he himself had bound him with two chains at the first taking of him, and afterwards ordered him to be bound with thongs, and scourged, of which he says nothing, being convinced of his error, and willing to hide it; however, he bears a full testimony to the innocence of the apostle.

**Ver. 30.** *And when it was told me*, etc.] As it was by Paul's sister's son,

*how that the Jews laid wait for the man*; had formed a conspiracy to take away his life, and laid a scheme in order to it, and at least intended, if they were not actually in ambush, to seize him as he should be brought from the castle to the sanhedrim:

*I sent straightway to thee*; the prisoner Paul, under a guard of soldiers; this he did directly, as soon as ever he heard of the design of the Jews; and he sent him to Felix, as being governor, to whom the judgment of this affair properly belonged, and who was best qualified for it, at least in the chief



captain's account; and who doubtless consulted his own honour and safety, lest he should incur blame and disgrace, should a Roman have been slain through any neglect or want of care in him:

*and gave commandment to his accusers also, to say before thee what they had against him*; it is reasonable to conclude, that he said nothing of this to them, though he might have determined he would, till after Paul was sent away; otherwise the affair would have been discovered, which he desired might be concealed:

*farewell*; which is the conclusion of the epistle, and is a wish of health and happiness.

**Ver. 31.** *Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul*, etc.]

Out of the castle, and put him upon a beast, as the chief captain had ordered the centurions, and they had directed the soldiers to do:

*and brought him by night to Antipatris*: they set out from Jerusalem at the third hour, or about nine o'clock at night, and travelled all night, and by break of day came to Antipatris; a city which lay in the road from Jerusalem to Caesarea: it was built by Herod the great, in the best soil of his kingdom, enriched with rivers and woods<sup>f1171</sup>; and was so called by him, in memory of his father Antipater; it before went by the name of Chabar Zaba<sup>f1172</sup>, or Capharsaba; the Jewish writers place it in the utmost borders of the land of Judea<sup>f1173</sup>; hence that phrase so often used by them, from Gebath to Antipatris<sup>f1174</sup>, in like sense as from Dan to Beersheba, these two places being the utmost borders of the land; here it was that Simon the just, with some of the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem, met Alexander the great, who travelled all night, as these soldiers with Paul did, and came to Antipatris at sun rising<sup>f1175</sup>. It was forty two miles from Jerusalem. It was in the road from Judea to Galilee, as appears from the following canon of the Jews, concerning divorces<sup>f1176</sup>;

“if a husband says to his wife, lo, this is thy divorce, if I do not come thirty days hence, and he goes from Judea to Galilee, and comes to Antipatris and returns, it becomes void:”

the way from Jerusalem to Caesarea lay through Nicopolis, Lydda, Antipatris, and Betthar; from Jerusalem to Nicopolis, according to the old Jerusalem Itinerary<sup>f1177</sup>, were twenty two miles; from thence to Lydda, ten miles; and from Lydda to Antipatris ten more (which make forty two miles, as before observed); and from Antipatris to Betthar ten miles, and from

thence to Caesarea, sixteen more: so that when the apostle was at Antipatris, he had twenty six miles more to go to Caesarea; and hence it appears, that the length of the journey from Jerusalem to Caesarea was sixty eight miles; though Josephus<sup>f1178</sup> makes the distance to be six hundred furlongs, or seventy five miles: and that the way from the one to the other lay through the places before mentioned, may be illustrated from what the same writer says, of some persons travelling from Caesarea to Jerusalem; so he relates<sup>f1179</sup>, concerning Quadratus governor of Syria, that from Tyre he came to Caesarea, from Caesarea to Lydda, and from Lydda to Jerusalem; and of Cestius the Roman general, he says<sup>f1180</sup>, that from Caesarea he came to Antipatris, and from Antipatris to Lydda, and from Lydda to Jerusalem, which clearly seems to be the same road the apostle went; and so Jerom<sup>f1181</sup>, in the account he gives of the journey of Paula, says, that she came to Caesarea, where she saw the house of Cornelius, the cottage of Philip, and the beds of the four virgin prophetesses; and from thence to Antipatris, a little town half pulled down, which Herod called after his father's name; and from thence to Lydda, now Diospolis, famous for the resurrection of Dorcas, and the healing of Aeneas. Antipatris is, by Ptolomy<sup>f1182</sup>, placed at the west of Jordan, and is mentioned along with Gaza, Lydda, and Emmaus; some take it to be the same with Capharsalama, mentioned in:

“Nicanor also, when he saw that his counsel was discovered, went out to fight against Judas beside Capharsalama:” (1 Maccabees 7:31)

and others say, it is the same that is since called Assur or Arsuf, a town on the sea coast, which is not likely, since it does not appear that Antipatris was a maritime city. The apostle could not now stay to preach the Gospel in this place, nor do we elsewhere read or hear of a Gospel church state in it, until the “fifth” century; when it appears<sup>f1183</sup> there was a church here, and Polychronius was bishop of it, who was present at the council of Chalcedon, held in the year 451; and in the “eighth” century there were many Christians dwelt here, for in the year 744 there were many of them killed by the Arabians.

**Ver. 32.** *On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him*, etc.] That is, the two hundred soldiers, and the two hundred spearmen, who were all on foot, left the seventy horsemen to conduct Paul to Caesarea; for being come to Antipatris, all danger from the Jews was over:

*and returned to the castle*; the castle Antonia in Jerusalem, from whence they set out.

**Ver. 33.** *Who, when they came to Caesarea*, etc.] The seventy horsemen:

*and delivered the epistle to the governor*; to Felix, governor of Judea, who was now at Caesarea; namely, the letter which Claudius Lysias, the chief captain, sent to him; the form and contents of which are before given:

*these presented Paul also before him*; concerning whom, and whose affairs, the letter was.

**Ver. 34.** *And when the governor, had read the letter*, etc.] Which he doubtless opened and read as soon as he had received it, not knowing what important business might be contained in it, or of what dangerous consequence a neglect of reading it might be; this showed care and diligence in him:

*he asked of what province he was*; since he perceived by the letter he was a Roman, and that he might know whether he was under his jurisdiction, and whether the hearing of his case belonged to him; and it should seem that it rather belonged to the governor of Syria; but that the crimes he was charged with were committed in Judea, particularly that of profaning the temple.

*And when he understood that he was of Cilicia*; which was a Roman province, in which Tarsus was, where Paul was born free; (<sup>4213</sup>Acts 21:39, 22:3).

**Ver. 35.** *I will hear thee, said he*, etc.] The Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, “we will hear”, which is a grand courtly way of speaking:

*when thine accusers are come*; which Lysias, in his letter, informed him that he had ordered them to come; which shows the governor to have some sense of justice and integrity, being desirous to hear both sides before he judged of the affair, though there was so much said in the chief captain’s letter in favour of Paul’s innocence, and against his enemies.

*And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s judgment hall*; or palace: this was a place built by Herod the great at Caesarea, of whose magnificent buildings here Josephus gives a large account. For besides the famous haven or port which he made here, he adorned the place with splendid palaces, he built a theatre, and an amphitheatre, and a “forum”<sup>f1184</sup>, which

was either a market place, or a court of judicature; and if the latter, perhaps the same that is here meant, in a part of which, or in a place adjoining to it, the apostle was put. Here he was kept by a guard of soldiers, but not in close confinement; he had much liberty, and his friends and acquaintance had leave to come to him; (see ~~4023~~ Acts 24:23). We read <sup>f1185</sup> of  $\hat{y}rsyq$   $l \text{ } \text{ç} \text{ } yj \text{ } yd$ , which some interpret “the chamber of the judges of Caesarea”; or the place where they sat in judgment, and may be the same that is here meant; though others interpret it a prison; and so it seems was this judgment hall of Herod’s.

# CHAPTER 24

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 24

**Ver. 1.** *And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders,* etc.] From Jerusalem to Caesarea: these five days are to be reckoned not from the seizing of Paul in the temple, but from his coming to Caesarea; the Alexandrian copy reads, “after some days”, leaving it undetermined how many: the high priest, with the elders, the members of the sanhedrim, with “some” of them, as the same copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, came down hither; not merely as accusers, by the order of the chief captain, but willingly, and of their own accord, to vindicate themselves and their people, lest they should fall under the displeasure of the Roman governor, for encouraging tumults and riots: the high priest must be conscious to himself that he had acted in an illegal manner, in ordering Paul to be smitten on the mouth, in the midst of the council, in the presence of the chief captain; and if it had not been for the soldiers, Paul had been pulled to pieces in the council: and the elders knew what a hand they had in the conspiracy against his life; and they were sensible that this plot was discovered, and Paul was secretly conveyed away; and what the captain had wrote to the governor, they could not tell, and therefore made the more haste down to him, to set themselves right, and get Paul condemned:

*and with a certain orator named Tertullus:* this man, by his name, seems to have been a Roman; and because he might know the Roman, or the Greek language, or both, which the Jews did not so well understand, and was very well acquainted with all the forms in the Roman courts of judicature, as well as was an eloquent orator; therefore they pitched upon him, and took him down with them to open and plead their cause. The name Tertullus is a diminutive from Tertius, as Marullus from Marius, Lucullus from Lucius, and Catullus from Catus. The father of the wife of Titus, before he was emperor, was of this name <sup>f1186</sup>; and some say her name was Tertulla; and the grandmother of Vespasian, by his father’s side, was of this name, under whom he was brought up <sup>f1187</sup>. This man’s title, in the Greek text, is **ρητωρ**, “Rhetor”, a rhetorician; but though with the Latins an

“orator” and a “rhetorician” are distinguished, an orator being one that pleads causes in courts, and a rhetorician a professor of rhetoric; yet, with the Greeks, the “Rhetor” is an orator; so Demosthenes was called; and so Cicero calls himself<sup>f1188</sup>.

*Who informed the governor against Paul*; brought in a bill of information against him, setting forth his crimes, and declaring themselves his accusers; they appeared in open court against him, and accused him; for this is not to be restrained to Tertullus, but is said of the high priest, and elders with him; for, the word is in the plural number, though the Syriac version reads in the singular, and seems to refer it to the high priest.

**Ver. 2.** *And when he was called forth*, etc.] Not Tertullus the orator; for this is not to be understood of him, and of his being admitted to speak, as is thought by some, but the Apostle Paul; which is put out of doubt by the Vulgate Latin version, which reads, “and Paul being cited”; he was ordered to be brought out of custody into the court, to hear his indictment, and answer for himself:

*Tertullus began to accuse him*; to set forth his crimes, which he introduced with a flattering preface to Felix:

*saying, seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence*; very likely he might refer to his purging the country of robbers; he took Eleazar, the chief of them, who had infested the country for twenty years, and many others with him, whom he sent bound to Rome, and others of them he crucified; and whereas there arose up another set of men, under a pretence of religion, who led people into the wilderness, signifying, that God would show them some signs of liberty; these seemed, to Felix, to sow the seeds, and lay the foundation of division and defection, which showed his sagacity, and which Tertullus here calls “providence”; wherefore, foreseeing what would be the consequence of these things, if not timely prevented, he sent armed men, horse and foot, and destroyed great numbers of them; and particularly he put to flight the Egyptian false prophet, who had collected thirty thousand men together, and dispersed them<sup>f1189</sup>; and yet his government was attended with cruelty and avarice; witness the murder of Jonathan the high priest, by a sort of cut throats, who were connived at by him; particularly by the means of Dora his friend, whom he corrupted; and the pillaging of many of the inhabitants of Caesarea<sup>f1190</sup>: so that this was a piece of flattery,

used by Tertullus, to catch his ear, and gain attention, and insinuate himself into his affections.

**Ver. 3.** *We accept it always, and in all places*, etc.] The sense is, that the Jews observed with pleasure the provident care the governor took of their nation, and at all times spoke well of him; and wherever they came commended his conduct, and owned the favours they received from him, and the blessings they enjoyed under his government: and then giving him his title of honour,

*most noble Felix*; Tertullus adds, that this the Jews did

*with all thankfulness*; as sensible of the obligations they were under to him; but this was all a farce, mere artifice, and wretched flattery.

**Ver. 4.** *Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee*, etc.] Suggesting, that he could say a great deal more under this head, but, for brevity sake, should omit it; and because he would not tire his patience, and hinder business going forward:

*I pray thee, that thou wouldst hear us of thy clemency a few words*; he praises him for his humanity and good nature, and for his patience in hearing causes, and promises him great conciseness in the account he should give him; and entreats that, according to his wonted goodness, he would condescend to hear what he had to lay before him; all which was artfully said to engage attention to him.

**Ver. 5.** *For we have found this man a pestilent fellow*, etc.] Pointing to Paul, the prisoner at the bar; the word here used signifies the “pest” or “plague” itself; and it was usual with orators among the Romans, when they would represent a man as a very wicked man, as dangerous to the state, and unworthy to live in it, to call him the pest of the city, or of the country, or of the empire, as may be observed in several places in Cicero’s Orations.

*And a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world*: sedition was severely punished by the Romans, being what they carefully watched and guarded against, and was what the Jews were supposed to be very prone unto; and Tertullus would suggest, that the several riots, and tumults, and seditions, fomented by the Jews, in the several parts of the Roman empire, here called the world, were occasioned by the apostle: the crime charged upon him is greatly aggravated, as that not only he was

guilty of sedition, but that he was the mover of it, and that he stirred up all the Jews to it, and that in every part of the world, or empire, than which nothing was more false; the Jews often raised up a mob against him, but he never rioted them, and much less moved them against the Roman government: and to this charge he adds,

*and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes*; not Nazarites, as Calvin seems to understand the passage; for these were men of great repute among the Jews, and for Paul to be at the head of them would never be brought against him as a charge: but Nazarenes, that is, Christians, so called by way of contempt and reproach, from Jesus of Nazareth; which name and sect being contemptible among the Romans, as well as Jews, are here mentioned to make the apostle more odious.

**Ver. 6.** *Who also hath gone about to profane the temple*, etc.] By introducing a Greek into it; (see <sup><4213></sup>Acts 21:28,29) which was only a supposition and conjecture of the Asiatic Jews, and was a false and groundless one:

*whom we took*; as they did in the temple, and dragged him out of it:

*and would have judged according to our law*; which was another untruth, for they had him not before any court of judicature; they brought no charge in form against him, nor did they examine his case, and inquire into the truth of things, or hear what he had to say, but fell upon him, and beat him; and if it had not been for the chief captain and his soldiers, would have destroyed him, so far were they from proceeding according to their law: it seems by Tertullus calling the law, “our law”, that he was a Jewish proselyte; or else he speaks after the manner of lawyers, who call what is their clients, theirs.

**Ver. 7.** *But the chief captain Lysias came upon us*, etc.] Suddenly, and at unawares, immediately, and with great haste, before they could execute their designs; which were not to judge Paul according to law, but to kill him, in the manner the zealots did:

*and with great violence took him away out of our hands*; for he came with an army, and rescued him, (<sup><4237></sup>Acts 23:27) Some copies add, “and sent him to thee”; and so the Syriac version reads.

**Ver. 8.** *Commanding his accusers to come unto thee*, etc.] But this was not done till after Paul had set forth his case before the people, upon the



stairs leading to the castle: and after he had pleaded his own cause before the sanhedrim; and after the chief captain had had intelligence of the Jews lying in wait to kill him: Tertullus would insinuate that the captain was blameworthy, that he hindered a legal process against Paul; and that it was owing to him, that this trouble was given the governor, as well as the high priest and elders, who by his orders came down from Jerusalem to Caesarea; and that had it not been for him this affair might have been finished with more dispatch, and less trouble.

*By examining of whom;* not the accusers, but either the chief captain, as some think, or rather Paul:

*thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him;* so impudent was Tertullus, and of such effrontery and assurance, that he feared not to say, that the governor, by examining Paul himself, would easily come to the knowledge of the things he was accused of, and plainly see that he was guilty of them; so that there would be no need of their attestations, or of producing witnesses against him.

**Ver. 9.** *And the Jews also assented,* etc.] That is, Ananias the high priest, and the elders that were with him, agreed to what Tertullus said, and confirmed the same.

*Saying, that these things were so;* that Paul was such a person, and was guilty of the crimes he had set forth; and that the chief captain had taken the steps, and done the things he had related.

**Ver. 10.** *Then Paul, after the governor had beckoned unto him to speak,* etc.] Tertullus having finished his account, Paul was silent to his charge and calumnies, until the governor beckoned with his hand or head, or made some sign to him to speak for himself; which he might not do, until leave was given him; and then he

*answered* as follows:

*forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation;* some say he was in the thirteenth, others in the tenth year of his government; some copies read a “just judge”; but this does not so well agree with the character of Felix; (see Gill on “~~Acts~~ Acts 24:27”).

*I do the more cheerfully answer for myself;* since if he had been such a mover of sedition everywhere, he must in this course of years have known

or heard something of it; and seeing also he could be no stranger to the temper of the Jews, that they were given to envy, revenge, lying, and perjury, and therefore would not easily believe all they said, or rashly take their part, but rather would pity the apostle, who had fallen into such hands, and do him justice.

**Ver. 11.** *Because that thou mayest understand*, etc.] By what Paul now asserted, and by the witnesses which he could produce to certify the truth of it:

*that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship*; that is, from the time that he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, to the present time, in which he stood before Felix, pleading his own cause; which may be reckoned, thus, he came in one day from Caesarea to Jerusalem, (~~4216~~ Acts 21:16,17) the next day he visited James and the elders, (~~4218~~ Acts 21:18) on the third day he purified himself in the temple, (~~4226~~ Acts 21:26) where he was taken and used ill by the Jews; on the fourth day, he was brought before the sanhedrim, and defended himself, (~~4230~~ Acts 22:30) on the fifth day forty Jews conspire to take away his life, (~~4231~~ Acts 23:11), on the sixth day he came to Caesarea, being sent there by Lysias, (~~4232~~ Acts 23:32) and five days after this, which make eleven, Ananias, and the elders, with Tertullus, came down to accuse him; and this day was the twelfth, on which his trial came on. And of these twelve days he was a prisoner nine, and therefore could not have done so much mischief, and stirred up so much sedition as was insinuated; and in opposition to the charge of profaning the temple, he observes that he came up to Jerusalem to “worship”; namely, at the feast of Pentecost.

**Ver. 12.** *And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man*, etc.] Either about civil or religious affairs: not that it was criminal to dispute in the temple; it was a common thing for the doctors to dispute about matters of religion, in the porches, and courts, and chambers of the temple, as it may be observed they often did with Christ; but the apostle mentions this to show, that he was so far from moving sedition among the people of the Jews, that he never so much as entered into any conversation with them, upon any subject whatever: true indeed, he was in the temple, and was found there, but not disputing with any, but purifying himself according to the law of Moses:

*neither raising up the people*; stirring them up to sedition, and tumult, to rebel against the Roman government:

*neither in the synagogues*; where there were the greatest concourse of people, and the best opportunity of sowing seditious principles, and of which there were many in the city of Jerusalem. The Jews say <sup>f1191</sup> there were four hundred and sixty synagogues in Jerusalem; some say <sup>f1192</sup> four hundred and eighty:

*nor in the city*; of Jerusalem, in any of the public streets or markets, where there were any number of people collected together; the apostle mentions the most noted and public places, where any thing of this kind might most reasonably be thought to be done.

**Ver. 13.** *Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.*] As that he was a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, and a profaner of the temple these things they could not set forth in any clear light, and bring testimonies, or give demonstration of; they could not make them appear to be true, which it lay upon them to do, or otherwise in course he ought be acquitted: this was challenging and defying them to make good their assertions.

**Ver. 14.** *But this I confess unto thee*, etc.] What was truth he was not ashamed of, but ready to own, and bear his testimony for, whatever was the consequence of it:

*that after the way which they call heresy*; referring to the charge of his being a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, (<sup><4015></sup>Acts 24:5) and meaning by the way the Christian religion, or the doctrines of Christianity, which the Jews called heresy; and as early as this were the Christians, by them, called heretics: so we read <sup>f1193</sup> of *μννυμh tkrb*, “a prayer against the heretics”, which Samuel (the little) composed before, or in the presence of R. Gamaliel the elder, he approving of it; which R. Gamaliel was Paul’s master; and some have thought, that Samuel the little, the composer of this prayer, was Saul himself; so that he knew very well that the Christian doctrine was called heresy, and the Christians heretics, for he had called them so himself in the time of his unregeneracy; but now he was not ashamed to profess that way, and walk in it, and according to it worship God, as follows:

*so worship I the God of my fathers*; even Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, suggesting, that by embracing Christianity, he had not denied, and gone off from the worship of the one, only, living, and true God, the God of Israel; and that there was an entire agreement between the saints of the Old

Testament, and the Christians of the New, in the object of worship; the Vulgate Latin version reads, “so serve I the Father, and my God”; that is, God the Father, who is the Father of Christ, and the God and Father of believers in him:

*believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets*; which the Sadducees did not; and strictly adhering to these, and not to the traditions of the elders, as did the Scribes and Pharisees; so that since he believed whatever was contained in the sacred writings, he could not be charged justly with heresy; and as he believed, so he taught nothing but what was agreeably to the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

**Ver. 15.** *And have hope towards God*, etc.] Of an interest in him, and of enjoying eternal life and happiness with him in a future state:

*which they themselves also allow*; that is, some of the Jews, not the Sadducees, for they denied what is afterwards asserted; but the Pharisees, who believed the immortality of the soul, and its existence in a future state:

*and that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust*; agreeably to the doctrine of Christ in (~~RES~~ John 5:28,29). In this article the Pharisees of those times were sounder than the modern Jews; for though the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is one of their thirteen articles of faith, and is a fundamental one, which he that does not believe, cannot be said to be of the Jewish religion; yet they limit it entirely to the righteous <sup>f1194</sup>, and will not allow that the wicked shall rise again: and this notion obtained also very early; for in their Talmud <sup>f1195</sup> it is reported, as the saying of R. Abhu, that

“the day of rain is greater than the resurrection of the dead; the resurrection of the dead is *uyqydxl* , for the righteous, but the rain is both for the righteous, and the wicked.”

Though Abarbinel <sup>f1196</sup> says, that the sense of this expression is not, that they that are not just shall have no part in the resurrection, but that hereby is declared the benefit and reward to be enjoyed at the resurrection; that that is not like rain, from whence both just and unjust equally receive advantage; whereas only the reward is for the righteous, but not for the ungodly: moreover, he observes, that this saying was not received and approved of by all the wise men, particularly that R. Joseph dissented, and others agreed with him; and as for himself, he openly declares, that that

assertion, that the just among the Israelites only shall rise again, is foreign from truth, since the Scripture affirms, (<sup>2711B</sup>Daniel 12:2) “that many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake”; but if there should be no other than the righteous in the resurrection, they would without doubt be very few; besides it is said, “some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt”; and Isaiah says, (<sup>2761A</sup>Isaiah 66:24) “and they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me”; which shows, that the ungodly shall rise again, to receive their due punishment: and Manasseh ben Israel <sup>f1197</sup>, in the last century, argued for the resurrection of both the godly and ungodly, from the same passages of Scripture; and yet he was not of opinion, that the resurrection would be general and common to all men, only that some of all sorts, good, and bad, and middling, would rise again, and which he supposed was the sense of the ancients. It is certain the Jews are divided in their sentiments about this matter; some of them utterly deny that any other shall rise but the just; yea, they affirm <sup>f1198</sup>, that only the just among the Israelites, and not any of the nations of the world shall rise; others say that all shall rise at the resurrection of the dead, excepting the generation of the flood <sup>f1199</sup>; and others <sup>f1200</sup> think, that only they that have been very bad, or very good, shall rise, but not those that are between both; but certain it is, as the apostle affirms, that all shall rise, both just and unjust: the just are they who are made so by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them, and who being created anew unto righteousness and true holiness, live soberly, righteously, and godly; the unjust are they who are destitute of righteousness, and are filled with all unrighteousness; and these latter, as well as the former, will rise again from the dead; which is clear, not only from the words of Christ, and the writings of the apostles, but from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, particularly (<sup>2711B</sup>Daniel 12:2) and also from the justice of God, which requires that they who have sinned in the body, should be punished in the body; wherefore it is necessary on this account, that the bodies of the wicked should be raised, that they with their souls may receive the full and just recompense of reward; and likewise from the general judgment, which will include the righteous and the wicked, and who must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to receive for the deeds done in the body, whether good or evil; in order to which there must be a resurrection of them; to which add, the account the Scripture gives of the punishment of the wicked in hell, which supposes the resurrection of the body, and in which the body and soul will be both destroyed. Indeed there will be a difference between the resurrection of the

just and of the unjust, both in the time of their rising, the dead in Christ will rise first at the beginning of the thousand years, the wicked not until they are ended; and in the means and manner of their rising; they will be both raised by Christ, but the one by virtue of union to him, the other merely by his power; the just will rise in bodies not only immortal, and incorruptible, but powerful, spiritual, and glorious, even like to the glorious body of Christ; the wicked will rise with bodies immortal, but not free from sin, nor glorious: yea, their resurrection will differ in the end of it; the one will rise to everlasting life and glory, the other to everlasting shame and damnation.

**Ver. 16.** *And herein do I exercise myself*, etc.] Or because of this; on account of this doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, which is a doctrine according to godliness, and promotes and engages to a holy life and conversation, as the contrary tends to encourage a dissolute and sinful manner of living; (see <sup><415D></sup>1 Corinthians 15:32) The apostle studied, and laboured, and bent himself, and employed his thought, care, and time,

*to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man*; that is, to discharge every duty which God requires, and to give to every man what is due to him; so as to please God, and not offend men, neither Jew nor Gentile, nor the church of God; and so as that conscience may be clear of guilt, and may not be defiled with sin, being purged and purified by the blood of Christ. By a “conscience void of offence”, is meant a good conversation; which as it respects God, lies in a carefulness not to offend him, but to do his will; and as it respects men, a shunning what may give offence, or be a stumbling to them; and though this cannot be perfectly attained to in each of its branches, yet there is in every good man a concern to have such a conscience; and the consideration of the resurrection of the dead, the general judgment, and a future state, induce him to it.

**Ver. 17.** *Now after many years*, etc.] Absence from Jerusalem; it was now about five and twenty years since his conversion, and most of this time he spent among the Gentiles; three years after it he went up to Jerusalem, and fourteen years after that, (<sup><4018></sup>Galatians 1:18, 2:1) but it had now been some years since he had been there:

*I came to bring alms to my nation*; the collections which were made among the Gentile churches, particularly in Macedonia, for the poor saints at Jerusalem, (<sup><4155></sup>Romans 15:25-27, <sup><4001></sup>2 Corinthians 8:1-4).

*and offerings*; either for the day of Pentecost, according to the usages of that feast, or the offerings on the account of the vow of the Nazarite, (<sup><421></sup>Acts 21:26). The Vulgate Latin version adds, “and vows”; unless the spiritual and evangelical sacrifices of prayer and praise can be thought to be meant, since the ceremonial law was now abrogated; though it is manifest the apostle did at some times, and in some cases, comply with the Jews in the observance of it, in order to gain some.

**Ver. 18.** *Whereupon*, etc.] Or “among which”; while the apostle was busy about the offerings of the Nazarites:

*certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple*; and therefore could not be said to profane it; this he observes in answer to the charge of his attempting to profane it, and acquaints the governor how that was; as that having joined himself to four men that had a vow upon them, and being in the temple purifying himself with them, certain Jews that came from Ephesus, in Asia, who knew him there, and had a pique against him, found him here; not profaning the temple, as they pretended, but acting according to the worship and service of it; and that,

*neither with a multitude*; for there were but four men with him;

*nor with tumult*; making any noise and riot, or stirring up persons to sedition and rebellion.

**Ver. 19.** *Who ought to have been here before thee*, etc.] For they were the only persons who saw him in the temple, and what he was doing; and who by an hideous outcry raised a mob upon him, who took things upon hearsay from them:

*and object, if they had ought against me*; either with respect to sedition, or blasphemy, error or heresy, if they were capable of proving anything.

**Ver. 20.** *Or else let these same here say*, etc.] They that are present, the high priest and the elders, who were come down to accuse him:

*if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council*; or “Jewish sanhedrim”; when he was brought before them by the chief captain, (<sup><421></sup>Acts 22:30, 23:1) meaning, if any evil was then done by him, or any iniquity proved upon him, let it be declared; for as for his imprecation, or prophecy, that God would smite the high priest, he excused himself on that head, as not knowing it was the high priest.

**Ver. 21.** *Except it be for this one voice*, etc.] Sentence or expression following, which declares his faith about the resurrection; not that he thought or owned that this was an evil in him, but that it was the only one, that any of them, the Jews, a part among them, namely, the Sadducees, could condemn, or judge to be evil in him:

*that I cried, standing among them*; whereby they were thrown into confusion and division among themselves: and it was this,

*touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day*; (see <sup>4236</sup>Acts 23:6).

**Ver. 22.** *And when Felix heard these things*, etc.] Which were said on both sides, both by plaintiff and defendant, the charges brought against Paul, and his answer to them, as a judge ought to do:

*having more perfect knowledge of that way*; the Christian religion, which the Jews called heresy, and Paul had embraced; the sense is, either that he had a more perfect knowledge of it than he had before; and by what Paul had said, he saw that it was not contrary to the law, nor had any tendency to promote sedition and tumult; or rather, when he should have more perfect knowledge of this new way, called the sect of the Nazarenes, he would determine this cause, and not before: wherefore

*he deferred* them; put them off to longer time, and would make no decision in favour of one side or the other:

*and said, when Lysias the chief captain shall come* from Jerusalem to Caesarea,

*I will know the uttermost of your matters*: as for the way, or religion of the Christians, he proposed doubtless to consult other persons; and as for the profanation of the temple, and especially about stirring up of sedition, he would inquire of Lysias about that; and when he had got full information of these particulars, then he promised them to bring things to an issue, and finish the cause.

**Ver. 23.** *And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul*, etc.] In custody, to watch and guard him, and look after him, that he went not away, since he was neither condemned nor acquitted; and therefore must be retained a prisoner, till one or other was done:



*and to let him have liberty*; not to go where he pleased, or out of the place of confinement, for then there would have been no need of the after direction, not to prohibit his friends from coming to him; but to free him from his bonds and close confinement; which was done, partly on account of his being a Roman, and partly because he took him to be an innocent man, and it may be because he hoped to receive money from him:

*that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him*; but that they should have free access to him, and the liberty of conversation with him; which layouts granted show that he was inclined to the side of Paul, both through the defence that he had made for himself, and through the letter which Lysias sent him, as well as through the knowledge he had gained by long observation and experience, of the temper and disposition of the Jews, their priests and elders.

**Ver. 24.** *And after certain days*, etc.] Some days after this trial:

*when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess*; to Caesarea, having been to fetch her from some other place, or to meet her: this woman was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, who was eaten by worms, (<sup>4123</sup>Acts 12:23) and sister to King Agrippa, mentioned in the next chapter; but though she was born of Jewish parents, and so a Jewess, as she is here called, yet her name was a Roman name, and is the diminutive of Drusus; the first of which name took it from killing Drausus, an enemy's general, and who was of the Livian family; and the name of the mother of Tiberius Caesar was Livia Drusilla; Caius Caligula, the Roman emperor, had also a sister whose name was Drusilla <sup>f1201</sup>; this name Herod took from the Romans, and gave to his daughter; though the masculine name is often to be met with in Jewish writings; we frequently read of *yaswrd ybr*, "Rabbi Drusai" <sup>f1202</sup>; Herod Agrippa <sup>f1203</sup> left three daughters, born to him of Cypris, Bernice, Mariamne, and Drusilla; and a son by the same, whose name was Agrippa; Agrippa when his father died was seventeen years of age, Bernice was sixteen, and was married to her uncle Herod; Mariamne and Drusilla were virgins, but were promised in marriage by their father; Mariamne to Julius Archelaus, son of Chelcias, and Drusilla to Epiphanes, the son of Antiochus, king of Comagene; but after Herod's death, he refused to marry her, being unwilling to embrace the Jewish religion and relinquish his own, though he had promised her father he would; wherefore her brother Agrippa married her to Azizus king of the Emesenes, who was willing to be circumcised; but this marriage was quickly dissolved; for Felix

coming to the government of Judea, seeing Drusilla, was enamoured with her beauty; and by the means of one of his friends, one Simon a Jew, and a native of Cyprus, who pretended to be a magician, he enticed her from her husband, and prevailed upon her to marry him:

*he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ;* which he did, chiefly on account of his wife, who being brought up in the Jewish religion, had some notion of the Messiah the Jews expected, and could better understand what Paul talked of than he did; who at this time doubtless showed, that Christ was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; that he is truly God and man, that he died, and rose again from the dead on the third day, and that he has obtained salvation for sinners, and that whoever believes in him shall be saved; this was the faith in Christ Paul discoursed of, and Felix and his wife heard; but it does not appear that it was attended with the power of God, to the conversion of either of them; it seems to have been merely out of curiosity, and as a diversion to them, and to do his wife a pleasure, that he sent for Paul and heard him.

**Ver. 25.** *And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,* etc.] The apostle not only discoursed concerning the doctrine of faith in Christ, but insisted upon the duties of religion: and particularly he reasoned upon righteousness; not justifying righteousness, that is only the righteousness of Christ, and which rather belongs to the doctrine of faith in Christ; but the exercise of justice, or the doing of righteousness between man and man; which was agreeably to the light of nature, to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ, and is a virtue highly necessary in a judge, and was greatly wanting in Felix; who, as the historian says <sup>f1204</sup>, was guilty of much cruelty and injustice throughout this government and therefore very appropriately did the apostle fall on this subject: and he might also reason concerning the necessity of a righteousness, in order to justify before God, and to appear before him with acceptance, and to enter into heaven: he might show, that it was the loss of righteousness which was the reason of the first man being removed from his place and state of happiness, in which he was whilst innocent; and that to admit persons into heaven without a righteousness, is contrary to the pure and holy nature of God, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and particularly would not be agreeable to his justice, which requires a perfect righteousness; yea, it would be uncomfortable to holy men themselves, to have ungodly and unrighteous persons with them in heaven: he might also reason upon the want of righteousness, which is in every man; how that the first man having lost his

righteousness, all his posterity are destitute of one; and that they are not able to work out one acceptable to God, and which will justify in his sight; that the thing is impracticable and impossible, and that that which men call a righteousness is not one, at least is not a justifying one: he might insist upon the unprofitableness of a man's own works of righteousness for such a purpose, by observing the imperfection of them; and that justification by them is contrary to God's declared way of justifying sinners, is derogatory to his free grace, would make null and void the death of Christ, and encourage boasting in men; and all this he might reason about, in order to convince him of the necessity and suitableness of the righteousness of faith in Christ, he had before been discoursing of: and very pertinently in the next place did he insist on "temperance"; or "continence", and chastity; since Felix had enticed away another man's wife, and now lived in adultery with her: and who was now with him, whilst hearing this discourse; which concluded with an account of "judgment to come"; how that Jesus Christ is appointed the Judge of quick and dead, and that all must appear before him, stand at his bar, and be accountable to him for all their actions, and be judged by him, which will be done in the most righteous manner: he might argue this, not only from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, of which Drusilla might have some knowledge, such as (<sup><del>1963</del></sup> Psalm 96:13, <sup><del>2087</del></sup> Ecclesiastes 3:17 11:9 12:14 # <sup><del>2709</del></sup> Daniel 7:9,10), but from reason, from the relation which men stand in to God, as his creatures, and therefore are accountable to him for their actions; and from the justice of God, which in many instances, in the present state of things, is not manifest: good men are afflicted and suffer much, and bad men flourish and enjoy great prosperity; wherefore there must be another state in which things will have another turn, and justice will take place: he might from hence conclude the certainty of a future judgment; and the universality of it, that it would reach to all men and things, and would proceed according to the strict rules of justice, and in the most awful manner; and that a true and just sentence would be pronounced and strictly executed: upon which account of things,

*Felix trembled*; his conscience was awakened, accused him of the injustice and incontinence he had been guilty of; and his mind was filled with horror, at the thought of the awful judgment he could not escape, which Paul had described unto him; nor could he bear him to discourse any longer on these subjects:

*and answered, go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*; he signifying he was not at leisure now to hear him any

longer; when he had a spare hour he would send for him, and hear him out; but this was only an excuse to get rid of him now, and lull his conscience asleep, and make it quiet and easy; which he was afraid would be more and more disturbed, should he suffer Paul to go on preaching in this manner: it is a saying of R. Judah <sup>f1205</sup>,

“say not when I am at leisure I will learn, perhaps thou wilt never be at leisure.”

**Ver. 26.** *He hoped also that money would have been given him of Paul,* etc.] For he observed from his own defence, that he came up to Jerusalem to bring alms and offerings; and he perceived by Tertullus’s indictment, that he was at the head of a large body of men; that he was some considerable person, at least who was in great esteem among some sort of people, and whose life and liberty were valuable: and he might hope if Paul had not money of his own, yet his friends would supply him with a sufficiency to obtain his freedom; and it may be that it was with this view that he ordered that they should have free access to him and minister to him, that so he might have to give to him:

*that he might loose him;* from all confinement, and set him at entire liberty: *wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him;* but not about religious matters, but about his civil affairs; suggesting he would release him for a sum of money, which the apostle did not listen to, being unwilling to encourage such evil practices, or to make use of unlawful means to free himself.

**Ver. 27.** *But after two years,* etc.] Not of Felix’s government, for he had been judge many years in that nation, but of the apostle’s confinement at Caesarea:

*Porcius Festus came in Felix’s room;* was made governor of Judea by Nero in his stead; who having had many and loud complaints against him for malpractice, moved him: and so Josephus <sup>f1206</sup> says, that Festus succeeded Felix in the government of Judea, and calls him as here, Porcius Festus; in the Arabic version he is called Porcinius Festus, and in the Vulgate Latin version Portius Festus, but his name was not Portius, from “porta”, a gate, but “Porcius”, a porcis, from hogs; it was common with the Romans to take names from the brute creatures; so Suillius from swine, Caprarius and Caprilius from goats, Bubulcus from oxen, and Ovinus from sheep. The famous Cato was of the family of the Porcii; his name was M.

Porcius Cato, and came from Tusculum, a place about twelve miles from Rome, where there is a mountain which still retains the name of Porcius; we read also of Porcius Licinius, a Latin poet, whose fragments are still extant; whether this man was of the same family is not certain, it is very likely he might: his surname Festus signifies joyful and cheerful, as one keeping a feast; this was a name common with the Romans, as Rufus Festus, Pompeius Festus, and others:

*and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound*; he had done many injuries to their persons and properties, he had greatly abused them, and incensed them against him; and now he was sent for to Rome, to answer for his maladministration; wherefore, to gratify the Jews, and to oblige them, in hopes that they would not follow him with charges and accusations, at least would mitigate them, and not bear hard upon him, he leaves Paul bound at Caesarea, when it was in his power to have loosed him, and who he knew was an innocent person: but this piece of policy did him no service, for the persons he had wronged, the chief of the Jews at Caesarea, went to Rome, and accused him to Caesar; and he was sent by his successor thither, to appear before Nero, and answer to the charges exhibited against him; and had it not been for his brother Pallas, who was in great authority at court, he had been severely punished<sup>f1207</sup>.

# CHAPTER 25

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 25

**Ver. 1.** *Now when Festus was come into the province*, etc.] Of Judea, which was a Roman province, over which he was made governor by Nero, the Roman emperor, in the room of Felix; he now being landed in some part of the province, namely, at Caesarea, and so might be said to have entered upon the government of it, as the phrase will bear to be rendered;

*after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem*; he very likely came by sea from Italy to Judea, and landed at Caesarea; for though Joppa was the nearest port to Jerusalem, yet Caesarea was the safest, and most commodious port, being made so by Herod; (see Gill on “~~4182~~Acts 18:22”), and besides, it seems to have been very much the residence of the kings and governors of Judea, (~~4129~~Acts 12:19, 23:23,33) here Festus stayed three days after his landing, to rest himself after the fatigue of the voyage, and then went up to Jerusalem, the metropolis of the province of Judea.

**Ver. 2.** *Then the high priest*, etc.] Ananias, as in (~~4212~~Acts 23:2, 24:1) the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin version, and all the Oriental versions, read, “the chief priests”, the whole college of the priests:

*and the chief of the Jews*; their rulers and elders, the members of the Jewish sanhedrim;

*informed him against Paul*; they took the first opportunity of waiting upon him, when he was come to Jerusalem; hoping it might be a favourable one to them, since he was just entering upon his government, and might be willing to gratify the chief of the nation, and gain their affection and esteem, and since as yet he was not acquainted with their wicked dispositions and artifices; and brought a bill of information against Paul, and gave a large account of him, what a wicked man he was, and what evils he had committed; they laid many things to his charge, and very heavily accused him, and endeavoured to prepossess the governor, and prejudice him against him:

*and besought him*; that he would grant them the following request.

**Ver. 3.** *And desired favour against him*, etc.] Paul; they asked what would be a favour to them, and a prejudice to him: or “of him”, that is, of Festus; they asked a favour of him, and desired it as such, as what would be gratefully accepted and acknowledged by them; which sense is confirmed by the Syriac version; the Arabic version renders it “to”, or “upon them”; that is, they asked him to grant a favour to them, or bestow one on them, which is as follows:

*that he would send for him to Jerusalem*; that his case might be heard before him, and he might be tried and judged by him, as they pretended:

*laying wait in the way to kill him*; this was their design, though they concealed it, and pretended no other view than that justice might take place: their scheme was, that if they could have prevailed upon Festus to have sent for Paul to Jerusalem, from Caesarea, they would have provided men, perhaps the same forty and upwards as before, in (<sup><44312></sup>Acts 23:12,13) to have laid in wait for him in the way as he came, and to have killed him: the whole of this shows the malice of these men, the badness of their cause, the indefatigableness and diligence to attain their end, the danger the apostle was in, and the care of Providence over him.

**Ver. 4.** *But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea*, etc.] Or that he was kept there, and was in proper custody, under the care of a centurion, and should continue there; nor was there any reason why he should be removed, especially since he should return thither speedily, as he adds:

*and that he himself would depart shortly thither*; the answer was a very wise and prudent one, and the reasons given were just and strong; as that Paul had been sent to Caesarea, was left bound by his predecessor there; there he found him, and there he was under a proper guard, and there it was right for him to continue; and besides, he himself should make no stay in Jerusalem, but should depart for Caesarea in a few days, and therefore it was very improper to send for Paul thither.

**Ver. 5.** *Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able*, etc.] Who are at leisure, can spare time, and to whom it will be convenient, without interrupting other business, to take such a journey; and who are able to bear the expenses of it, without hurting their families, and whose health and age will admit of it; and above all, who are masters of this affair, and are

capable of forming charges, and of supporting them with proper proofs and evidences: let such

*go down with me*; from Jerusalem to Caesarea: and accuse this man: in proper form, according to the rules of law, of what he is guilty, and can be proved upon him:

*if there is any wickedness in him*; or committed by him, anything that is absurd and unreasonable, notoriously flagitious and criminal; that is, contrary to the rules of reason, the common sense of mankind, and the laws of God and men; and especially of the Roman empire, or that is blasphemous or seditious.

**Ver. 6.** *And when he had tarried among them more than ten days*, etc.] The Alexandrian copy, and three of Beza's copies, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, "no more than eight or ten days"; and the Syriac and Ethiopic versions leave out the phrase "no more", and read "when he had stayed there", as the former; that is, at Jerusalem; or "when he had remained among them", as the latter; the Jews, chief priests, and others, "eight or ten days"; the historian, not being certain to a day, expresses himself in this manner:

*he went down to Caesarea*; from whence he came, and where Paul was:

*and the next day sitting in the judgment seat*; the day after he was come to Caesarea, he sat upon the bench in the court of judicature, to try causes, and particularly the apostle's, which he was very desirous of knowing, for which reason he so soon took the bench: and

*commanded Paul to be brought*; from the place where he was kept a prisoner, to the judgment hall where Festus was.

**Ver. 7.** *And when he was come*, etc.] Into court:

*the Jews which came down from Jerusalem*; along with Festus, perhaps the high priest with the elders, and Tertullus the orator, as before:

*stood round about*; either the Apostle Paul, or the judgment seat; the witnesses and accusers were to stand, as well as the person accused; (see Gill on "<sup>41157</sup>Mark 14:57").

*And laid many and grievous complaints against Paul; which they could not prove*; for his moral conversation, both before and after conversion,



was very strict and conformable to the laws of God and man; and yet as pure and inoffensive as he was, he was not exempt from the calumnies of men; and these many and very grievous; but it was his happiness, and to his honour through the grace of God, that his enemies could not make good anyone thing against him.

**Ver. 8.** *While he answered for himself*, etc.] As he was allowed by the Roman laws to do, he pleaded his own cause, and showed the falsehood of the charges exhibited against him; by observing, that as the crimes alleged against him were reducible to three heads, neither of them were just and true:

*neither against the law of the Jews*; the law of Moses, whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial; not the moral law, that he was a strict observer of, both before and since his conversion; nor the ceremonial law, for though it was abolished, and he knew it was, yet for peace sake, and in condescension to the weakness of some, and in order to gain others, he submitted to it, and was performing a branch of it, when he was seized in the temple; nor the judicial law, which concerned the Jews as Jews, and their civil affairs: neither against the temple; at Jerusalem, the profanation of which he was charged with, by bringing a Gentile into it; which was a falsehood, at least a mistake:

*nor yet against Caesar, have I offended at all*; for he was charged with sedition, (~~441B~~ Acts 24:5). Caesar was a common name to the Roman emperors, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt; and which they took from Julius Caesar the first of them, who was succeeded by Augustus Caesar, under whom Christ was born; and he by Tiberius, under whom he suffered; the fourth was Caius Caligula; the fifth was Claudius, mentioned in (~~441B~~ Acts 11:28, 18:2) and the present Caesar, to whom Paul now appealed, was Nero; and though succeeding emperors bore this name, it was also given to the second in the empire, or the presumptive heir to it: authors are divided about the original of Caesar, the surname of Julius; some say he had it from the colour of his eyes, which were “Caesii”, grey; others from “Caesaries”, his fine head of hair; others from his killing of an elephant, which, in the language of the Moors, is called “Caesar”: the more common opinion is, that he took his name from his mother’s womb, being “Caeso”, cut up at his birth, to make way for his passage into the world; in which manner also our King Edward the Sixth came into the world.

**Ver. 9.** *But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure*, etc.] As did his predecessor Felix, (<sup>4027</sup>Acts 24:27) he being just entered upon his new government, and having met with some caresses and civilities from the Jews at Jerusalem, by whom he had been much pressed and urged about the affair of the apostle:

*answered Paul, and said, wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?* meaning by the Jewish sanhedrim, he Festus being present: this was what the Jews had requested of him when he was at Jerusalem, that he would send for Paul thither, and there let him be judged, and which request he had denied; but having been solicited and importuned by the Jews, perhaps as, they came down together, he was inclined to gratify them, and to admit of it that he should be tried at Jerusalem, before the sanhedrim, he being present; and yet he was unwilling to do this without the prisoner's consent, he being a freeman of a Roman city; fearing he should be charged with delivering up a Roman into the hands of the Jews, which might be resented by the emperor and the Roman senate, should it come to their knowledge.

**Ver. 10.** *Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat*, etc.] Not that here was a seat in the judgment hall built by Herod for Caesar himself to sit in, should he ever come there, as some have thought; but the seat on which Festus sat is called Caesar's judgment seat, because it was in a Roman court of judicature, and because Festus, who filled it, represented Caesar himself:

*where I ought to be judged:* being a Roman citizen, and not at Jerusalem by the sanhedrim of the Jews, who had nothing to do with him:

*to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest;* it may be by his predecessor Felix, who had informed him of this case; or by Lysias's letter, which might come to his hands; or by the apostle's answer and vindication of himself, which he now made.

*have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest;* it may be by his predecessor Felix, who had informed him of this case; or by Lysias's letter, which might come to his hands; or by the apostle's answer and vindication of himself, which he now made.

**Ver. 11.** *For if I be an offender*, etc.] Against the law of Moses, or the temple at Jerusalem, or Caesar the Roman emperor:

*or have committed anything worthy of death*; by the laws of the Romans, as sedition, murder, etc.

*I refuse not to die*; signifying that he did not decline going to Jerusalem, either through any consciousness of guilt, or fear of death; for if anything could be proved against him, that was of a capital nature, he did not desire to escape death; he was ready to die for it; this was no subterfuge, or shift, to evade or defer justice:

*but if there be none of these things*; to be found, or proved, and made to appear:

*whereof these accuse me*; pointing to the Jews, that came down to be his accusers, and had laid many and grievous charges against him:

*no man may deliver me unto them*; not justly, or according to the Roman laws; suggesting that Festus himself could not do it legally;

*I appeal unto Caesar*; to this the apostle was induced, partly by the conduct of the governor, who seemed inclined to favour the Jews; and partly by the knowledge he might have of their intention to lie in wait for him, should he go up to Jerusalem; and chiefly by the vision he had had, which assured him that he must bear witness of Christ at Rome, (<sup>421</sup>Acts 23:11).

**Ver. 12.** *Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council*, etc.] Not with the Jewish sanhedrim, or any part of it that came down on this occasion; but with Roman counsellors, which he had to assist him in judgment, when any difficult matters were before him; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, “with his counsellors”; and the Arabic reads in the singular number, “with his counsellor”; with these he advised, whether it was proper to admit of Paul’s appeal, or not; and having had their opinion,

*he answered, hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go*: the question is put, partly for the more certain knowledge of the thing, that there might be no mistake in it; and partly on account of the Jews, that they might see that though he was disposed to do them a favour, it was not in his power, because of this appeal; and it may be with some resentment in himself, since it carried in it a sort of reflection upon him, as if he was incapable of issuing this affair, or would not be just and faithful in it.

**Ver. 13.** *And after certain days*, etc.] Several days after the above appeal made by Paul:

*King Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus*: this King Agrippa was the son of Herod Agrippa, who killed James the brother of John, and of whose death mention is made in (~~400~~ Acts 12:1,2) the Jewish chronologer<sup>f1208</sup> calls him Agrippa the Second, the son of Agrippa the First, the fifth king of the family of Herod: he was not king of Judea, this was reduced again into a province by Claudius; and upon the death of his uncle Herod, king of Chalcis, he was by the said emperor made king of that place, who afterwards removed him from thence to a greater kingdom, and gave him the tetrarchy, which was Philip's, his great uncle's; namely, Batanea, Trachonitis, and Gaulanitis, to which he added the kingdom of Lysanias; ((see ~~400~~ Luke 3:1)) and the province which Varus had; and to these Nero added four cities, with what belonged to them; in Peraea, Abila and Julias, and in Galilee, Tarichea and Tiberias<sup>f1209</sup>. The Jewish writers often make mention of him, calling him, as here, King Agrippa; (see Gill on "~~400~~ Acts 26:3"), and so does Josephus<sup>f1210</sup>. According to the above chronologer<sup>f1211</sup> he was had to Rome by Vespasian, when he went to be made Caesar; and was put to death by him, three years and a half before the destruction of the temple; though others say he lived some years after it: and some of the Jewish writers affirm, that in his days the temple was destroyed<sup>f1212</sup>. Agrippa, though he was a Jew, his name was a Roman name; Augustus Caesar had a relation of this name<sup>f1213</sup>, who had a son of the same name, and a daughter called Agrippina; and Herod the great being much obliged to the Romans, took the name from them, and gave it to one of his sons, the father of this king: the name originally was given to such persons, who at their birth came forth not with their heads first, as is the usual way of births, but with their feet first, and which is accounted a difficult birth; and "ab aegritudine", from the grief, trouble, and weariness of it, such are called Agrippas<sup>f1214</sup>. Bernice, who is said to be with King Agrippa, is not the name of a man, as some have supposed, because said to sit in the judgment hall with the king, but of a woman; so called, in the dialect of the Macedonians, for Pheronice, which signifies one that carries away the victory; and this same person is, in Suetonius<sup>f1215</sup>, called Queen Beronice, for whom Titus the emperor is said to have a very great love, and was near upon marrying her: she was not wife of Agrippa, as the Arabic version reads, but his sister; his father left besides him, three daughters, Bernice, Mariamne, and Drusilla, which last was the wife of

Felix, (~~400b~~ Acts 24:24). Bernice was first married to her uncle Herod, king of Chalcis <sup>f1216</sup>, and after his death to Polemon, king of Cilicia, from whom she separated, and lived in too great familiarity with her brother Agrippa, as she had done before her second marriage, as was suspected <sup>f1217</sup>, to which incest Juvenal refers <sup>f1218</sup>; and with whom she now was, who came together to pay a visit to Festus, upon his coming to his government, and to congratulate him upon it.

**Ver. 14.** *And when they had been there many days*, etc.] Indulging themselves in pleasure, and spending their time in conversing on various subjects; and in order to carry on the conversation, and pass away time,

*Festus declared Paul's case unto the king*; in the following manner:

*saying, there is a certain man left in bonds by Felix*; the former governor in Caesarea, meaning Paul.

**Ver. 15.** *About whom, when I was at Jerusalem*, etc.] Quickly after he came to his government:

*the chief priests and elders of the Jews informed me*; brought an accusation to him, exhibited to him charges against him, presented to him a bill of information, setting forth various crimes he had been guilty of:

*desiring to have judgment against him*; not barely to have his cause tried, but to have a sentence of condemnation passed upon him; some copies read "condemnation", as the Alexandrian copy, and two of Beza's; and that punishment is designed, and even death itself, is manifest from the following words.

**Ver. 16.** *To whom I answered*, etc.] As follows:

*it is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die; or to give any man to destruction*; to pass sentence of death upon him, without hearing his cause, and purely at the request of another, and merely to gratify him:

*before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face*; so as to speak to his face, or before him, what they have to charge him with:

*and have licence to answer for himself, concerning the crime laid against him*; and this was also according to the law of the Jews, (~~405b~~ John 7:51) though Festus, from such an application to him by the chief priests and

elders, might conclude that their manner was different, he being ignorant of their laws and customs; but their prejudice to the apostle carried them to act such an illegal part, or at least to desire it might be acted: it is one of the Jewish canons, that it is unlawful for a judge to hear one of the contending parties, before the other is come in.

**Ver. 17.** *Therefore when they were come hither*, etc.] To Caesarea, namely the chief priests and elders of the Jews:

*without any delay on the morrow, I sat on the judgment seat*: that is, the next day after they came down, Festus went into the judgment hall, and took his place there, in order to hear this cause; which circumstance he mentions, to show how expeditious he was:

*and I commanded the man to be brought forth*: from his place of confinement, to the hall, to answer for himself.

**Ver. 18.** *Against whom when the accusers stood up*, etc.] As they were obliged to do, whilst they were exhibiting their charges, bearing their testimonies, and producing their proofs; (~~42xv~~ Acts 25:7).

*They brought none accusation of such things as I supposed*: for by his being left in bonds, and by the information of the chief priests and elders, and their violence against him, he imagined he must be chargeable with some notorious capital crime.

**Ver. 19.** *But had certain questions against him of their own superstition*, etc.] Or religion; as about their law, which they said Paul had spoke against; and about their temple, which they pretended he had polluted; and about the resurrection of the dead, which he asserted, and some denied:

*and of one Jesus which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive*; for it seems more was said on each side, than is recorded by Luke: the Jews objected to him among other things, his belief in Jesus of Nazareth, whom they traduced as an impostor and deceiver; Paul on the other hand argued, that he was the true Messiah; and in proof of it, affirmed that though they had put him to death, he was risen from the dead, and so was declared to be the Son of God with power: Festus, it is very likely, had never heard of Jesus before, and therefore speaks of him in this manner; or if he had, he had entertained a contemptible opinion of him, as well as of the Jewish religion; and which he expresses, even in the presence of the king, who had outwardly at least embraced it.

**Ver. 20.** *And because I doubted of such manner of questions,* etc.] Or was ignorant of them, and knew not what to make of them, or to say to them, and was at an entire loss what to do in this affair:

*I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters;* before the Jewish sanhedrim, who best understood them.

**Ver. 21.** *But when Paul had appealed to be reserved,* etc.] In custody at Caesarea:

*unto the hearing of Augustus;* to have his cause heard, tried, and judged of, by the Roman Emperor Nero, here called Augustus; for as it was usual for a Roman emperor to be called Caesar, from Julius Caesar, the first of them, so to be called Augustus, from Octavius Augustus, the second emperor: his original surname was Thurinus, but this being objected to him as a reproachful one, he afterwards took the name of Caesar, and then of Augustus; the one by the will of his great uncle, the other by the advice of Munatius Plancus; when some thought he ought to be called Romulus, as if he was the founder of the city, it prevailed that he should rather be called Augustus; not only this surname being new, but more grand, seeing religious places, and in which anything was consecrated by soothsaying, were called “Augusta, ab auctu, vel ab avium gestu, gustuve”, according to Ennius<sup>f1219</sup>: in the Greek text the name is Sebastos, which signifies venerable and worshipful.

*I commanded him to be kept;* in Caesarea, by a centurion, and not sent to Jerusalem:

*till I might send him to Caesar:* till he could have an opportunity of sending him to Rome, to take his trial before the emperor.

**Ver. 22.** *Then Agrippa said to Festus,* etc.] After he had given him the above account:

*I would also hear the man myself;* Agrippa being a Jew by profession, and knowing more of these things than Festus did, and very likely had heard much concerning Jesus Christ; and if not of the apostle, yet however of the Christian religion; and therefore he was very desirous, not only out of curiosity to see the man, but to hear him; and get some further information and knowledge about the things in dispute, between the Jews and Christians, in which Festus was very ready to gratify him:

*tomorrow, said he, thou shall hear him*: and sooner things could not well be prepared for an affair of this kind, and for so grand a meeting.

**Ver. 23.** *And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come*, etc.] Into the hall, or court of judicature:

*and Bernice*; his sister, along with him:

*with great pomp*: in rich dress, with the “regalia”, or ensigns of royalty carried before them, and attended with a large train and retinue of servants:

*and was entered into the place of hearing*; the causes that were tried in court, that particular part of the hall, which was assigned for that purpose; for as there were the proper places for the judge and council, and for the plaintiffs and defendants, so for those that came to hear:

*with the chief captains*; or tribunes, who had the command of the Roman soldiers; and who had each of them a thousand men under them, as their title signifies:

*and principal men of the city*; that is, of Caesarea; the magistrates, and chief inhabitants of the place:

*at Festus’s commandment Paul was brought forth*; and became a spectacle to a vast number of men, as he himself says; and which in part fulfilled what Christ had foretold to his disciples, that they should be brought before kings and governors for his sake; (see ~~4008~~ 1 Corinthians 4:9 ~~4008~~ Matthew 10:18).

**Ver. 24.** *And Festus said, King Agrippa*, etc.] He addressed himself to him in the first place, as being the principal person, and of great dignity, as well as knowledge:

*and all men which are here present with us*; the chief captains, and principal inhabitants of the city:

*ye see this man* the prisoner at the bar, meaning Paul:

*about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me*: applied unto him, interceded with him, and very importunately pressed and desired him to give judgment against him:

*both at Jerusalem and also here*; at Caesarea, whither they came from Jerusalem to accuse him:



*crying*: in a very noisy and clamorous way:

*that he ought not to live any longer*; as they did before Lysias the chief captain, (<sup>4072</sup>Acts 22:22) and so in the hearing of Festus; for it was his death they sought, and nothing else would satisfy them.

**Ver. 25.** *But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death*, etc.] Which was a public testimony of the apostle's innocence, to the great mortification of his enemies, some of whom might be present; a like testimony was given of him by Lysias, (<sup>4073</sup>Acts 23:29).

*And that he himself hath appealed unto Augustus*; the Emperor Nero; (see <sup>4074</sup>Acts 25:21).

*I have determined to send him*; having had the opinion of his council upon it.

**Ver. 26.** *Of whom I have no certain thing*, etc.] No certain crime, charge, or accusation; nothing of any moment or consequence, no particular thing, nothing but a heap of confused notions, of I know not who or what:

*to write unto my lord*; meaning the Roman emperor, under whom he served as governor of Judea:

*wherefore I have brought him before you*; the whole company then present:

*and especially before thee, O King Agrippa*; as being not only a man of eminence, dignity, and authority, but of knowledge in such matters, which the Jews accused Paul of; (see <sup>4075</sup>Acts 26:2,3).

*That after examination had*; of Paul, and his case;

*I might have somewhat to write*; concerning him, and the charges exhibited against him to the emperor.

**Ver. 27.** *For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner*, etc.] A man bound as if he was a malefactor, and guilty of some heinous crimes, to Rome, to be tried before Caesar:

*and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him*; for which he is a prisoner, and for which he is sent to the emperor: it seemed to Festus an absurd thing, and what might be justly looked upon by his master, a foolish, silly, and stupid piece of conduct, and void of common sense and

reason, mere madness and folly; to send him a prisoner, and not signify in his letter to him, what was laid to his charge; and yet this was so dark and obscure, that he could not tell what to make of it, nor what to write to his lord about it; and hoped therefore, upon this re-examination of Paul before Agrippa, he should come to a more certain knowledge of this affair, and be better furnished to give Nero an account of it, to whom the apostle had appealed.

# CHAPTER 26

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 26

**Ver. 1.** *Then Agrippa said unto Paul*, etc.] After Festus had made the above speech to him, and to all present, and had introduced the affair of Paul, who now stood before them:

*thou art permitted to speak for thyself*; which a prisoner might not do, until he had leave; and this leave was granted by Festus the Roman governor, who was properly the judge, and not Agrippa, though the permission might be by both; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read, “we have ordered”, or “permitted thee”, etc.

*Then Paul stretched forth the hand*; as orators used to do, when they were about to speak; or else to require silence; or it may be to show the freedom of his mind, and how ready he was to embrace the opportunity of pleading his own cause; being conscious to himself of his innocence, and relying on the ingenuity and integrity of his judge; and especially of the king, before whom he stood:

*and answered for himself*; or made an apology, or spoke in vindication of himself, in order to remove the charges brought against him.

**Ver. 2.** *I think myself happy, King Agrippa*, etc.] This was an handsome and artificial way of introducing his defense, and of gaining the affection and attention of the king, and yet was not a mere compliment; for it had been his unhappiness hitherto, that his case was not understood; neither Lysias the chief captain, nor the governors Felix and Festus, knew anything of the rites and customs of the Jews, and could not tell what to make of the questions of their law, of which Paul was accused: but it was otherwise with Agrippa, he was master of them, and this the apostle looked upon as a circumstance in his own favour:

*because I shall answer for myself this day before thee*; not before him as a judge, for Festus was judge, but in his presence; and he being versed in things of this kind, was capable of informing, counselling, directing, and assisting the judge, in what was proper to be done; wherefore it was an

advantage to the apostle to plead his own cause, and vindicate himself before such a person from the charges exhibited against him:

*touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews*; such as violation of the law, profanation of the temple, contempt of the people of the Jews and their customs, and of blasphemy, and sedition; all which he was able to clear himself from, and doubted not but he should do it to the entire satisfaction of the king.

**Ver. 3.** *Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs*, etc.] Rites and ceremonies of the Jews, whether enjoined by the law of Moses, or by the elders, fathers, and wise men:

*and questions which are among the Jews*; concerning angels, spirits, and the resurrection of the dead; which were moved and agitated between the Sadducees and Pharisees; and a multitude of others, which were disputed between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, of which their Misna and Talmud are full, and with these Agrippa was well acquainted; and to their rites and customs he conformed, of which we have some instances recorded in their writings: when they went with their firstfruits to Jerusalem<sup>f1220</sup>,

“a pipe sounded before them till they came to the mountain of the house, and when they came to the mountain of the house (the temple), even King Agrippa carried the basket upon his shoulder, and went in till he came to the court.”

So concerning the reading of the law by a king, they give this following account<sup>f1221</sup>:

“a king stands and takes (the book of the law), and reads sitting; King Agrippa stood and took it, and read standing, and the wise men praised him; and when he came to that passage, (<sup>4575</sup>Deuteronomy 17:15) “Thou mayest not set a stranger over thee”, his eyes flowed with tears; they said unto him, fear not, Agrippa, thou art our brother.”

Some of their writers say<sup>f1222</sup>, this was a piece of flattery in them: they also elsewhere commend him for his modesty and humility<sup>f1223</sup>;

“according to the tradition of the doctors, when persons attending a funeral met a bride (with her retinue), the former gave way, and

both to a king of Israel, when they met him; but they say concerning King Agrippa, that he met a bride, and gave way, and they praised him.”

And whereas it was forbidden to eat on the eve of the passover, before the Minchah, though ever so little, that they might eat the unleavened bread with appetite <sup>f1224</sup>; it is observed, that even King Agrippa, who was used to eat at the ninth hour, that day did not eat till it was dark <sup>f1225</sup>: so that from hence it appears, that King Agrippa was famous for his exact knowledge and observance of the customs and manners of the Jews, and which was well known, and was by the apostle:

*wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently*; since he was charged with a breach of the laws and customs of the Jews; and his defence would proceed upon things which Agrippa was not altogether ignorant of.

**Ver. 4.** *My manner of life, from my youth*, etc.] That is, his conduct and deportment, his behaviour among men, from the time that he was capable of performing religious exercises, and of knowing the difference between one sect and another, and of being observed and taken notice of by men:

*which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem*; for though he was born in Tarsus in Cilicia, he was very early brought, or sent by his parents to Jerusalem, where he had his education under Gamaliel; so that the first part of his life was spent in Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea, and among the Jews there; the more learned and knowing part of them, Gamaliel’s pupils, and the wise men and their disciples: and his course of life must be well known to them, as he says,

*this know all the Jews*; that had any knowledge of him, and conversation with him.

**Ver. 5.** *Which knew me from the beginning*, etc.] From his youth, from his first coming to Jerusalem:

*if they would testify*; what they know, and speak out the truth of things, they must say,

*that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee*; there were three sects of religion among the Jews, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes; the first of these was the most exact, and came nearest to the truth of doctrine, and was the strictest as to outward holiness of life and

conversation, and of this sect the apostle was; and according to it he lived, and that in such a manner, as not to be charged with any notorious crime; and indeed in his own, and very likely in the opinion of others, he was then blameless. (See Gill on “<sup><418E></sup>Matthew 3:7”).

(Essenes: A Jewish sect, who, according to the description of Josephus, combine the ascetic virtues of the Pythagoreans and the Stoics with a spiritual knowledge of the divine law. It seems probable that the same name signifies “seer”, or “the silent, the mysterious”. As a sect the Essenes were distinguished by an aspiration after the ideal purity rather than by any special code of doctrines. There were isolated communities of the Essenes, which were regulated by strict rules, and analogous to those of the monastic institutions of a later date. All things were held in common, without distinction of property; and special provision was made for the relief of the poor. Self-denial, temperance and labour — especially agricultural — were the marks of the outward life of the Essenes; purity and divine communication the objects of aspiration. Slavery, war and commerce were alike forbidden. Their best known settlements were on the north west shore of the Dead Sea. J.B. Smith one volume Bible Dictionary.)

**Ver. 6.** *And now I stand, and am judged*, etc.] Before the Roman governor, and in the presence of Agrippa:

*for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers*; either for the hope of righteousness, life, and salvation, by the Messiah; who was promised to the Jewish fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and others; (see <sup><4228></sup>Genesis 22:18, 49:10) or for the hope of the resurrection of the dead, and eternal life; of which there are various testimonies in the writings of the Old Testament, committed to the people of the Jews. (<sup><3826></sup>Job 19:26,27, <sup><2339></sup>Isaiah 26:19, <sup><2711></sup>Daniel 12:2) and others; and both these senses may be very well joined together, for it was for asserting that the promised Messiah was come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; that he was risen from the dead, and that all the dead will be raised by him; and that life and righteousness, salvation, and everlasting glory and happiness, are only by him; for asserting these things, I say, the apostle was now a prisoner, and stood at the bar of a Roman judge, being accused by the Jews.

**Ver. 7.** *Unto which promise*, etc.] Of the Messiah, and salvation by him; and of the resurrection of the dead and eternal glory, as following upon it:

*our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night hope to come*; and enjoy the Messiah, and all blessings along with him; and the happy state of the resurrection and eternal life: the people of Israel were distinguished into twelve tribes, according to the names of the twelve patriarchs, the sons of Jacob; and though ten of the tribes had been carried captive, and had not returned as tribes, yet there were many of the several tribes, who either were left in the land, or returned along with the two tribes, and were mixed with them: and this way of speaking here used by Paul, and also by James, (~~5000~~James 1:1) is justified by Jewish writers: the Misnic doctors say <sup>f1226</sup>,

“the twelve tribes bring twelve heifers, and for idolatry they bring twelve heifers and twelve goats:”

compare with this (~~4567~~Ezra 6:17, 8:35), yea, they say <sup>f1227</sup> “twelve tribes” are called, **l hq**, “a congregation”, eleven tribes are not called a congregation.”

This suggests a reason of the apostle’s use of this phrase, for he here represents the Israelites as a worshipping assembly, serving God continually, night and day, as they were by their representatives, the priests and stationary men in the temple; and that with intensesness, ardour, and fervency, as the word rendered “instantly” signifies being in a longing and earnest expectation of the coming of the Messiah, and of his world to come, and of the resurrection of the dead, and a future state of happiness.

*For which hope’s sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews*: for preaching that the Messiah, the twelve tribes hope for, is already come and that there is salvation in him, and in no other, and that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both just and unjust; and that there is another world and state after this, in which men will be happy and miserable; and these were the charges and accusations, or the sum of what were exhibited against him.

**Ver. 8.** *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you*, etc.] You Heathens and Sadducees; for the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead was thought an incredible doctrine by the Heathens in general, and therefore was laughed at by the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers at Athens, when preached by the apostle there; and by a particular sect among the Jews, the Sadducees; and the apostle may be thought either to address himself to Festus, the Roman governor, and to the chief captains, who were present, and, being Heathens, disbelieved this doctrine; or else to

King Agrippa, who might be a Sadducee, and to such of the Sadducees as were in court, and expostulate with them, why it should be looked upon as a thing by no means to be credited,

*that God should raise the dead*; which may be understood both of the particular resurrection of Christ from the dead, which was not believed, neither by the Romans nor by the Jews, and neither by Pharisees nor Sadducees; or of the general resurrection of the dead, which was judged from the nature of things to be impracticable, and impossible by the latter, as well as by the Heathens: but since God is omniscient and omnipotent, and just and true, knows where every particle of a dead body lies, and can gather all together, and inspire with life; which he can as easily do, as to form all things out of nothing, as he did; and his justice and veracity seem to require, that the same bodies which have been partners with their souls in sinning, or in sufferings should share with them in woe or in happiness; it can neither be absurd, unreasonable, nor incredible, to suppose that God will raise them from the dead.

**Ver. 9.** *I verily thought with myself*, etc.] This seems to be a correction of himself, why he should wonder at their ignorance and unbelief, particularly with respect to Jesus being the Messiah, and his resurrection from the dead, and expostulate with them about it; when this was once his own case, it was the real sentiments of his mind, what in his conscience he believed to be right and just; namely,

*that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*; to him himself, to his religion, to his Gospel, and ordinances, and people; by blaspheming his name, by denying him to be the Messiah, by condemning his religion as heresy, by disputing against his doctrines, and manner of worship, and by persecuting his followers.

**Ver. 10.** *Which thing I also did in Jerusalem*, etc.] The metropolis of Judea, where he had had his education, and was well known; here he consented to the death of Stephen, and held the clothes of the witnesses while they stoned him; and here he haled men and women out of their houses, and committed them to prison, and made havoc of the church of Christ, and destroyed the faith, and those that professed it, as much as in him lay.

*And many of the saints I shut up in prison*; at Jerusalem; (see ~~4HRB~~ Acts 8:3).



*having received authority from the chief priests*; to take them up, and imprison them.

*And when they were put to death*; for it seems there were more than Stephen put to death, though we have no account of them:

*I gave my voice against them*; not that he sat in council, or was a member of the Jewish sanhedrim, and voted for the execution of the Christians, but he was pleased with the sentence they passed, and approved of it; or he joined the zealots, who, without any form of law, seized on the Christians, and put them to death wherever they found them; and this he assented to, and encouraged: some render the words, “I carried the sentence”; as the Vulgate Latin version; that is, the sentence of condemnation, which the Jewish sanhedrim passed upon the disciples and followers of Christ: this Saul took, and carried, it may be, both to the Roman governor, to be signed by him, and to the officers to put it in execution; so industrious and forward was he in persecuting the saints.

**Ver. 11.** *And I punished them oft in every synagogue*, etc.] In Jerusalem, where there were many; (see Gill on “<sup><4412></sup>Acts 24:12”); by beating and scourging them there, as the manner was; (see <sup><4007></sup>Matthew 10:17).

*and compelled them to blaspheme*; the Lord Jesus Christ, both to deny him to be the Messiah, and to call him accursed; as the Jews and Heathens obliged some professors of Christianity to do, who were only nominal ones, and had not grace and strength to stand against their threatenings, and to endure their persecutions:

*and being exceeding mad against them*; full of malice, envy, and hatred:

*I persecuted them even to strange cities*; particularly Damascus; and of his journey thither, he gives an account in the following verse; or through the violence of his persecution he obliged them to fly to strange cities, where they were foreigners and strangers; though he himself might not follow them there, since we do not read of his going anywhere but to Damascus; whereas they that were scattered by the persecution, in which he was concerned, travelled as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch, (<sup><4419></sup>Acts 9:19). The phrase may be rendered, “even to cities without”; i.e. without the land of Israel: frequent mention is made in Jewish writings of such and such cities being **ḅal h̄xwj**, “without the land”.

**Ver. 12.** *Whereupon as I went to Damascus*, etc.] Being intent, upon the above said things, to punish the saints, compel them to blaspheme, imprison them, and even put them to death on account of these things; upon this errand and business he went to Damascus, the chief city of Syria, where he knew there were many that believed in Christ, who had removed from Jerusalem thither, on account of the persecution, or were settled there before:

*with authority and commission from the chief priests*; the Jewish sanhedrim, to bring those of them at Damascus bound to Jerusalem, in order to be punished, as in (<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:2, 22:5) and which the Ethiopic version adds here.

**Ver. 13.** *At midday, O king*, etc.] So in (<sup><402></sup>Acts 12:6). This circumstance is omitted in (<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:3). King Agrippa is called upon by the apostle, to excite his attention to what he was about to relate, it being very wonderful, and of great importance.

*I saw in the way*; that is, to Damascus, when near the city;

*a light from heaven*; which descended from thence:

*above the brightness of the sun*; it was a greater light than that, or otherwise it could not have been discerned at noon, or have had the effect it had upon Saul, and his company. This account of the greatness of the light, is not in the other places where this narrative is given:

*shining round about me*: so in (<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:3, 12:6)

*and them which journeyed with me*; this is not mentioned in the other accounts.

**Ver. 14.** *And when we were all fallen to the earth*, etc.] Saul, and the men that were with him, for fear of the divine Majesty, who by this extraordinary light was thought to be present: the other narratives only relate Saul's falling to the earth; how this is to be reconciled to their standing speechless, in (<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:7), (see Gill on "<sup><400></sup>Acts 9:7").

*I heard a voice speaking unto me*, etc. (see Gill on "<sup><400></sup>Acts 10:4"). (see Gill on "<sup><400></sup>Acts 10:5").

**Ver. 15.** *And I said, who art thou, Lord? and he said*, etc.] Or "the Lord said", as the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions read,

*I am Jesus whom thou persecutest*; the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, “Jesus of Nazareth”; (see Gill on “<sup><4095></sup>Acts 9:5”).

**Ver. 16.** *But rise and stand upon thy feet*, etc.] This, and what follows in this and the two next verses, are not in any of the former accounts; and these words are used not only because Saul was fallen to the earth, and are an encouragement to rise up, and stand corporeally, but to take heart, and be of good cheer; for though he had acted so vile and cruel a part by Christ, and his people, yet he had designs of grace, and good will to him; and this appearance was not for his destruction, but for his honour, comfort, and usefulness:

*for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose*; not to take vengeance for past offences, but for the ends hereafter mentioned: and this appearance of Christ was real, corporeal, and personal, and not imaginary, or merely visionary and intellectual; and it was to this sight of Christ he more than once refers, partly in proof of Christ’s resurrection from the dead, and partly to demonstrate the truth of his apostleship, (<sup><4601></sup>1 Corinthians 9:1, 15:8).

*to make thee a minister and a witness, both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee*; so that he was an apostle, not of men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ, as he himself says, (<sup><8001></sup>Galatians 1:1). He was a minister, not of man’s making, but of Christ’s; and they are the only true ministers of the Gospel, who are made by Christ, who have their mission and commission, their qualifications, gifts, and abilities, their doctrine, work, and wages from him: and the apostle’s work, as a minister, was to be a witness; it was to testify what he had seen of Christ corporeally; and what knowledge of his person, office, and grace was now communicated to him by the spirit of wisdom and revelation; and what should hereafter be made known to him, either mediately by Ananias, or immediately by Christ and his Spirit; for the apostle had after appearances, visions, and revelations; (see <sup><44217></sup>Acts 22:17,18, 23:11, <sup><47111></sup>2 Corinthians 12:1-4,7).

**Ver. 17.** *Delivering thee from the people*, etc.] That is, the people of the Jews, as they are distinguished from the Gentiles; and so the Syriac version, and two of Beza’s copies, and two of Stephens’s, read; for the Lord knew, that as soon as ever Saul was converted and professed his name, and preached his Gospel, the people of the Jews would immediately

become his implacable enemies, and seek to destroy him; wherefore he promises him before hand deliverance, and security from them:

*and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee;* to both Jews and Gentiles; to the Jews first, and then to the Gentiles; which method the apostle observed, and which course he steered, until the Jews put away the Gospel from them; and then he turned to the Gentiles, to whom he chiefly preached, as their apostle, and was saved from many dangers among them, as is here promised.

**Ver. 18.** *To open their eyes,* etc.] The eyes of their understanding, which were shut, and darkened, and blind: one copy reads, “the eyes of the blind”; and the Ethiopic version renders it, “the eyes of their heart”; and to have them opened, is to have them enlightened, to see their lost state and condition by nature, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the plague of their own hearts, the impurity of nature, the impotence of man to that which is spiritually good, the imperfection of obedience, and the insufficiency of a man’s righteousness to justify him before God; and to see where help is laid, and where salvation is; to behold Christ as the only able, willing, complete, and suitable Saviour; to see that there is life and righteousness, peace, pardon, grace, and glory in him; and to have an insight into the doctrines of the Gospel, and a glimpse of the invisible things of another world. Now though this is all the work of the Spirit, by whom only the eyes of the understanding are enlightened; yet this is ascribed to the apostle, not as the efficient cause, but as the instrument and means through preaching of the Gospel, which the Spirit of God would, and did make use of:

*and to turn them from darkness to light;* or “that they might be turned”, as the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions render it: by “darkness” is meant, the darkness of nature, the darkness of sin, of ignorance, and unbelief, in which all men by nature are; who are in the dark about, and are ignorant of God, and the perfections of his nature; and about sin, and the evil there is in it, and that comes by it; and the way of peace, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and the work of the spirit in regeneration and sanctification upon the heart; and about the Scriptures of truth, and the doctrines of the Gospel, and what will be their state and portion in another world; they do not know where they are, what they are, nor where they are going: and in the effectual calling this darkness is in a great measure removed, and they are turned to light; to God, who is light itself, and to

Christ, the light of the world, and to the light of the word, and to a participation of the light of grace here, in which they see light, and behold the above things, and of the light of glory hereafter. This is a phrase used by the Jews, at the time of the passover, when they praise the Lord, and give thanks unto him for the wonders he wrought for their fathers and for them, as that he had brought them out of bondage to liberty, and from sorrow to joy, and **l wdg rwal hl pam**, “from darkness to a great light”

<sup>f1228</sup>. Conversion is the end of the Gospel ministry, and illumination is necessary to it; yea, it lies in a turn from darkness to light, as is here expressed: and this conversion is not a mere external one, or a reformation of manners; this is indeed sometimes called a conversion, and is a man’s turning from the evil of his ways, from a vicious life and conversation, to a sober way of living, and is often brought about through the ministry of the word; but then this may be where true conversion is not, and where there is no special illumination of the Spirit, nor any true spiritual light; and there may be a turning again to the former course of life; besides, this external conversion, when it is right and genuine, is the fruit and effect of inward conversion, or true grace, and is at most but the evidence of it: nor is it a conversion to a doctrine in a professional way; men may be converted in this sense, and remain wicked; they may have the form, but not the power of godliness; know the doctrine and profess it, and yet be strangers to the experience of it: nor does it design a restoration after backslidings; which sometimes goes by the name of conversion, such as was Peter’s after his fall; but the first work of conversion is here meant, which is internal, and is a turn of the hearts of men; and is not the work of man, but of God, who has the hearts of all in his hands, and can turn them as he pleases; and is what man is passive in, he does not turn himself, but is turned by the Lord; though ministers may be, and are instruments in it. It follows,

*and from the power of Satan unto God:* this power of Satan regards not his power over the rest of the devils, whose prince and head he is; hence he is called the prince of devils, and the prince of the power of the air; but his power over the world of men, which he has by usurpation, and therefore is called the prince of the world; but not his power over the bodies of men, by possessing them, inflicting diseases, and death itself upon them, nor over their estates; all which is only by permission of God, whenever he exercises it; but over the souls of men, in whom he rules as in his own kingdom: he is the strong man armed, and the hearts of men are his palaces, which are guarded with devils and unclean lusts; when all the goods are kept in peace

by him, there is no concern about sin, no inquiry after salvation, no dread of the curses of the law, nor fear of hell and damnation, but all in the utmost security: and he not only dwells in the hearts of unregenerate persons, but he works effectually there; by stirring up their corruptions, putting ill things into their minds, and instigating them against true spiritual and powerful religion, and the professors of it: he has power over the minds of them that believe not, to blind them, by keeping them in blindness, and increasing it; which he does by diverting their minds from hearing the Gospel; and whilst hearing it, by filling them with enmity against it. Moreover, they are led by him as captives at his will; they are in his power, as the bird is in the snare of the fowler, and as a prisoner in the hands of a jailer; and are entirely at his beck and command, and do his lusts, and obey his will: and this also may have a particular respect to the power and authority which he exercised over the Heathens, before the Gospel came among them; Satan usurped a power over the Gentile world, and took upon him to be the god of it; and for many hundred of years was worshipped in their idols; and he held them fast bound unto him in the fetters of ignorance, superstition, and idolatry; but now the Gospel was sent among them to free them from this power and tyranny of his; and it was made effectual to the turning of multitudes of them from him, and subjection to him, which is done in the effectual calling of every person; not that Satan then has no more power over them to tempt and distress them, but not to rule over them, and lead them about at pleasure, and much less to devour and destroy them: and then also are they turned to God, to have true knowledge of him, and an hearty desire after him, which they had not before; and to a love of him, whose hearts before were enmity to him; and to believe in him, and trust in him as the God of providence, and of grace; and to have communion with him; and to be subject to his government, and yield a cheerful obedience to him, both externally and internally.

*That they may receive forgiveness of sins:* as an act of God's free grace, through the blood of Christ, which was shed for it; and which free and full forgiveness of sins is published in the Gospel, that whoever believes in Christ, may by faith receive it. This is what every enlightened soul sees it needs, and is desirous of; it is the first thing it wants, and asks at the hands of God; and nothing can be more suitable to its case, and welcome to it; and this is the good news which is declared in the ministry of the Gospel: and it is had in a way of receiving; for it is not purchased with money, nor

procured by the merits of men; but is a gift of God, which is received by the hand of faith into the conscience of the enlightened sinner; the consequences of which are peace, joy, and comfort.

*And inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in one:* by the “inheritance” is meant, either something enjoyed now, as God himself, who is the portion of his people, and the lot of their inheritance; or a part and interest in Christ, who is that good part and portion, and which shall never be taken away; and the blessings of grace in him, which, besides forgiveness of sins, are peace with God, a justifying righteousness, and adopting grace: or rather eternal glory and happiness hereafter is here designed, which is called an “inheritance” or “lot”, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was distributed by lot; not that heaven is a casual thing; but it signifies that every Israelite indeed will have their share and portion in it. There are many things which show an agreement between heaven, and the land of Canaan; that was a goodly land, and ready prepared for the Israelites; and so heaven is the better country, and the city and kingdom God has prepared for his people from the foundation of the world: a wilderness was passed through first, and many battles fought before it was possessed; the people of God pass through the wilderness of this world, and fight the good fight of faith, and then enter into rest: the Israelites were introduced into it, not by Moses, but by Joshua; and saints get to heaven, not by the works of the law, but by Christ the Saviour, another Jesus or Joshua: and lastly, Canaan was a place of rest; and so is heaven. Moreover, it may be so called, in allusion to inheritances among men, though it vastly exceeds all earthly ones, being incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away, reserved in the heavens; yet it bears some likeness to them; it is what is bequeathed to the children of God by their heavenly Father, and comes to them through the death of Christ the testator, and is for ever: it is neither purchased nor acquired, but is freely given; belongs only to the children of God, and is their Father’s free gift unto them, and is only enjoyed by such who are “sanctified”; and it lies among them, and will be jointly and equally possessed by them. The heirs of salvation are said to be sanctified in different senses; they are sanctified by God the Father in eternal election, being separated from others, and chosen through sanctification to it; and they are sanctified “in” and “by” the Lord Jesus Christ: they are sanctified in him representatively, he being the covenant head of his people, has all grace, and so all holiness in him for them, which is perfect and complete; and this is the source of all that holiness that is in



them, and which they have communicated to them by virtue of their union to him; and also they are sanctified “in” him through the imputation of the holiness of his human nature to them, which is a branch of their justification before God; and they are sanctified by him meritoriously, or by his blood, through which their sins are expiated, and fully atoned for; and so in this sense they are sanctified by it: and they are sanctified internally by the Spirit of God, who in regeneration produces principles of grace and holiness in them, which were not there before; man was originally possessed of a perfect moral holiness, but through sin is become an unholy creature; and in the same state and condition are the children of God by nature, as others, and need the sanctifying influences of the divine Spirit to make them meet for the undefiled inheritance: and this inheritance these sanctified ones receive by faith now, as they do the forgiveness of their sins; that is, they now receive by faith the promise of the inheritance, and the earnest and pledge of it, and their right unto it, and claim upon it: for the phrase,

*by faith that is in me*, is not to be connected with the word “sanctified”, but with the word “receive”, in the preceding clause; and has respect to both benefits, which it receives from Christ, the object of it here expressed; for it is not any faith, but faith which is in Christ, by which these blessings of grace are received and enjoyed: and the whole of this shows the great ends and usefulness of the Gospel ministry.

**Ver. 19.** *Whereupon, O King Agrippa*, etc.] Having been favoured with this illustrious appearance of the Lord and with this declaration and commission from him:

*I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision*; to Christ himself, who appeared from heaven in so much light and glory, and spoke unto him, and appointed him what he should be, and do, and declared what use he should be of: he did not disbelieve what Christ said, nor was he disobedient to the orders he gave, but immediately set about the work he called him to, without consulting flesh and blood; (see <sup><4016></sup>Galatians 1:16).

**Ver. 20.** *But showed first unto them of Damascus*, etc.] The Jews at Damascus to whom the apostle first preached; (see <sup><4020></sup>Acts 9:20,22).

*and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea*; observing the order of his mission, (<sup><4027></sup>Acts 26:17) though it was not until after he had been in Arabia, and had returned to Damascus, that he went to Jerusalem,



and preached there; (see ~~4017~~ Galatians 1:17,18) compared with (~~4028~~ Acts 9:28).

*and [then] to the Gentiles*; as at Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra in Lycaonia; and at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea in Macedonia; and in many places in Greece and Asia, as at Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, and others, as this history shows; and indeed he preached the Gospel from Jerusalem round about to Illyricum;

*that they should repent*; that is, that they should repent of their sins; of sin in general, as it is committed against God, is a transgression of his law, and as it is in itself exceeding sinful, and in its effects dreadful; and of particular sins, such as men have been more especially addicted to, and of which the Jews and Gentiles, the apostle was sent unto, and to whom he preached, had been guilty: as the former of their will worship, and following the commandments and traditions of men, thereby making void the law of God; of their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah; of their persecution of his apostles, ministers, and people; and of their trust in, and dependence upon, their own righteousness for justification: and the latter of their immoralities, superstition, and idolatry; and both not of the outward gross actions of life only, but of inward sins and lusts: and repentance of each of these lies in a different sentiment of them; in a detestation and abhorrence of them; in shame and confusion on account of them; in self-reflections upon them, and humiliation for them; in an ingenuous acknowledgment of them, and turning from them: and this is not a national repentance which the ministers of the Gospel are to show to men the necessity of; though this is not unworthy of them, when there is a call in Providence to it, and the state of things require it; much less a legal one, but an evangelical repentance; which has along with it faith in Christ Jesus, dealing with his blood and righteousness for the remission of their sins, and their justification before God; and which springs from, and is encouraged and heightened by, a sense of the love of God: and now this being a part of the Gospel ministry, does not suppose it to be in the power of men to repent of themselves, since no man, whilst he remains insensible of the evil nature of sin, and the hardness of his heart continues, which none but God can remove, can repent; and when he becomes truly sensible, he then prays to God to give him repentance, and to turn him: nor does it at all contradict its being a blessing of the covenant, a gift of Christ, and a grace of the Spirit of God; nor does it suggest, that the preaching of the word is sufficient of itself to produce it; the contrary of which the ministry of John

the Baptist, of Christ, and of his apostles, declares; but the design of its being insisted on in the Gospel ministry, is to show that men are sinners, and in such a state and condition, that they are in need of repentance, and that without it they must perish; and the rather this is to be quietly inculcated, since true repentance is unto life, is the beginning and evidence of spiritual life, and issues in eternal life; and since there is a close connection between that and salvation, and that without it there is no salvation. It follows,

*and turn to God*; this is to be understood, not of the first work of conversion, which is God's work, and not man's act, and in which man is passive, and which is before repentance, whereas this follows upon it; though the ministers of the word have a concern with this; to bring about this is the design and use of their ministrations; their business is to show the nature of conversion, what it is, and wherein it lies; to rectify mistakes about it, and to observe the necessity of it: but here is designed a turning to God, in consequence of the grace of first conversion; by an acknowledgment and confession of sin to God, by an application to him for pardoning grace and mercy, by a trust and dependence on him for righteousness, life, and salvation, and by obedience to his commands and ordinances. It intends a turning of the Jews from their evil principles and practices, from the traditions of their elders to the law of God, the Gospel of Christ, and the ordinances of it, and of the Gentiles, from their idols to the worship of the true and living God:

*and do works meet for repentance* the same with "fruits meet for repentance", (<sup>4008</sup>Matthew 3:8). And such as are particularly mentioned in (<sup>4011</sup>2 Corinthians 7:11) they are they which are the reverse of the evil actions they have been guilty of, and which are properly good works. And they are they which are done according to the will of God declared in his word, this is a requisite of a good work; what is not according to the word of God is not a good work, nor can it be any evidence of repentance; and they are also such as spring from love to God, for if they are done through fear of punishment, or for sinister and selfish ends, they show repentance to be a mere legal one: and they are such as are done in faith, in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God by him. All external good works are designed, which show that the inward repentance professed, and that the outward change made in religion and worship, are genuine and sincere: the doctrines of internal repentance and outward worship, and all good

works, are parts of the Gospel ministry, and to be insisted on in their proper places.

**Ver. 21.** *For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple*, etc.] He means the Asiatic Jews, who finding him in the temple, laid hold on him, and dragged him out of it: and, as he says, went about to kill me; for no other reason, but for preaching to the Gentiles, and for preaching the above doctrines to them: what he refers to is in (~~407~~ Acts 21:27-31).

**Ver. 22.** *Having therefore obtained help of God*, etc.] Both to preach the Gospel, and escape danger; for he had delivered him many a time both from Jews and Gentiles, according to his promise, (~~407~~ Acts 26:17) and particularly from the Asiatic Jews, when they were about to kill him, by the means of Lysias the chief captain, who rescued him out of their hands; and also from the lying in wait of the Jews to take away his life, and the various methods they used both with Felix and Festus to get him into their power: but the Lord appeared for him, and saved him from all their pernicious designs against him; and therefore he could say as follows,

*I continue unto this day*: in the land of the living, though in bonds:

*witnessing both to small and great*; to kings and subjects, as now to Agrippa, Festus, the chief captains and principal inhabitants of Caesarea, and to the common people assembled; to high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, young and old; to persons of every state, age, and sex:

*saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come*. This he mentions in opposition to the charge against him, as that he spoke against the law of Moses, as well as against the temple, and the people of the Jews; whereas his doctrine was perfectly agreeable to the writings of Moses, and the prophets, concerning the Messiah, they speak of in many places, and the Jews expected. There is an entire harmony and agreement between the writings of Moses, and the prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, in all the doctrines of the Gospel revelation; in the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the unity of the divine essence, and of the proper deity of each person; in the doctrines respecting the person, offices, and work of Christ; that he is the Son of God, God and man in one person, and the only Mediator between God and man; and that he is prophet, priest, and King; and that the great work he was appointed to, undertook, and came about, and has fulfilled, is the redemption of his

people; and in the several doctrines of grace concerning the choice of men to salvation, the covenant made with Christ on account of them, their redemption, justification, and pardon, their repentance and good works, the resurrection of the dead, and a future state: the particular things instanced in, the apostle preached, and Moses and the prophets said should be, and in which they agreed, are as follow.

**Ver. 23.** *That Christ should suffer*, etc.] Great afflictions in soul and body, and death itself; this is recorded by Moses, (<sup><0085></sup>Genesis 3:15) and is the sense of many of the types, as of the passover, brazen serpent, etc. and of all the sacrifices which from God were appointed by him, and is the constant account of all the prophets from the beginning to the end; (see <sup><0271></sup>Psalm 22:1,2,6,7,11-21, <sup><2552></sup>Isaiah 53:2-12) (<sup><7086></sup>Daniel 9:26, <sup><3009></sup>Zechariah 9:9, 12:10, 13:6,7). The sufferer is Christ, or the Messiah, not the Father, nor the Spirit, but the Word, or Son of God, and not in his divine nature, which was incapable of suffering, but in his human nature; though sufferings may be ascribed to his whole person, both natures being united in him: and hence they became efficacious to answer the purposes for which they were endured; and which he endured, not for himself, nor for angels, but for chosen men, sinners, and ungodly persons; in order to make peace and reconciliation for them, procure the pardon of their sins, obtain eternal redemption for them, deliver them from all evil, and from all enemies, and bring them nigh to God: and what he suffered were no other than what had been foretold in the writings of the Old Testament, which all along represent the Messiah as a suffering one; and in particular that he should suffer in his character, be reproached, and accounted a worm, and no man, (<sup><2553></sup>Isaiah 53:3, <sup><0276></sup>Psalm 22:6, 59:9) and in his soul and body, and be put to death and buried, as the above prophecies referred to show; the several circumstances leading on to, or attending his sufferings and death, are distinctly expressed; as the betraying him by one of his disciples, selling him for thirty pieces of silver, his being forsaken by all his disciples, his crucifixion between two thieves, the parting of his garments, giving him gall and vinegar to drink, and the piercing his side with a spear, (<sup><0489></sup>Psalm 41:9, <sup><3012></sup>Zechariah 11:12,13) (<sup><3037></sup>Zechariah 13:7, <sup><2552></sup>Isaiah 53:12, <sup><0278></sup>Psalm 22:18, 69:21 <sup><3020></sup>Zechariah 12:10). And to this agreed the doctrine of the apostle, who taught that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ that was to come, and that he had suffered all that Moses and the prophets did say should come upon him: but these were not the present sentiments

of the Jews, who expected the Messiah to be a temporal Prince and Saviour, and to live in great outward prosperity, and for ever.

*And that he should be the first that should rise from the dead:* by his own power, and to an immortal life, as Jesus did; and so is the firstborn from the dead, and the first fruits of them that slept: a type of this, in the deliverance of Isaac, is recorded by Moses in (<sup><0121></sup>Genesis 22:12-14) compared with (<sup><3119></sup>Hebrews 11:19) and the thing itself is foretold by many of the prophets, (<sup><0160></sup>Psalms 16:10, <sup><2369></sup>Isaiah 26:19, <sup><2862></sup>Hosea 6:2).

*and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles:* in his own person to the people of the Jews, and by his apostles to the Gentiles. In the writings of Moses he is spoken of as the great prophet God would raise up in Israel, to whom they should hearken; and as the Shiloh to whom the gathering of the people should be, (<sup><0175></sup>Deuteronomy 17:15, <sup><0490></sup>Genesis 49:10) and that he should be a light to both Jews and Gentiles, through the ministration of the Gospel, is said by the prophets, (<sup><2392></sup>Isaiah 9:2, 42:6, 49:6) and these were the things which the apostle asserted in his ministry, in perfect agreement with those writings.

**Ver. 24.** *And as he thus spake for himself,* etc.] Asserting the integrity and innocence of his past life and conversation, in proof of which he appealed to the Jews themselves; setting forth the prejudices to the Christian religion he had been under; declaring the heavenly vision that had appeared to him, and the divine orders he had received; alleging, that in his ministry there was an entire harmony between him, and the writings of Moses, and the prophets, for which the Jews professed a veneration; as he was thus vindicating himself, ere he had well finished his apology,

*Festus said with a loud voice;* that all might hear, and being moved with resentment at what he had heard; and it may be, he was displeas'd with Paul that he took so much notice of Agrippa, and so often address'd him, and appeal'd to him, when he scarce ever turn'd to, or look'd at him:

*Paul, thou art beside thyself;* not in thy senses, or right mind, to talk of such an appearance and vision, and especially of the resurrection of a person from the dead. This is no unusual thing for the ministers of the Gospel to be reckon'd madmen, and the doctrines they preach madness and folly: our Lord himself was said to be beside himself, and to have a devil, and be mad; and so were his apostles, (<sup><4102></sup>Mark 3:21, <sup><4800></sup>John 10:20 <sup><4813></sup>2 Corinthians 5:13) and it is not to be wonder'd at that natural men

should entertain such an opinion of them, since what they deliver is quite out of their sphere and reach: Festus added,

*much learning doth make thee mad*; the apostle was a man of much learning, both Jewish, Greek, and Roman; and Festus perceived him to be of great reading by his making mention of Moses, and the prophets, writings which he knew nothing at all of. And as this sometimes is the case, that much reading, and hard study, do cause men to be beside themselves, he thought it was Paul's case: so the philosopher<sup>f1229</sup> suggests, that men of great wit and learning, and who are closely engaged in study, whether in philosophy, or politics, or poetry, or in technical affairs, are inclined to be melancholy, and phrenetic.

**Ver. 25.** *But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus*, etc.] That is, Paul said, as the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read: he replied to Festus, to whom he gives his title of honour, not out of fear, nor flattery, but according to custom; and though he used him in such a reproachful manner, as if he was not himself, which he denies; nor did what he had said show anything of that kind, but the reverse, to which he appeals;

*but speak forth the words of truth and soberness*; which are true in themselves, being perfectly agreeable to the Scriptures of truth; and are what Christ, who is truth itself, had spoken, and of which he is the subject; and which the spirit of truth leads into, and owns and blesses: the Gospel in general, and all the doctrines of it, are words of truth; they are true, in opposition to that which is false, there is nothing of falsehood in them, no lie is of the truth; and to that which is fictitious, as the counterfeit Gospel of false teachers, which looks like the Gospel, and has the appearance of truth, but in reality is not; and to that which is but shadow, the Gospel, and the truths of it, are solid and substantial ones; hence the law and truth are opposed to each other, (~~4017~~ John 1:17) and there are particular doctrines of the Gospel, and such as the apostle had been speaking of, or referred unto, which are called truth, words of truth, and faithful sayings; as that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that he is God manifest in the flesh, or is God and man in one person; that he came into the world to save the chief of sinners; that he suffered, died, and rose again from the dead; that justification is by his righteousness; and that as he is the first that rose from the dead, others will rise also; or that there will be a resurrection of the dead by him; (see ~~4021~~ 1 John 2:21,22, ~~5015~~ 1 Timothy 3:15,16) (~~5015~~ 1 Timothy 1:15 ~~6101~~ 1

Corinthians 15:1,3,4, ~~<800>~~Galatians 3:1 ~~<800>~~2 Timothy 2:18). And these are “words of soberness” also; they are words of the highest wisdom, which contain the wisdom of God in a mystery, even hidden wisdom, the deep things of God, and such as could never have been found out by the wisdom of men; they are the means of bringing a man to himself, to his right mind, who before was not himself; of causing a man to think soberly of himself, and not more highly than he ought to think, even to think of himself, that he is the chief of sinners, and the least of saints; and of speaking soberly, wisely, and prudently; and of living soberly, righteously, and godly: they are doctrines, as delivered by the faithful ministers of them, which come from a sound and sober mind, and have a tendency to make wise and sober; and therefore should be spoken “forth”, openly and boldly, freely and faithfully, constantly and continually, as they were by the apostle, whatever reproaches, calumnies, and reflections may be cast upon them for so doing, even though they may be called fools and madmen.

**Ver. 26.** *For the king knoweth of these things*, etc.] Something of them, of the sufferings and resurrection of the Messiah, and of his showing light to Jews and Gentiles, as they are spoken of by Moses and the prophets, whose writings Agrippa was conversant with, and of these things as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; at least he had heard the report of them, how that they were said to be accomplished in him.

*Before whom also I speak freely*; because of the knowledge he had of these things:

*for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him*; as that Moses and the prophets have foretold then, and that they have had their fulfilment in Jesus;

*for this thing was not done in a corner*: the ministry of Jesus was, public, his miracles were done openly, his suffering the death of the cross under Pontius Pilate was generally known, and his resurrection from the dead was a well attested fact, and the ministration of his Gospel to Jews and Gentiles was notorious. The Arabic and Ethiopic versions refer this to Paul’s words and actions, that what he had said and done were not private but public, and of which Agrippa had had, by one means or another, a full account; but the other sense is best.



**Ver. 27.** *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?* etc.] What they have said concerning the person, office, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and that what they have said is fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth?

*I know that thou believest;* that what the prophets said were true, and are accomplished.

**Ver. 28.** *Then Agrippa said unto Paul,* etc.] Either seriously or ironically; rather the former, arising from the convictions of his mind, which he could not stifle nor conceal:

*almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;* to profess faith in Jesus as the Messiah, to embrace his doctrine, and submit to his ordinances, which is to be a Christian, at least externally: and when he says “almost”, or “in a little”, his meaning is, that within a little, or very near, he was of being persuaded to embrace Christianity; or in a little matter, and in some respects; or rather in a few words, and in a small space of time, Paul had strangely wrought upon him to incline to the Christian religion; though the first sense, that he was almost, or within a little of being a Christian, seems to be the best, as appears by the apostle’s reply to it: what it is to be a real Christian, (see Gill on “<sup>41125</sup>Acts 11:26”). An almost Christian is one that has much light and knowledge, but no grace; he may know something of himself and of sin, of its being a violation of the law of God, and of the bad consequences of it, but has not true repentance for it; he may know much of Christ in a speculative way, concerning his person and offices, as the devils themselves do, and of the good things which come by him, as peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation; but has no application of these things to himself; he may have a large notional knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel, but has no experience of the power, sweetness, and comfort of them in his own soul; all his knowledge is unsanctified, and without practice: he is one that has a taste of divine things, but has not the truth of them; he may taste of the heavenly gift, of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come; yet it is but a taste, a superficial one, which he has; he does not savour and relish these things, nor is he nourished by them: he has a great deal of faith in the historical way, and sometimes a bold confidence and assurance of everlasting happiness; but has not faith of the right kind, which is spiritual and special, which is the faith of God’s elect, the gift of God, and the operation of his Spirit; by which the soul beholds the glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, under a sense of need, and goes forth to him, renouncing everything of self, and



lays hold upon him, and trusts in him for salvation; and which works by love to Christ and his people, and has with it the fruits of righteousness: he may express a great deal of flashy affectation to the word, and the ministers of it, for a while, but has nothing solid and substantial in him; he may partake of the Holy Ghost, of his gifts largely, but not of special and internal grace; and indeed he can only be an almost Christian, that becomes one merely through the persuasion of men: it is one part of the Gospel ministry to persuade men, but this of itself is ineffectual; a real Christian is made so by the power of divine grace. Agrippa was only persuaded, and but almost persuaded by the apostle to be a Christian, but not by the Lord, nor altogether, who persuades Japheth to dwell in the tents of Shem.

**Ver. 29.** *And Paul said, I would to God,* etc.] This prayer of the apostle's shows his affection for the souls of men, and his great desire for their conversion, and also his sense of the power and grace of God, as necessary to it:

*that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am;* that is, his wish was that not only Agrippa, but that all that were present, were not only within a little, or in some low degree, but entirely, in the highest and fullest sense, Christians, as he was; that they knew as much of Christ, and had as much faith in him, and love to him, as he had, and were as ready to serve and obey him: he does not wish that Agrippa and the rest that heard him were as he had been, a bigot for traditions and ceremonies, that trusted in his own righteousness, did many things contrary to the name of Jesus, was a blasphemer of him, a persecutor of his saints, and an injurious person; but as he now was, not meaning with respect to his civil circumstances, as a mean poor man, and a tent maker, or with respect to his single state of life, which he elsewhere advises to, (~~405~~ 1 Corinthians 9:5) or with respect to his ministerial capacity, as an apostle of Christ, and a preacher of the Gospel; but as a Christian, and in a private capacity: his sense is, he wished that they were as he, regenerated by the Spirit of God, new creatures in Christ, called by the grace of God with an holy calling, believers in Christ, lovers of him, pardoned by his blood, justified by his righteousness, sanctified by his grace, children of God, and heirs of eternal life: and all this he wishes for of God, saying, “would to God”, etc. knowing that the whole of this is not of men, but of God; all grace, and every blessing of it, which make or show a man to be a Christian indeed, are from him. And this wish is expressive of true grace, which desires the good of others, and also of a spirit truly

generous, that is not selfish and monopolizing; and which is concerned for the glory of God, the interest of Christ, and the weakening of Satan's kingdom: and from the whole of this it appears, that a person may arrive to true satisfaction of his own state; and that it is an evidence of grace, when the heart is drawn out in desires, after the salvation of others; and that altogether Christians are the only desirable ones; and that to be made a real Christian is the work of God, and to be ascribed to him. This the apostle wished for, for Agrippa and all that heard him; as does every Gospel minister for their hearers, the hearing of the word being the ordinary means of believing; and the rather it is desired by them, because the condemnation of those that hear the word is otherwise thereby aggravated: the apostle adds,

*except these bonds*; which were both troublesome and reproachful: not but that he cheerfully endured them himself, and thought it the duty of Christians to bear them patiently, when called to it, but then they were not things to be desired and wished for; the exception is not only Christian like, but humane and genteel.

**Ver. 30.** *And when he had thus spoken*, etc.] These words are omitted in the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions:

*the king rose up*; from the judgment seat; that is, King Agrippa:

*and the governor*; the Roman governor, Festus:

*and Bernice*: the sister of King Agrippa:

*and they that sat with them*; either in council, or to hear; the chief captains, and principal inhabitants of Caesarea.

**Ver. 31.** *And when they were gone aside*, etc.] Into some apartment adjoining to the judgment hall:

*they talked between themselves*; that the common people might not hear their debates, and the result of them, and what were their sentiments concerning Paul and his case:

*saying, this man doth nothing worthy of death*, or of bonds; according to the Roman laws; for as yet there were no laws among the Romans against the Christians as such, or against their professing and preaching Christ.

**Ver. 32.** *Then said Agrippa unto Festus*, etc.] As declaring his sense, and by way of advice and counsel; but not as determining anything himself, for that lay in the breast of Festus, the Roman governor and judge:

*this man might have been set at liberty*; from his bonds and imprisonment; for ought that appears against him, or any law to the contrary:

*if he had not appealed unto Caesar*; wherefore an inferior judge could not release him; but so it was ordered in divine Providence, that he should appeal to Caesar, that he might go to Rome, and there bear a testimony for Christ; however, this declaration of Agrippa, and what he and the governor and the rest said among themselves, are a considerable proof of the innocence of the apostle.

# CHAPTER 27

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 27

**Ver. 1.** *And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy*, etc.] The chief city of which was Rome, the metropolis of the empire, where Caesar had his palace, to whom the apostle had appealed; and his voyage thither was determined by Festus, with the advice of Agrippa and his council, pursuant to the apostle's appeal, and which was founded on the will of God; all which concurred in this affair: it was the decree and will of God that the apostle should go to Rome, which was made known to him; and it was his resolution upon that, to go thither, wherefore he appealed to Caesar; and it was the determination of the Roman governor, not only as to his going there, but as to the time of it, which was now fixed: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read "he", instead of "we"; and the Ethiopic version reads expressly "Paul"; but the Greek copies read we: by whom are meant the apostle, and his companions; as Luke the writer of this history, and Aristarchus the Macedonian mentioned in the next verse, and Trophimus the Ephesian, who was afterwards left at Miletus sick, (~~2~~ Timothy 4:20) and who else cannot be said; these were to sail with him to Italy, not as prisoners, but as companions: this resolution being taken,

*they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners*; who very likely had also appealed to Caesar, or at least the governor thought fit to send them to Rome, to have their cases heard and determined there; and these by the order of Festus were delivered by the centurions, or jailers, in whose custody they had been,

*unto one called Julius*; in the Alexandrian copy of the third verse, he is called Julianus; he was either one of the Julian family, or rather was one that had been made free by some of that family, and so took the name:

*a centurion of Augustus' band*; of a Roman band of soldiers, which belonged to that legion which was called "Augusta"; for it seems there was a legion that bore that name, as Lipsius observes, and it may be from Augustus Caesar.

**Ver. 2.** *And entering into a ship of Adramyttium*, etc.] Which was in the port of Caesarea; for from thence they set sail to the place where this ship was bound, which very likely was the place here mentioned; there was a city of this name in Africa, and which was built upon the sea shore, and is sometimes called Hadrumentum<sup>f1230</sup>, as this is called Adramantos, in the Syriac version; and in the Alexandrian copy, and in another manuscript, “a ship of Adramyntum”; it is mentioned with Carthage, a city in Africa, by Pliny<sup>f1231</sup> and Solinus<sup>f1232</sup>; the one calls it Adrumetum, and the other Adrymeto; and the latter says, that it, as well as Carthage, was built by the people of Tyre; and so Sallust<sup>f1233</sup> says, that the Phoenicians built Hippo, Adrumetum, Leptis, and other cities on the sea coast; and the name seems to be a Phoenician name, **twmrdj** “Hadarmuth”, which signifies “the court of death”; perhaps it might be so called, either from the badness of the air in which it was, or the dangerousness of its haven: Jerom calls it Hadrumetus, and says<sup>f1234</sup> it is a city in Byzacium, a country in Africa; he seems to design another place, the metropolis of the Byzacian country, the most fruitful of all the parts of Africa, and which in the Phoenician language was **twamrdh** “Hadarmeoth”; which signifies “the court of a hundred”; that is, it was a place so fruitful that it brought forth an hundred fold; and agreeably to which is what Pliny says<sup>f1235</sup>, they are called Libyphoenicians, who inhabit Byzacium, a country so named, in circuit two hundred and fifty miles, and of such great fruitfulness that the land returns to the husbandmen an hundred fold. The former of these is most likely to be the place here meant; and though we nowhere read of the apostle being here, nor of the Gospel being preached here in the early times of Christianity; yet in the “fourth” century there was a church in this place, and Philologus was bishop of it, who subscribed at a council held at Carthage in this century; and in the “fifth” century we read of several bishops of this place, as Aurelius, who was in the Chalcedon council, Flavianus in that at Ephesus, which was reckoned an infamous one, and Helladius, who was in the first Ephesine council, and Felix, who was banished by Gensericus<sup>f1236</sup>. There was another city of the same name in Aeolia, or Mysia<sup>f1237</sup>, and which was formerly called Pegasus, and since Landermiti, and was a seaport, and bids fair to be the place here intended; though since there was an island of Lycia called Adramitis<sup>f1238</sup>, now Audromety, and it was at Myra, a city of Lycia, where this ship stopped, (<sup>427</sup>Acts 27:5) and where the passengers changed their ship, this seems most likely to be designed:

*we launched*; in the said ship from Caesarea:

*meaning to sail by the coast of Asia*; the lesser Asia, along by Ephesus and Miletus, as they did; for in this last place, as before observed, Trophimus was left sick; the Alexandrian copy reads, *μελλοντι* “that was about to sail”; that is, the ship of Adramyttium was about to sail, or just ready to sail by the coast of Asia, wherefore the company entered, and set forth in it on their voyage:

*one Aristarchus a Macedonian, of Thessalonica, being with us*; the same person that was with the apostle at Ephesus, and accompanied him into Asia, (<sup><418B></sup>Acts 19:29, 20:4) the same went through with him to Rome, and became his fellowlabourer, and fellow prisoner there, (<sup><502B></sup>Philemon 1:24) (<sup><5040></sup>Colossians 4:10).

**Ver. 3.** *And the next day we touched at Sidon*, etc.] This was a famous city in Phoenicia, upon the northern border of the land of Israel; it was a maritime place, and noted for trade and navigation; Mela <sup>f1239</sup> calls it rich Sidon, and the chief of the maritime cities; Jerom <sup>f1240</sup> calls it the ancient city Sidon; and Curtius says <sup>f1241</sup> it was renowned for the antiquity and fame of its founders; it is thought to be built by Sidon, the firstborn of Canaan, (<sup><0005></sup>Genesis 10:15) from whom it took its name; so Josephus <sup>f1242</sup> affirms, that Sidonius, as he calls him, built a city in Phoenicia after his own name, and it is called by the Greeks Sidon; some say it was built by Sidus the son of Aegyptus, and named after him: according to R. Benjamin <sup>f1243</sup> it was a day’s journey from hence to Tyre; and with others <sup>f1244</sup>, it was not more than two hundred furlongs, about twelve or thirteen miles, which was another city of Phoenicia, as this was: Jerom’s <sup>f1245</sup> account of Sidon is this,

“Sidon, a famous city of Phoenicia, formerly the border of the Canaanites, to the north, situated at the foot of Mount Libanus, and the artificer of glass:”

and so Pliny <sup>f1246</sup> calls it, it being famous for the making of glass; and Herodotus <sup>f1247</sup> speaks of it as a city of Phoenicia: Justin the historian says <sup>f1248</sup> it was built by the Tyrians, who called it by this name from the plenty of fish in it; for the Phoenicians call a fish “Sidon”: and indeed Sidon or Tzidon seems to be derived from *dwX*, “Tzud”, which signifies “to fish”; and the place is to this day called Said or Salt; and so R. Benjamin calls it Tzaida <sup>f1249</sup>: to this city they came from Caesarea, the day following that they set out on, and here they stopped awhile:

*and Julius courteously treated Paul*; the centurion into whose hands the apostle was delivered, used him with great humanity and civility; he found grace in his sight, as Joseph did in the sight of Potiphar, and as he himself had done before with Lysias, Felix, Festus and Agrippa:

*and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself*; for as there were disciples at Tyre, (<sup><420B></sup>Acts 21:3,4) so it seems there were at Sidon, both which cities were in Phoenicia, and are often mentioned together; and the apostle was allowed to go ashore, and visit his friends, and be refreshed by them, both in body and spirit, and be provided for by them with things convenient for his voyage. It is highly probable that there was here a Gospel church, but by whom planted cannot be said; our Lord himself was at the borders of this place, (<sup><415C></sup>Matthew 15:21) and the ministers of the word scattered at the death of Stephen, went as far as Phoenicia preaching the Gospel, (<sup><441B></sup>Acts 11:19) and that there were brethren there, appears from note on: (see Gill on "<sup><445B></sup>Acts 15:3"), in which country Sidon was: in the "third" century there was a church in this place, and Zenobius was presbyter of it, who suffered martyrdom under Dioclesian <sup>f1250</sup>; in the "fourth" century there was a bishop of the church here, at the synod held at Nice; in the "fifth" century the bishop of the Sidonians, in the council of Chalcedon, declared his opinion with others against Dioscorus, whose name was Damianus; in the "sixth" century, mention is made of a bishop of Sidon, in the acts of the council held at Rome and Constantinople, and in the same century a synod met at Sidon, in the 20th year of Anastasius the emperor <sup>f1251</sup>: the account of the bishops of Sidon, as given by Reland <sup>f1252</sup>, is as follows; Theodorus bishop of Sidon subscribed in the first Nicene council, in the year 325; Paulus subscribed in the first council at Constantinople, in the year 381; Damianus was in the council held at Chalcedon, in the year 451; Megas is mentioned in the acts and epistles subjoined to the Chalcedon council; Andreas, bishop of this place, is taken notice of in a letter of John of Jerusalem.

**Ver. 4.** *And when we had launched from thence*, etc.] From Sidon:

*we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary*; that is, they sailed below the island of Cyprus; of which (see <sup><40B></sup>Acts 4:36, 13:4) whereas if the wind had been right for them, they would have sailed above the island; leaving it on the right hand, in a straight course to Myra; but now they were obliged to go below it, leaving it on the left hand, going in

part about it, through the seas of Cilicia and Pamphylia to Lycia, as follows.

**Ver. 5.** *And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia,* etc.] For these two seas joined, as Pliny says <sup>f1253</sup>, “mare Pamphylium Cilicio jungitur”, the Pamphylian sea is joined to the Cilician; and in another place <sup>f1254</sup> he observes, that in the Pamphylian sea were islands of no note, and in the Cilician sea of the five chiefest was Cyprus (an island mentioned in the preceding verse), and a little after, the sea of Cilicia is distant from Anemurius fifty miles:

*we came to Myra a city of Lycia;* not Limyra in Lycia, though that lay by the sea side; for according both to Pliny <sup>f1255</sup> and Ptolomy <sup>f1256</sup>, Limyra and Myra were two distinct places in Lycia; which was a country, according to the latter, which had on the west and north Asia; (according to others, Caria on the west, and part of Lydia on the north;) on the east part of Pamphylia, and on the south the Lycian sea, or, as others, the Rhodian sea: much less was this the city of Smyrna, as some have said, which lay another way in Ionia, over against the Aegean sea; and still less Lystra, as the Alexandrian copy and Vulgate Latin version read, which was in Lycaonia, and in the continent many miles from the sea: Lycia was a country of the lesser Asia, and lay between Caria and Pamphylia, and so it is mentioned with Caria and Pamphylia, in:

“And to all the countries and to Sampsames, and the Lacedemonians, and to Delus, and Myndus, and Sicyon, and Caria, and Samos, and Pamphylia, and Lycia, and Halicarnassus, and Rhodus, and Aradus, and Cos, and Side, and Aradus, and Gortyna, and Cnidus, and Cyprus, and Cyrene.” (1 Maccabees 15:23)

and the Carians, Pamphylians, and Lycians, are frequently put together in history; and the Lycians are said <sup>f1257</sup> to be originally of Crete, and to have their name from Lycus the son of Pandion; though some think that Lycia took its name “a luce”, from light, and of this country Myra was the metropolis: Ptolomy calls it Myrra, as if it had the signification of “myrrhe”; and so Jerom or Origen <sup>f1258</sup> reads it here, and interprets it “bitter”; but Pliny and others call it Myra, as here, and it signifies “ointment”; and here the apostle staying some time, though it cannot be said how long, no doubt opened the box of the precious ointment of the Gospel, and diffused the savour of it in this place; for in the beginning of the “fourth” century, in Constantine’s time, we read of one Nicolaus, a



famous man, bishop of Myra in Lycia, who was present at the council of Nice, and there showed the scars and marks upon him, because of his constant confession of Christ under Maximinus; in the “fifth” century there was a bishop of this place, whose name was Romanus, and was in two synods, in the infamous one at Ephesus, where he favoured Eutyches, and in that at Chalcedon; in the “sixth” century mention is made of a bishop of this church in the acts of the synod at Rome and Constantinople; in the “seventh” century, Polyeuctus, bishop of Myra, was in the sixth synod at Constantinople, and in this century Myra was the metropolitan church of Lycia; in the “eighth” century, Theodorus, bishop of it, was in the Nicene synod; and in the ninth century this place was taken by the Saracens <sup>f1259</sup>.

**Ver. 6.** *And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria,* etc.]

Alexandria was the chief city in Egypt, built by Alexander the great, from whom it took its name; it was situated near the sea, and had a famous haven or port, which R. Benjamin <sup>f1260</sup> calls *hayrdnski a l ç l mnh*, “the port of Alexandria”; from hence ships were sent into several parts for trade and commerce, and one of these Julius found at Myra: the top sail was a distinguishing sign of a ship of Alexandria, for none might spread their top sails but ships of Alexandria <sup>f1261</sup>; these were not obliged to strike sail when they came into a port: the Jewish writers make frequent mention of *tyrdnski a hnyps*, “a ship of Alexandria” <sup>f1262</sup>; by which they intend a ship of a large bulk, which had a cistern in it for fresh water for a long voyage; and by this they distinguish ships of bulk from those small ones, that were used about their coasts; a ship of Alexandria with them was a ship that went from the land of Israel to Alexandria; whereas here it seems to design one that belonged to Alexandria, and went from thence to other parts: and this ship was

*sailing into Italy*; and it was usual for ships to go from Alexandria to Puteoli in Italy, and from thence to Alexandria upon trade and business <sup>f1263</sup>

*and he put us therein*; the centurion removed Paul and his companions, and the rest of the prisoners, with whatsoever soldiers were under his care, out of the ship of Adramyttium, into the ship of Alexandria; that is, he ordered them to remove out of one into the other.

**Ver. 7.** *And when we had sailed slowly many days,* etc.] Because of contrary winds, as in (~~427b~~ Acts 27:4) or else for want of wind, as some

think; the Syriac version renders it, “and because it sailed heavily”; that is, the ship being loaden with goods:

*and scarce were come over against Cnidus*; or “Gnidus”, as it is sometimes called; it was a city and promontory in Doris, in the Chersonese or peninsula of Caria, famous for the marble statue of Venus made by Praxiteles<sup>f1264</sup>; it was over against the island of Crete, and is now called Capo Chio; it was the birthplace of Eudoxus, a famous philosopher, astrologer, geometrician, physician and lawgiver<sup>f1265</sup>; it is made mention of in:

“And to all the countries and to Sampsames, and the Lacedemonians, and to Delus, and Myndus, and Sicyon, and Caria, and Samos, and Pamphylia, and Lycia, and Halicarnassus, and Rhodus, and Aradus, and Cos, and Side, and Aradus, and Gortyna, and Cnidus, and Cyprus, and Cyrene.” (1 Maccabees 15:23)

Jerom<sup>f1266</sup> says, it was a famous island over against Asia, joining to the province of Caria; some think it has its name from the fish “Gnidus”, which is taken about this place, and which is of such an extraordinary nature, that when taken in the hand, it stings like a nettle; others<sup>f1267</sup> derive it from dg[ “hanad”, or “gnad”, which, in the Phoenician language signifies “to join”; because, as both Pausanias<sup>f1268</sup> and Strabo<sup>f1269</sup> say, it was joined by a bridge or causeway to the continent: it had two ports in it, as the last mentioned writer says, but into neither of them did the ship put, in which the apostle was; nor do we read of the Gospel being preached here, or of a church in it until the “sixth” century, when mention is made of a bishop of Gnidus in the acts of the synod at Rome and Constantinople<sup>f1270</sup>:

*the wind not suffering us*; to go right forward, as the Syriac version adds:

*we sailed under Crete*; or below it, as in (<4270> Acts 27:4) This is now called Candy; (see Gill on “<4271> Acts 2:11”), over against Salmone; now called Capo Salamone: this, by Pliny<sup>f1271</sup>, Ptolomy<sup>f1272</sup>, and Mela<sup>f1273</sup>, is called Samonium or Sammonium, and by them said to be a promontory in the island of Crete, on the east side of it, over against the island of Rhodes; Strabo calls it Salmonion, an eastern promontory of Crete; and Jerom a maritime city of the island of Crete.

**Ver. 8.** *And hardly passing it*, etc.] That is, Salmone, with great difficulty, because of the winds:

*came unto a place which is called the Fair Havens*; called by other writers Cale Acte, or the fair shore, and is placed by Ptolomy <sup>f1274</sup> in Eubaea, and by Herodotus <sup>f1275</sup> in Sicily; but by Stephanus <sup>f1276</sup> is said to be a city of the Cretians, and which agrees with this account;

*nigh whereunto was the city of Lasae*; there was a city in Crete called by Solinus <sup>f1277</sup> Lisson, and by Ptolomy <sup>f1278</sup> Lyssus, which he places on the south side of the island; and by Pliny <sup>f1279</sup> Lasos, which comes pretty near to this name, but then he places it in the midland part of Crete; who also makes mention of an island called Lasia over against Troezenium, and another that was one of the Cyclades; the Syriac version here read, “Lasia”: Jerom <sup>f1280</sup> says, Lasea is a city on the shore of the island of Crete, near the place which is called the Fair Havens, as Luke himself explains it; for which some corruptly read “Thalassa”; as do the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; and the Alexandrian copy “Alassa”: Beza conjectures that it is the same with Eloea, which Pliny makes mention of in the above cited place, as a city in Crete.

**Ver. 9.** *Now when much time was spent*, etc.] In sailing against the wind, or by staying at the Fair Havens; for so the Syriac version renders it, “where we stayed a long time”; and the Ethiopic version, “and there we remained many days”: it follows,

*and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past*; the Syriac version reads, “the fast of the Jews”; this was the day of atonement, which was the grand fast of the Jews, on which day they afflicted their souls, (<sup>(R237)</sup> Leviticus 23:27) in memory of the worshipping of the golden calf; on that day they neither eat nor drink, nor do any work, neither do they wash, nor are they anointed, nor do they bind on their shoes, or make use of the marriage bed; nor do they read anything but sorrowful things, as the Lamentations of Jeremiah, until the setting of the sun, and the rising of the stars; and hence this day is called by them μwx μwy, “the day of fasting”, and l wdgh μwx, “the great fast, and the day of the fast of atonement, and the fast of the atonement” <sup>f1281</sup>: now this day was on the 10th of the month Tisri, which answers to the latter part of our September, and the former part of October; so that it was now Michaelmas time, when winter was coming on, and sailing began to be dangerous; about this time of the year the Pleiades set, which brings on tempestuous weather, and unfit for sailing:

*Paul admonished them*, or gave them some advice to continue where they were.

**Ver. 10.** *And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive*, etc.] Not only by the tempestuous weather which they had met with, and still continued, and which they must expect to have, if they continued on their voyage; but by a spirit of prophecy, which he was endued with, by which he foresaw, and so foretold, as follows;

*that this voyage will be with hurt, and with much damage not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives*; or of our persons, or bodies, that is, of the health of them; for certain it is that it was revealed to the apostle, that not one life should be lost; but yet through the shipwreck, what with the fright of it, and being in the water, much damage must accrue to their persons, as well as the ship and all its freight be lost.

**Ver. 11.** *Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship*, etc.] Who were either one and the same person, or if two persons, the one was the owner, whose the ship was, and the other, he that was at the helm, and steered and directed it; or the one might be the captain, and the other the pilot. The κυβερνητης, or “governor”, as he is here called with the ancients, was he who sat on an eminence in the stern of the ship, at the helm, and had the direction of it; he gave the orders, which others executed: what qualified him for his post chiefly lay in three things; in the knowledge of the constellations, and winds, of the former that he might direct the course of the ship according to them, and by them foresee future tempests, and of the latter, that he might be acquainted with the several points, from whence they blew; also in the knowledge of ports, and places to put into, and of rocks and sands, that they might be escaped; likewise in the knowledge of the use of the helm, and sails<sup>f1282</sup>; for one part of his business, as<sup>f1283</sup> Seneca observes, was to give orders after this manner; so and so move the helm, so and so let down the sails, etc. in every ship there was a governor, and in larger ones sometimes there were two;<sup>f1284</sup> Aelianus says, the Carthaginians had always two governors in a ship: the other word, ναυκληρος, is in the glossary rendered “navicularius”, which signifies “the owner” of the ship; and so we render it; though perhaps he is the same with the “proreta”, who governed the prow or head of the ship, and was the next in dignity to the governor, and a kind of a sub-governor; and his business was to observe tempests, to explore promontories, rocks and sands, and show them to the governor<sup>f1285</sup>; and so Isidore<sup>f1286</sup> says, the

owner of the ship is called Naucleros, because the ship is in his lot, “cleros” signifying lot: and as these best understood naval affairs, Julius gave more heed to what they said, and rather believed them,

*than those things which were spoken by Paul*; by a spirit of prophecy, which he had no notion of; for though he treated him civilly as a man, he had no regard to him as a Christian, or as one endued with the Spirit of God, which he knew nothing of.

**Ver. 12.** *And because the haven was not commodious to winter in*, etc.] Which was called the “Fair Havens”, (<sup>4278</sup>Acts 27:8) which name it might have by an antiphrasis, it being just the reverse; it might be a good summer haven, but not be fit for winter: perhaps it might be an open road or bay, and having nothing to shelter from the boisterous waves, was a place very improper for a ship to be in, in stormy weather; for in open places, as bays and roads, the sea tumbles in very violently in bad weather: this was a haven fit for fair weather only, and therefore might be so called:

*the more part advised to depart thence also*; the major part of the ship’s company were of the same opinion with the master and owner of it, and advised as well as they, to sail from the Fair Havens in quest of a better port; the Syriac version reads, “the most of ours”, of the apostle’s companions; so that they were against him, according to that version, which is not likely; however, the majority in the ship were for sailing:

*if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter, which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west*: this place is called in the Syriac version Phoenix; and Ptolomy<sup>f1287</sup> makes mention both of the city and haven of Phoenix, as on the south side of the island of Crete: and whereas it is here said to lie towards the south west and north west, this may be reconciled to that, as well as to itself; for the haven considered in general lay towards the south, but having its windings and turnings, with respect to them it lay towards both the south west and the north west, and so was a very commodious haven to winter in.

**Ver. 13.** *And when the south wind blew softly*, etc.] Or moderately, which was a good wind for them:

*supposing that they, had obtained their purpose*; that things would succeed according to their wish, and favour their design:

*loosing thence*; from the Fair Havens; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions render it, “loosing from Assos”; which could not be Assos of Troas, mentioned in (Acts 20:13) which was many miles from hence; rather Asum, a town in Crete, of which Pliny<sup>f1288</sup> makes mention, though, according to him, it seems to be an inland town; wherefore it is best to take the word *ασσον*, to be an adverb, and render it “thence”, as we do; or join it with the next word, and render it,

*they came near, or they sailed close by Crete*; along the shore, the wind favouring them, that they were in no danger of being dashed upon it, it being a soft gentle wind.

**Ver. 14.** *But not long after*, etc.] They had not been long at sea, but

*there arose against it*; the ship, or the island of Crete, or both:

*a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon*; in the Greek text it is a “Typhonic” wind, so called, not from the name of a country from whence it blew; rather from Typho, the same with Python, an Heathen deity, who is said to be drowned in the lake Serbonis, or in the river Orontes; about which places this sort of wind is observed to be frequent, and which may take its name from him, being supposed to be raised by him. This wind may very well be thought to be the same which is called Typhon, and is by writers<sup>f1289</sup> represented as a very tempestuous one, as a sort of whirlwind or hurricane, a violent storm, though without thunder and lightning; and Pliny<sup>f1290</sup> calls it the chief plague of sailors, it breaking their sails, and even their vessels to pieces: and this may still have its name from Typho, since the Egyptians used to call everything that is pernicious and hurtful by this name; moreover, this wind is also called “Euroclydon”. The Alexandrian copy reads, “Euracylon”, and so the Vulgate Latin version seems to have read, rendering it “Euro-aquilo, the north east wind”. The Ethiopic version renders it, the “north wind”; but according to Aristotle<sup>f1291</sup>, and Pliny<sup>f1292</sup> the wind Typhon never blew in the northern parts; though some think that wind is not meant here, since the Typhon is a sudden storm of wind, and soon over; whereas this storm of wind was a settled and lasting one, it continued many days; and that it is only called Typhonic, because it bore some likeness to it, being very blustering and tempestuous: it seems by its name to be an easterly wind, which blew very violently, ploughed the sea, and lifted up its waves; hence the Arabic version renders it, “a mover” or “stirrer up of the waves”; which beat against the ship in a violent manner, and exposed it to great danger.

**Ver. 15.** *And when the ship was caught*, etc.] By the wind, snatched up by it, and forcibly carried away:

*and could not bear up into the wind*; and against it, or look it in the face, as the word signifies; could not ply to windward, the wind being so high and the sea so strong:

*we let her drive*; about the sea, at pleasure, it being in vain to attempt to get her forward against the wind, or to direct her course.

**Ver. 16.** *And running under a certain island*, etc.] Or below a certain island and hard by, it or under the sea shore of it, where the sea might be smoother, the wind not being there so strong:

*which is called Clauda*: by Ptolomy<sup>f1293</sup> it is called Claudus, and was near the island of Crete, and now called Gozo. The Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, read “Cauda”; and there was an island near to Crete, which was called Gaudos<sup>f1294</sup>, and is thought to be the place here meant:

*we had much work to come by the boat*; which they had with them to go ashore in, or to betake themselves to in case of shipwreck; and which in this storm was in danger of being dashed to pieces against the ship, or lost; and it was with some difficulty that they came at it, and took it up into the ship.

**Ver. 17.** *Which when they had taken up*, etc.] When they had got the boat into the ship:

*they used helps*; the mariners made use of other persons, called in the assistance of the soldiers, and passengers, and prisoners; or for the help of the ship, they made use of cords, chains, and such like things:

*undergirding the ship*: with cords and ropes, which they drew under the keel of the ship, and so bound both sides of the ship, that it might not split and fall to pieces; which may be what is now called “frapping”, and is done by putting large ropes under the keel, and over the gunwale; and is used when a ship by labouring hard in the sea breaks the bolts in her sides, and this keeps her from parting. Horace<sup>f1295</sup> refers to this use of ropes in tempests, when he says, “Nonne vides ut — sine funibus vix durare carinae possint imperiosius Aequeor?” do not you see that without ropes the keels can scarcely endure the more imperious sea? Isidorus<sup>f1296</sup> makes mention



of several sorts of ropes made use of in storms; “spirae”, he says, are ropes that are used in tempests, which the mariners after their manner call “curcubae; tormentum” is a long rope in ships, according to the same writer, which reaches from head to stern, by which they are bound faster together:

*and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands*: which were on the African coast, here called “Syrtes”; either from the conflux of sand and slime, and such like things, which made them very dangerous for shipping, and being covered with water, could not be seen and guarded against, and especially in a storm; or from their drawing of vessels into them, which they retain, suck in, and swallow up; and such the mariners might know were not far off: there were two very remarkable ones on the coast of Africa, the one is called the greater “Syrtes”, the other the lesser <sup>f1297</sup>; the greater was more to the south than the lesser, and also more to the east, and the lesser was to the west: of these “Syrtes”, Jerom <sup>f1298</sup> says, they are sandy places in the great sea very terrible, and to be feared, because they use to draw all into them; they are near the Egyptian sea; the Lybian sea, which washes the African shore, is by Seneca called from them the “Syrtic sea” <sup>f1299</sup>: wherefore,

*they strake sail*; let down their sails; so read some manuscripts in New College, Oxford; in the Greek text it is, “they let down the vessel”; not the boat they had taken in, of which we read after; nor an anchor, or anchors, which would have been improper in a storm; nor the mast, it can hardly be thought that should be the first thing they should cut down, when they did not cast out the tackling till the third day; the storm was vehement on the first, more vehement on the second, when they lightened the ship, and most vehement on the third, when they cast out the tackling; and as Scheffer <sup>f1300</sup> observes, the mast is never cut down before the loss of other things; wherefore this is to be understood of letting down the sail yard, and contracting the sails; the Syriac version renders it, “we let down the main sail”; or, “the sail”, using the Greek word “Armenon”, which signifies “a sail”:

*and so were driven*; about in the sea, wheresoever the winds and waves carried them; or very likely the ship was driven before the wind under her bare poles.

**Ver. 18.** *And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest*, etc.] Sometimes being lifted up as it were to the heavens, and then presently sinking down,



as if they were going into the bottom of the sea; such a condition at sea is described to the life by the Psalmist, in (<sup>49A75</sup>Psalm 107:25-27).

*the next day they lightened the ship*; of its burden, its lading, the goods and merchandise that were in it; as the mariners did in the ship in which Jonah was, (Jon 1:5) the Ethiopic version renders it, “they cast the goods into the sea”; the Arabic version, the “merchandise”.

**Ver. 19.** *And the third day*, etc.] From the time this storm began, and this tempestuous weather held:

*we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship*; by which seems to be meant their naval stores and instruments, as sails, ropes, cables, anchors, etc. and yet we afterwards read of their anchors and main sail: it may be rendered, “the furniture of the ship”; and yet it cannot design the ship’s provisions, at least all were not cast away; for afterwards mention is made of casting out the wheat into the sea: many versions render it, “the armament of the ship”; and the Ethiopic version adds, “and arms”; the soldiers’ arms, and others which belonged to the ship, which were brought with them to defend themselves against an enemy: these, the historian says, “we cast out”; the Apostle Paul’s company, Luke and others; but not without the leave and order of the centurion and governor of the ship: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version read, “they cast out”: which seems most probable.

**Ver. 20.** *And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared*, etc.] The Syriac version adds, “nor moon”; which is an usual description of dark, cloudy, and tempestuous seasons; and which was not only uncomfortable to them, because they could not see these luminaries, and enjoy their beneficial light and influence; but because they had them not to guide and direct them; for the sun, moon, and stars, are useful to sailors, to steer their course by; especially they were to the ancients, before the invention and use of the loadstone; besides, by these they conjectured what weather it would be, as mariners still do; they observed the rising and setting of the sun, whether it shone with equal rays or not, and whether it was red and fiery, or pale; and the like observations they made upon the moon, both as to its colour and size; and especially the constellations and stars were of singular use unto them; and above all, the two Bears, the greater and the lesser; the Greeks observed the former, and the Phoenicians the latter; and who are said by Pliny to have first found out the use of the constellations in navigation; particularly this is ascribed to the famous philosopher Thales,

who is said to be a Phoenician; and from other constellations, as Arcturus, Orion, Hyades, etc. they foresaw rains, storms, and tempests: and now what made the case of the apostle and the ship's company the more distressing was, that it was not only dark and cloudy, but very tempestuous, as follows;

*and no small tempest lay on us*; and all this continued many days: so Virgil <sup>f1301</sup> represents Aeneas and his company in a like condition at sea, as not able by the heavens to distinguish day from night, nor to direct their course, neither sun nor stars appearing, and so wandered about in the sea three days without the sun, and as many nights without a star; and Homer <sup>f1302</sup> describes Ulysses in a violent storm at sea, and for the space of nine days tossed about, when on the tenth day he got to land; and Sosia, in Terence <sup>f1303</sup>, is brought in saying, that he had been thirty days in a ship, expecting death every moment, so boisterous was the storm he was in; and so it was in this case, the winds blew hard upon them, and the rains fell with great violence, and everything was discouraging and distressing; insomuch that

*all hope that we should be saved was then taken away*; neither the master and owner of the ship, nor the mariners, nor the soldiers, nor prisoners, nor the apostle's companions, had any hope of being saved, but all expected to be lost. The apostle himself knew indeed, that though the ship would be lost, every man's life would be saved; and yet he could have no hope of this, as to the outward appearance of things, but on account of the revelation which the Lord had made to him, and he believed; otherwise, as to all human helps and means, there was no probability of an escape.

**Ver. 21.** *But after long abstinence*, etc.] From food, not for want of it, as appears from what follows, (<sup>40736</sup>Acts 27:36-38) nor in a religious way, in order to obtain the favour of God; but either for want of appetite, and a nauseousness and loathing of food, through the tossing of the ship, fright at the storm, and fears of death; and chiefly for want of time, being employed for the security of themselves and the ship.

*Paul stood forth in the midst of them*; that all might hear him:

*and said, sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me*: it would have been better for them to have taken his advice, and stayed at the Fair Havens,

*and not have loosed from Crete*; or sailed from thence:

*and to have gained this harm and loss*; whereby they would have shunned the injuries of the weather, the storm and tempest which they had endured, to the prejudice of their health, and the terrifying of their minds, and have prevented the loss of the goods and merchandise of the ship, and its tackling, utensils, instruments, and arms; the former of these is expressed by “harm” or injury, and the latter by “loss”. The apostle addresses them in a very courteous manner, and does not use sharp reproofs, severe language, or upbraid and insult them, only reminds them of the counsel he had given, which had it been taken, would have been to their advantage; and the rather he mentions this, that since what he had foretold was in part already come to pass, they might give the more heed to what he was about to say to them.

**Ver. 22.** *And now I exhort you to be of good cheer*, etc.] To take heart and courage, and not be cast down, though things had been thus with them, and they were now in a very melancholy plight and condition.

*For there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship*; the ship will be lost, but not one person in it: there will be a shipwreck, and so every man’s life will be in danger, and yet not one will perish; and therefore there was reason to be of good cheer, since this was what they could not, and did not expect, all hope of being saved was gone: wherefore this, if they could but believe it, must be good news to all the company; and in order to engage them to believe it, the apostle adds,

**Ver. 23.** *For there stood by me this night the angel of God*, etc.] One of the ministering, spirits that stand before God, and who was sent by him to the apostle; and appeared to him, either in a vision by a dream, or rather when he was awake, and stood by him, as he was praying for deliverance from the storm; for it is most likely that the apostle should be engaged at such a time as this:

*whose I am, and whom I serve*: meaning not the angel, but God, whose the angel was; and his the apostle was, by electing, redeeming, and calling grace; God the Father had chosen him in his Son unto salvation; and Christ had redeemed him by his blood; and the Holy Spirit had called him by his grace; and he was not only the Lord’s in common, as all other saints are, but he was his apostle and minister, and served him in the ministration of the Gospel of Christ, as well as from a principle of grace, obeyed the law of God, and was subject to the ordinances of Christ; in all which he served with great pleasure and cheerfulness, diligence, constancy, and faithfulness;

from right principles, and with right views, being constrained by love, and influenced by the consideration of the relation he stood in to God. And all this was not peculiar to the apostle, but common to all the saints, excepting that of his being an apostle and minister of the Gospel: and the consideration of their relation to God has the same influence upon them it had upon him; they are not their own, nor are they the servants of men, nor do they belong to Satan, nor even to the ministering angels, but they are the Lord's; not merely by creation, as all men are, but in a way of special grace: they are Jehovah the Father's, to whom he bears a peculiar love and favour, and whom he has chosen in his Son for his peculiar people; and which is made manifest and known by drawing them with loving kindness to himself in the effectual calling; by his Gospel coming in power to them; by the blessings of the covenant of grace being bestowed on them; and by the spirit of adoption witnessing to them, that they are the children of God: they are Jehovah the Son's, they are his people made willing in the day of his power; they are his portion assigned him by his Father; they are his spouse and bride, whom he has betrothed to himself; they are his children, to whom he stands in the relation of the everlasting Father; and they are his sheep the Father has given him, and he has laid down his life for; all which appears by their having his Spirit, as a Spirit of regeneration and sanctification, without which none are openly and manifestatively his: and they are Jehovah the Spirit's; they are his regenerated and sanctified ones; they are his workmanship, having his good work of grace begun and carrying on in their souls; they are his temples in which he dwells; he has the possession of them, and will not leave them till he has brought them safe to glory: and under all this evidence, and especially through the testimony of the Spirit of God unto them, they call themselves the Lord's, as the apostle here does, and this engages them to serve him. The natural man has no desire, but an aversion to the service of God; converted men are willing to serve him, and delight to do it; they serve God in the best manner they can, in righteousness and true holiness, in an acceptable manner, with reverence and godly fear, and heartily and willingly; as appears by the pleasure they take in being called the servants of God, by disclaiming all other lords, by running all risks to serve the Lord, and by lamenting it, that they serve him no better.

**Ver. 24.** *Saying, fear not, Paul*, etc.] For though the apostle knew and believed he should go to Rome, and appear before Caesar, to whom he had appealed, and where he should bear a testimony for Christ; and though he

had previous notice of this storm, and of the loss and damage which should be sustained, and which he expected; yet the flesh was weak, and he might be under some fears and misgivings of heart, for these sometimes attend the best of men.

*Thou must be brought before Caesar;* as has been declared, and therefore cannot be lost in this storm; it is the will and decree of God, which cannot be frustrated, it must be:

*and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee;* that is, God had determined to save the whole ship's company for his sake, and in answer to his prayers, which he had been putting up for them; the Lord had heard him, and granted his request, and would save them all on his account: so sometimes God saves a nation, a city, a body of men, even of ungodly men, for the sake of a few that fear his name, who are among them.

**Ver. 25.** *Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer,* etc.] Which he repeats with more fervency and earnestness, there being so much reason for it:

*for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me:* true faith lays hold and, settles upon the word and promises of God; and the true believer, knowing his power and faithfulness, firmly persuaded that there shall be a performance of what is said by him, with respect to matter, manner, and circumstances. Whatever God has told his people of, or has promised unto them, shall be performed, whether with respect to things temporal; that they shall not want any good thing; that all their afflictions shall be for their good; that they shall be supported under them, and at last brought out of them: or whether with respect to spiritual things; whatever he has said concerning himself, that he will be their God, will continue to love them, will not leave them, nor forsake them, will guide and protect them, will supply all their need, and give them grace here, and glory hereafter; and whatever he has said concerning his Son, that he is their Saviour and Redeemer, that they are justified by his righteousness, pardoned through his blood, and shall be saved in him with an everlasting salvation; and whatever he has said concerning his Spirit, that he shall enlighten them more and more, carry on his good work in them, and finish it, shall be their comforter and their guide, shall strengthen them in their inward man, and work them up for that selfsame thing, eternal glory: and likewise, whatever he has said concerning the prosperity and happiness of the churches in the latter day; even all those glorious things spoken of the city of God; and which relate both to the spiritual and personal reign of Christ. Faith takes

all this at his word, and firmly believes it shall be as he has said: and it has good grounds and reasons for acting in this manner; from the veracity, faithfulness, and power of God, who has promised; and from the nature of the promises themselves, which are unconditional, immutable, all in Christ, and yea and amen in him, and not one of them has ever failed: and such a believing frame of soul greatly encourages cheerfulness of spirit, and produces it: a believer is cheerful himself, as he has reason to be; he is filled with joy and peace in believing, yea, with a joy unspeakable, and full of glory; and he makes all about him cheerful; he comforts others with the same comforts he has been comforted of God; and however, he exhorts, after his own example, to believe, and be of good cheer; (see <sup><400></sup>2 Chronicles 20:20).

**Ver. 26.** *Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island.*] This circumstance is foretold, that when the whole affair should come to pass, it might be manifest that it was not a casual thing, a fortuitous event, a business of chance, but was predetermined by God, made known to the apostle, and predicted by him. This island was Melita; and the fulfilment of this part of the prediction is related in (<sup><401></sup>Acts 28:1).

**Ver. 27.** *But when the fourteenth night was come,* etc.] From their setting out from the Fair Havens in Crete, or from the beginning of the storm:

*as they were driven up and down in Adria:* or “in the Adriatic sea”, as the Syriac version renders it: the Adriatic sea is now called by the Turks the gulf of Venice, and the straits of Venice, and sometimes the Venetian sea <sup>f1304</sup>; but formerly the Adriatic sea included more than the Venetian gulf; it took in the Ionian and Sicilian seas, and had its name from the city Adria, a colony of the Tuscans <sup>f1305</sup>. It is called by Ptolomy <sup>f1306</sup> Hadria, and reckoned a city of the Picenes. Pliny <sup>f1307</sup> places it near the river Padus, and calls it Atria, a town of the Tuscans, which had a famous port, from whence the sea was before called Atriotic, which is now Adriatic. Adria, Justin <sup>f1308</sup> says, which is near to the Illyrian sea, and gave name to the Adriatic sea, is a Grecian city; and from this place the ancestors of Adrian, the Roman emperor, originally came; and all the sea between Illyricum and Italy is called the Adriatic; and from the beginning of it, which is at the city of Venice, unto Garganus, a mountain in Italy, and Dyrrachium, a city of Macedonia, it is 600 miles in length, and its largest breadth is 200, and the least 150, and the mouth of it 60. The other part of the sea, which washes Macedonia and Epirus, is called the Ionian sea. Moreover, this whole sea is

called the superior sea, with respect to the Tyrrhenian, which dashes the other shore of Italy, and is called the inferior<sup>f1309</sup>. In this same sea, Josephus<sup>f1310</sup>, the historian, was shipwrecked as he was on a voyage to Rome: his account is this;

“I came to Rome, having gone through many dangers by sea, for our ship being sunk in the middle of Adria, being in number about six hundred, we swam all night; and about break of day, by the providence of God, a ship of Cyrene appeared to us, in which I, and some others, in all eighty, getting before the rest, were received into it, and so got safe to Dicearchia, which the Italians call Puteoli;”

a place afterwards mentioned, where the apostle also arrived. And the sea itself is often, by the poets<sup>f1311</sup> called Adria, as here, and is represented as a very troublesome sea; and here Paul, and the ship’s company, were driven to and fro by the storm,

*when about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country:* about the middle of the night the mariners thought, by some observations they made, that they were nigh land; or, as it is in the Greek text, “that some country drew near to them”; which well agrees with the language and sense of seafaring persons, to whose sight the land seems to draw near them, or depart from them, when they draw near, or depart from that: the Ethiopic version is, “they thought they should have seen a city”; they had a notion of some city near; and the Arabic version, “they thought to know in what country, or place” they were; and therefore did as follows.

**Ver. 28.** *And sounded,* etc.] Or let down their plummet, or sounding line; which was a line with a piece of lead at the end of it, which they let down into the water, and by that means found what depth it was, by which they could judge whether they were near land or not. The sounding line, with the ancients, was called by different names; sometimes bolis, and this is the name it has here, **βολισαντες**, “they let down the bolis”: and the bolis is, by some, described thus; it is a brazen or leaden vessel, with a chain, which mariners fill with grease, and let down into the sea, to try whether the places are rocky where a ship may stand, or sandy where the ship is in danger of being lost: it is also called “catapirates”, which is thus described by Isidore; “catapirates” is a line with a piece of lead, by which the depth of the sea is tried. Herodotus makes mention of it under this name, and observes, that when persons are within a day’s voyage of Egypt, if they let



down the “catapirates”, or sounding line, they will bring up clay, even when in eleven fathom deep<sup>f1312</sup> According to modern accounts, there are two kinds of lines, occasionally used in sounding the sea, the sounding line, and the deep sea line: the sounding line is the thickest and shortest, as not exceeding 20 fathoms in length, and is marked at two, three, and four fathoms with a piece of black leather between the strands, and at five with a piece of white leather: the sounding line may be used when the ship is under sail, which the deep sea line cannot. — The plummet is usually in form of a nine pin, and weighs 18 pounds; the end is frequently greased, to try whether the ground be sandy or rocky, etc.<sup>f1313</sup> . The deep sea line is used in deep water, and both lead and line are larger than the other; at the end of it is a piece of lead, called deep sea lead, has a hole at the bottom, in which is put a piece of “tallow”, to bring up the colour of the sand at the bottom, to learn the differences of the ground, and know what coasts they are on.

*And found it twenty fathoms*; or “orgyas”; a fathom is a measure which contains six feet, and is the utmost extent of both arms, when stretched into a right line: the fathom, it seems, differs according to the different sorts of vessels; the fathom of a man of war is six feet, that of merchant ships five feet and a half, and that of fly boats and fishing vessels five feet: if the fathom here used was the first of these, the sounding was an hundred and twenty feet; the Ethiopic version renders it, “twenty statues of a man”.

*And when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms*; or ninety feet; by which they imagined that they were near the continent, or some island: in some places, as the coasts of Virginia, for instance, by the use of the deep sea line, it is known how far it is from land; for as many fathoms of water as are found, it is reckoned so many leagues from land.

**Ver. 29.** *Then fearing lest they should have fallen upon rocks*, etc.] Or rough places, as shelves, rocks, or sands, as they might well fear, when the water shallowed so fast, from 20 to 15 fathoms:

*they cast four anchors out of the stern*; or hinder part of the ship; the Ethiopic version calls it, “the head of the ship”: and adds, “where the governor sat”; that is, at the helm, to steer it. Perhaps the reason of this version is, because it is not usual in modern navigation, and so, when this version was made, to cast out anchors from the stern, but from the prow or head of the ship; but it seems this was done by the ancients. According to



Pliny, the Tyrrhenians first invented the anchor; though Pausanias ascribes the invention of it to Midas, the son of Gordius: the most ancient ones were made of stone, as was the anchor of the Argonautes; afterwards they were made of wood; and it is said, that the Japanese use wooden anchors now; and these were not pointed, but had great weights of lead, or baskets filled with stones at the head of them, to stop the ship with; last of all they were made of iron, but with a barb or tooth on one side only, not on both: the anchor with two teeth or barbs was found out by Eupalamius; or, as others say, by Anacharsis, the Scythian philosopher: it was usual to have more anchors than one in every ship, of which there was one which exceeded the rest, both in size and strength, and was called the “sacred” anchor; and which was only used in case of necessity<sup>f1314</sup>; and is what is now called “the sheet anchor”. The modern anchor is a large strong piece of iron, crooked at one end, and formed into two barbs, resembling a hook, fastened at the other end by a cable. The parts of an anchor are,

- (1) the ring into which the cable is fastened;
- (2) the beam, or shank, which is the longest part of the anchor;
- (3) the arm, which is that which runs down into the ground; at the end of which is,
- (4) the flouke or fluke, by some called the palm, being that broad and picked part with its barbs like an arrowhead, which fastens into the ground;
- (5) the stock, a piece of wood, fastened to the beam near the ring, serving to guide the fluke, so that it may fall right, and fix in the ground.

There are three kinds of anchors commonly used, the kedger, the grapnel, and the stream anchor<sup>f1315</sup>; yea, I find that there are four kinds of anchors, the sheet anchor, best bower, small bower, and stream anchor: it seems the grapnel is chiefly for the long boat: here were four anchors, but very likely all of a sort, or, however, not diversified in the manner the modern ones are. These they cast out to stop the ship, and keep it steady, and that it might proceed no further, till they could learn whereabout they were:

*and wished for the day*; that by the light of it they might see whether they were near land, or in danger of rocks and shelves, as they imagined.

**Ver. 30.** *And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship,* etc.] To save their lives, concluding that it was in the utmost danger, and that it would quickly, notwithstanding the anchors cast out, break away, and fall upon the rocks, and split to pieces:

*when they had let down the boat into the sea;* which before they had taken up into the ship, (~~4276~~ Acts 27:16,17) and now they let it down, in order to get into it, and make their escape:

*under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship;* the foremost part of the ship, the prow of it; their pretence in attempting to get out of the ship, and into the boat, was, that whereas there were anchors cast out of the stern, or hinder part of the ship, so they would cast out others, from the fore part of it; and “stretch” them “out”, as the word signifies, or carry them further out into the sea, for the security of the ship; and to do which, it was necessary to use the boat.

**Ver. 31.** *Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers,* etc.] He did not direct his speech to the governor and owner of the ship, who very likely, being sensible of the danger, were in the scheme with the mariners, and at the head of them; but to Julius the centurion, and the soldiers under him, who having no knowledge of maritime affairs, were not apprised of the danger, nor aware of the design of the shipmen; and besides, had now great dependence upon the assurance the apostle had given, that no life should be lost: to these he said,

*except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved;* pointing to the mariners who were about to let down the boat, in order to make their escape: the apostle had before declared, that there should be no loss of any man’s life, and yet now affirms, that unless the mariners continued in the ship, the rest of the company could not be saved: this does not show that the decree concerning the salvation of them was a conditional one, and that the condition was, that the mariners should stay in the ship; but that their stay in the ship, who had skill to guide and direct it, as also the company when shipwrecked, were a means absolutely fixed in the decree, and therefore was absolutely necessary: God had determined to save the whole ship’s crew, and that in the same way and manner; they were all to be shipwrecked; some were not to leave the ship before hand, and save themselves in the boat, but they were all to be exposed to equal danger, and then be saved; and till that time came, the proper and prudent means were to be made use of, who were the shipmen, who best knew how to

manage the ship in this extremity: this teaches us that the end and means, in the decrees of God, are not to be separated; nor is any end to be expected without the use of means; and means are as peremptorily fixed, and are as absolutely necessary, and must as certainly be accomplished, as the end. Thus spiritual and eternal salvation is a certain thing; it is the appointment of God, which is absolute and unconditional, immutable and unfrustrable; there is a sure connection between the decree of God and salvation; it is a scheme drawn by Jehovah in the council of peace, who is God only wise, saw everything before hand that would come to pass, and has power to execute his scheme; it is an affair secured in the covenant of grace, which is sure and immovable; God is faithful who has made it with his Son; and Christ, the surety and Mediator of it, is equal to that part which he has in it; yea, salvation is a finished work, full satisfaction is made for sin, and pardon procured, an everlasting righteousness is brought in, all enemies are conquered and destroyed, and Christ's people are saved from them: and the interest which he has in them shows the certainty of their salvation; for they are given to him, and are in his hands; they are his portion, his treasure and his jewels; they are the purchase of his blood, and the travail of his soul; they are united to him, and are built upon him; they are interested in his preparations and prayers, and are in some sense saved already; and yet there are some things which God has fixed as means, and made absolutely necessary, and without which none can be saved: as for instance, none can be saved without regeneration; without this there is no meetness for heaven; nor does it appear without it that any have a right unto it; nor can an unregenerate man have any true hope of it; wherefore such as are chosen and redeemed, are regenerated by the Spirit of God: so likewise without holiness no man shall see the Lord; this is fixed in the decree of God, and is necessary to the enjoyment of him, and to fellowship with angels and glorified saints; wherefore the Lord sanctifies all he saves: particularly none without faith in Christ will ever be saved; nor is this inconsistent with salvation being by grace, seeing it is not considered as a cause of salvation, but is itself a gift of grace; it lies in receiving things at the hand of God, it admits of no glorying in men, and gives all the glory of salvation to God and Christ, and free grace; and this is necessary because God has appointed it, and therefore he bestows it on all he means to save: to which may be added, that without perseverance in faith and holiness, there is no salvation; wherefore the Lord puts his grace into the hearts of his people to cause them to persevere; he encompasses them with his

power, upholds them with the right hand of his righteousness, and preserves them from Satan, and from a final and total falling away.

**Ver. 32.** *Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat*, etc.] With which it had been fastened to the sides of the ship, and by which the mariners were letting it down, in order to get into it, and go off:

*and let her fall off*; from the sides of the ship into the sea, and so prevented the shipmen quitting the ship; for now they gave more credit to Paul than to them.

**Ver. 33.** *And while the day was coming on*, etc.] Between midnight and break of day: Paul besought them all to take meat; to sit down and eat a meal together:

*saying, this day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried*; or have been waiting for, or expecting; that is, as the Arabic version expresses it, a shipwreck; for fourteen days past, ever since the storm begun, they had expected nothing but shipwreck and death:

*and continued fasting, having taken nothing*: not that they had neither ate nor drank all that while, for without a miracle they could never have lived so long without eating something; but the meaning is, they had not eaten anyone regular meal all that while, had only caught up a bit now and then, and ate it, and that but very little.

**Ver. 34.** *Wherefore I pray you to take some meat*, etc.] To sit down composedly, and eat meat cheerfully and freely:

*for this is for your health*; the Alexandrian copy reads, “for our health”; it was for the health of them all, that they might be better able to bear the shock and fatigue of the shipwreck, and be in better spirits, and in a better capacity to help themselves, and one another:

*for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you*; a proverbial phrase, expressing the utmost safety of their lives, and therefore might cheerfully eat their food, and rest themselves, and be satisfied. To dream of shaving the hair, portended shipwreck to sailors; nor was it lawful for any to pare his nails, or cut off his hair, but in a storm; to which custom, some think, the apostle here alludes <sup>f1316</sup>; (see <sup><0945></sup>1 Samuel 14:45, <sup><0041></sup>2 Samuel 14:11).

**Ver. 35.** *And when he had thus spoken he took bread*, etc.] A piece of bread, of common bread, into his hands; for this could never be the eucharist, or Lord's supper, which the apostle now celebrated, as some have suggested, but such sort of bread that seafaring men commonly eat: mention is before made of "meat" or "food", which the apostle entreated them to take, which includes every sort of sea provisions they had with them; and which, with the ancients, were usually the following: it is certain they used to carry bread corn along with them, either crude, or ground, or baked; the former when they went long voyages, the last when shorter ones; and it is plain that they had wheat in this ship, which after they had eaten they cast out, (<sup>42738</sup>Acts 27:38) and corn ground, or meal, they had used to eat moistened with water, and sometimes with oil, and sometimes with oil and wine; and they had a sort of food they called "maza" which was made of meat and milk; likewise they used to carry onions and garlic, which the rowers usually ate, and were thought to be good against change of places and water; and they were wont to make a sort of soup of cheese, onions and eggs, which the Greeks call "muttootos", and the Latins "mosetum"; and they had also bread which was of a red colour, being hard baked and scorched in the oven, yea it was "biscoctus", twice baked <sup>f1317</sup>; as our modern sea biscuit is, and which has its name from hence, and which for long voyages is four times baked, and prepared six months before the voyage is entered on; and such sort of red bread or biscuit very probably was this, which the apostle now took into his hands, and did with it as follows:

*and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all*: and for them all, as Christ did at ordinary meals, (<sup>4149</sup>Matthew 14:19, 15:36).

*and when he had broken it he began to eat*: which was all agreeably to the custom and manner of the Jews, who first gave thanks, and then said "Amen", at giving of thanks; when he that gave thanks brake and ate first: for he that brake the bread might not break it until the "Amen" was finished by all that answered by it, at giving of thanks; and no one might eat anything until he that brake, first tasted and ate <sup>f1318</sup>.

**Ver. 36.** *Then were they all of good cheer*, etc.] Encouraged by the apostle's words and example:

*and they all took some meat*; and made a comfortable meal, which they had not done for fourteen days past.

**Ver. 37.** *And we were in all in the ship*, etc.] Reckoning the master and owner of the ship, and the centurion and the soldiers, and the apostle and his company, with whatsoever passengers there might be:

*two hundred and threescore and sixteen souls*; the Alexandrian copy reads, “two hundred seventy and five”; and the Ethiopic version, “two hundred and six”. This account of the number is given to show, that the historian, who was one of them, had an exact knowledge of all in the ship; and this being recorded before the account of the shipwreck, may serve to make the truth of the relation the more to be believed that none of them perished, since their number was so precisely known; and makes it the more marvellous, that such a number of men should be saved, and in a shipwreck; and shows, that there must be a wonderful interposition of divine power to bring them all safe to land.

**Ver. 38.** *And when they had eaten enough*, etc.]] Were satisfied, having eaten a full meal:

*they lightened the ship*; of its burden, that it might the better carry them to the shore, and that by the following method:

*and cast out the wheat into the sea*; which seems to have been part of the ship’s provision; or one part of their lading, which they brought from Egypt, and were carrying to Italy: they had cast out some of the goods of the ship before, and also the tackling of the ship, and now, last of all, the wheat; for what was eatable they reserved till last, not knowing to what extremity they might be reduced.

**Ver. 39.** *And when it was day they knew not the land*, etc.] What place it was, or the name of it:

*but they discovered a certain creek with a shore*; a gulf or bay, with a shore near it; the Ethiopic version explains it,

*an arm of the sea*, where was a port, where they thought they could secure themselves, or get ashore:

*into which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship*; whither they had a mind, and consulted to run the ship, if it could be done by any means, believing it was the most likely method of saving themselves, and that; for notwithstanding the assurance they had that no

man's life should be lost, they made use of all proper means for their safety and security.

**Ver. 40.** *And when they had taken up the anchors*, etc.] The four anchors they cast out of the stern, (<sup>f1319</sup>Acts 27:29) or “when they had cut the anchors”, as the Syriac and Arabic versions render it; that is, had cut the cables to which the anchors were fastened:

*they committed themselves unto the sea*; or left them, the anchors, in the sea; or committed the ship to the sea, and themselves in it, endeavouring to steer its course to the place they had in view:

*and loosed the rudder bands*; by which the rudder was fastened to the ship. — -The rudder, in navigation, is a piece of timber turning on hinges in the stern of a ship, and which opposing sometimes one side to the water, and sometimes another, turns or directs the vessel this way or that. The rudder of a ship is a piece of timber hung on the stern posts, by four or five iron hooks, called “pintles”, serving as it were for the bridle of a ship, to turn her about at the pleasure of the steersman. — -The rudder being perpendicular, and without side the ship, another piece of timber is fitted into it at right angles, which comes into the ship, by which the rudder is managed and directed: this latter is properly called the “helm” or “tiller”, and sometimes, though improperly, the rudder itself. — -A narrow rudder is best for a ship's sailing, provided she can feel it; that is, be guided and turned by it, for a broad rudder will hold much water when the helm is put over to any side; yet if a ship has a fat quarter, so that the water cannot come quick and strong to her rudder, she will require a broad rudder. — -The aftmost part of the rudder is called the “rake” of the rudder. This is the account of a rudder with the moderns <sup>f1319</sup>: with the ancients, the parts of the rudder were these, the “clavus” or “helm”, by which the rudder was governed; the pole of it; the wings or the two breadths of it, which were as wings, and the handle: some ships had but one rudder, most had two, and some three, and some four; those that had but one, seemed to have it in the middle of the stern; and those that had two had them on the sides, not far from the middle; and there were some ships which had them not only in the stern, but also in the prow or head of the ship <sup>f1320</sup>: that the ancients had sometimes more rudders than one in a ship, has been abundantly proved by Bochartus and Scheherus; take only an instance or two. The Carthaginians, as <sup>f1321</sup>Aelianus reports, decreed two governors to every ship saying it was absurd that it should have *δυο πηδάλια*, “two rudders”, and that he who

was most useful to the sailors, and had the government of the ship, should be alone, and without successor and companion; and so Apuleius<sup>f1322</sup> says, the ship in which we were carried was shook by various storms and tempests, “*utroque regimine amisso*”, and having lost both its rudders, sunk at the precipice. Some of the Indian ships have three rudders; that of Philopator’s had four rudders: how many this ship had, in which the apostle was, cannot be said: but this is certain, that it had more than one; for the words are, “and loosed the bands of the rudders”; and since it is a clear case, that the ships of the ancients had more rudders than one to each, there is no need to suppose a figure in the text, and that the plural number is used for the singular, as Beza thinks: and “the bands” of them were those by which they were fastened; and they were “loosed”, as Schefferus conjectures, because when the anchors were cast out, they fastened the rudders higher, that they might not be broken by the dashing of the waves, especially as they were in a storm; but now having taken up the anchors, they loosed these bands: and certain it is, that not only oars but rudders were fastened with cords or ropes to the ship<sup>f1323</sup>: according to the notion of modern navigation, the rudder band might be thought to be the rope which is turned round the tiller, and made fast to the ship’s side, and as the tiller is moved, “surges” round the end of the tiller; and very likely might be made fast, when the ship was at anchor, on one side, to keep the ship from breaking her sheer; but now being loosed, and the helm “a midship”, and the mainsail hoisted, the ship ran to the shore before the wind.

*And hoised up the main sail to the wind*: which they had before struck or let down, (<sup><427></sup>Acts 27:17). The main sail is that which is upon the main mast. The Ethiopic version renders it, “the great sail”. The great sail was that which is called “*acatius*”, which is another word than is here used: so Isidore<sup>f1324</sup> says “*acatius*” is the greatest sail, and is placed in the middle of the ship; “*epidromos*” is the next in size, and is placed at the stern; and “*dolon*” is the least sail, and is fixed at the head: and both the Syriac and Arabic versions here render it, “the little sail”; and which sailors put up when they are afraid to use large sails, which would carry too much wind; but the word here used is “*artemo*”, which the above writer says is commended rather for the sake of directing the ship, than for swiftness. And this seems to be the use that was now made of it, namely, to guide the ship into the creek or bay.

*And made toward the shore*; which was in the creek, or to the haven in it.



**Ver. 41.** *And falling into a place where two seas met*, etc.] An “isthmus”, on each side of which the sea ran; and which the inhabitants of Malta, as Beza says, show to this day, and call it, “la Cala de San Paulo”, or the Descent of Saint Paul. The meeting of these two seas might occasion a great rippling in the sea like to a large eddy, or counter tide; and here might be a sand on which

*they ran the ship aground*; for this place where the two seas met, as the same annotator observes, could not be the shore itself; for otherwise, to what purpose should they cast themselves into the sea, as they afterwards did, if the head of the ship struck upon the shore, and stuck fast there? but must rather mean a shelf of sand, opposite, or near the entrance into the bay, and where the shipwreck was.

*And the fore part stuck fast, and remained unmovable*; so that there was no getting her off:

*but the hinder part was broken by the violence of the waves*; that is, the stern; by which means there were boards and broken pieces for the company to get ashore upon.

**Ver. 42.** *And the soldiers’ counsel was to kill the prisoners*, etc.] Paul, and the rest: this they had not only an inclination to, but they declared it, and gave it as their opinion, and what they thought advisable to be done directly:

*lest any of them should swim out and escape*; and they should be accountable for them: but this was dreadful wickedness in them to seek to take away the lives of others, when they themselves were in so much danger; and monstrous ingratitude to the Apostle Paul, who had been so much concerned for their lives, and careful of them, and had been the means of saving them, and for whose sake they were saved: the devil must have had a great hand in this.

**Ver. 43.** *But the centurion, willing to save Paul*, etc.] Not only because he was a Roman citizen, but because he perceived he was some extraordinary person; and chiefly because he was moved there unto by a superior influence, that Satan might not have his end; and that the will of God might be fulfilled, that he should go to Rome, and there bear a testimony of Christ.

*Kept them from their purpose*; would not suffer them to execute their design, restrained them from it, and laid his commands upon them to the contrary.

*And commanded that they which could swim, should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land*; which some restrain to the Roman soldiers, as if the centurion's speech was only directed to them; though it seems rather to have respect to the whole company, the mariners, who generally can swim, and the soldiers, as many of them as could, and the rest of the prisoners or passengers; though it may be, he might chiefly regard the soldiers, who were usually learned to swim, that they might the more readily pass rivers, in their marches, where they could find no bridges, that so he might be the sooner rid of them, and break their purpose.

**Ver. 44.** *And the rest, some on boards*, etc.] Doors, tables, planks, or any such like things:

*and some on broken pieces of the ship*; or what came from it, as masts, beams, etc.

*and so it came to pass that they escaped all safe to land*; not one was lost, as Paul had foretold. And so it will be with the saints after their afflicted state in this life, who are safe by being in Christ, and by abiding in him and in the use of means; and though by reason of the many difficulties in the way, through the corruptions of their own hearts, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, various afflictions, and sometimes violent persecutions, they are scarcely saved, yet at last they are certainly saved: so it comes to pass that they get safe on the shores of eternal bliss and happiness; because they are ordained unto it, are the care of Christ, and the purchase of his blood; and are partakers of the blessings of grace, and have the Spirit, as an earnest of the heavenly inheritance; and when landed they are safe; sin will be no more; Satan will be under their feet; there will be no more afflictions of any kind; and they will be with the Lord, and for ever with him. This voyage of the apostle, and the saints with him, was an emblem of the passage of the people of God in this world to heaven: their number was but few; who besides Luke, and Aristarchus the Macedonian, were with him, is not known, (<sup><447></sup>Acts 27:2). And so the number of the children of God, in anyone period of time, is but small in comparison of the rest of the world: the apostle and his companions had but very indifferent company, as other prisoners, a band of soldiers, and the sailors; Christ's church is as a rose in a field, a lily among thorns, vexed with the

conversation of the wicked, being in a world which lies in wickedness; and which may very fitly be compared to the sea, for the waves of afflictions in it, and the restless and uneasy spirits of the men of it. Sailing at this time was dangerous, (~~4270~~ Acts 27:9) as the saints' passage through this world always is, and especially now in these last and perilous days; partly through the aboundings of immorality on the one hand, and partly through the spread of error and heresy on the other. A great storm arose, (~~4274~~ Acts 27:14) and there are many the Christian meets with in his voyage to heaven; and well it is for him that Christ is an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, and that he is built on such a foundation, which the most violent storms cannot move him from. There was no sight of sun or stars for many days, (~~4271~~ Acts 27:20) and so it is sometimes with the people of God; the sun of righteousness is not seen by them, clouds interpose between him and them; and the stars, the ministers of the Gospel, are removed from them, and their eyes cannot behold their teachers, which make it a distressed time with them: yea, all hope of salvation was gone, (~~4271~~ Acts 27:20) and such at times is the case of truly gracious souls; their hope, and their strength, they are ready to say, are perished from the Lord, and they are cut off from before his eyes: there was also a long abstinence from food, (~~4271~~ Acts 27:21,33) which is sometimes the case in a spiritual sense, and is owing either to want of food, the word of the Lord being precious, there being a famine of hearing the word; or for want of appetite to it: and last of all, there was a design formed by the soldiers to kill Paul, and the prisoners, but were prevented by the centurion, (~~4272~~ Acts 27:42). The sincere followers of Christ are accounted as sheep for the slaughter, and are killed all the day long in the intention of wicked men; who have always a good will to it, were they not restrained through the goodness of a civil government, and especially by the power and providence of God: however, at last, they get safe to their port and haven, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.

# CHAPTER 28

## INTRODUCTION TO ACTS 28

**Ver. 1.** *And when they were escaped*, etc.] From the danger they were exposed to by shipwreck, and were got safe to land; this is omitted in the Syriac version:

*then they knew that the island was called Melita*; an island toward the African shore, where it is placed both by Pliny<sup>f1325</sup>, and Ptolomy<sup>f1326</sup>; in which, the latter says, was the city Melita: it lies between Sicily and Tripolis of Barbary, and is now called Malta: it was famous for the knights of Rhodes, which are now called the knights of Malta: it has its name from *j l m*, “to escape”, it being formerly a refuge to the Phoenicians, especially in stormy weather, in their long voyage from Tyre to Gades; and was indeed a place of escape to the Apostle Paul, and those that were with him. And perhaps it might be so called from its being a refuge for pirates; for Cicero<sup>f1327</sup> says, here pirates used to winter almost every year, and yet did not spoil the temple of Juno, as Verres did: though some say it was so called from the great abundance of honey found in it; for it was a very pleasant and fruitful island, bringing forth great plenty of wheat, rye, flax, cummin, cotton, figs, wine, roses, thyme, lavender, and many other sweet and delightful herbs, from whence bees did gather great plenty of honey. It was, according to Pliny, distant from Camerina eighty four miles, and from Lilybaeum a hundred and thirteen; and it is said to be distant from the promontory of Sicily an hundred miles, though others say sixty; and that it was so far from Syracuse, which is the next place the apostle came to in this voyage, was from Africa an hundred and ninety miles. On the east side, a little from the chief city of it, now called Malta, was a famous temple of Juno, spoiled by Verres, as before observed; and on the south side another of Hercules, the ruins of both which are yet to be seen. The compass of the island is about sixty miles, the length twenty, and the breadth twelve, and has in it five ports, and about sixty villages.

**Ver. 2.** *And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness*, etc.] The inhabitants of this island are called barbarians, not from the country of

Barbary, near to which they were; nor so much on account of their manners, for, though Heathens, they were a civil and cultivated people, being, as appears from the name of the chief man of the island, under the Roman government; but because of their language, (see [4641](#) 1 Corinthians 14:11), it being neither Hebrew, Greek, nor Latin; for as the inhabitants were originally a colony of the Phoenicians, they spoke their language; and now though it is inhabited by such as are called Christians, they speak the Saracen or Arabic language, and little different from the old Punic or Phoenician language: however, though the inhabitants could not understand their language, they understood their case, and were very civil and humane to them, and showed them extraordinary kindness:

*for they kindled a fire*; or set fire to a large pile of wood; for a large fire it must be to be of service to such a number of people, in such a condition as they were:

*and received us everyone*: though their number were two hundred threescore and sixteen;

*because of the present rain, and because of the cold*; for a violent rain fell on them, as is usual upon a storm, and much wetted them, so that a fire was very necessary; and it being winter or near it, it was cold weather; and especially they having been so long in a storm, and now shipwrecked; and some having thrown themselves into the sea, and swam to the island; and others having been obliged to put themselves on boards and planks, and get ashore, and were no doubt both wet and cold; so that nothing was more needful and more agreeable to them than a large fire.

**Ver. 3.** *And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks*, etc.] Had picked up some sticks, and put them in a bundle fit for the fire, as everyone was busy to assist in this extremity; nor did the apostle think such an action below him, who in all things was a man of great humility and condescension:

*and laid them on the fire*; to increase it:

*there came a viper out of the heat*: a viper is a kind of serpent, which brings forth its young living, to the number of twenty, only one in a day, which come forth wrapped up in thin skins, which break on the third day, and set them at liberty; and so is reckoned among viviparous animals, from whence it seems to have its name, whereas other serpents lay eggs and hatch them. It is said <sup>f1328</sup>, that this remarkable reptile has the biggest and

flattest head of all the serpent kind; its usual length is about half an ell, and its thickness an inch; its snout is not unlike that of a hog; it has sixteen small immovable teeth in each jaw, besides two other large, sharp, hooked, hollow, transparent, canine teeth, situate at each side of the upper jaw, which are those that do the mischief: these are flexible in their articulation, and are ordinarily laid flat along the jaw, the animal never raising them but when it would bite. The roots or bases of these teeth, or fangs, are encompassed with a vesicle or bladder, containing the quantity of a large drop of a yellow insipid salivous juice. — It has only one row of teeth, whereas all other serpents have two; its body is not at all fetid, whereas the inner parts of the bodies of other serpents are intolerable. — It creeps very slowly, and never leaps like other serpents, though it is nimble enough to bite when provoked. — Its body is of two colours, ash coloured or yellow, and the ground speckled with longish brown spots; the scales under its belly are of the colour of well polished steel. Its bite is exceeding venomous, and its poison the most dangerous. Now when this viper here is said to come out of the heat, the meaning is, that it came out from the sticks, which were laid upon the fire, being forced from thence by the heat of it: and so the Syriac version renders it, “there came out of them” (the sticks) “a viper, because of the heat of the fire”; it lay quiet among the sticks, among which, and such like things, this creature often lies; but when the fire began to heat it, it sprung out:

*and fastened on his hand*; or wrapped itself about his hand: the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, “bit his hand”; but that does not seem so likely, since he felt no harm by it; the Ethiopic version, “hung upon his hand”; which agrees with what follows; nor is it inconsistent with its wrapping itself about his hand, which is the more proper signification of the word used.

**Ver. 4.** *And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast*, etc.] The viper is called “Therion”, a beast, it being of the viviparous kind; and hence comes “Theriaca”, or “Venice treacle”, the foundation of which composition is vipers’ flesh; and it is called venomous, because it is of all serpents the most venomous: this when the country people saw

*hang on his hand*, having wrapped itself about it,

*they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer*: they might see he was a prisoner by his chain, or might learn it from some of the company, and therefore took it for granted he had been guilty of some

crime; and by the viper's fastening on him, they concluded it was murder he was guilty of; for the same notion might obtain among them, as among the Jews, that a murderer that could not be legally convicted, was sometimes punished this way.

“Says R. Simeon ben Shetach <sup>f1329</sup>, may I never see the consolation, if I did not see one run after his friend into a desert place; and I ran after him, and I saw the sword in his hand, and the blood dropping, and he that was slain panting; and I said to him, O wicked man, who has slain this? either I or thou; but what shall I do? for thy blood is not delivered into my hand; “for the law says, by the mouth of two or three witnesses he shall surely die” ((<sup>f1326</sup>Deuteronomy 17:6)): may he that knows the thoughts take vengeance on that man that slew his friend; they say, they did not remove from thence, **çj n abc d[**, “till a serpent came”, and bit him, and he died.”

So the Jews observe, that when the execution of capital punishments was taken away from them, yet such who deserved them were punished by God in a way equivalent to them: so for instance, if a man committed a crime, for which he deserved to be burnt, either he fell into the fire, or **wkçwn çj n**, “a serpent bit him” <sup>f1330</sup>; or if he deserved to be strangled, either he was drowned in a river, or died of a quinsy. There is a kind of an asp which the Egyptians call “Thermuthis”, which they reckon sacred, and worship: this they say will not hurt good men, but destroys the wicked; and if so, says the historian, then **δικη**, “vengeance”, or justice has honoured this creature, to be so sharp sighted as to discern the good from the bad; and they say, Isis sends it to the most wicked <sup>f1331</sup>. Agreeably to which these men reason,

*whom though he hath escaped the sea:* has not been drowned there, when shipwrecked,

*yet vengeance suffereth not to live.* The Greek word “Dice” rendered “vengeance”, is the name of a goddess among the Heathens, said to be the daughter of Jupiter and Themis <sup>f1332</sup>. She is represented as sitting by her father Jupiter; and when anyone does injury to another, informs him of it <sup>f1333</sup>. She is painted sorrowful, and with a contracted forehead, a grave countenance, and a rough aspect, to strike terror in unrighteous persons, and give confidence to righteous ones <sup>f1334</sup>, agreeably to her name, which signifies “justice”. This deity the barbarians supposed pursued Paul; and

though she let him escape the sea, she will not suffer him to live any longer; for they looked upon the viper's fastening on him, as to be sent by her, so to be immediate death to him.

**Ver. 5.** *And he shook off the beast into the fire*, etc.] Having held it a while, and as being master of it, and as not being afraid of it, though it was the ready way to provoke it to fasten on him again:

*and felt no harm*; it having not bit him, nor infected him with its poison; and hereby was fulfilled what our Lord promised to his disciples, (<sup><41168></sup>Mark 16:18);

**Ver. 6.** *Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen*, etc.] With the venomous bite of the viper; swelling is one of the symptoms following the bite of this creature; and if the bite does not issue in death, yet the swelling continues inflamed for some time. The symptoms following the bite of a viper are said to be <sup>f1335</sup> an acute pain in the place wounded; swelling, first red, afterwards livid, spreading by degrees; great faintness; a quick, low, and sometimes interrupted pulse; sickness at the stomach; bilious convulsions: vomiting; cold sweats; sometimes pains about the navel; and death itself, if the strength of the patient, or the slightness of the bite, do not overcome it: if he does overcome it, the swelling continues inflamed for some time; and the symptoms abating, from the wound runs a sanious liquor, little pustules are raised about it, and the colour of the skin is as if the patient were icterical or jaundice; or had the jaundice: the Arabic and Ethiopic versions render it, "that he should burn", or "burnt"; that is, inflamed, for the bite of the viper causes an inflammation, a hot swelling, which rises up in pustules or blisters:

*or fallen down dead suddenly*; for immediate death is sometimes the effect of such poison. Pliny <sup>f1336</sup> relates, that the Scythians dip their arrows in the sanies or corrupt matter of vipers, and in human blood, which by the least touch causes immediate death; and Pausanias <sup>f1337</sup> reports from a certain Phoenician, that a man fleeing from a viper got up into a tree, where the viper could not reach him, but it blew, or breathed out its poison on the tree, and the man immediately died: though the force of this creature's poison does not always, and in all places, and in all persons operate alike; some die within a few hours, and others live some days, some to the third day, and some to the seventh <sup>f1338</sup>:



*but after they had looked a great while*; upon the apostle, to observe whether any inflammation or swelling arose, or death ensued, as they expected: when they had waited some time, perhaps an hour or two,

*and saw no harm come to him*; that he was neither inflamed, nor swelled, nor dead; that it had no manner of effect upon him, and no evil of punishment was inflicted on him hereby, from whence they could conclude that he was guilty of any notorious crime:

*they changed their minds, and said that he was a god*: before they took him to be a murderer, and now they even ascribe deity to him, as was usual with the Gentiles, when anything extraordinary was performed by men: so the Lystrians took Paul for Mercury, and Barnabas for Jupiter, upon the apostle's curing the cripple, (~~¶~~ Acts 14:11,12); but what god the inhabitants of Melita thought him to be, is not certain; some think Hercules, who was worshipped in this island. The inhabitants of this island now believe that the apostle expelled all poison and venom out of it when he was there; and it is reported, that the children born in this place fear not any snakes, neither are hurt by anything that is venomous, insomuch that they will take scorpions, and eat them without danger; although, in all other parts of the world, those kind of creatures are most pernicious, and yet do no manner of hurt to men in this island; yea, it is affirmed, that there is a sort of earth found here, which kills serpents: as for the eating of them, the viper itself may be eaten; most authors agree <sup>f1339</sup>, that there is no part, humour, or excrement, not even the gall itself, of a viper, but may be swallowed without much harm; accordingly the ancients, and, as several authors assure us, the Indians at this day, both of the east and west, eat them as we do eels — viper's flesh either roasted or boiled, physicians unanimously prescribe as an excellent restorative, particularly in the elephantiasis, incurable consumptions, leprosy, etc.

**Ver. 7.** *In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island*, etc.] Or “the first man of the island”; so the governor of Melita used to be called, as appears by an inscription mentioned by Bochart, wherein a Roman knight is called *πρωτος μελιταιων*, “the first of the Melitians”; for this island was under the Roman government, and the very name of this chief man shows it: it was first in the hands of the Africans, when Dido built Carthage, which was eight or nine hundred years before the time of Christ: Battus was king of this island, from whom it was taken by Hiarbas king of Lybia, or of the Getulians, and who also conquered

Carthage; and it continued under the power of the Carthaginians, until they were conquered by the Romans; and then it was taken by Titus Sempronius, above two hundred years before Christ, in whose hands it was when the apostle was here; since then it has been taken by the Saracenes, though they held it not, being taken from them by Roger earl of Sicily, in the year 1090; and so it remained in the hands of the Sicilians, until the knights of Rhodes were driven out of that island by the Turks, in 1522; and then this was given them by the Emperor Charles the Fifth seven years after, on condition they would oppose the Turks, and defend that part of Christendom, which they bravely did: in the year 1565, it was besieged by Pialis Bassa, but without success <sup>f1340</sup>; and it is said to be so well fortified, as that it is impossible it should be taken, unless through treachery or famine; it is now in the hands of the said knights: but whether this man was governor of the island or not, it may be reasonably thought that he was the richest man in the island, and in the greatest honour and dignity; and had near the shore, where the ship's company landed, many houses and much land, and farms and vineyards, and the like:

*whose name was Publius*; or Poplius, as some copies, and the Syriac version read. Publius was a name common with the Romans; it was with them a forename, by which such were called, who were "pupilli", or fatherless, for it is a contraction of "Popilius". There was one of this name who was bishop of Athens, said to succeed Dionysius the Areopagite there; who is thought by some to be the same here mentioned; who they say was first bishop in his own country, which through mistake they make to be Miletus, instead of Melita; and afterwards bishop of Athens, where he suffered martyrdom: but this is not likely, for even though he might be converted by the apostle, of which we have no account; and also became a preacher of the Gospel, of which there is no proof; it is not probable that he should leave his own country, and go to Athens, and take upon him the care of that church there: but whether he was afterwards converted or not, he was very kind to the apostle and the ship's company, as follows:

*who received us, and lodged us three days courteously*; this was a very considerable instance of humanity and hospitality, to receive so many strangers at once into his houses, as two hundred three score and sixteen; and give them food and lodging, for three days together, and that in such a kind, friendly, and cheerful manner: and thus, as Abraham and Lot, by receiving strangers, entertained angels at unawares, so Publius, though ignorant of it, entertained an apostle of Christ among those strangers; the

benefit of which he afterwards enjoyed, and which was a compensation for his liberality and beneficence.

**Ver. 8.** *And it came to pass that the father of Publius*, etc.] So that Publius was not an old man, though of so much dignity and wealth: the Arabic version, contrary to all copies, and other versions, reads, “the son of Publius”:

*lay sick of a fever*; or fevers, of different sorts, a complication of them, which sometimes is the case; unless this was an intermitting fever, and the several fits of it are intended; or rather the plural number is put for the singular, to denote the vehemence of it, and which was attended with another disorder, and might be brought on by it:

*and of a bloody flux*; or dysentery, a pain of the bowels, as the Syriac version renders it; or an ulceration of the bowels, as the Arabic version; which occasioned a discharge of blood, so that his case was very threatening. This disease, according to modern writers <sup>f1341</sup>, is attended with a fever. The word “dysentery” here used properly signifies that kind of flux of the belly, characterized by the frequency of stools, or dejections, mixed with blood, and accompanied with gripes: the fever, ulcer, etc. which attend it, are not essential to the disease; though many both of the ancients and moderns think the ulcer is. — There are three kinds of “dysenteries”; the “first” when a laudable blood is evacuated from a mere plethora, or plenitude, without any disorder of the intestines, as in the haemorrhoidal flux; the “second” when a thin watery blood is evacuated, called the “hepatic” flux, though really arising from haemorrhoidal vessels; the “third” kind, which is that that is properly called the dysentery, is when blood is cast out, mixed with a purulent matter in the excrements: this is either “benign”, i.e. without a fever, and not contagious; or “malignant”, which is attended with a pestilential fever, and frequently ravages whole cities and provinces, happening most commonly in armies; in the last stage, a sort of caruncles are frequently ejected along with the purulent matter, which are difficult to be accounted for, unless from an excoriation and ulceration of the intestines: sometimes the intestines are even gangrened: this seems to have been the case of the father of Publius, which makes the following cure the more remarkable:

*to whom Paul entered in*; into the room where he was, no doubt with the consent and leave, if not at the request of Publius; the Ethiopic version adds, “and he entreated him to put his hand upon him”; that is, either

Publius asked this favour of the apostle for his father, having heard of the affair of the viper, from whence he concluded there was something divine and extraordinary in him; or the father of Publius asked this for himself:

*and prayed and laid his hands on him, and healed him*; when Paul had entered the room, and found in what a bad condition the sick man was, he either kneeled down and prayed by him, or stood and prayed over him, and for him, that God would restore him to his health; and this he did, to let them know that he himself was not a god; and that the cure that would now be wrought would be from God, and not from himself, and therefore all the glory should be given to God; and he laid his hands on him, as a sign or symbol, or rite that was used in extraordinary cases, and agreeably to the direction and promise of Christ, (<sup><411618></sup>Mark 16:18); and upon this a cure followed; both the diseases left him at once, and he was restored to health.

**Ver. 9.** *So when this was done*, etc.] This miracle was wrought, and the fame of it spread over the island:

*others also which had diseases in the island came*: from all parts of it, to the apostle:

*and were healed*; of whatsoever diseases they were afflicted with.

**Ver. 10.** *Who also honoured us with many honours*, etc.] Not with divine honours, with religious adorations, as if they had been so many deities; for these they would not have received, nor have recorded them, to the commendation of the inhabitants; but civil honours, expressions of respect and gratitude; and particularly gifts and presents, large and valuable, in which sense the phrase is used by Jewish writers; so upon those words in (<sup><071317></sup>Judges 13:17). “What is thy name, that when the sayings come to pass, we may do thee honour?” they make this paraphrase <sup>f1342</sup>,

“Manoah said to him (the angel), tell me thy name, that I may inquire where to find thee, when thy prophecy is fulfilled, and give thee <sup>^</sup>rwd, “a gift”, <sup>hj nm al a Æwndbkw ^</sup>yaw, “for there is no honour but a present”, or “offering”; or wherever this phrase is used, it signifies nothing else but a gift, as it is said, (<sup><0227></sup>Numbers 22:17). “For honouring I will honour thee”.”

that is, with money and gifts, as Balaam’s answer in the next verse shows, and so the Jewish commentators interpret it <sup>f1343</sup>; (see Gill on “<sup><5487></sup>1 Timothy 5:17”);

*And when we departed*; from the island, which was not till three months from their first coming ashore:

*they laded [us] with such things as were necessary*; that is, for the voyage: they provided a proper supply of food for them, which they put into the strip, for their use in their voyage; by which they expressed their gratitude for the favours they received from Paul; for whose sake not only his company, but the whole ship's company fared the better: and very likely many of them were converted under the apostle's ministry; for it can hardly be thought that the apostle should be on this island three months, as he was, and not preach the Gospel to the inhabitants of it, in which he always met with success, more or less; and the great respect shown him at his departure seems to confirm this; though we meet with no account of any church, or churches, or preachers of the word in this place, in ecclesiastical history, until the "sixth" century, when mention is made of a bishop of the island of Melita <sup>f1344</sup>; indeed in the "fourth" century, Optatus Milevitanus is said by some, through mistake; to be bishop of Melita, when he was bishop of Milevis, a city in Africa upon the continent; and, through a like mistake, this island is said to be famous for a council held in it under Pope Innocent, against Pelagius, in the beginning of the "fifth" century; when the council was held at the above place Milevis, and not at Melita, from whence it was called the Milevitan council.

**Ver. 11.** *And after three months we departed*, etc.] From Melita; here they stayed the three winter months, which were unseasonable for navigation; but now the spring coming on, and the weather agreeable, they left the island, and sailed

*in a ship of Alexandria*; (see Gill on "~~4206~~ Acts 27:6");

*which had wintered in the isle*; perhaps all the said three months, for the same reason:

*whose sign was Castor and Pollux*; or Dioscuri, that is, the sons of Jupiter; for Castor and Pollux were his sons, by Leda: these are placed among the constellations in the Zodiac, and go by the name of Gemini, or the twins; and these were supposed to have a power of saving men in danger at sea: wherefore such as were about to go to sea, first paid their devours, and made vows to them; which they performed when they returned, and were delivered from shipwreck; and when they were in danger at sea, they used to pray unto them: the fiery exhalations that sometimes appear at sea, they

took for them; and when only one appeared, it was looked on as a bad omen; but when both, it was reckoned to portend a prosperous voyage; hence they were considered as sea deities; and the Ethiopic version accordingly renders it here “Dioscoura”, and adds, “who is the god of the mariners”: now the images of these two brothers were sometimes set at the head, or forepart of the ship, as they were in this, from whence the ship took its name; as it is very common for the names of ships to be the same with the pictures or images that are placed at the head of them: whether the centurion chose this ship because of its sign, imagining there might be more safety in it, he having suffered shipwreck already; or whether this was the only one in the island, that was going for Italy, is not certain, nor very material: the Arabic version takes the word rendered Castor and Pollux, to be the name of a man, who was the owner of the ship; for it reads the words thus, “in a ship of Alexandria”, that belonged “to a man of Alexandria, called Dioscorides”.

**Ver. 12.** *And landing at Syracuse*, etc.] A famous city in the isle of Sicily, now called Saragossa: it is placed by Ptolomy <sup>f1345</sup> on the east side of the island, in the Adriatic sea; it was 180 furlongs, or two and twenty miles and a half in circuit, and formerly had a marble haven and triple wall, and as many towers; the founder of it was Archias, a Corinthian; Pliny says <sup>f1346</sup>, that it is never so cloudy weather, but the sun is seen in it, at one time or another of the day: Cicero <sup>f1347</sup> calls it the greatest and most beautiful of all the cities of Greece; it is such a city, he says, that it may be said to consist of four large cities; “one” part of it is called “the island”, which has two ports to it; “another” was called Acradina, in which were a large market, beautiful porticos, etc. the “third”, Tiche, in which was the ancient temple of Fortune; and the “fourth”, which because it was last built, was called Neapolis: it is a very ancient city, being built more than seven hundred years before the birth of Christ; it was a colony of the Corinthians; here reigned two tyrants, whose names were Dionysius; it was attacked by the Carthaginians, but without success, being delivered from the siege by Pyrrhus king of Epirus <sup>f1348</sup>; it was again assaulted by the Athenians, who were repulsed, and entirely conquered, about the year before Christ 413: after that it was taken by Marcellus, the Roman consul, about the year of the city of Rome 542 <sup>f1349</sup>, after a three years’ siege; during which time it was defended, and preserved by the means of the famous mathematician Archimedes; who by his invention of warlike machines, baffled all the attempts of the Romans; but was killed by a soldier, as he was intent upon

his studies, not knowing that the city was taken; and it continued in the hands of the Romans, until it was taken and plundered by the Saracens, in the year of Christ 675; and was retaken by Roger king of Apulia, about the year 1090, and is now under the government of Don Carlos, king of the two Sicilies;

*we tarried there three days*; on what account it is not said, whether on account of merchandise, or for the sake of the conversation of Christians here: it is certain there were churches in Sicily very early; we read of them in the “second” and “third” centuries; in the time of Constantine, at the beginning of the “fourth” century, there was a church at Syracuse, of which Chrestus was bishop, to whom the emperor wrote a letter himself, which is still extant in Eusebius<sup>f1350</sup>: in the “fifth” century, Hilarius, a teacher at Syracuse, wrote from thence to Augustine, concerning the Pelagian heresy, to whom he gave an answer: in the “sixth” century, Maximinianus, bishop of this church, had the inspection of all the churches in Sicily committed to him, by Gregory; who was wonderfully preserved in a shipwreck, as he was returning from Rome; in this same age lived John, bishop of Syracuse, and Trajanus a presbyter, and Felix a deacon of the same church: in the seventh century there was one George bishop of this place, to whom Pope Vitalian wrote a letter; and in the same century a bishop of this church was in the sixth council at Constantinople<sup>f1351</sup>.

**Ver. 13.** *And from thence we fetched a compass*, etc.] About the isle of Sicily, from Syracuse to Pachinus, the promontory of the island:

*and came to Rhegium*; a city in Calabria, called by Ptolomy<sup>f1352</sup> Regium Julium; it was built, as Solinus<sup>f1353</sup> says, by the Chalcidians, and was formerly a city of the Brutians<sup>f1354</sup>; it is now called Reggio: it is said<sup>f1355</sup> to have its name from its being broken off from the main continent, for it lies in the straits of Sicily; and formerly Sicily was joined to Italy, but was separated from it by the violence of the sea at this place:

*and after one day the south wind blew*; they stayed one day at Rhegium, and when they departed from thence, they had a south wind, which was favourable to them: whether the apostle preached here, or no, is not certain, since his stay was so short; some Popish writers tell some idle stories about the apostle’s preaching; how that the fishes came to the shore to hear him; that the grasshoppers were commanded by him to be silent, and have never been seen in that place since; that a stone pillar was set on fire by the flame of a candle, by which miracle the inhabitants present were



converted and baptized; and one Stephen, that was in company, was made by him their first bishop: but in ecclesiastical history we meet with no account of any church in this place, until the fifth century; when the bishop of it, with others, subscribed a letter of Leo the First, sent into the east; and about the year 440, there was a synod of thirteen bishops convened in this place, on account of a certain ordination; and in the “seventh” century, a bishop of the church at Rhegium was present in the sixth council at Constantinople; in the “eighth”, Constantine, bishop of Rhegium, was in the Nicene synod<sup>f1356</sup>:

*and we came the next day to Puteoli*; the Syriac version adds, “a city of Italy”; it was formerly called Dicearchia<sup>f1357</sup>, from the strict justice used in the government of it: it had its name of Puteoli, either “a putore”, from the rankness and ill smell of the waters of it, through the “sulphur” and “alum” in them; or “a puteis”, from the wells about it, the waters of which, by Pausanias, are said<sup>f1358</sup> to be so hot, as in time to melt the leaden pipes through which they flow, who calls it a town of the Tyrrhenians; by Pliny<sup>f1359</sup> it is placed in Campania, and so Jerom<sup>f1360</sup> says, Puteoli a city, a colony of Campania, the same that is called Dicearchia. Josephus<sup>f1361</sup> also speaks of it as in the same country; for he says, that Herod and Herodias both came to Dicearchia, (or Puteoli), and found Caius (the emperor) at Baiai, which is a little town in Campania, about five furlongs from Dicearchia; and he also in another<sup>f1362</sup> place says, the Italians call Dicearchia, *ποτιολους*, “Potioli”; which is the same word the apostle here uses, and which is the Latin “Puteoli” corrupted; it is said to be first built by the Samians: frequent mention is made by writers<sup>f1363</sup>, of “pulvis Puteolanus”, the dust of Puteoli; which being touched by the sea water, hardens into a stone; and was therefore used to bank the sea, break the waves, and repel the force of them: that it was a place by the sea side, may be learned from the sea being called after its name, “mare Puteolanum”<sup>f1364</sup>, the sea of Puteoli; so Apollonius Tyaneus is said<sup>f1365</sup> to sail from this place to Rome, whither he came in three days; to this port the ships of Alexandria particularly used to come, and hither persons were wont to go to take shipping for Alexandria<sup>f1366</sup>; it is now called by the Italians Pozzuolo, and lies about eight miles from Naples; and according to the following story of the Jews’, must be an hundred and twenty miles from Rome; who tell us<sup>f1367</sup>, that



“Rabban Gamaliel, and R. Eleazar ben Azariah, and R. Joshua, and R. Akiba, went to Rome, and they heard the noise of the multitude at Rome, from Puteoli, an hundred and twenty miles:”

the story is a fable designed to signify the vast number of people at Rome, and the noise, hurry, and tumult there; but perhaps the distance between the two places may not be far from truth: and as fabulous is the account which R. Benjamin <sup>f1368</sup> gives of this place Puteoli, when he says it was called Surrentum, a great city which Tzintzan Hadarezer built, when he fled for fear of David.

**Ver. 14.** *Where we found brethren*, etc.] Christians; which is not to be wondered at, since it was a port much frequented, and where many came and went, of different countries and nations; particularly there were many Jews here, to whom the Gospel was first preached, and to some of them it was the power of God unto salvation in many places, and doubtless was so here: Josephus <sup>f1369</sup> speaks of Jews in this place, who were deceived by a false Alexander, who pretended to be the son of Herod, a prince of their nation. Patrobulus, the same with Patrobas in ( <sup><564></sup>Romans 16:14); who is reckoned one of the seventy disciples, is said to be bishop of this place; (see Gill on “<sup><200></sup>Luke 10:1”); though we have no account of its church state until the “fifth” century, when a bishop of the church at Puteoli is said to be in the council held at Ephesus against Eutyches, and sustained the place of Leo, pope of Rome: in the “sixth” century, a bishop of this church was in a council held at Rome, under Symmachus: in the seventh century, the bishop of Puteoli was in the sixth council at Constantinople <sup>f1370</sup>:

*and were desired to tarry with them seven days*; that is, the Christians at Puteoli desired the apostle, and those that were with him, to stay a week with them, that they might have the advantage of a day of public worship together, and might enjoy much of their Christian conversation; and accordingly they did stay that time, no doubt by the leave, and with the consent of Julius the centurion; and which shows, that he used the apostle with great civility and courteousness, and was very ready to grant him favours; if he was not in this voyage converted by him, which is not unlikely, considering the whole of his conduct:

*and so we went toward Rome*; after they had stayed seven days at Puteoli, they set forward on their journey to Rome; for from hence they went thither on foot, though they might have gone from hence to Rome by sea, as Apollonius Tyaneus did; (see Gill on “<sup><483></sup>Acts 28:13”); and so likewise

Titus the son of Vespasian, who went from Rhegium to Puteoli in a merchant ship, and from thence to Rome <sup>f1371</sup>; but it may be the ship unloaded here, and there was no other going for Rome at that time: Rome was the metropolis of Italy, the seat of the empire, and mistress of the whole world; it is so well known, as not to need describing: it was built on seven hills, and had its name either from Romulus the founder of it; or from the Greek word  $\rho\omega\mu\eta$ , which signifies “strength” <sup>f1372</sup>, from whence Romulus is supposed to have his name; with the Hebrews it has its name from its sublimity, height, and glory, from the word  $\mu\omega\tau$ , which signifies to be high and exalted: some say it had its name from Roma, a daughter of Italus, who first laid the foundation of it, though Romulus and Remus brought it into the form of a city; it was built seven hundred and fifty years, and upwards, before the birth of Christ. The Jews make it to be of an earlier date; they say <sup>f1373</sup>, that at the time Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter, Gabriel descended and fixed a reed in the sea, and brought up clay, and with it was built the great city, which is Rome; and in another place <sup>f1374</sup> it is said, in the day in which Jeroboam set up the two calves, one at Dan, and the other at Bethel, was built a certain cottage, which is Italy of Greece, that is, Rome; for it is elsewhere observed <sup>f1375</sup>, Italy of Greece, this is the great city of Rome; and again <sup>f1376</sup>, on the day in which Jeroboam set up the two calves, Remus and Romulus came and built two cottages in Rome.

**Ver. 15.** *And from thence*, etc.] That is, from Rome, whither they were going:

*when the brethren heard of us*; when the Christians at Rome heard that the apostle and his friends were landed at Puteoli, and were on their journey to Rome: these were the members of the church at Rome; for there was a church state here before this time. The apostle had before this written a letter to them, called the Epistle to the Romans, in which he treats them as a church. The Papists say that the Apostle Peter was the first bishop of it, and pretend an uninterrupted succession from him; though it is questionable whether he ever was at Rome; and if he was, it is not probable that he should take upon him the care of a single church, which was not consistent with his office as an apostle: in the “first” century, the bishops or pastors of this church were as follow; after the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Eusebius <sup>f1377</sup> says, Linus was the first bishop of it, the same that is mentioned in (~~2~~2 Timothy 4:21) and according to the same writer <sup>f1378</sup>, Anenctetus succeeded him, and then Clement, a fellow labourer of the

Apostle Paul's, (<sup>f1378</sup>Philippians 4:3); who wrote two epistles to the Corinthians, which are still extant; though Eusebius<sup>f1379</sup>, not consistent with himself, makes Clement in another place to succeed Linus; and some make Clement even to be before him; and some place one Cletus before Anenctetus and him: such an uncertainty is there, and such a puzzle attends the first account of this uninterrupted succession; and which seems designed in Providence to bring it into contempt: in the "second" century, Euarestus succeeded Clement; and then followed him Alexander, Sixtus, or Xystus, Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter, Eleutherius, and Victor: in the "third" century, Victor was succeeded by Zephyrinus; and after him were Calixtus, Urbanus, Pontianus, Anterus, Fabianus, Cornelius, Lucius, Stephanus, Sixtus, or Xystus II, Dionysius, Felix, Eutychianus, and Gaius: in the "fourth" century, Marcellinus succeeded Gaius; who was followed by Marcellus, Eusebius, Miltiades, Sylvester, Julius, Liberius, Felix II, Damasus, and Siricius<sup>f1380</sup>; and further than this age, it is not worth while to follow them; the man of sin began to grow apace, and in a century or two afterwards, proclaimed himself universal bishop:

*they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and the Three Taverns*; these were both of them towns that lay in the Appian way to Rome; the former of these Horace<sup>f1381</sup> makes mention of, in the account of his journey from Rome to Brundisium; first he says, he came to Aricia, or Rizza, which is about 160 furlongs, or 21 miles from Rome, and from thence to Appii Forum: that Appii Forum was further from Rome than the Three Taverns, appears from what Cicero says<sup>f1382</sup>, who dates his letter to Atticus from Appii Forum, at four o'clock, and tells him, that he had sent him another a little before from "Tres Tabernae", or the Three Taverns; and indeed, Appii Forum was one and fifty miles from Rome, and the Three Taverns but three and thirty: so that the sense must be, that some of the brethren from Rome came as far as the Three Taverns, and others as far as Appii Forum; which, as before observed, were two towns upon the road: hence the former of these was not a statue of Appius, near the city of Rome, as some have<sup>f1383</sup> said; nor a market in the city itself, as says Jerom<sup>f1384</sup>, or a writer under his name; whose words are, Appii Forum is the name of a market at Rome, from Appius, formerly a consul, and from whom the Appian way had its name: but this was a town at some distance; there were several towns in Italy of a like appellation; as Julii Forum, Cornelii Forum, now Imola, Livii Forum, now Forli: Pliny<sup>f1385</sup> makes mention of an Appii Forum; and there was a town in Calabria, called Taberna: and as the one

was not a mere market place, so the other does not design three houses for public entertainment; for the words should not be translated “three taverns”, nor indeed translated at all; nor are they by Luke, who retains the Latin name, as the name of a place; and here it was that Severus, the Roman emperor, was killed by Herculius Maximianus <sup>f1386</sup>; and this, in Constantine’s time, was the seat of a bishop; for among the bishops assembled on account of Donatus, mention is made of one “Felix a Tribus Tabernis” <sup>f1387</sup>, or Felix bishop of Tres Tabernae, the same place we call “the Three Taverns”:

*whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage*; that is, when he saw the brethren that came to meet him, he gave thanks to God for the sight of them, which he had so much desired; and he took heart and courage, and went on cheerfully, and in high spirits, towards Rome; in hope of seeing the rest, and believing that God had some work for him to do there.

**Ver. 16.** *And when we came to Rome*, etc.] To the city itself:

*the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard*; or general of the army; or, as some think, the governor of the “praetorian” band of soldiers, who attended the emperor as his guards: his name is thought to have been Burrhus Afranius; to him Julius the centurion delivered all the prisoners he brought from Caesarea, excepting Paul, to be disposed of by him, in the several prisons, or jails, to whom it belonged to take care of such persons: this clause is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions:

*but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him*: this was owing, either to the letter which Festus sent to Rome concerning him, and his case; by which it appeared, that he was no malefactor, and therefore to be used in a different manner from the rest of the prisoners; or rather to the intercession of the centurion, who had all along used him in a very civil and courteous manner; who requesting this favour had it granted, that Paul should not be put into the common prison with the rest, but should dwell in an apartment by himself; or, as the Ethiopic version renders it, “at his own will”; where he himself pleased, for he dwelt in his own hired house, (~~4281~~ Acts 28:30); only he was under the care and custody of a soldier, who constantly attended him wherever he went; and which could not be otherwise, seeing he was chained, as in (~~4281~~ Acts 28:20) and his chain was put on his right hand, and fastened to the left hand of the soldier,

that had him under his keeping; so that wherever he was or went, the soldier must be likewise: hence that passage in Seneca <sup>f1388</sup>,

“as the same chain joins together the prisoner and the soldier, so those things which are unlike go together; fear follows hope.”

**Ver. 17.** *And it came to pass, that after three days*, etc.] From his first coming to Rome, when he had hired himself a house, or lodging, and was settled in it, and was rested from the fatigue of his voyage and journey:

*Paul called the chief of the Jews together*: he sent to the principal men among them; for though the Jews, were expelled from Rome in the reign of Claudius, they were now returned, and had their liberty of residing there; very likely by means of Poppea, Nero’s concubine, who favoured the Jews: but whether they had a synagogue, and these men were the chief and leading men in it, the doctors, rulers, and officers of it, are things not certain; however, these the apostle desired to come to him where he was, for whether he had the liberty of going about where he would, the soldier attending him, is not so clear a point:

*and when they were come together*; to his house, or lodging:

*he said unto them, men and brethren*: which was the usual form of address with the Jews; (see ~~400~~ Acts 7:2).

*Though I have committed nothing against the people and customs of our fathers*; meaning he had said nothing disrespectfully of the people of the Jews; nor had done anything to the prejudice of their temporal, spiritual, and eternal good, but just the reverse; nor had he said or done anything contrary to the laws and customs enjoined the Jews by Moses, even those that were of a ceremonial nature; for though he had everywhere declared that the Gentiles were not obliged to an obedience to them, yet he did not dissuade the Jews from the use of them; and oftentimes complied with them himself, things he had been charged with:

*yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans*; he was first seized by the Jews in the temple of Jerusalem, and then fell into the hands of Lysias, the chief captain; who bound him, and by whom he was sent to Caesarea, where he was retained a prisoner both by Felix and Festus, Roman governors.

**Ver. 18.** *Who when they had examined me*, etc.] About the things laid to his charge, had heard what his accusers had to object to him, and the defence he made for himself:

*would have let [me] go*; released him from his bonds, and set him at liberty to go where he pleased:

*because there was no cause of death in me*; no crime proved upon him, which was worthy of death; and this was the sense of Lysias the chief captain, and of Felix and Festus the Roman governors, and of King Agrippa.

**Ver. 19.** *But when the Jews spake against it*, etc.] His being cleared and dismissed, and desired he might be sent back to Jerusalem, to be tried and judged there, to which Festus seemed inclined:

*I was constrained to appeal to Caesar*; to prevent the design of the Jews upon him, which was to way lay him and kill him, or by what ways they could, right or wrong, take away his life; and to provide for his own safety:

*not that I had ought to accuse my nation of*; meaning, that he had no ill design in this appeal against his country, to expose them, and bring them under reproach and censure, but to vindicate himself, defend his own innocence, and preserve his character and life; suggesting, that what he did was not of choice, but by constraint, and with reluctance; being no friend to Heathen tribunals, nor any enemy to the Jewish nation.

**Ver. 20.** *For this cause therefore have I called for you*, etc.] To let them know the true state of his case; that though he was a prisoner, it was not for any crime he had done, much less any of a capital nature; and that as he was no scandal to his country, so neither did he intend to raise any against it, or say or do anything which might bring it into contempt and danger: as well as

*to see [you] and speak with [you]*; and keep up and maintain a free and friendly conversation together:

*because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain*; which was then upon him, and he pointed to; the true reason of which was, because he had preached that the Messiah the tribes of Israel were hoping and waiting for, and who is the only solid foundation of the hope of eternal life and salvation, was already come; and that he had suffered and died, and rose

again from the dead, and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; (see ~~2408~~Jeremiah 14:8 17:13). And this title well agrees with Jesus Christ, who in the New Testament is called “our hope”, and “the hope of glory”, (~~5000~~1 Timothy 1:1 ~~5002~~Colossians 1:27), and he is the hope of every Israelite indeed, of every sensible sinner, of every regenerated person, whether Jew or Gentile; and such are encouraged to hope in him for grace here, and glory hereafter: and whereas they see themselves lost and undone, and that there is no salvation for them by their own works, and that there is salvation in Christ, they are directed and encouraged to hope in him for it; because it is a work finished by him, and is complete in him; it is of free grace and favour bestowed; it is wrought out for the chief of sinners; and such as they themselves are, are invited by himself to look to him for it; and the Gospel declaration is, that whoever believes in him shall be saved: they see themselves to be sinners, and that there is no hope of the forgiveness of their sins from an absolute God, or the absolute mercy of God out of Christ, but that the blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins, and that God, for Christ’s sake, does forgive sins: wherefore they hope in him for it; to which they are encouraged by the proclamation of the grace of God, as a forgiving God in Christ; by the promises of forgiveness in the covenant of grace; by the Gospel declaration of it; by its being entirely of free grace, through the blood of Christ; and by the many instances of the worst of sinners who have been favoured with it: these Israelites, indeed, also see themselves unrighteous creatures, and that they cannot be justified before God by works of righteousness done by them; but that there is a righteousness wrought out by Christ, which is acceptable and well pleasing to God; is freely bestowed on men, and is imputed to all sorts of men, even to the ungodly; wherefore they hope in him for it, and lay hold on this object of hope set before them: in a word, they have hope of eternal life on his account, that being the gift of God through him; and it being the will of God, that whoever believes in him should have it; and it being in the power and right of Christ to bestow it; and they having also his Spirit as the earnest and pledge of it; as well as have his righteousness as their title to it, his grace as their meetness for it, and have a share both in his intercession and in his preparations of it: moreover, the apostle taught that there would be a general resurrection of the dead, upon which would succeed a state of everlasting happiness for the righteous; and which was the hope of the tribes of Israel in common, especially of every Israelite indeed: now these things had irritated the carnal Jews against him, who could not rest till they



had been the means of bringing him into the condition he now was; nor were they content with this, without having his life.

**Ver. 21.** *And they said unto him,* etc.] That is, the chief men of the Jews at Rome, whom Paul had called together, replied; either in a lying and dissembling way, or as expressing matter of fact; which last may be allowed:

*we neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee:* which was very much, that the high priest and sanhedrim had not wrote to the principal men of their religion at Rome; giving an account of the apostle, and his case unto them, in order to prejudice them against him, and to furnish them with charges and accusations; which if they could not prevail by them, so as to get him condemned by the emperor, yet might be a means of preventing any of their nation giving heed unto him, and embracing his sentiments and notions concerning Jesus of Nazareth:

*neither any of the brethren that came [from] Jerusalem;* or any part of Judea, to Rome; meaning not the Christian Jews, for these they would not call brethren; but those who were of the same religion as well as nation, whom it was usual with the Jews to call brethren:

*shewed or spake any harm of thee;* so that it looks as if they did make mention of him, but did not charge him with anything that was wicked and criminal: this they said, to show that they were not prejudiced against him by any person or means; and which carried in it a very considerable testimony of the apostle's innocence.

**Ver. 22.** *But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest,* etc.] What was his opinion and judgment, concerning the Messiah, whether he was come or not, and whether Jesus of Nazareth was he; and concerning other principles relating to him, embraced by the Christians; and what he had to say for the clearing up, proving, and confirming his sentiments about these things:

*for as concerning this sect;* or heresy, meaning the Christian religion: in saying so, they reproached it; for the Gospel, or Christian religion, is not an human device, the choice and option of man's free will, and what he pleases himself with, as an opinion and invention of his own, or of other men, as "heresy" signifies; but it is of God, and by revelation of Jesus Christ, and is a doctrine of the highest wisdom: nor does it deny or take away any fundamental article of true religion; either natural, as known by



the Gentiles, or as revealed, with which the Jews were made acquainted, under the former dispensation; but establishes every such article, as the unity of the divine Being; the worship of the one only and true God of Israel, in a spiritual manner; the doctrine of the Messiah, his person, office, and grace; the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment; and therefore could not be chargeable with heresy: nor was it set up for any worldly gain, or popular applause, which are the things that authors and abettors of heresy have in view; nor was it designed to divide and separate persons from the true church of God, but to bring them to it, and unite them together in it; (see ~~4014~~ Acts 24:14).

*We know that everywhere it is spoken against;* this they knew, both by letters they received, and by persons who came from different parts of the world; and which was fact, and was no other than what was foretold concerning Christ, that he should be a sign that should be spoken against, (~~4013~~ Luke 2:34); and which the apostle found true of the Gospel preached by him, both among Jews and Greeks; it being to the one a stumblingblock, and to the other foolishness, (~~4012~~ 1 Corinthians 1:23), and especially it was contradicted and blasphemed everywhere by the Jews; these in all places opposed themselves to it, and spoke evil of it, and of its preachers and professors: Christ, the author, sum, and subject of the Christian religion, was spoken against in his person; his deity and divine sonship were denied, as they still are; and his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; yea, his actions, even his works of mercy to the bodies of men, by healing their diseases, his conversing with sinners for the good of their souls, the several miracles he wrought, and the whole series of his life and conversation, were blasphemed and evil spoken of: the doctrines of the Gospel in general were contradicted, as they now are by many, as absurd and irrational, and as tending to licentiousness; and in particular those which respect the Father of Christ, as being the Father of Christ, his everlasting love to the elect in him, and his distinguishing grace in the choice of them; and those which relate to Christ, as that he is truly God, and the Son of God, and to his sacrifice, satisfaction, and imputed righteousness; and also which concern the Spirit of God, as his deity and personality, and his operations on the souls of men; and such as relate to a future state, the resurrection of all the dead, and judgment to come: likewise the ordinances of the Christian religion, baptism and the Lord's supper, were despised and spoken against, and the professors of it treated as fools and wicked men; the reasons of all this are, because the Christian religion, and the doctrines

of it, are not of men, are contrary to the lusts of men, and particularly to the pride of men; they subject them to reproach and persecution, and gather men out from among them.

**Ver. 23.** *And when they had appointed him a day*, etc.] When they should meet together, and when both sides might be better prepared to enter into a conversation on the subject of Christianity; and when there might be an opportunity for a more numerous assembly to hear:

*there came many to him into his lodging*; the same very likely with his own hired house, (<sup>4430</sup>Acts 28:30); hither a large number came at the time appointed, more than those whom Paul first sent for:

*to whom he expounded*; the Scriptures, the writings of Moses, and the prophets; and particularly such parts of them as concerned the Messiah; so our Lord expounded to his disciples in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself, (<sup>4207</sup>Luke 24:27).

*And testified the kingdom of God*; or the kingdom of the Messiah, which oftentimes signifies the Gospel, and the Gospel dispensation: he produced full and sufficient proofs and testimonies from prophecies, miracles, and facts, that the kingdom of the Messiah was come; which consisted not in outward pompous things, in temporal riches and honours, as they expected; but in the ministration of the Gospel, and in the administration of its ordinances; and in righteousness and holiness, which give the one a right unto, and the other a meetness for, the kingdom of heaven: and of this he testified, that it is the kingdom of God, of his preparing and of his giving, and is what he calls his people unto, and makes them meet for; and in which they shall reign with him, and enjoy him for ever: and the apostle could testify and make it evident, that there was such a kingdom, and such a future glorious state; from the promise of God, to which the twelve tribes of Israel hoped to come; from the prophecies of the Old Testament, which speak of everlasting life, and of the resurrection of the dead unto it; from the expectations of the saints of the former dispensation, who all died in the faith of it; and from the coming of the Messiah, his sufferings and death, and ascension to heaven, whereby he had brought life and immortality to the clearest light:

*persuading them concerning Jesus*; endeavouring to persuade them, that Jesus was the true Messiah; that he was truly God, and the Son of God, as well as man; that he was born of a virgin, and wrought miracles, and

yielded perfect obedience to the law; that he laid down his life as a sacrifice for sin, and to make reconciliation and atonement for it; that he brought in an everlasting righteousness; that he rose again from the dead for justification; that he was ascended up to heaven, and was set down at the right hand of God, where he ever lives to make intercession, and will come again a second time to judge both quick and dead: these are some of “the things concerning Jesus”, as the words may be rendered, which the apostle endeavoured to persuade the Jews into a belief of; as also the blessings of grace which come by him, such as peace and pardon through his blood, reconciliation and atonement by his sacrifice, justification by his righteousness, and complete salvation in him: concerning these he persuaded the Jews, setting things in a clear light, using strong arguments to convince them, and giving full proof, as the nature of them would admit of; and which is no other than moral persuasion, and is of itself ineffectual; efficacious persuasion is only of God; it is he that opens the heart to attend to these things, and gives faith to receive and embrace them: however, it is the duty of Gospel ministers to make use of arguments, and by them to endeavour to persuade men of their need of Christ, and of salvation by him, as the apostle did; (see <sup><4051></sup>2 Corinthians 5:11).

*Both out off the law of Moses:* not the law of the ten commandments, given on Mount Sinai to Moses, who delivered it to the children of Israel, and is opposed to the doctrine of grace and truth, which came by Jesus Christ, (<sup><4017></sup>John 1:17); that accuses and convinces of sin, and pronounces guilty, and curses for it; but does not reveal Jesus Christ as a Saviour from it; no proof can be taken from thence of the things concerning Jesus; but the five books of Moses are here meant, in which he wrote of Christ, as our Lord himself says, (<sup><4046></sup>John 5:46,47) as he did particularly in (<sup><0085></sup>Genesis 3:15 49:10 <sup><0585></sup>Deuteronomy 18:15); also the types and sacrifices, recorded in his writings, might be made use of in proof of Jesus, and the things of him:

*and out of the prophets:* such as (<sup><0225></sup>Psalms 22:15,16 16:10 68:18 110:1) (<sup><2074></sup>Isaiah 7:14 53:1-12 <sup><2024></sup>Daniel 9:24, 26 <sup><3080></sup>Micah 5:2 <sup><3000></sup>Zechariah 9:9 13:7); with many others: and in this work he continued,

*from morning till evening;* not that we are to suppose, that he carried on one continued discourse upon these subjects, without any intermission; but that he was all the day employed, either in expounding: the Scriptures, proving that the kingdom of the Messiah was come, and using strong and

persuasive arguments, to show that Jesus was he; or in answering the cavils and objections of the Jews, to what he said.

**Ver. 24.** *And some believed the things which were spoken*, etc.] By him, concerning the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ; even as many as were ordained unto eternal life, and to whom it was given to believe; for faith is the gift of God, and which comes by hearing of the word, when it is attended with a divine power; and then it is not only notionally understood, and barely assented to as truth, but is cordially believed and embraced, and cheerfully professed, and steadily held fast: this was not a mere historical faith, or a bare assent to the truth of the things spoken, nor a mere profession of faith in them, but a believing in Christ with the heart, the sum and substance of them; as they heard these things, their understandings were enlightened, and they saw their need of Christ, and the things of Christ, which were held forth in the ministry of the word; and so approved of them, savoured, relished, and fed upon them; and until this is the case, none can, nor will believe aright:

*and some believed not*: notwithstanding the full proof, and clear evidence produced by the apostle: these were not of Christ's sheep, their eyes were blinded, and their hearts were hardened, as was prophesied of them, and therefore they could not believe; they were given up to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart, and were left under the power of obstinate and invincible unbelief: their disbelief of these things arose from the prejudices they had conceived about a worldly kingdom; from the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, they imagining the Messiah would not die, but abide for ever; from the carnal reasonings of their minds, about divine and spiritual things; and from the ignorance that was in them, because of the obduracy of their hearts. The kingdom the apostle testified of was not an Utopian kingdom, nor any of the real kingdoms of this world, but the kingdom of the Messiah they were expecting; but that which he described, being not such an one as they imagined, they believed him not: the things he said concerning Jesus were not trivial, speculative, and indifferent things; but of the greatest moment and importance, and of which there was full proof in their own writings; and though spoken by Paul, were no other than the word of God; and besides, were good news, and glad tidings, and yet they believed them not: this difference among them, some believing and some not believing, was not owing to the power and free will of man, as if some of themselves would, and did believe, and others would not, but to the distinguishing grace of God; for faith is not of man, it is the gift of God, it

is the fruit of electing grace, and is given in consequence of it: nor is this any unusual thing, under the same ministration of the word, for one to believe, and another not believe: this is a common case, and is the usual success the Gospel meets with; so it always has been, and so it is, and will be; so it was in the times of Noah, he was a preacher of righteousness to the old world, even of the righteousness of faith, many were disobedient, few believed; and so it fared with the evangelical prophet Isaiah, and with Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zechariah, and other prophets of the Old Testament; and with John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and with Christ himself, as well as with our apostle; and this has been the case ever since his time, now is, and will be, as long as the Gospel is preached.

**Ver. 25.** *And when they agreed not among themselves*, etc.] One part believing what was said, and the other disbelieving; and such a division is the usual effect of the Gospel ministry; (see <sup><2125></sup>Luke 12:51,52). Or this may be understood of the unbelieving party, who though they agreed in the main that Jesus was not the Messiah, yet might have different sentiments of the apostle; of the manner of his reasoning, and the nature of his proofs and arguments; and of some things which he delivered, which some might assent to, and others deny; as the Pharisees and Sadducees in the sanhedrim at Jerusalem disagreed about the doctrine of the resurrection: and the rather this may be thought to be the sense, because they not only departed, when very likely those that believed might stay longer, but because at their departure the apostle says something very cutting and stinging, and which he would not say in common of them all, of the believers; and besides, they are afterwards said to reason among themselves, (<sup><4129></sup>Acts 28:29).

*They departed*; from the apostle's lodging to their own houses, or to some other place, where they could call over, and debate among themselves, the things they had heard:

*after that Paul had spoken one word*; a very remarkable one, and full to the purpose, and which he gave them just at parting with them:

*well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers*; the passage referred to is in (<sup><2319></sup>Isaiah 6:9,10), which the prophet Isaiah delivered under the influence and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, being moved by him, as all the holy men of God were; and which was very appropriate, not only to the Jewish fathers in the times of Isaiah, but to their posterity in succeeding ages, in the times of Christ and his apostles;

(see <sup><130></sup>Matthew 13:10-14 <sup><127></sup>John 12:37-46); and were exceeding applicable to the present unbelieving Jews, who had been disputing with the apostle, and were now departing from him, in unbelief: and from hence it appears, that since it was the Holy Ghost that spake by Isaiah the prophet, and he that spoke to him and by him, was the Adon, Jehovah, and Lord of hosts, as is clear from (<sup><101></sup>Isaiah 6:1,5,8,9); it follows, that the Holy Ghost is a divine person, truly God, and equal with the Father and the Son.

**Ver. 26.** *Saying, go unto this people, and say*, etc.] A message sent in wrath and judgment to the people of Israel, rejected from being the people of God, a “lo ammi” being written upon them; and therefore God does not call them “his”, but “this” people: and this message was sent by an evangelical prophet, who foretold, in the clearest manner, the Messiah’s incarnation, and birth of a virgin, the work he was to do, the sufferings he should undergo, and the glory that should follow; and that after he had seen in a vision the glory of the King Messiah, the perfections of deity filling the temple of his human nature, him exalted on a throne, and attended and worshipped by angels; after he had had such a view of his beauty and excellency, that laid him low in his own sight, and humbled him under a sense of his own impurity and unworthiness; and after he had had a comfortable discovery and application of pardoning grace; and after he had expressed such a readiness and willingness to go on the Lord’s errand: which one might have thought would have been of a different nature; and that he would have been sent, and have been made useful, to set forth the glories and excellencies of Christ’s person, office, and grace, he had had such a view of; and to preach the comfortable doctrine of pardoning grace to men, which he had just now such a gracious experience of; but on the contrary, he is bid to say,

*hearing ye shall hear*; with bodily ears, the Gospel preached by the Messiah and his apostles:

*and shall not understand*, spiritually and experimentally, what they heard: to have an opportunity of hearing the Gospel, is a great blessing; seeing it is good news, glad tidings of good things, a joyful sound, and the voice of Christ himself; it is a distinguishing favour, and what all men at all times have not; when it is attended with a divine energy, the Spirit of God is received through it, regeneration, quickening and sanctifying grace are by it; faith comes by hearing it, and Christ is found under the ministration of it;

and, generally speaking, the understanding and knowledge of divine things, are by means of it: men are naturally without the understanding of spiritual things, and where the Gospel is not, they remain so; the ministers of the Gospel, and the word preached by them, are the means of leading men into a spiritual understanding of things, though only as, and when attended with the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of Christ: and a special mercy it is when persons, whilst hearing the word, understand what they hear, and can distinguish truth from error; and approve of the truth, receive the love of it, feel the power, and taste the sweetness of it; find it and eat it, believe, embrace, and profess it, and bring forth fruits worthy of it: but on the contrary, when it is heard and not understood, it is an awful dispensation; for hence either they content themselves with bare hearing, and depend upon it for salvation; or they despise and speak evil of what they do not understand; and so their hearing, instead of being a blessing, is an aggravation of their condemnation:

*and seeing ye shall see*: miracles wrought:

*and not perceive*; them to be proofs of the things, for which they are wrought: so Jarchi expounds those words,

“ye shall see the wonders, or miracles I have done for you, and shall not set your hearts to know me”

from whence it appears that the Gospel preached in the clearest and most powerful manner, and even miracles wrought in confirmation of it, are insufficient for conversion; and nothing will effect it, but efficacious grace.

**Ver. 27.** *For the heart of this people is waxed gross*, etc.] Or fat; stupefied with notions of carnal and temporal things, and become hardened against, and unsusceptible of, divine and spiritual things:

*and their ears are dull of hearing*; the Gospel, and its joyful sound; to which they stop their ears, as the deaf adder to the voice of the charmer:

*and their eyes have they closed*; and wilfully shut, against all evidence from facts, miracles, prophecies, and preaching:

*lest they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with [their] ears, and understand with [their] heart, and should be converted*; that is, see the evidence of miracles, take in the truth of doctrine, understand the meaning



of prophecy, and so be turned from darkness, ignorance, and unbelief, to light, knowledge, and faith:

*and I should heal them*; or “have mercy on them”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; that is, forgive their sins: hearing the Gospel preached, is the ordinary means of understanding spiritual things; and the understanding being enlightened through the ministry of the word, by the Spirit of God, whereby the sinner sees his lost state by nature, his impurity and impotency, the danger he is in, and the destruction that is imminent on him, and he is liable to, and also his need of Christ, and salvation by him; this issues in conversion, in the turning of a man from the evil of his ways, to believe in Christ, walk on in him, and worthy of him; when he is healed of the diseases of his soul, which are many, are natural, and hereditary, mortal and incurable, but by Christ the great physician; by whose stripes, wounds, and blood, there is healing, that is, pardon; for healing diseases, and pardoning iniquities, are one and the same; (see <sup><A37B></sup>Psalm 103:3); and at conversion, when a soul is enlightened, and made sensible of the evil of sin, and that there is no cure of this disease, by anything that he or any creature can do, or prescribe for him, but only by the blood of Christ; a discovery of pardoning grace is made unto him; and he is made whole, and cured of every disease that attended him; from whence spring joy, peace, and comfort to him; but when through hearing the word, the understanding is not enlightened, and conversion does not follow upon it, there is no healing of the disease of sin, no pardon applied; and consequently such must be in a most deplorable and miserable condition, as all ignorant hearers and despisers of the Gospel are; (see Gill on <sup><A34></sup>Matthew 13:14; see Gill on <sup><A35></sup>Matthew 13:15;

**Ver. 28.** *Be it known therefore unto you*, etc.] Unbelievers and despisers, take this along with you at parting, and do not say you were never acquainted with it:

*that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles*; meaning the Gospel, which is a publication and declaration of that salvation, which God contrived from all eternity; made provision for, and secured in the covenant of grace; which he appointed, called, and sent Christ to effect, in the fulness of time; and which he has accomplished, by his obedience, sufferings, and death; even a full, complete, spiritual, and eternal salvation, from sin, Satan, the world, the curse of the law, and eternal death; that that Gospel which proclaims this, and is the power of God unto it, to them that



believe, is sent to the Gentile world, by God himself, who has ordered his ministers to turn to them, upon the rejection of it by the Jews:

*and [that] they will hear it: and do understand it and obey it, believe it and profess it:* this the apostle could assert upon his own knowledge, who had preached it in many nations of the world; and could testify how gladly they heard it, with what pleasure they received it, how readily they obeyed it, and how cheerfully they professed it, and how steadily they held it; though the Jews despised and put it away from them, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life: this the apostle says, reproaching them with their folly, stupidity, and infidelity; when the Gentiles, which knew not God, received the Gospel and are saved.

**Ver. 29.** *And when he had said these words,* etc.] Cited the prophecy of Isaiah, and declared the mission of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and their calling by it; both which must greatly gravel and disturb the unbelieving part of his audience:

*the Jews departed;* much displeased and uneasy:

*and had great reasoning among themselves;* not only with them that believed, but with others, that seemed to incline towards the apostle, and who espoused and undertook to defend some principles of his, against the rest, as the doctrine of the resurrection; and particularly they might take into consideration the passage in Isaiah, the apostle had recited to them at parting, and which was so appropriate to them; as well as the account he gave them of the preaching of the Gospel, and the success of it among the Gentiles, things which must be very grating to them: this whole verse is wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Syriac version.

**Ver. 30.** *And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house,* etc.] In a house which he hired with his own money; in which his friends Luke, Aristarchus, and others, dwelt with him; where he was guarded by a soldier: whether at the expiration of these two years he was set at liberty, and for ten years afterwards travelled into Italy, France, and Spain, preaching the Gospel, as some think; or whether he then suffered martyrdom, is not certain; the latter is most probable:

*and received all that came in unto him;* there, as the Syriac version reads, that is, into his lodging, as the Ethiopic version expresses it; which is not to be understood of his hospitality, for it cannot be thought that he should provide food and lodging for all that came unto him; but that he admitted

*all that would to come and hear him, and freely preached the Gospel to them:* it should seem by this, as well as by what is said (<sup><4823></sup>Acts 28:23); that many of the Jews came into his lodging, and heard him expound, that it was a large house he had hired and dwelt in; and such an one Jerom<sup>f1389</sup> thinks it was, like that he supposes he would have Philemon provide for him, which he desires in his epistle to him, (Philemon 22); namely, a house in the most noted place in the city, for the conveniency of those that came to him; large enough to hold many; free from noise and disturbance; and not situated in a scandalous neighbourhood, nor near to shows and plays; and that the lodging should rather be on the floor than in an upper room: and such a house, with all the conditions that Jerom mentions, the Papists pretend to show at Rome to this day; where, as their tradition is, Luke composed, or however finished this his history; which, as the above writer observes<sup>f1390</sup>, reaches to the two years of Paul's stay at Rome; that is, until the fourth year of Nero; from whence, adds he, we learn that in the same city this book was composed: and it is certain, that Luke was with him, when the apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy from Rome, and when the time of his martyrdom seemed to himself to be at hand, (<sup><5017></sup>2 Timothy 4:7,11).

**Ver. 31.** *Preaching the kingdom of God,* etc.] That is, the Gospel, as in (<sup><4048></sup>Luke 4:43 16:16); he preached up Jesus as the King Messiah, and declared that his kingdom was come, and opened the nature of it; that it consisted not in meats and drinks, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; which is the kingdom of grace here, and is within a man, in his heart, where grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life: and he gave them same account of the kingdom of glory, and the way unto it; and showed, that without regeneration and sanctification, no one could be meet for it; and without the justifying righteousness of Christ, no man could have a right unto it, or be possessed of it:

*and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ:* his person, as God and man; his office as Mediator, being prophet, priest, and King; his incarnation and birth; his life and miracles; his doctrine and obedience, sufferings and death; his resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand; his intercession, and second coming to judgment; with all the truths of the Gospel, in which he has a concern; as redemption, peace, reconciliation and pardon, by his blood and sacrifice, and justification by his righteousness, and salvation and eternal life through him. These things had been the subject of the apostle's ministry, throughout the whole of it:

he began at Damascus with preaching Jesus as the Son of God and the true Messiah; and he ends at Rome, with teaching the things concerning him: at his first setting out in the work of the Lord, he determined to make known none but Christ, and him crucified; and in this resolution he continued through the whole course of his life, and abode by it to the end: and this he did

*with all confidence;* with all freedom and liberty in his soul, though he was bound in his body with a chain; with all plainness, openness, and faithfulness; and with all courage and boldness, though in the midst of adversaries:

*no man forbidding him;* not the Roman emperor, nor the Roman senate, nor any other magistrate; nor could the Jews hinder him, nor was his mouth to be stopped by any; nor could the open door of the Gospel be shut, or its course be impeded; for though the apostle was bound, the word of God was not, but ran and was glorified; and was made known, and even owned in Caesar's palace; some say Nero's cupbearer, and Poppea his concubine, were converted by him: and he not only continued preaching the Gospel during the two years of his imprisonment at Rome, but also wrote several epistles to churches, and particular persons; as the epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and the Hebrews, and to Philemon, and the "second") epistle to Timothy: some copies add here, "Amen"; and at the close of the Alexandrian copy, stand these words, "the Acts of the holy Apostles"; and at the Syriac version these, "the End of the Acts of the blessed Apostles, that is, of their Histories".

# FOOTNOTES

- Ft1** -- Epiphan. Contr. Haeres. 50:1. Haeres. 30.
- Ft2** -- Meor Enayim, p. 167.
- Ft3** -- Euseb. Eccl. Hist. 50:4. c. 29.
- Ft4** -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.
- Ft5** -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 1.
- Ft6** -- Gale Razeya apud Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. ver. 50:8. c. 23.
- Ft7** -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 99. 1.
- Ft8** -- Cateches. 17. sect. 8. p. 247.
- Ft9** -- Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1.
- Ft10** -- T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 54. 2. Vid. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 57. 4.
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- Ft19** -- Misna Sota, c. 5. sect 3.
- Ft20** -- T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 42. 1. Maimon. Hilch, Sabbat, c. 27, sect. 4.
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- Ft104 -- Maimon. Hilch, Tophilla, c. 6. sect. 4. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 28. 2.

- Ft105 -- lb. c. 3. sect. 1. Vid. T. Beracot, fol. 26. 2.
- Ft106 -- Targum in Eccl. 10:17.
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- Ft145** -- Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 17.
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**Ft168** -- T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 53. 2. Chagiga, fol. 5. 1. Megilla, fol. 17. 2. Nedarim, fol. 41. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 98. 1. & passim.

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**Ft170** -- Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 3.

**Ft171** -- Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 2.

**Ft172** -- T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 32. 11.

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**Ft174** -- Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 2. & Middot. c. 5. sect. 3.

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- Ft205 -- Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1, 2.
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- Ft207 -- Aben Ezra, Vid. ib. in <sup>דניאל</sup>Daniel 11:14.
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- Ft209** -- Migdal Oz & Hagehot Maimoniot. in Maimon. Teshuba, c. 3. sect. 7.
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- Ft310 -- De prepar. Evangel 50:9. c. 27.
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