A Comprehensive Commentary
of the
Acts of the Apostles

together with references for further study
from the General Conferences of
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
the Encyclopedia of Mormonism
and other doctrinal texts by General Authorities of the Church

Written and compiled by
Paul Nolan Hyde
Preface

This project began as an attempt to provide my children and grandchildren something of their ancestor’s love and understanding of the scriptures. I began producing volumes many years ago which I was pleased to call Paraphrastic studies. I wrote one of these studies for each of the four Gospels and the letters of Paul. Eventually, however, I began to sense that there was much that I knew about the New Testament that my “translations” could not communicate. I therefore thought to write a comprehensive commentary on the entire New Testament, beginning with Matthew and concluding with the book of Revelation. As I published each of the nine volumes, I included the paraphrastic studies, where I had them, in conjunction with the commentary for each book in the New Testament. I began this project in 2005 and completed the final volume in 2010. The whole effort was a delight to my soul.

A year before I retired from the Church Educational System, in 2003, I thought to produce an 1830 formatting of the Book of Mormon using the present text of the 1981 edition. This was a relatively easy task, given the technology available to me. I distributed these to my colleagues at the Orem Institute of Religion, members of my family, and a few other interested parties for the cost of printing and binding them. Sometime in the early spring of 2007, I was impressed to begin a verse by verse commentary on the Book of Mormon, a task that I had not presumed to attempt, inasmuch as there are no translation difficulties that abound in the Old and New Testaments. Yet, there were instances of nineteenth-century word usage and syntactic issues that I thought a commentary might help to clarify. As I began, however, I discovered that there was much more that I could communicate to my children of my understanding of the ancient record of the Nephites, material that I had gleaned as I taught the scriptures during my thirty-five year career with CES. This labor eventually produced five volumes of moderate size. As I published each segment of the commentary, I enclosed the 1830 formatting of each book in the Book of Mormon that I had devise several years before. The last volume also appeared in late 2010.

By the time that I was fully engaged with writing commentaries on both the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, I had become infatuated with the idea that I might be able to expand the commentaries to include the other volumes of scripture as well. Thus, in the winter of 2010 I began writing commentaries on the Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants. Once I finished with the Pearl of Great Price, I began to move ahead with the book of Genesis and the rest of the Old Testament. In the late fall of 2014 I finished the last of the commentaries on the Old Testament, for a total of thirty-three printed and bound volumes. With these volumes and the others produced over the past ten years, I have completed commentary on every verse of the Standard Works of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

My procedure for writing the Commentary was similar to that used in creating the original paraphrastic studies. The same reference texts were employed. For difficult words in Greek, Hebrew,
and English I resorted to the works of James Strong and other lexicographers for linguistic insight. I consider the contributions made by conservative Protestant scholarship (as recorded in the New International Version) and conservative Catholic scholarship (as related in the New Jerusalem Bible). I resorted to the considered thought of Adam Clarke, one of the most prominent and prolific commentators on the sacred manuscripts available at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and who, I believe, was a man of great faith. I consulted with the Joseph Smith Translation at appropriate times (including in another column an indication that a JST change had been made for any given verse), and frequently to the writings of the General Authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as I contemplated the possible meanings of each word and phrase. From time to time I resorted to Smith’s Bible Dictionary and Discovering the World of the Bible by LaMar Berrett for some of the more arcane information that I thought would illuminate the text.

I have attempted to maintain a steady course throughout my commentaries, treating each verse as unique, and where appropriate, duplicate notes and the text rather than use cross-references within the volume. Some may find this a waste of paper and ink, but I frankly dislike having to rifle through pages or volumes trying to find the first instance of the note or commentary. The duplications are easily ignored; fumbling through pages cannot be. It is in the best interests of the reader, however, to contemplate the reasons why such duplications exist in the biblical text in the first place. They are purposeful and I have attempted to point out their purpose as I have progressed through each volume.

My numbering system for the notes used in the body of the commentary was adapted from historical linguistic texts with which I am familiar and which I had found quite useful. The pattern used is chapter.verse.word, thus note “3.4.5” would contain material referring to the fifth word in the book of Hosea 3:4, for example. I make no comprehensive promises regarding the preciseness of my word count in any particular verse, but it will be close enough to eliminate any distressing confusion. Inasmuch as I began this series with the Gospel of Matthew, there will be times when I will make reference to my own work in that first volume. Sometimes there will be no more than a reference, “MT-C 23.4.5”; other times I may quote directly from the original text. In either case my sole motivation will be to facilitate the flow of ideas rather than to multiply words. There are enough words already. References to the Commentaries on other books of the New Testament are abbreviated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>MT-C</td>
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<td>Mark</td>
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<td>Luke</td>
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<td>GA-C</td>
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<td>Ephesians</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>RV-C</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
References to the Commentaries in the books of the Old Testament are as follows:

|-------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|---------|--------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|

I have also made reference to the other standard works of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The references to the Book of Mormon are articulated in bold and italics lettering using the following abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book of Mormon Book</th>
<th>1 Nephi—1 NE-C</th>
<th>2 Nephi—2 NE-C</th>
<th>Jacob—JA-C</th>
<th>Enos—EN-C</th>
<th>Jarom—JM-C</th>
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<tr>
<td>4 Nephi—4 NE-C</td>
<td>Mormon—MM-C</td>
<td>Ether—ET-C</td>
<td>Moroni—MR-C</td>
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The abbreviation TPW-C refers to the material found on the Title Page of the Book of Mormon and in the Testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses. The references to Sections that are in the Doctrine and Covenants are indicated as DC-C followed by the section number and verse (OD1-C and OD2-C are self-explanatory); The Pearl of Great Price references contained herein use the following abbreviations: MO-C, AB-C, SM-C, SH-C, and AF-C.

In some cases I have taken on what some would consider controversial material. I make no apologies for so doing. I have found that my children are best served when an issue is approached head on, the differing points of view presented, and the rationale given as to why one school of thought ought to be preferred over another. Sometimes the decisions are logically founded; others the result of doctrinal points that are unique to the theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In most cases I have not argued authorities, even though I could have inserted multiple references to the writings of scholars with whom I am familiar. I have chosen to have my sources on any particular issue to remain anonymous in the text of the commentary for several reasons. First and foremost, this work is my commentary, what I believe and hold to be true. In the end, that is what my children wish to know. Secondly, I did not wish to have my children accept or dismiss a particular view merely because of who had been the author of it. Many wonderful insights have been made by scholars both inside and outside of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Wherein I have found one view to be preferable over another has not been a partisan matter, but rather a matter of the mind, heart, and spirit cooperating together in an attempt to understand what must be the truth. Thirdly, I have been quite clear who my “authorities” have been. It is my fondest
desire that my children would become as familiar with their writings as I have. Were I to cite all of my sources with extensive quotes from each, there would be no need for them to open any of the books that I have come to love. That, in part, is why I included the third column containing cross-references to the various doctrinal works in the Commentaries. Exceptions to this practice should be noted as being of extreme importance.

In addition to the text of the Standard Works, together with my own commentary, I inserted a column of references for further study. The citations are taken from three major sources: the Conference Reports of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints from April 1980 to November 2002 (abbreviated as CR followed by the year, month and page number); the Encyclopedia of Mormonism (four volumes, abbreviated EM followed by the volume and page number); and A Scripture Index (a compilation of scripture references cited in various texts published by General Authorities of the Church). For those not familiar with the abbreviations used in A Scripture Index. I include them below:

| TPJ — Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith | PM — Promised Messiah |
| GD — Gospel Doctrine | MM — Mortal Messiah (4 vols.) |
| MA — Mediation and Atonement | MLM — Millennial Messiah |
| FWR — Far West Record | DNTC — Doctrinal New Testament Commentary (3 vols.) |
| DHC — History of the Church (7 vols.) | JC — Jesus the Christ |
| TSWK — Teaching of Spencer W. Kimball | AF — Articles of Faith |
| MF — Miracle of Forgiveness | DS — Doctrines of Salvation (3 vols.) |
| FPM — Faith Precedes the Miracle | AGQ — Answers to Gospel Questions (5 vols.) |
| MD — Mormon Doctrine |

As with each of the volumes previously published, I include two lists. The first, bound in front of the Commentary, is a listing of all of the words and phrases upon which I have made extensive remarks, a kind of sequential table of contents. I have also arranged this list alphabetically and have placed it at the end of the Commentary as a kind of index. A comprehensive alphabetical index for the entire volume appears as the last section of this book.

Needless to say that all of the errors in the material submitted herein to the reader are the product of my own limitations as a scholar; all of the brilliance which may appear here is the product of minds and hearts filled with the fire of the Spirit of God, from whom all truth and beauty ultimately derive.

A Note on the Electronic Edition

Not only did my children and other family members receive bound copies of commentaries, but there were a number of friends and neighbors who had expressed an interest in them. There were requests from others who desired copies of what I had done, but I was not in a position to provide them with hard copies. Inasmuch as I had all of the volumes in computer files, I thought to compile each of the commentaries in some format that could be read on a smart device. I opted to use the Adobe Acrobat, turning all of the work into PDF files. I have used these on my tablet for many years and have found them useful and far easier to cart about with me. In the early spring of 2015, my neighbor David Dollahite arranged for a meeting with Jack Welch and Marny Parkin regarding the possibility of BYU providing a dedicated web site so that there would be greater public access to my
work. Thus began the present enterprise of editing and standardizing all that had done during the last ten years. My commentary on the Gospel of Mark is the second of these electronic volumes. Within a year or so I hope to have all of the books available in the same format.

PNH
Orem, Utah
July 2015
## Sequence of Specifically Noted Words and Phrases in the Act of the Apostles Commentary

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7.51.2— stiffnecked
7.51.14— Holy Ghost
7.52.4— prophets
7.52.16— shewed
7.52.23— Just One
7.52.26— whom
7.53.8— disposition
7.54.8— cut to the heart
7.54.14— gashed
7.55.25— right hand
7.56.11— Son of man
7.58.13— witnesses
7.58.26— Saul
7.59.7— God
7.59.10— Lord Jesus
8.1.2— Saul
8.1.23— Jerusalem
8.1.34— Judaea
8.1.36— Samaria
8.1.39— apostles
8.2.2— devout men
8.2.5— Stephen
8.2.12— lamentation
8.3.3— Saul
8.3.6— havoc
8.3.5— halting
8.5.2— Philip
8.5.9— Samaria
8.5.12— Christ
8.6.13— Philip
8.6.19— miracles
8.7.2— unclean spirits
8.7.21— palisies
8.9.8— Simon
8.9.16— sorcery
8.9.18— bewitched
8.9.22— Samaria
8.9.29— great one
8.11.6— regard
8.11.14— bewitched
8.11.17— sorceries
8.12.5— Philip
8.12.18— Jesus Christ
8.13.2— Simon
8.13.14— Philip
8.13.16— wondered
8.14.4— apostles
8.14.8— Jerusalem
8.14.11— Samaria
8.14.15— word of God
8.14.22— Peter
8.14.24— John
8.16.20— Lord Jesus
8.18.3— Simon
8.18.21— money
8.20.2— Peter
8.22.13— thought
8.23.9— gall of bitterness
8.23.15— bond of iniquity
8.24.3— Simon
8.25.2— they
8.25.16— Jerusalem
8.25.20— gospel
8.25.26— Samaritans
8.26.9— Philip
8.26.16— south
11
8.26.19—way  9.6.3—trembling  9.29.16—Grecians
8.26.22—down  9.6.5—astonished—  9.30.4—brethren
8.27.11—Ethiopia  9.10.8—Damascus  9.31.8—Judea
8.27.13—eunuch  9.10.10—Ananias  9.31.10—Galilee
8.27.18—Candace  9.11.16—Straight  9.31.12—Samaria
8.27.30—treasure  9.11.23—Judas  9.31.27—comfort
8.27.35—Jerusalem  9.11.27—Saul  9.31.33—multiplied
8.27.38—worship  9.11.29—Tarsus  9.32.7—Peter
8.28.2—returning  9.12.10—Ananias  9.32.18—saints
8.28.9—Esaias  9.13.2—Ananias  9.32.22—Lydda
8.28.11—prophet  9.13.21—saints  9.33.9—Aeneas
8.29.6—Philip  9.13.23—Jerusalem  9.33.22—palsy
8.30.2—Philip  9.14.8—9—chief priests  9.34.2—Peter
8.30.12—prophet  9.15.14—15—chosen vessel  9.34.6—Aeneas
8.30.13—Esaias  9.15.24—Gentiles  9.34.7—8—Jesus Christ
8.31.16—Philip  9.15.31—Israel  9.35.6—Lydda
8.32.16—sheep  9.16.4—shew  9.35.8—Saron
8.34.3—eunuch  9.17.2—Ananias  9.36.5—Joppa
8.34.4—answered  9.17.10—house  9.36.10—Tabitha
8.34.5—Philip  9.17.14—hands  9.36.16—Dorcas
8.34.15—prophet  9.17.18—Brother  9.36.25—almsdeeds
8.35.2—Philip  9.17.19—Saul  9.37.7—8—those days
8.35.16—Jesus  9.17.23—Jesus  9.37.19—washed
8.37.2—Philip  9.18.22—baptized  9.37.25—26—upper chamber
8.37.18—19—I believe  9.19.6—meat  9.38.4—Lydda
8.37.21—22—Jesus Christ  9.19.12—Saul  9.38.8—Joppa
8.38.18—Philip  9.19.21—Damascus  9.38.15—Peter
8.38.21—eunuch  9.20.2—straightway  9.38.30—delay
8.39.16—17—caught away  9.20.5—Christ  9.39.2—Peter
8.39.18—Philip  9.20.8—synagogues  9.39.22—widows
8.40.2—Philip  9.21.15—destroyed  9.40.2—Peter
8.40.6—Azotos  9.21.20—21—this name  9.40.19—Tabitha
8.40.15—cities  9.21.23—Jerusalem  9.41.17—saints
8.40.20—Caesarea  9.21.38—39—chief priests  9.42.7—Joppa
9.1.2—Saul  9.22.2—Saul  9.43.12—Joppa
9.1.4—breathing  9.22.11—Jews  9.43.15—Simon
9.1.6—threatenings  9.22.15—Damascus  9.43.17—tanner
9.1.8—slaughter  9.22.21—Christ  10.1.7—Caesarea
9.1.18—19—high priest  9.22.29—confounded  10.1.9—Cornelius
9.2.5—letters  9.23.4—5—many days  10.1.11—centurion
9.2.7—Damascus  9.23.9—Jews  10.1.14—band
9.2.10—synagogues  9.24.3—4—laying away  10.1.17—Italian
9.2.18—way  9.24.8—Saul  10.2.2—devout
9.2.31—Jerusalem  9.26.3—Saul  10.2.7—fearful
9.3.8—Damascus  9.26.7—Jerusalem  10.2.16—alms
9.4.3—fell  9.27.2—Barnabas  10.2.24—alway
9.4.8—heard  9.27.10—apostles  10.3.9—10—ninth hour
9.4.14—Saul  9.27.38—Damascus  10.3.15—angel
9.4.19—me  9.27.43—Jesus  10.3.26—Cornelius
9.5.7—Lord  9.28.12—Jerusalem  10.4.25—alms
9.5.27—pricks  9.29.10—11—Lord Jesus  10.4.31—memorial
10.5.6—Joppa
10.5.11—Simon
10.5.13—surname
10.5.15—Peter
10.6.5—Simon
10.6.7—tanner
10.7.8—Cornelius
10.7.20—devout
10.8.15—Joppa
10.9.3—morrow
10.9.6—7—went on
10.9.16—Peter
10.9.26—27—sixth hour
10.10.19—trance
10.11.8—vessel
10.11.19—knit
10.13.10—kill
10.14.2—Peter
10.14.16—common
10.14.18—unclean
10.17.3—Peter
10.17.4—doubted
10.17.23—Cornelius
10.17.26—enquiry
10.17.28—Simon’s
10.18.6—Simon
10.18.10—Peter
10.19.2—Peter
10.19.13—three
10.21.2—Peter
10.21.8—which
10.21.14—Cornelius
10.22.4—Cornelius
10.22.6—centurion
10.22.8—just
10.22.17—18—good report
10.22.25—Jews
10.22.27—warned
10.23.13—Peter
10.23.19—20—certain brethren
10.23.22—Joppa
10.24.3—4—morrow after
10.24.8—Caesarea
10.24.10—Cornelius
10.25.3—Peter
10.25.7—Cornelius
10.26.2—Peter
10.28.5—them
10.28.21—Jew
10.29.7—gainsaying
10.30.2—Cornelius
10.30.4—5—Four days
10.30.11—12—this hour
10.30.16—17—ninth hour
10.30.31—32—bright clothing
11.19.13—Stephen
11.19.18—Phenic
11.19.20—Cyprus
11.19.22—Antioch
11.19.31—Jews
11.20.4—them
11.20.8—Cyprus
11.20.9—Cyrene
11.20.20—Grecians
11.20.23—24—Lord Jesus
11.22.16—Jerusalem
11.22.21—Barnabas
11.22.29—Antioch
11.23.25—cleave
11.24.17—18—much people
11.25.3—Barnabas
11.25.5—Tarsus
11.25.9—Saul
11.26.11—Antioch
11.26.36—Christians
11.27.6—prophets
11.27.8—Jerusalem
11.27.10—Antioch
11.28.9—Agabus
11.28.20—dearth
11.28.33—34—Claudius Caesar
11.29.20—Judaea
11.30.10—elders
11.30.15—Barnabas
11.30.17—Saul
11.30.18—Israel
11.4—time
11.5—Herod
11.6.3—Herod
11.6.12—Peter
11.7.20—smote
11.7.21—Peter
11.7.9—wist
11.9.10—ward
11.10.15—16—iron gate
11.10.33—out
11.11.3—Peter
11.11.32—Herod
11.11.43—Jews
11.12.14—Mary
11.12.18—John
11.12.22—Mark
| 12.13.3—Peter | 13.7.5—deputy | 13.22.32—Jesse |
| 12.13.7—door | 13.7.9—10—Sergius Paulus | 13.23.10—promise |
| 12.13.17—Rhoda | 13.7.12—prudent | 13.23.12—Israel |
| 12.14.5—Peter’s | 13.7.17—Barnabas | 13.23.16—Jesus |
| 12.15.8—mad | 13.7.19—Saul | 13.24.2—John |
| 12.15.24—angel | 13.8.2—Elymas | 13.24.18—Israel |
| 12.16.2—Peter | 13.8.4—sorcerer | 13.26.9—Abraham |
| 12.16.11—door | 13.8.19—deputy | 13.27.6—Jerusalem |
| 12.16.17—astonished | 13.9.2—Saul | 13.27.21—prophets |
| 12.17.10—12—hold their peace | 13.9.7—Paul | 13.28.14—Pilate |
| 12.17.34—James | 13.10.7—subtily | 13.31.15—Galilee |
| 12.17.38—brethren | 13.10.10—mischief | 13.31.17—Jerusalem |
| 12.17.45—46—another place | 13.10.12—child | 13.33.16—Jesus |
| 12.18.20—Peter | 13.10.17—enemy | 13.33.25—second |
| 12.19.3—Herod | 13.10.26—pervet | 13.33.34—begotten |
| 12.19.30—Judaea | 13.10.28—29—right ways | 13.34.29—sore |
| 12.19.32—Caesarea | 13.11.31—mist | 13.34.30—mercies |
| 12.20.2—Herod | 13.11.34—darkness | 13.34.32—David |
| 12.20.9—Tyre | 13.12.3—deputy | 13.36.2—David |
| 12.20.26—chamberlain | 13.13.9—Paphos | 13.41.3—despisers |
| 12.21.6—Herod | 13.13.13—Perga | 13.41.7—perish |
| 12.23.4—angel | 13.13.15—Pamphylia | 13.42.4—Jews |
| 12.25.2—Barnabas | 13.13.17—John | 13.42.10—synagogue |
| 12.25.4—Saul | 13.14.6—Perga | 13.42.12—Gentiles |
| 12.25.7—Jerusalem | 13.14.10—Antioch | 13.43.4—congregation |
| 13.1.12—prophets | 13.15.6—law | 13.43.18—Barnabas |
| 13.1.14—teachers | 13.15.9—prophets | 13.43.29—31—grace of God |
| 13.1.16—Barnabas | 13.15.14—synagogue | 13.45.4—Jews |
| 13.1.18—Simeon | 13.15.29—exhortation | 13.45.12—envy |
| 13.1.22—Niger | 13.16.2—Paul | 13.45.22—Paul |
| 13.1.24—Lucius | 13.16.6—beckoning | 13.46.2—Paul |
| 13.1.26—Cyrene | 13.16.13—Israel | 13.46.4—Barnabas |
| 13.1.28—Manuten | 13.17.7—Israel | 13.46.43—Gentiles |
| 13.1.35—Herod | 13.17.10—fathers | 13.47.19—Gentiles |
| 13.1.37—tetrarch | 13.17.12—exalted | 13.50.3—Jews |
| 13.1.39—Saul | 13.17.25—Egypt | 13.50.22—Paul |
| 13.2.13—Separate | 13.17.29—30—high arm | 13.50.24—Barnabas |
| 13.2.15—Barnabas | 13.18.11—manners | 13.50.31—coasts |
| 13.2.17—Saul | 13.18.14—wilderness | 13.51.15—Iconium |
| 13.4.12—Seleucia | 13.19.6—7—seven nations | 14.1.7—Iconium |
| 13.4.19—Cyprus | 13.19.12—Chanaan | 14.1.15—synagogue |
| 13.5.6—Salamis | 13.20.8—judges | 14.1.18—Jews |
| 13.5.15—synagogues | 13.20.19—Samuel | 14.1.34—Greeks |
| 13.5.18—Jews | 13.20.21—prophet | 14.2.4—Jews |
| 13.5.23—John | 13.21.12—Saul | 14.2.8—Gentiles |
| 13.6.10—Paphos | 13.21.16—Cis | 14.2.13—14—evil affected |
| 13.6.15—sorcerer | 13.21.23—Benjamin | 14.3.1—2—Long time |
| 13.6.17—18—false prophet | 13.21.28—29—forty years | 14.3.6—7—speaking boldly |
| 13.6.24—Bar Jesus | 13.22.24—said | 14.4.19—apostles |
16.6.12—Galatia
16.6.25—Asia
16.7.6—Mysia
16.7.12—Bithynia
16.7.15—Spirit
16.8.4—by
16.8.5—Mysia
16.8.9—Troas
16.9.3—vision
16.9.6—Paul
16.9.10—man
16.9.15—Macedonia
16.10.9—we
16.10.14—Macedonia
16.11.4—Troas
16.11.12—Samothracia
16.11.18—Neapolis
16.12.5—Philippi
16.12.9—chief city
16.12.18—colony
16.13.4—sabbath
16.13.13—river
16.13.16—prayer
16.14.6—Lydia
16.14.10—purple
16.14.15—Thyatira
16.14.17—worshipped God
16.14.36—Paul
16.15.33—constrained
16.16.10—prayer
16.16.13—damsel
16.16.17—spirit
16.16.19—divination
16.16.29—soothsaying
16.17.4—Paul
16.18.8—Paul
16.18.24—Jesus Christ
16.19.4—masters
16.19.16—Paul
16.19.18—Silas
16.19.24—marketplace
16.19.27—rulers
16.20.6—magistrates
16.20.11—Jews
16.21.16—Romans
16.22.11—magistrates
16.24.11—inner prison
16.24.20—stocks
16.25.4—Paul
16.25.6—Silas
16.25.9—tenors
16.25.10—prisoners
16.28.2—Paul
16.29.8—sprang
16.29.12—trembling
16.29.17—Paul
16.29.19—Silas
16.30.4—out
16.30.14—saved
16.31.4—Believe
16.31.8—Jesus Christ
16.33.22—straightway
16.35.7—magistrates
16.35.10—serjeants
16.36.11—Paul
16.36.13—magistrates
16.37.2—Paul
16.37.16—Romans
16.38.3—serjeants
16.38.9—magistrates
16.38.19—Romans
16.40.14—Lydia
17.1.7—Amphipolis
17.1.9—Apollonia
17.1.13—Thessalonica
17.1.17—synagogue
17.1.20—Jews
17.2.2—Paul
17.2.5—manner
17.2.21—scriptures
17.3.1—Opening
17.3.3—alleging
17.3.5—Christ
17.3.19—Jesus
17.4.7—consorted
17.4.9—Paul
17.4.11—Silas
17.4.15—devout
17.4.16—Greeks
17.4.23—chief women
17.5.3—Jews
17.5.14—laid fellows
17.5.18—baser sort
17.5.37—Jason
17.6.9—Jason
17.6.15—rulers
17.7.2—Jason
17.7.14—Caesar
17.7.22—Jesus
17.8.3—troubled
17.9.5—security
17.9.7—Jason
17.10.3—brethren
17.10.7—Paul
17.10.9—Silas
17.10.13—Berea
17.10.20—synagogue
17.10.23—Jews
17.11.4—noble
17.11.8—Thessalonica
17.11.17—readiness of mind
17.11.23—scriptures
17.12.4—them
17.12.8—honourable
17.12.12—Greeks
17.12.15—men
17.13.4—Jews
17.13.6—Thessalonica
17.13.17—Paul
17.13.19—Berea
17.14.8—Paul
17.14.18—Silas
17.14.20—Timoteus
17.15.5—Paul
17.15.9—Athens
17.15.13—commandment
17.15.15—Silas
17.15.17—Timoteus
17.15.25—speed
17.16.3—Paul
17.16.8—Athens
17.16.12—stirred
17.17.1—Therefore
17.17.6—synagogue
17.17.9—Jews
17.17.18—market
17.18.3—philosophers
17.18.6—Epicureans
17.18.10—Sticks
17.18.19—babbler
17.18.31—strange gods
17.18.38—Jesus
17.19.9—Areopagus
17.21.4—Athenians
17.21.6—strangers
17.22.2—Paul
17.22.8—Mar’s hill
17.22.15—Athens
17.22.25—superstitious
17.26.5—one blood
17.26.25—times before appointed
17.26.30—bounds of their habitation
17.27.8—happly
17.27.11—feel
17.28.18—poets
17.29.7—offspring
17.29.17—Godhead
17.30.8—winked
17.31.6—day
17.31.10—he
17.31.18—that man
17.31.23—ordained
17.31.28—assurance
17.33.2—Paul

16
17.34.13—Dionysius
17.34.15—Areopagite
17.34.20—Damaris
18.1.4—Paul
18.1.7—Athens
18.1.11—Corinth
18.2.5—Jew
18.2.7—Aquila
18.2.10—Pontus
18.2.14—Italy
18.2.18—Priscilla
18.2.21—Claudius
18.2.29—Rome
18.3.21—tentmakers
18.4.3—reasoned
18.4.6—syngage
18.4.10—persuaded
18.4.12—Jews
18.4.15—Greeks
18.5.3—Silas
18.5.5—Timoteus
18.5.9—Macedonia
18.5.10—Paul
18.5.12—pressed
18.5.20—Jews
18.5.22—Jesus
18.5.24—Christ
18.6.4—5—opposed themselves
18.6.7—blasphemed
18.6.11—raiment
18.6.17—blood
18.6.33—Gentiles
18.7.13—Justus
18.7.20—21—joined bard
18.7.23—syngage
18.8.2—Crispus
18.8.4—5—chief ruler
18.8.8—syngage
18.8.21—Corinthians
18.9.6—Paul
18.9.12—vision
18.12.3—Gallio
18.12.6—deputy
18.12.8—Achaia
18.12.10—Jews
18.12.17—Paul
18.14.3—Paul
18.14.11—Gallio
18.14.15—Jews
18.14.22—wrong
18.14.24—25—wicked lewdness
18.15.8—words
18.15.10—names
18.15.14—law
18.16.3—drave
18.17.4—Greeks
18.17.6—Sothenes
18.17.12—syngage
18.17.21—Gallio
18.18.2—Paul
18.18.23—Syria
18.18.27—Priscilla
18.18.29—Aquila
18.18.31—shorn
18.18.35—Cenchrea
18.18.40—vow
18.19.2—he
18.19.5—Ephesus
18.19.8—them
18.19.16—syngage
18.19.21—Jews
18.21.13—feast
18.21.17—Jerusalem
18.21.32—Ephesus
18.22.7—Caeasar
18.22.10—up
18.22.14—church
18.22.19—Antioch
18.23.18—Galatia
18.23.20—Phrygia
18.23.22—order
18.24.6—Apollos
18.24.9—Alexandria
18.24.20—Ephesus
18.25.4—instructed
18.25.21—diligently
18.25.32—John
18.26.6—baldly
18.26.9—syngage
18.26.12—Aquila
18.26.14—Priscilla
18.26.23—expounded
18.27.9—Achaia
18.27.29—31—believed through grace
18.28.6—Jews
18.28.15—Jews
18.28.17—Christ
19.1.8—Apollos
19.1.11—Corinth
19.1.12—Paul
19.1.17—18—upper coasts
19.1.21—Ephesus
19.1.25—disciples
19.1.36—John's
19.4.3—Paul
19.4.4—John
19.4.30—31—Christ Jesus
19.5.13—14—Lord Jesus
19.6.3—Paul
19.6.20—tongues
19.6.22—prophesied
19.6.26—Jews
19.8.6—syngage
19.8.14—15—three months
19.8.16—disputing
19.8.18—persuading
19.9.3—divers
19.9.13—14—that way
19.9.18—he
19.9.21—they
19.9.33—Tyrannus
19.10.2—this
19.10.17—Asia
19.10.23—24—Lord Jesus
19.10.26—Jews
19.10.28—Greeks
19.11.4—special
19.11.10—Paul
19.12.11—handkerchiefs
19.12.13—aprons
19.13.5—vagabond
19.13.6—Jews
19.13.7—exorcists
19.13.17—18—evil spirits
19.13.23—24—Lord Jesus
19.13.32—Paul
19.14.8—Sceva
19.14.10—Jew
19.14.12—chief
19.14.15—priests
19.15.8—Jesus
19.15.12—Paul
19.17.8—Jews
19.17.10—Greeks
19.17.14—Ephesus
19.17.16—fear
19.17.26—27—Lord Jesus
19.18.7—confessed
19.18.9—shewed
19.19.3—them
19.19.7—8—curious arts
19.19.33—silver
19.20.1—So
19.21.6—Paul
19.21.8—10—in the spirit
19.21.16—Macedonia
19.21.18—Achaia
19.21.22—Jerusalem
19.21.33—Rome
19.22.5—Macedonia
19.22.13—Timothke
19.22.15—Epastus
19.22.21—Asia
19.23.11—12—that way
19.24.6—Demetrius
19.24.8—silversmith
19.24.12—shrines
19.24.14—Diana
19.26.10—Ephesus
19.26.15—Asia
19.26.17—Paul
19.27.25—Diana
19.27.34—destroyed
19.27.37—Asia
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Chapter 1

1 The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,
salutation. The name itself means “Friend of God” as translated from
the Greek.
1.1.10—**all**—An excusable hyperbole, softened by the phrase “began to
do”. Luke included in his narrative those primary experiences and
teachings which laid the foundation for all that the Apostles would
later do and say.
1.1.16—**do**—Jesus’ peerless example of righteousness while he dwelt in
mortality. It is his sinless conduct while living among the children of
men which enabled him to be of supreme benefit to his fellow men
1.1.18—**teach**—The principles of eternal life and salvation.

1.2 So continues the description of the Gospel of Luke and the aftermath
occasioned by the ascension of Christ into heaven. Jesus declared to his
disciples that unless he were to depart from them, the full weight and
measure of the Holy Ghost would not descend upon them (see **JN-C 16.7**).

1.2.3—**day**—Luke concluded his Gospel with a reference to the
Ascension of Jesus Christ (see **LK-C 24.50–52**) as did Mark in his
narrative (see **MK-C 16.19–20**). Luke will expand his account of the
Ascension in the verses that follow below (see 1.6–12).

1.2.15–16—**Holy Ghost**—The Holy Ghost is a revelator and therefore
any inspiration given the Apostles in their capacity as the legal
administrators of the Church of Christ constitutes the word of God
and power unto salvation.

1.2.22—**apostles**—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles”
derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political
language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair
between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John
the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the
Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the
business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of
Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who
have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been
somewhat infrequent in practice.

1.3 There is a superior translation of this verse.

To whom also he shewed himself alive after his sufferings by many
infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the
things pertaining to the kingdom of God; (**JST**; Acts 1.3)

We are sometimes tempted to place limitations on the amount of revelation
that the Father and the Son are willing to commit to the Church and King-
dom of God upon the earth. All arguments to the contrary aside, the book of
Acts clearly demonstrates that Heaven is perfectly willing to provide con-
tinuous instruction to those who receive such teachings with joy and
obedience.

1.3.2—**whom**—The Apostles who are Jesus’ special witnesses into all of
the world. They know because they have seen and felt his person. We
know because we have believed their words and have partaken of the
Spirit of God which has testified to us that their testimony is true.

1.3.7—**alive**—The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the outward marker
that there had been a redemption from all sin provided for the repen-
tant children of men. They are in relation to each other is illustrated
in another place in the case of the man brought to Jesus with palsy.

2 Until the day in which he was
taken up, after that he through the
Holy Ghost had given command-
ments unto the apostles whom he
had chosen:

3 To whom also he shewed him-
self alive after his passion by many
infallible proofs, being seen of
them forty days, and speaking of
the things pertaining to the king-
dom of God:

| Acts 1:2 | AF 169 |
| DHC 6 9 | EM 1 2 |
| Acts 1:2–3 | PM 609 |
| Acts 1:2–5 | MLM 8 |
| Acts 1:2–8 | MD 691 |

24
The man was healed of his physical malady in order to demonstrate that Jesus also had power to forgive sins (see **MK-C 2.8–12**).

1.3.10—*passion*—This is in reference to the Savior’s atoning sacrifice which began in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Greek word which is here translated as “passion” derives from roots which mean “experience a sensation (usually painful), feel, suffer, vex”. The English word “passion” derives from Latin roots which mean “suffering”, but also closely related to other derivatives like “patient”.

1.3.13–14—*infallible proofs*—The Apostles had been at the crucifixion and had witnessed all of the torments associated with his death. The death of Jesus was an established fact. Jesus’ resurrection from the dead was no less tangible. Each of the remaining Apostles had touched him when he appeared to them in the Upper Room. They had watched him eat on several occasions afterwards. Many other disciples were likewise recipients of the Savior’s ministrations in Galilee and elsewhere. Nothing was more certain to the Church of Christ than the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.3.19–20—*forty days*—Frequently during the time between the morning of the resurrection until about a week before the Day of Pentecost, the Savior came to his Apostles and others, furthering their instructions, providing that strength and confidence which would allow the Apostles to carry forth the Kingdom of God upon the earth. It was by alluding to the teachings given during this time that the early Gnostic apostates deceived the people.

1.3.25—*things*—Inasmuch as Jesus found it necessary to give further instruction to his Apostles, even after more than three years of daily contact, we might conclude that the four Gospels do not necessarily contain all that Jesus taught to his disciples during his ministry among them.

1.4 Another translation clarifies the circumstances of the Savior’s last visit with the Apostles before his ascension into heaven.

> And, being with them when they were assembled together, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. (JST, Acts 1.4)

As both Matthew and John testify in their accounts, between the resurrection and the day of Pentecost the Apostles made their way into Galilee for a time, where Jesus appeared unto them and ministered to their needs. He also appeared unto many others, five hundred at once by one account, in order to strengthen the membership of the Church. Therefore, there is no conflict between the accounts handed down to us in the writing of the disciples of Christ.

1.4.13—*depart*—That is to say, they should not depart from Jerusalem at that point, which was forty days after the resurrection, but continue in the city until after the Day of Pentecost, which was about ten days hence.

1.4.15—*Jerusalem*—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in
peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

1.4.20—promise—The Gift of the Holy Ghost and the accompanying baptism of fire which had been promised to the faithful from the time of the ministry of John the Baptist (see MT-C 3.11–12, MK-C 1.8, LK-C 3.16, and JN-C 3.33).

1.5 Several of the Apostles had been disciples of John the Baptist and were present when this great prophet announced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God, the Lamb who had come into the world to bring salvation to the children of men, even as many as will. John had testified that Jesus was endowed with a greater power, the keys to bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Although the disciples had enjoyed the influence of the Spirit of God from time to time, it was not until after the resurrection of Jesus Christ that the full blessing of that ordinance was realized.

1.5.2—John—The son of Zachariah who became the presiding high priest of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthoods of his day. He was called upon to baptize the Lord Jesus Christ in the Meridian of Time; hence his sobriquet. John held the keys of the priesthood until he restored them to the prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 15 May 1829.

1.5.16–18—not many days—Hardly more than ten days would lapse before the Day of Pentecost.

1.6 Whatever responsibilities the Apostles may have had during the Savior’s forty-day, postresurrection ministry in Galilee and environs, they were now gathered in Jerusalem in anticipation of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon them. In one of these final meetings before the Savior ascended into heaven, the disciples asked him concerning the establishment of the political Kingdom of God that had been promised in the writings of the ancient prophets. As is recorded in the synoptic Gospels, Jesus devoted a great deal of time during the waning hours of his mortal ministry to the signs and wonders which would transpire between his death and resurrection and the Second Coming in Glory (see MT-C 24.3–51, MK-C 13.1–36, and LK-C 21.5–36). It may have been that the disciples did not initially comprehend that the synopsis which the Savior had given to them would extend past their mortal ministry.

1.6.18—restore—Much speculation has been proffered regarding the significance of this word, especially since there are several precedents which imply that the Greek word which is here translated as “restore” could also mean “cast down, destroy, bring to an end”. In essence, then, the question may have been “Will the kingdom of the Jews be destroyed in our lifetimes?”

1.7 Whether in regard to the destruction of the Jewish nation or to the Second Coming, the answer is the same. Though tacit, the reply is understood as “No”. If either one of those events were to transpire during the time the Apostles labored among the children of men, it would be part of their stewardship to know the “times” and the “seasons”. As the prophet Amos testified, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets”. The destruction of the Jewish nation would take place as the result of the Bar Kokhba rebellion that was quelled about 130 AD. The establishment of the political Kingdom of God lay many centuries in the future. In both cases, these particular Apostles had no serious need to know, since most of them would have been killed long before. The phrase “times and seasons” implied that Jesus was not going to give the

5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Acts 1:5

AF 158, 168

JC 49, 696

CR96-0 78

6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Acts 1:6

DS 1 160

JC 782

MD 307, 418, 636

MLM 592

MM 2 149

PM 193

Acts 1:6–7

DS 1 164, 172

JC 589

Acts 1:6–8

MD 43

MM 3 65

Acts 1:6–9

MLM 310

Acts 1:6–11

MD 721

MM 1 44

Acts 1:6–12

MLM 9

Acts 1:7

FPM 250

Acts 1:7–8

JC 696

7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.
Apostles any hints whatsoever as to the timing of these seminal events; this would be the prerogative of the Father.

1.7.14—times—There are three words in Greek which might be translated into our English word “times”. The first refers to a specific occasion which is fixed and immovable, like unto a “date”. The second refers to a specific “interval” or “period” of time, a “window of opportunity” as it were. The third, and the one used here, means an “undetermined period of time”, like any “year”, “era”, or “century” without reference to any particular one.

1.7.17—seasons—The Greek word which is here translated as “seasons” derives from roots which mean “occasion, a set or proper time”, thus corresponding to the first of the three words given in 1.7.14 above.

1.7.26—power—The Greek word which is here translated as “power” derives from roots which mean “ability, privilege, capacity, force, competency, freedom, mastery, influence, jurisdiction”. This word differs from that used in 1.8.5.

1.8 A comparison between the uses of the word “power” in this and the preceding verse, indicates that the stewardship of the Apostles did not include certain privileged information, but that in everything having to do with the administration of the Church and Kingdom of God, they would be led and guided by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost. The timing of the political Kingdom of God was the prerogative of the Father. The establishment of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the hearts of the children of men was the responsibility of the disciples of Jesus as they were moved upon by the Spirit of God. The Apostles would not be ministers of state, or diplomats negotiating treaties, or judges wielding the scepter of secular power among the nations. They would be the humble emissaries of the Savior, bearing witness of the redemption from death and hell, through the resurrection and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

1.8.5—power—The Greek word which is here translated as “power” derives from roots which mean “literal or figurative force, miraculous power, miracle, wonder, ability, abundance, mighty, meaning, strength”. This word differs from that used in 1.7.26. That “power” would be upon them in less than a fortnight.

1.8.24—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

1.8.28—Judaea—In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the province of Judea stretched from Malatha on the south to the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the River Jordan on the east, comprising approximately 5,000 square miles.

1.8.31—Samaria—When the Assyrians conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BC, they carried away into captivity all those who might have been considered the political, social, and economic leaders of the ten tribes, leaving behind a vast number of the “common people” to be governed by Assyrian surrogates. In the process of time, the surrogates and the oppressed began to intermarry, or at least to produce offspring together. The resultant mixing of Gentile and Israelite blood offended their cousins to the south in the Kingdom of Judah, and a bitter relationship, if it may be called a relationship,
ensued bringing the social wrath of all concerned upon the heads of the mixed culture. Samaria had been the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, and for that reason, it is supposed, all Assyrian-Israelite offspring were called by that name as an opprobrium. The parable of the Good Samaritan could have involved other nationalities as the major characters, but the power of the juxtaposition of the Samaritan with the Levite and the Priest was poignant almost beyond our comprehension.

1.8.35–36—uttermost part—The Greek word which is here translated as "uttermost part" derives from roots which mean "contiguity, farthest, final (place or time)"). The Apostles were given the commission, throughout all time, to bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ, whether in mortality or in the world of spirits. During their mortal lives they were assigned the "ends of the earth", which for them would have been Asia, Africa, and Europe. Others were to be assigned to perform the same labors in locations to which the original Apostles could not easily come.

1.9 Having instructed his Apostles and other disciples for a period of forty days, Jesus took his leave of the brethren from atop the Mount of Olives. A cloud enveloped him and he disappeared from their sight. Was this ascension like unto that which Elisha witnessed when the prophet Elijah was translated without tasting death? Luke makes no mention of a "chariot of fire", but there was no doubt a manifestation of glory. Modern experiences assure us that columns of "fire" or pillars of light frequently accompany the appearances of divine emissaries. Whatever the manner, the angels present will testify to the Apostles that the world would one day receive the returning Christ, watching him descend in the same fashion as they observed him ascend.

1.10 An astonishing scene indeed. When the risen Christ appeared to the ancient Nephites gathered in the land of Bountiful at the temple there, they too were transfixed, unable to speak to one another, unable to take their eyes off of the glorious personage that had descended from the heavens. Elisha was apparently in a similar frame of mind when the chariots and horsemen of Israel descended to gather up the prophet Elijah and bear him off to a terrestrial state without tasting death.

1.10.13–14—two men—The angels of God are men, men who at some time or another pertained to this earth. Who the two angels were, Luke did not say. We also wondered at the identity of the two angels who attended the tomb on resurrection morning.

1.10.19–20—white apparel—Robes of righteousness, we might say. These messengers sent from the presence of the Father assured the disciples of what they already knew in their hearts.

1.11 We do not know why the angels interrupted the reverie of the Apostles at this time. Were there vital matters to attend to that were being neglected while the disciples lingered on the mount? Were there other observers privy to the Ascension who might be of a mind to compromise the safety of the Apostles had they remained in that place for a greater length of time? Was this a gentle reminder that one era had come to a close and that another was beginning, one in which they had the major role? We do not know, but the testimony of the angels was certain. Jesus would one day return to be received into the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth. They were charged with the preparations to be made in anticipation of that great day by

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel:

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.
touching the hearts and minds of all those with whom they would come in contact, whether among the living or the death. There was no time to be awestruck or whimsical.

11.7—Galilee—It is this salutation has often been entered into evidence to convince the readers of the scriptures that Judas Iscariot was from the land of Judea rather than from Galilee. With Judas dead, the eleven remaining members of the Quorum of the Twelve can be referred to as “men of Galilee”. The fact of the matter is that Judas most likely was also a Galilean and that his sobriquet is probably a reference to the manner of his suicide (see MT C10.4.5–6).

1.12 After the Apostles had returned from their assignments in Galilee, they took up their abode in Jerusalem in anticipation of the day of Pentecost. Though we may not know for a certainty, the disciples may very well have found lodging in the same place where they had celebrated the Passover with the Savior.

1.12.5—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

1.12.10—Oliver—The Greek word which is here translated as “Oliver” derives from roots which mean “olive-orchard”. The English word “Olivet” is a diminutive form of “olive”. This word is used twice in the Bible; the Hebrew counterpart means the same, but has no linguistic association with the Greek word. Why translators chose this particular form to represent the Greek word for “olive” is a task for those who deal in prosody.

1.12.16–18—sabbath’s day journey—In consequence of the regulations concerning the gathering of manna in the wilderness, the Law of Moses commanded that a man was not to leave his “place” on the Sabbath Day. At some point, the Israelites thought that such a literal proscription too restrictive. They therefore settled on a distance which a man might legitimately leave his place of residence. Scholars tells us that the distance decided upon was 2,000 cubits, relating the Sabbath’s Day journey to the distance between the Ark of the Covenant and the main body of the Israelites as they were about to cross the River Jordan when they began the conquest of Palestine. Other scholars aver that the 2,000 cubits was equal to the distance between the Tabernacle to the extremities of the camp when the House of Israel was settled in any one place in the wilderness. While tradition has established this figure of 2,000 cubits as the distance a man might travel on the Sabbath Day, there is no scriptural warrant for it. To further complicate the matter, some biblical scholars have replaced “cubit” with “pace”, greatly exaggerating the distance allowed. A “cubit” is a measurement defined as the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, variable from 16 to 22 inches depending on the man being measured. A “pace” is the distance traveled in two walking steps, also variable. Assuming 18 inches per cubit, however, the distance would have been about 3,000 feet or a little less than six-tenths of a mile. Some scholars have transmuted the distances into furlongs, which does little to illuminate the issue. Other traditionalists suggest that the distance traveled should begin when one left his

12. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.
doorway, while still others suggest that the distance began once the traveler passed through the city gates. What all of these variables imply, is that without further information we are hardpressed to find the precise place where Jesus took his leave of the Apostles. This fact, however, has not dissuaded the learned from doing that very thing.

1.13 These are the same names given by Luke in his Gospel as part of his account of the selection of the first Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, though they are not listed in the same order (see LK-C 6.13–16). The name of the suicide, Judas Iscariot, of course, is missing.

1.13.17—Peter—Anti-papists, in their zeal to condemn the Catholic Church by assailing their resort to Peter as the bearer of the Keys of the Kingdom, have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. In their attempts to denigrate the Roman Church they have fallen back on the age-old tactic of ad homonym attacks upon him who was, without question, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles during his life and the de facto President of the Church of Christ after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus into Heaven. That Peter was mortal and had failings can be freely admitted, but like most detractors, the shrill protesters have ended up saying more about themselves than they have the object of their assault. That Peter had moments of weakness is a given, but those things for the which he has been most generally derided, he was not guilty of. Those who have berated this man will one day hang their heads in shame and beg for their forgiveness for their arrogance and stupidity. Simon was a fisherman by trade who forsook all in order to join Jesus in the salvation of mankind. Jesus gave him the sobriquet, “Peter”, because of his primary role as the “Prophet, Seer, and Revelator” to the world once Jesus had departed mortal life. Tradition has it that Peter was crucified head-downward because he did not feel worthy to suffer on the cross in exactly the same fashion as did his Master. We cannot begin to imagine the nature of his lingering death.

1.13.19—James—In the same fashion that Simon and Andrew were brothers, James and John were sons of the same man, Zebedee the fisherman. “James” is a transliterated form of the Hebrew name “Jacob” by way of Greek. With his brother John, he served as a companion and counselor to Simon Peter in the presidency of the Church of Christ in the Meridian of Time. He was of a volatile personality in his youth, particularly when those who he loved were threatened or insulted. For that reason he was given the sobriquet, “Boanerges”, in that he was one of the “Sons of Thunder”. Some have suggested that he was the author of the Epistle of James, but the evidence is not certain. Because of some confusion with at least two other Apostles named James, we are not exactly certain the nature of his martyrdom.

1.13.21—John—Frequently referred to as the “Beloved”. He is the author of the Gospel of John, the three small Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation, all in the New Testament. There are other manuscripts which have been prophetically alluded to but have not, as yet, seen the light of day. The desire of his heart was to remain upon the earth as the Savior’s emissary until Jesus returned in glory. Jesus granted his wish and thus became the faithful guardian ordained to stand as a witness of the apostasy and darkness that descended upon the world. He, with Peter and James, would be instrumental in the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood in this last dispensation, by which the Church and Kingdom of God was once more established.
upon the earth. The account of his labors during the intervening millennia will make fascinating reading for the faithful.

1.13.23—Andrew—A son of Jonas and a fisherman like his brother Simon. We are not told which of the two was the eldest, but he is one with a host of other men who have faithfully served God with family members without guile or envy. Tradition has it that he was crucified on an “X” rather than be put to death in the same fashion as Peter and Jesus. As prosaic as the legend might be, it gives rise to St. Andrew’s Cross, the heraldic symbol of Scotland and a prominent feature in the Union Jack of Great Britain.

1.13.24—Philip—There is scriptural evidence that suggests that Philip had been friends with the sons of Jonas and the sons of Zebedee before the Apostleship devolved upon them. Some historians have gone so far as to suggest a kinship between the three families. Because his name is Greek, scholars have suggested that he may have come from a mixed heritage, a Greek father and a Jewish mother, but the evidence is quite thin.

1.13.26—Thomas—Next to Simon Peter, Thomas is the most unjustly maligned member of the Quorum of the Twelve chosen during the Savior’s ministry. A close reading of the context in which might be found evidence for Thomas’ hesitancy in one matter or another will reveal that his faith, trust, and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ was no different than that of his faithful colleagues. Some traditions stifle the truth and berate the character of good and wholesome men. Thomas is also called “Didymus”, a Greek word meaning “Twin”, though we do not know whose twin he was.

1.13.27—Bartholomeus—Literally, "Bar Tholmai", meaning the "son of Tholmai", a common form of patronymics among the Jews. It is also seen in “Simon Barjonas”, the Hebrew name for Peter. Most scholars have concluded that Bartholomew is the same person as “Nathanael”. He was a close friend and colleague of Philip, through whom he came to Christ.

1.13.29—Matthew—Elsewhere Matthew is called Levi. He was, until the time of his call into the ministry, a collector of revenue for the Roman government. He is called the “son of Alphaeus”, giving rise to the probable notion that he and James the Less were also literal brethren serving together in the Kingdom.

1.13.30—James—Often referred to as the “Less” to distinguish him from the brother of John the Beloved. Notwithstanding the distinction, he continues to be confused with the son of Zebedee and the half-brother of Jesus, both of whom were also at some point members of the presiding Quorum of the Church of Jesus Christ. He is called the “son of Alphaeus”, though we do not know for a certainty that the father of James was the same person who was the father of Matthew. Traditional scholarship has sometimes identified James the Less with Cleophas, one of the two disciples who met with the resurrected Jesus on the road to Emmaus. The evidence is spectacularly absent for this conjecture.

1.13.34—Alphaeus—The father of James the Less, and possibly that of Matthew as well. Other well-meaning scholars have attempted to identify a third member of the Quorum of the Twelve, Simon Zealotes, as a son of Alphaeus. This assertion is not presently supportable.

1.13.36—Simon—Some scholars claim that he, like James and Matthew, was a son of Alphaeus. That assertion is highly unlikely.

1.13.37—Zealotes—The Greek root from which the title comes, literally
means “zeal” and is the source for the English word. The title has to do with Simon’s association with the members of a radical patriotic group in Israel that were sometimes called “Canaanites”. Elsewhere Simon is called the Canaanite. This is not a reference to his ethnicity, as some have supposed, but rather to his political affiliation. Other scholars have proposed that the zealously of Simon may have been due to his fervency in preaching the Gospel. It is unlikely that the Twelve would have knowingly made those kinds of distinctions among themselves and before the world.

1.13.39—Judas—In the Gospels Judas "not Iscariot" is identified by alternate given names: Lebbaeus (Matthew), an Arabic name; and Thaddeus (Matthew & Mark), a Hebrew name. Elsewhere Judas is called Jude, the probable author of the Epistle of Jude.

1.13.41—brother—The text in Greek allows that Judas was either the “son of James” or the “brother of James”. Why translators have chosen one over the other is known only to themselves. The real issue is, who is this James that Judas is the son or brother of? Is James the son of Zebedee old enough to have a thirty-year-old son? Is James Alphaeus? We have no way of knowing. If one were guess as to which of the two could be the father of Judas, first impression would be James the brother of John and the son of Zebedee, only because in this dispensation, when the original Quorum of the Twelve was organized, the Apostles obtained their seniority by virtue of their chronological age. If we should read "brother of" rather than "son of", there would be no significant difference between the two potential relatives insofar as their ages were concerned. Logic would then dictate that Judas would be the brother of James Alphaeus only because he was not also coupled with John the Beloved.

1.14 The unity of the early saints is demonstrated in their "prayer and supplication". The first had to do with their frequent gathering together to be edified and blessed by the leadership of the Church. The second had to do with their willingness to live by the covenants which they had made with their God and with each other.

1.14.5–6—one accord—The Apostles and others who dwelt with them at this time were of one heart and one mind. Their attempts to establish Zion began modestly but effectively (see 4.32–35).

1.14.8—prayer—The Greek word which is here translated as "prayer" derives from roots which mean "worship; place of worship, chapel".

1.14.10—supplication—The Greek word which is here translated as "supplication" derives from roots which mean "bind, knit, tie; beg, petition".

1.14.13—women—We are not told precisely who they are, but it may be assumed that they were those who had served the Lord Jesus Christ in his ministry. Perhaps we might name Mary Magdalene; Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus; and others who had imparted of their time and means to facilitate the preaching of the Gospel throughout Palestine.

1.14.15—Mary—This is the last mention of the mother of Jesus in the narrative of the New Testament. We may rest assured, however, that she was well guarded and preserved by the surrogate son who was appointed by Jesus, even John the Beloved (see JN-C 19.26–27).

1.14.23—brethren—That is, the half-brothers of Jesus of Nazareth, among who were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. James would one day serve as an Apostle.
1.15 Under the direction of the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the leadership of the Church gathered in council to conduct vital business matters, among which was the selection of another disciple to serve as an especial witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.15.3–4 *those days*—That is, during the ten days between the ascension of Jesus and the day of Pentecost.

1.15.5—*Peter*—Notwithstanding sectarian posturing to the contrary, Simon Peter was the presiding officer of the Church of Christ in his day.

1.15.19—*names*—The Greek word which is here translated as "names" derives from roots which mean "authority, character". These were the ordained officers of the Church, the General Authorities we would say today.

1.15.24–26—*hundred and twenty*—Eminent scholars have suggested that the Apostles followed Jewish custom in forming their first council, one hundred twenty men gathered forming a deliberative body. The Apostles may have done so in order to conform to the mores of the day, utilizing principles with which they were most familiar. Certainly the Apostles were in attendance as were, undoubtedly, the Seventy. Whatever other officers were assembled we are not told, but we can rest assured that the one hundred twenty men did not constitute the entire membership of the Church at the time.

1.16 Peter is presenting to the leadership of the Church the immediate problem associated with the fall of Judas Iscariot. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was incomplete. Peter will quote from two passages in the Psalms of David to help his brethren realize that the necessity for replacements in the quorums of the Church had been anticipated. In particular, the loss of Judas Iscariot to apostasy could now easily be discerned in the writings of the ancients; the remediation for such a loss was also included in those writings. Peter's deference to the prophets, seers, and revelators of Israel was divinely inspired. Where there were scriptural instructions given to the servants of God in the past, those instructions ought to be consulted before decisions were made. In this case, Peter and the other Apostles saw in the Psalms of David precisely what they should do.

1.16.13–14 —*Holy Ghost*—Those who assert that the blessings and direct influence of the Holy Ghost did not exist upon the earth until after the ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven have their work cut out for them in order to explain what Peter is talking about here. From the days of Adam and Eve, all of the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ have been available to all those who were willing and prepared to receive them.

1.16.19—*David*—The second King of Israel. A man of heroic proportions whose insights into the mind and heart of God were only exceeded by the tragedies which he allowed to overwhelm him.

1.16.23—*Judas*—Judas Iscariot, a once faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ who received his foreordination as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ before the earth was framed. His story, like that of David, is one of profound tragedy.

1.17 When Judas Iscariot was called by the Lord Jesus Christ to serve as part of the Quorum of the Twelve, he was worthy of that office. He was not chosen so that he could betray the Savior and by so doing destroy his own soul. There are those theologians who would have us believe that the actions of men are immutably forecast. This is not the case. Judas allowed sin to

15. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty.)

16 Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.
enter into his life through temptations that he chose not to resist. Thus, in
the process of a short period of time, he blinded himself such that he was
easily led along by the Adversary of all men to his own spiritual and physical
destruction.

1.18 The money that Judas received from the chief priests to betray the
Lord, the thirty pieces of silver, had been returned by him to the Temple
mount and cast down in the midst of the nefarious elders of the Jews. It was
those same leaders who took that money and bought the potter’s field as a
place to bury those who could not be buried in Jewish cemeteries, including
suicides, it is assumed (see MT-C 27.3–8). With regard to the manner of
Judas’ death, Matthew’s account testifies that Judas took his own life by
hanging himself. The inspired version of that account testifies that he did so
from a tree (a mockery of the crucifixion, no doubt). His death was compli-
cated by either the rope or the tree itself failing to hold his weight, precipi-
tating his fall to the earth. Only the morbidly curious need to contemplate
the details of Judas’ demise. We need say no more of Judas other than what
Mormon testified of Korihor, that Satan did not support him in the end, but
speedily dragged him down to hell.

1.18.1—Now—Many scholars have concluded that this verse and that
which follows constitute one of Luke’s editorial asides rather than a
portion of Peter’s address to his brethren. While intuitively appealing,
we frankly do not know if this is true.

1.19 Any attempts on the part of the chief priests and Pharisees to disasso-
ciate themselves from the manner in which Jesus was taken into custody and
later turned over to the Romans for execution have clearly failed.

1.19.2—it—That is, the fact that the money that had been used to buy
the field had first been employed as a bribe for the life of Jesus Christ.
For that reason it was considered “blood money” and the field was so
identified with the betrayal of Jesus.

1.19.10—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the lin-
guistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name
literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or
“established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of
Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed
enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city,
“established in peace” is by definition, the City of the Great King.

1.19.20—Aceldama—The Greek word which is rendered here as “Aceldama”
derives from Hebrew roots which mean “smoothness, flattery, inheri-
tance, apportion, separate, give, distribute; blood, death, blood-
shed, struck dumb, astonish, stop, perish”. Some have suggested that
the tree where Judas hung himself grew on the very field that was later
purchased by the thirty pieces of silver, but there is no scriptural
warrant for that conclusion.

1.20 The scripture quoted here by Peter is actually a juxtaposition of
two short excerpts from different Psalms, the contexts of which have to do with
the enemies of David. The references are clearly Messianic as well as reflect-
ive of David’s circumstances. Psalms 69 is quoted at least twice by John the
Beloved in reference to the Savior (see JN-C 2.17, JN-C 15.29). Much of the
Psalms can be applied directly to Judas Iscariot notwithstanding the fact that
the text refers to the enemies of David and the Messiah in the plural.

Let their table become a snare before them: and that which should

18 Now this man purchased a
field with the reward of iniquity;
and falling headlong, he burst
asunder in the midst, and all his
bowels gushed out.

18 Acts 1:18
DN TC I 798
JC 226

19 And it was known unto all the
dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as
that field is called in their proper
tongue, Aceldama, that is to say,
The field of blood.

19 Acts 1:19
JC 643
Acts 1:20
JC 701
MD 89
MF 127

20 For it is written in the book of
Psalms, Let his habitation be deso-
late, and let no man dwell therein;
and his bishoprick let another take.

20 Acts 1:20 (RSV)
JC 701
Acts 1:20–26
MD 459
have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be
darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.
Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger
take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell
in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; and
they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. (Psalm
69:22–26)

The second excerpt is taken from Psalm 109. The following is taken from a
superior translation.

For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are
opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue.
They compassed me about; they spake against me also, with words of
hatred; and fought against me without a cause. And, notwithstanding
my love, they are my adversaries; yet I will continue in prayer for
them. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my
love. Set thou a wicked man over them; and let Satan stand at his
right hand. When they shall be judged, let them be condemned; and
let their prayer become sin. Let their days be few; let another take
their office. Let their children be fatherless; and their wives widows.
Let their children be continually vagabonds, and beg; let them seek
also out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch all that they
have; and let the stranger spoil their labor (/ST, Psalm 109:2–11).

We need not demonstrate precisely how every aspect of this quotation
applies to Judas Iscariot; a little imagination will more than suffice. The
instruction insofar as the Apostles are concerned, was that a man should be
selected to replace Judas Iscariot in the presiding council of the Church

1.20.23—bishoprick—The Greek word which is here translated as
“bishoprick” derives from roots which mean “inspection, supervision,
select, oversee”. The Hebrew word which is translated as “office” in
the Psalms derives from roots which mean “visitation, oversee, muster,
charge, care for, deposit”.

1.21 This is a nomination process only in the sense that the Apostles are
attempting to discern which of those in their company actually qualify as
those who had been eyewitneses of the life and teachings of the Savior. No
doubt they had already formulated their own lists, but they wished to
consider in their deliberations any who may have been inadvertently left out.
Among the one hundred and twenty who had assembled in the council were
many who had been associated with Jesus and the Apostles since the time of
John the Baptist.

1.21.3–4—these men—That is to say, among those who were gathered in
the council.

1.22 How great was Jesus’ entourage as he went from place to place during
his three year public ministry? There were the Twelve Apostles and several
women who traveled with him. The Seventy were frequently in his company.
But the Brethren were looking for a man who could unflinchingly declare
that he knew that Jesus was the Christ because of his own personal experi-
ences with the Savior. He should have stood on the shores of the River
Jordan and been present in the hamlets and cities of Galilee when the Lord
was there. The Lord’s ministry among the people of Samaria, Decapolis,
Perea, and Judea must needs be a part of his life’s experience as well. The

21 Wherefore of these men which
have companied with us all the
time that the Lord Jesus went in
and out among us,

Acts 1:21
EM 1 60
Acts 1:21–22
EM 3 1013
Acts 1:21–26
AF 195
AGQ 3 110
EM 1 60

22 Beginning from the baptism of
John, unto that same day that he
was taken up from us, must one be
ordained to be a witness with us of
his resurrection.

Acts 1:22
AF 394
JC 217
Acts 1:22–26
EM 2 884
events surrounding Jesus’ betrayal, arrest, crucifixion and resurrection should be vivid in the man’s memory, having been an eyewitness to all that had been said and done. The qualifications to be an Apostle have always, in every dispensation, been precisely the same. In our day, a man selected to serve in that august quorum must be one who knows his Lord as did Peter, James, and John did in their day. Let no one doubt that these men who presently serve in that capacity are eminently qualified.

1.22.6—John—The son of Zachariah who became the presiding high priest of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthhoods of his day. He was called upon to baptize the Lord Jesus Christ in the Meridian of Time; hence his sobriquet. John held the keys of the priesthood until he restored them to the prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 15 May 1829.

1.23 It is intriguing that neither Barsabas nor Matthias are mentioned by the Gospel writers in their accounts of the Savior’s life, even though it is clear that at least Matthew and John the Beloved would have known them personally. Even Luke, is reticent to refer to Matthias before the time he is called into the ministry. That Matthias and Barsabas had been active in Church affairs from the beginning is certain, yet they remained nameless until this moment in the record.

1.23.5—Joseph—Some ancient manuscripts and scholars have equated this man with the man who was the traveling companion of the Apostle Paul during the First Missionary Journey. It is unlikely that this is the case. Because name confusion was possible, however, and because Luke perhaps knew both, he included the distinguishing Latin/Greek surname, Justus. He may have had a brother, Judas (see 15:22).

1.23.7—Barsabas—Not to be confused with “Barabbas” (the patronymic of the man released by Pontius Pilate during Passover instead of Jesus Christ) or “Barnabas” (the patronymic of Paul’s missionary companion during the First Missionary Journey). “Barsabas” means “Son of the Sabbath”.

1.23.11—Justus—The Greek form of a Latin name meaning precisely what one would expect it to mean.

1.23.13—Matthias—The scriptural record is as silent about Matthias after his ordination as it is regarding his ministry before the calling was extended to him. Tradition, however, is filled with wonderful anecdotes and other accounts of his labors in Ethiopia where he purportedly suffered martyrdom.

1.24 In the end, after doing all that they could do, the Apostles knelt with the other disciples and petitioned the Lord God of Israel to reveal unto them the man that He had chosen to replace the fallen Judas. The Church and Kingdom of God is an institution of continuous revelation. Without that revelation, the Church withers and dies. All revelation requires the engagement of both heart and mind. One seeking the word of the Lord in any given matter must work it out in his mind the best that he can, and having come to the best conclusion achievable by his own lights, must then ask God for further guidance. This is the pattern established and practiced since the days of Adam and Eve. A man must be called of God, by prophecy, and have hands laid upon his head that he might receive the powers and keys of his stewardship. Peter and the other Apostles had exhausted all of their resources in determining who should be ordained. Now the Lord would inspire them appropriately as to what they should do.

1.24.11—hearts—The choice of Matthias over Barsabas was not an
indictment of the latter. Men are called into the ministry at certain
times to be a benefit to those around them. The Lord fully compre-
hended the needs of the membership of the Church with whom the
new Apostle would be working. The same might be said of the
particular field of labor to which Matthias might be sent to preach the
Gospel of Christ as an Apostle. Any disappointment that Barsabas
may have felt at not being selected would have been swept away as he
was given other assignments wherein he would achieve great success
and satisfaction.

1.25 All of the blessings, keys, powers, responsibilities, and gifts that were to
have been Judas Iscariot’s lot in time and in eternity were transferred to
Matthias, as if this man had been selected in the first place. Jesus had prom-
ised the Twelve that they would have the responsibility to judge the House
of Israel. Judas Iscariot had been among their number at the time that
prophecy was made. Judas had forfeited any role that he might have had in
the redemption and deliverance of the covenant people through his perfidy
and descent into hell. Matthias now took up the reins of that task, and all
others that might have fallen to Judas.

1.25.13—Judas—Judas Iscariot, a once faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus
Christ who received his foreordination as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus
Christ before the earth was framed. His story, like that of David, is
one of profound tragedy.

1.25.23–24—his own place—There exists an astonishing number of
tories as to what this phrase means and to which of the men, Judas
or Matthias, it applies. Speculation aside, it seems reasonable to
assume that Peter is following the stream of thought generated by the
very scriptures he had been citing (see 1.20). If so, then the phrase
without question, applies to Judas.

1.26 The mind and will of the Lord is revealed through His Prophet, His
mouthpiece upon the earth. Such a servant may speak with authority,
though the entire world may oppose. Unanimity among the twelve men who
constitute the Quorum of the Apostles has the same authority as the Prophet
and is just as binding upon the Church and Kingdom of God. The Lord has
revealed that the decisions of the Quorum of the Seventy, if the members are
completely unified, are equal in authority to that of the Prophet and of the
Twelve. If the proposal for the new Apostles had been put to the vote of the
Apostles and the Seventy, all eighty-one men voting identically, the appoint-
ment of Matthias would have been compelling indeed.

1.26.6—lots—The Greek word which is translated as “lots” derives from
roots which mean to “break bread; portion, bit, portioning, sharing,
die (small piece of wood), acquisition, patrimony, inheritance”. Given
forth their “lots” would mean, certainly, their vote, their portion of
the whole. It would seem reasonable that if the vote were unanimous,
that would constitute the mind and will of the Lord.

1.26.9—lot—This word in Greek is derived from precisely the same roots
as that in 1.26.6 and implies that the vote bestowed upon Matthias
the “inheritance” which had once belonged to Judas Iscariot.

1.26.12—Matthias—The scriptural record is as silent about Matthias
after his ordination as it is regarding his ministry before the calling
was extended to him. Tradition, however, is filled with wonderful
anecdotes and other accounts of his labors in Ethiopia where he
purportedly suffered martyrdom.

25 That he may take part of this
ministry and apostleship, from
which Judas by transgression fell,
that he might go to his own place.

26 And they gave forth their lots;
and the lot fell upon Matthias; and
he was numbered with the eleven
apostles.
2.1 Pentecost was a celebration required by the Law of Moses.

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days; and ye shall offer a new meat offering unto the LORD. (Leviticus 23:15–16)

This festival has borne several names over the centuries including the “Feast of Weeks”, “Feast of the Harvest”, and “Feast of the Firstfruits”. It was, however, instituted in conjunction with the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. Its connection with the Passover, then, is readily seen. As a result of the last of the plagues in Egypt, the Israelites were allowed to depart from the land into the wilderness. According to tradition, fifty days later, the House of Israel was encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai where they were given that Law which would define them as a people. In Christian terms, the Day of Pentecost serves as an outpouring of the new “Law”, that of the Spirit, fifty days after the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.1.6—**Pentecost**—The Greek word “Pentecost” is comprised of two parts. The first five letters is indicative of the number “five”; the second part of the word is indicative of the decimal marker. Therefore, “Pentecost” is literally translated as “Fifty” in reference to the fiftieth day after the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. The reader ought to be aware that “fifty” is the product of “seven sevens plus one”.

2.1.10—**they**—One may quibble about who is being spoken of here, but in lieu of another antecedent, it seems most likely that Luke is referring to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles which had just been reconstituted at the end of the last chapter. Other scholars have suggested that “they” refers to the 120 disciples which had been assembled to decide the question of succession. Yet it is clear that the Twelve are the major characters in that which follows as the Church begins its ministry among the devout Jews who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover and other celebrations.

2.1.14–15—**one accord**—An aspect of the establishment of Zion. The Apostles are in the bonds of fellowship and brotherhood, knit together in mind and heart. It is that unity which makes possible the great outpouring of the Spirit.

2.1.17–18—**one place**—Although we may not be able to speak with complete certainty, we probably ought to conclude that the experience of Apostles with the baptism of the Holy Ghost took place somewhere on the Temple Mount. The episode is far too public for it to have taken place in the upper room where they had been assembled to select the replacement for Judas Iscariot. Peter’s discourse clearly indicates that he is addressing those who did not pertain to the Church as yet. The fact that the Apostles were speaking in tongues indicates that the Twelve were teaching the principles of salvation to various bodies of men who had come from many different lands for the Passover and for Pentecost.

2.2 When the Temple of Solomon was completed, the Ark of the Covenant was taken into the Holy of Holies. The glory of the Lord filled the edifice, fire coming down from Heaven and consuming the sacrifices upon the altar of the Temple. The “glory”, “dwelling”, or “shechinah” was present at that

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**Chapter 2**

1. And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

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time. After the Temple was completely destroyed by the Babylonians in 589 BC, it was subsequently rebuilt in the days of the prince of Israel, Zerubbabel, as the Jews were returning from their seventy year captivity. This second Temple differed from the first in at least two details: first, the Ark of the Covenant was missing, undoubtedly hidden by the faithful sometime before the destruction of Jerusalem; and second, there was no accompanying “shechinah”. The same may be said of the remodeling of the Temple attempted by Herod the Great and his family. Is it not interesting that the “shechinah” on the Day of Pentecost “dwelt” upon the heads of the Apostles as they stood in the Temple? Were they not representative of the “New Covenant” with Israel? Were they not, each one, Temples of the Most High filled with the glory of God?

2.3 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it rested upon each of them. (JST, Acts 2:3)

“For our God is a consuming fire,” declared the Apostle Paul. The nearer one draws to the mind and will of God, the more compelling that statement becomes.

2.3.6—*cloven*—The Greek word which is here translated as “cloven” derives from roots which mean “partition thoroughly; channel; apportion, bestow, share, section, allotment, share, partake, participate”. In figurative meanings the word can also mean “disunite, differ”. Given the context, the latter usage seems unlikely.

2.3.7—*tongues*—The Greek word which is here translated as “tongues” derives from roots which refer directly to that most obvious organ of language articulation. Scholars have argued incessantly as to whether the “tongues” of fire symbolized the various “languages” which the Apostles were speaking or whether the “tongues” of fire should be understood as a metaphor describing the shape of the “shechinah” which sat upon each of the Apostles.

2.3.11—*fire*—The Greek word which is here translated as “fire” derives from a primitive roots which literally means “lightning”. There are many accounts of the children of men observing the power of God resting down upon the servants of God. Pillars of fire and light are frequently mentioned.

2.4 The gifts of the Spirit are varied and are adaptable to circumstances as the needs of the disciple become clear. The Twelve Apostles were tasked with the responsibility to teach the nations the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. While the disciples were not illiterate, they were somewhat parochial in terms of the languages which they could speak. Some individuals might have been able to read and write in Greek or Latin, as their professions might have demanded of them, but most were undoubtedly limited linguistically. The primary function of the gift of tongues is to give the minister of Christ the ability to teach the principles of salvation to people whose language the minister does not know. Its purpose is to clarify, not to obscure. Those who assert that the gift of tongues is given as an outward sign of holiness have a myopic view of the Gospel of Christ.

2.5 The great desire of scattered Israel was to one day return to worship at the great Temple in Jerusalem, which was for many, the heart of Jewry. Tens of thousands of Israelites came to Palestine every year to partake of the spirit

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. (JST, Acts 2:3)

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (AF 42, 159, 224, JC 403, EM 2 557, Acts 2:4–8, AF 233)

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. (AF 2:5, AGQ 2 55, MM 1 167)
of that holy place. Frequently, that singular journey would be a once in a lifetime experience. The scattering had taken the Jews and members of other Israelite tribes to permanent homes throughout Africa, Asia, and Europe. Of necessity, many of these had learned natively the language of their residence. Hebrew would have been book-learned; Aramaic would have been family-based at best. Had the Apostles spoken Aramaic, many would have understood what they were saying, but not as readily as speaking the language of the country or province where they had been born and raised. That these Galileans could do so was a wonderful surprise.

2.5.6—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

2.5.7—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

2.5.8—devout men—That is, men who were devout in the adherence and observance of the Law of Moses. They were dwelling in Jerusalem for a time in order to celebrate the Passover and the Feast of Weeks.

2.5.12–13—every nation—An excusable hyperbole. Certainly the experiences of the Day of Pentecost would prepare a cadre of men and women who, when they returned to the lands of their residence, would be instrumental in facilitating the preaching of the Gospel to both Jew and Gentile as the ministries of the Apostles and their associates continued to flow into the nations of the known world.

2.6 The pillars and tongues of fire which had filled and surrounded the Apostles were extraordinary to behold and the news of this manifestation spread quickly so that hundreds, perhaps thousands of these visitors to Jerusalem gathered to the place where the Twelve stood. What wonder would have come into the hearts of those present! As they heard the messages of salvation, would not the honest in heart have been touched by the power of the Holy Ghost? Would they not have been unified as they came to an understanding of the truth?

2.6.13—confounded—The Greek word which is here translated as “confounded” derives from combinations which seem to mean “pour, commingle, throw into disorder, perplex, uproar, stir up”. The literal meanings of the roots, however, signify “union, with, together, completeness, convene closely, pour”. Rather than being “confounded” Luke may have intended that we understand that the people were brought into “unity” because they heard the same message each in their own native tongue.

2.7 For some reason, the multitude who heard the Apostles addressing them in the native tongues of their homelands knew that the disciples were from Galilee. The multitude is astonished at the linguistic abilities of men who hailed from what would have been considered a relatively backward part of the country, linguistically speaking.

2.7.5—amazed—The Greek word which is here translated as “amazed” derives from roots which mean to “be startled, beside oneself, astonish”. The English word “amazed” derives from Old English roots
which mean to “confuse or bewilder”.

2.7.1—marvelled—The Greek word translated here as “marvelled” derives from roots which mean to “wonder, admire”

2.7.19—Galileans—The hanging question here is how did the visitors to Jerusalem know that the Apostles were Galileans? The men in the palace of Caiaphas recognized Peter’s accent as being from that northern province, but Simon was speaking Aramaic. The Apostles are all now addressing the multitude in various languages. Was the Galilean accent so broad that the men were able to discern it through the pronunciation of the various tongues which the disciples were speaking? Unlikely. It is far more reasonable to assume that the people knew precisely who Peter and the others were. Many of the multitude had been in Jerusalem for the better part of two months. Many may very well have heard Jesus teach and recognized the Apostles for what they were. Additionally, the Apostles had not been idle, but had been actively engaged in their labors before the Day of Pentecost.

2.8 Some scholars have tried to argue that the audience was blessed with the gift of interpretation of tongues, each man “hearing” the message of the various Apostles as if the disciples had been speaking in the language of each country. Thus, these academests propose, the accent of the Galileans would have been more pronounced. As winsome a theory as this might seem, we are left with the fact that it was the Apostles who were receiving the special outpouring of the Spirit, the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, the tongues and pillars of flame that appeared over and around them. The Gift that would have most pronounced under these circumstances is the one which Luke specifically assigns to the Apostles, speaking in the native languages of the various celebrants in Jerusalem.

2.9 The scattering of the Jews throughout the known world by the time of Peter and the Apostles had been enormous. The Assyrian and Babylonian Captivities had carried members of the House of Israel into many lands and in contact with many languages and cultures. Jews by birth and converts to Judaism from these various lands were part of the multitude which gathered to observe the marvelous manifestation of the Holy Ghost. The accuracy of the disciples in conducting their preaching in the precise dialects extant in their home towns astonished the gathering, as it ought to astonish us.

2.9.1—Parthians—At its greatest extent, the Parthian empire rivaled that of Rome. In the time of Jesus, the Parthians ruled from the Tigris River eastward to the subcontinent of India. The empire asserted itself against the Seleucids during the third century BC, overthrowing that division of the empire of Alexander the Great. Jews in that area may have been remnants of those taken into captivity by the Babylonians in and around 589 BC. The native language of Parthia was Old Persian, now generally categorized with the West Iranian languages.

2.9.3—Medes—Technically, the Median Empire flourished between the seventh and fifth centuries BC, but has variously been conquered and reconquered by many cultures and empires. Many captives from the northern Kingdom of Israel were carried by the Assyrians into Media and settled there during the Assyrian captivity of 721 BC. It is traditionally located south of the Caspian Sea and northeast of the Zagros Mountains. When the boundaries were clear, Parthia lay in the east, Assyria on the south, and Mesopotamia on the west. The language of ancient Media was closely related to Old Persian, if not identical.

2.9.5—Elamites—Tradition holds that the land of Elam was named after

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 

Acts 2:9–18
AF 233
one of the descendants of Shem. It lies on the south side of the Zagros Mountains, east of the Tigris River and north of the Persian Gulf. The Elamite dynasties antedate that of the Medes and the Parthians. The Elamic languages are not related to the Indo-European or Semitic language families. Historical linguists have suggested that Elam is more closely related to the Dravidian languages of India. The Elam language died out in the third century BC, and if so, we may only speculate what the nature of the language was at the time of Christ.

2.9.10—Mesopotamia—The Greek word “Mesopotamia” means the “land between the rivers” in reference to the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. The classic written language at the time of Christ would have been Sumerian; the spoken language would have been something akin to Akkadian, a member of the East Semitic language family, and is usually referred to as Late Babylonian.

2.9.13—Judaea—Many of the inhabitants of Judaea would have been fluent in several languages, but the native language speaker probably would have been most comfortable with Western Aramaic, a late dialect of ancient Hebrew. Perhaps, the significant thing here would be that whoever was speaking to this group of people no longer exhibited the northern “twang” that was so distinguishable in Peter’s speech patterns as a Galilean.

2.9.15—Cappadocia—Cappadocia was a province east of Asia minor and at one time a part of the Hittite Empire. It was located in the highlands of what is now central Turkey between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The name of this province means “land of beautiful horses” in ancient Hittite. The spoken language of Cappadocia in the time of the Savior, however, would have been a dialect of ancient Hittite, belonging to the extinct Anatolian language family. Many historical linguists have concluded that whatever language spoken in Cappadocia before the time of Christ would have been heavily influenced by the language of Alexander the Great. Cappadocian Greek, however, must be understood as a dialect that developed in the region long after the time of Jesus and the Apostles.

2.9.17—Pontus—A province located on the southeast shore of the Black Sea. Pontic Greek is a modern development from Koine and Ionic Greek and is still spoken today in parts of Turkey. The ancient language which would have been spoken in Pontus at the time of Christ would have been a heavily Hellenized dialect of Persian.

2.9.19—Asia—Undoubtedly, the Roman province of Asia Minor is meant here. It is located on the western end of the peninsula between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Its capitol was at Ephesus. The original languages of this region were all Anatolian, primarily some dialect of Hittite. Needless to say, the effect of Ancient Greek on these dialects would have been enormous.

2.10 What is intriguing with all that is transpiring here on the Day of Pentecost is that often the differences in language were dialectical or merely phonetic, accents, drawls, and the like. The astonishing thing about all of this is that the Apostles appeared to be linguistically perfect in every detail as they addressed any particular group.

2.10.1—Phrygia—A geographical area located in modern day Turkey whose boundaries have been held in dispute by historians. The most famous names that have survived the culture are King Midas and Cybele, the mother goddess of the Phrygians. Cultural anthropologists have suggested that the Phrygians originally came from an area

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,
we now know as Bulgaria. Their language was Indo-European, a member of the Thraco-Phrygian family which apparently died out in the sixth or seventh century BC. The Phrygians were overrun by the Cimmerians, the Lydians, Hittites, Persians, Greeks and Romans, creating the atmosphere for a polyglot melding of linguistic influences by the time of Jesus Christ and his Apostles.

2.10.3—Pamphylia—A region located on the north shores of the Mediterranean Sea, northwest of Cyprus, with Lycia on the west and Cilicia of the east. The language of Pamphylia was apparently closely related to Greek, although not much survives. As was the case with most of the Roman provinces in the days of Jesus and the Apostles, the history of Pamphylia is marked by continual warfare which brought linguistic influences of all kinds into the region. As an indicator of the variety of those influences, “Pamphylia” is supposed to mean “all tribes”.

2.10.5—Egypt—An empire established on the banks and in the delta of the Nile River. The Egyptian language falls within the Afro-Asiatic linguistic family as do the Semitic languages. At the time of the Apostles the spoken and written languages were called Demotic, no doubt somewhat influenced by both Greek and Latin.

2.10.11—Libya—Greek and Roman writers frequently applied the name “Libya” to all of the African continent except for Egypt. The earliest inhabitants of the region were probably the Berbers whose language and dialects are related to Egyptian and the Semitic languages. The northern coast of Libya were either settled or conquered by a series of foreign powers: Phoenicia, Carthage, Greece, Rome, among others. The tribal nature of the Berbers suggests that any living among them would be subject to a great deal of variance in vocabulary and phonetics.

2.10.13—Cyrene—The city of Cyrene located on a peninsula of the African continent to the west of Egypt was founded by Greek immigrants from the Aegean Islands six centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ. Major linguistic influences by the time of the Apostles would have been Latin and Egyptian.

2.10.15—strangers of Rome—That is to say, gentiles as well as Jews who had traveled from the capital city of the Roman Empire.

2.10.17—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob.

2.10.10—proselytes—The Greek word which is here translated as “proselytes” derives from roots which mean “approach, come near, visit, worship, assent to; arrive, accede, convert”. The English word “proselytes” is a transliterated borrowing from this same Greek word. These are, then, people who through the ministrations of the Jews, or perhaps through marriage, had accepted Judaism as their religious faith, including the observance of the Law given to Moses.

2.11 Some scholars have elaborated on the manner in which the names of the various groups were listed by Luke in his narrative. Most of these discourses are seriously flawed in their logic and presentation of evidence. What is of greatest import here is that the power of the Holy Ghost was upon the Twelve as they taught clearly the principles of eternal life. They are profoundly affected by the teachings.

2.11.1—Cretes—Residents of the island of Crete, which isle lay to the south and east of the peninsula of Greece. The language of the island has primarily been a dialect of Greek.

11 Cretes and Arabian, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.
2.11.3—Arabians—Arabia lies to the south of Judea, a long barren peninsula bordered on the east by the Persian Gulf and on the west by the Red Sea. The West Semitic language of the Arabians was a branch of the Afro-Asiatic family of languages. It is now divided into the North Arabic and South Arabic. Needless to say, there are, and were, a great variety of dialects in Arabic.

2.11.13–14—wonderful works—The Greek word which is here translated as “wonderful works” derives from roots which mean “magnificent, conspicuous favor, perfection”.

2.12 The multitude who had witnessed the tongues and pillars of fire around and about the Apostles were in a quandary. Clearly the manifestations which had appeared before their eyes and had fallen upon their ears were of the God of Heaven. What should they do next? Peter was prepared to address the question.

2.12.5—amazed—The Greek word which is here translated as “amazed” derives from roots which mean to “be startled, beside oneself, astonish”. The English word “amazed” derives from Old English roots which mean to “confuse or bewilder”.

2.12.9—doubt—The Greek word which is here translated as “doubt” derives from roots which mean “be thoroughly nonplussed, much perplexed”.

2.13 Who in the audience could have doubted? Not many, but there were detractors who spied out all that the disciples did. For the faithless Jews who dwelt in Jerusalem, parochial in their own way, much of what the Apostles had said would have hardly been more than gibberish to them. There would have been portions of their words which would have sounded like Greek, Akkadian, Persian, Egyptian, Latin, and a host of other languages and dialects. Who among them would have recognized them all? The mockers, devoid of the Spirit of God, would have simply accused the Twelve as being drunk.

2.13.9–10—new wine—Scholars have spilled gallons of ink attempting to argue what this “new wine” was. Needless to say, whatever the beverage, the mockers were suggesting that the disciples were inebriated.

2.14 Peter addresses himself to the “men of Judaea” first, undoubtedly the group to which most of the mockers belonged. Those who dwelt “in Jerusalem” may have been the hosts who had come up to the holy city to worship from all lands into which the Jews had been carried or they may have been just the permanent residents. It seems likely that in these verses Peter is addressing those who were having trouble accepting the miraculous aspects of the outpouring of the Spirit of God because they could not comprehend what many of the Twelve were saying in those foreign tongues. Peter will address this narrow group of the multitude until verse 22 when he then speaks to the entire gathering. Understanding that simple division in his discourse at the temple will aid us considerably in understanding that which he is about to reveal to the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Judah. Peter takes the lead in this particular situation because he is the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and the de facto President of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time. The structure and content of his discourse to the multitude will become increasingly familiar as our reading of the book of Acts progresses.

2.14.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:
2.14.19—Judaea—In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the province of Judea stretched from Malathia on the south to the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the River Jordan on the east, comprising approximately 5,000 square miles.

2.14.26—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

2.15 This is the sort of argument which worked well in the culture in which the Apostles labored at the time. In our contemporary, “advanced” society, this sort of appeal would fall on deaf ears, inasmuch as libations may be taken at any and all hours. One may no longer set one’s watch by a man in his cups.

2.15.14–15—third hour—The Jews and other cultures counted the hours of the day beginning at sunrise. Thus, this exchange takes place about nine o’clock in the morning. Tradition holds that the Jews did not take their morning meal until after the hour of prayer. Therefore, the logic follows, the Apostles could not be drunk.

2.16 The pillars and tongues of fire, the outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord, all of these outward manifestations which the multitude had just witnessed were in fulfillment of prophecy. As it will turn out, as is the case with most prophecies, the “wonderful works of God” at any given time are accompanied by devastation and destruction as a result of the rejection of the truth and the messengers of God who were sent to the people to deliver the truth.

2.16.11—Joel—A prophet of ancient Israel whose prophecies, like those of Isaiah, have proven to have many temporal fulfillments. Prophets, Apostles, and angels have cited his writings.

2.17 This citation comes from the concluding verses of the second chapter of Joel. It is useful to quote the first previous to where Peter begins.

And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. 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, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: (Joel 2:27–28)

Joel prophesied of a devastation that would come upon Israel, without question in reference to the Babylonia Captivity and quite possibly regarding the Assyrian Captivity as well. After the desolation there would be a return in

| 15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. |
| 16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; |
| Acts 2:16–17 | AF 234 |
| Acts 2:16–18 | EM 3 1163 |
| Acts 2:16–20 | EM 2 907 |
| Acts 2:17–18 | CR85-O 114 |
| CR90-A 18 |
which great blessings would be poured out upon the House of Israel. While the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy will take place just prior to the Second Coming, Peter perceives a connection with the events of his time as well. The multitude had just witnessed a marvel in the tongues of fire, yet for the preceding three years the inhabitants of Palestine had personal contact with the Lord Jesus Christ during his mortal ministry. Those with eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand knew that the Lord God of Israel had been in their midst. Those who believed would not be ashamed. Neither were the Apostles and the other disciples when they were verbally and physically abused by the Jews and the Romans. Immediately after the ascension of Jesus from the Mount of Olives, the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon the Apostles first, and from thence the Gift of the Holy Ghost and all of the attendant blessings would be taken into all of the world, unto all people, every nation, kindred, and tongue. The very beginning of that fulfillment was taking place that very day. The children of many of those of the multitude would be raised with all of the blessings of the Gospel of Christ, being baptized at age eight and being filled with the Holy Ghost in their youth, young men and women with fervent testimonies of the divinity of the Son of God and of his atoning sacrifice for mankind. Prophets, seers, and revelators would come from all generations, and not just the aged. The spirit of revelation would be upon all those who professed faith in the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2.18 Peter then quotes verse 29 of the same chapter in Joel

And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. (Joel 2:29)

The intent of Joel’s prophecy is that not only would the Spirit of the Lord fall upon the established citizenry of Israel, but that blessing would cut across all social strata as well. With that blessing, Peter suggests in his translation that the servants and handmaidens would belong to the Lord; they would be His. Therefore, within the Church and Kingdom of God, there would be neither rich nor poor, master or slave, male or female, but they would all be one in the bonds of Christ. All men and women, regardless of any class distinction that the world could impose, would be partakers of the heavenly gift, and would bear testimony of the power of God which had descended upon them.

2.19 Those of us in this dispensation should perceive immediately the connection between that which transpired ancienly among the Jews in Jerusalem during the ministry of the Apostles; these things have transpired and are transpiring among the faithful in this dispensation. The following verse cited by Peter demonstrates that both the Prophet and the Apostle knew what was to take place next in the history of the covenant people.

And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. (Joel 2:30)

We may understand that the Lord God of Israel would reveal to those who would abide by the principles of eternal life the meaning of all things that transpired around them, through the power and influence of the Holy Ghost. To the rebellious and dissolute, other revelations would come.

2.19.5—wonders—The Greek word which is here translated as “wonders” derives from roots which mean “prodigy, omen”. These omens would
be manifested in conjunction with the sun, moon, and stars. Some of them would be understood properly, others would be ignored for what they are; for the wicked many would be absolutely terrifying. The faithful would have the Heavens opened to them, by ordinances, teachings, and direct revelation.

2.19.10—*signs*—The Greek word which is translated here as “signs” derives from roots which signify “mark, indication, token, wonder, miracle”. The word “sign” in English derives from Latin roots which mean “mark, figure, image”. Both suggest an outward manner of identification. These will not be manifestations that will be asked by the wicked to satisfy their idle curiosity, but the natural consequences of the power of God, the priesthood, having been bestowed upon the sons of God.

2.19.15—*blood*—The Greek word which is here translated as “blood” while referring to the blood of both men and animals, may also refer to the juice of grapes. This word is also used in the New Testament to refer to the atoning blood of Christ. It is used also to indicate “bloodshed”. The Hebrew word in Joel translated as “blood” is almost semantically identical. For the righteous, the shedding of the blood of the Savior is a positive blessing, a sign designed to help the believer live in accordance with the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To the wicked and unbelieving, war and the loss of life is preeminent, a sign that their world of abominations is about to unravel.

2.19.17—*fire*—The righteous on that Day of Pentecost were surrounded by fire, a literal baptism in the Heavenly element. This was the promise given to them by John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ, a promise that has been reaffirmed in this dispensation. To the wicked, the destruction of all that has made them carnally secure would soon be upon them.

2.19.19–21—*vapour of smoke*—The Greek word which is here translated as “vapour” derives from roots which mean “breathe, air, mist”. The Hebrew word used in Joel which is translated as “pillars” derives from roots which mean “column, cloud, erect, palm”. The Hebrew word which is translated in Joel as “smoke” derives from roots which mean “dust, vapor, anger”. The obvious reference to destruction and mayhem overshadows the possible positive aspects of the prophecy. Yet one might allow that in the days of Moses, the House of Israel were led from place to place and protected by pillars of smoke and fire, meaning the presence of God in their midst. Jesus testified that the Holy Ghost would teach the disciples all that they would need to know and do in order to be preserved from the destructions which should come upon the wicked.

2.20 The effects of the apostasy upon the Kingdom of Judah in the days of the Apostles became increasingly apparent until the rebellions of the Jews became so strident that both the city and the nation were ultimately destroyed. The literal atmospheric consequences that came with the pillaging of the people, the destruction of their property, and the eventual destruction of the arability of the land itself might easily be seen in the smoke and dust cast up. The wording of the translation of Joel varies somewhat from that which Peter cites.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. (Joel 2:31)
Some scholars have pointed to these astronomical effects as pertaining to the eclipsing of the various political entities of the day. While these notions have some merit, we might consider that these same effects have been directly prophesied as transpiring in our day as well, in a much more literal vein. For an extended treatment of these latter-day manifestations, see *MT-C 24.29–30.*

2.20.17—*notable*—The Greek word which is here translated as “notable” derives from roots which mean “shine upon, visible, manifestation, conspicuous, memorable, illuminate”. It is also the source of the English word "epiphany" which means "a moment of insight or illumination". Can anyone doubt that the multitude gathered at the Temple with Peter and the other Apostles experienced an epiphany with all that had been said and done? The Hebrew word which is translated as “terrible” means both “revere” and “frighten” illustrating once again the dichotomy between the righteous and the wicked.

2.21 The last verse in chapter 2 and the first verse of chapter 3 of Joel have some continuity.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call. For, behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, (Joel 2:32; 3:1)

In the Meridian of Time, that captivity of Judah and Jerusalem would come to fruition within a hundred years of Peter’s discourse. It was a fair warning of the trials and tribulations of the First Jewish Rebellion of 67 AD which culminated with the destruction of the Temple and the holy city. It also foreshadowed the destruction of the Jewish nation at the end of the Second Jewish Rebellion in 130 AD. The membership of the Church of Christ was, for the most part, spared much of that tribulation because they were willing to hearken to the voice of the Apostles and prophets. The escape to Pella was as literal a fulfillment of the words of Joel as might be asked for. The same is true in the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times. Those who heed the direction and counsel of the living prophets, seers, and revelators will find themselves preserved from much of the corruption that will cover the earth prior to the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.22 After speaking to the permanent residents of Jerusalem and Judea, many of whom had made mock of the spiritual gifts given to the Apostles, Peter focused his remarks on the entire multitude that had gathered to Jerusalem from every nation for the Passover and the Day of Pentecost. One might be tempted to think that Peter was referring to the entire three-year ministry during which the recorded wonders and signs had been performed. However, it is clear that Peter is referring to those wondrous events that had taken place just prior to the Passover. Although we might accept the possibility that many of the travelers from foreign lands may have arrived early for the celebrations, yet Jesus arrival in Jerusalem was hardly more than a week before his crucifixion. For all that had happened in Samaria, Galilee, Decapolis, and Perea, Peter points to that final week in Jesus life, that intense period of time filled with one manifestation of divine authority after another.

2.22.4—*Israel*—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the
principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.22.10—Nazareth—Located due west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee, in the highlands above the Plain of Esdraelon. The adopted home of both Joseph and Mary, inasmuch as their royal lineage assigned them to the city of Bethlehem, a fact that is reflected in the account of the Savior’s birth in the second chapter of Luke. Jesus, though not born in Nazareth, was a resident there for most of his life. (See also MT-C 2.23.10)

2.22.13—approved—Peter’s argument is that Jesus was clearly blessed and his teachings sanctioned by God because of the manifold miracles which had been performed in their presence.

2.22.19—miracles—The fact that Peter is once again referring to the prophecy of Joel in this instance ought not to be lost on the reader (see 2.19).

2.23 Jesus became the Christ, the Holy Messiah, in the premortal councils held before the world was. The bounds and limitations of the nations were established, the prophets, seers, and revelators appointed and ordained, and the eternal covenants placed before all of those who would come to this earth during mortality. The time and place of every man’s birth was calculated to give him the greatest opportunity for success, that through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ each might return into the presence of our Father in Heaven, exalted and glorified. The perfect foreknowledge of God made this delicate orchestration possible.

2.23.3—delivered—The Greek word which is here translated as “delivered” derives from roots which mean “given out, given over, surrendered”. The literal meaning signifies “to bestow, grant, minister, from the beginning”. Jesus was foreordained to that responsibility that befell him as the Firstborn of the Father to redeem mankind, even as many as will.

2.23.6—determinate counsel—The Greek word which is here translated as “determinate” derives from roots which mean “mark, bound, appoint, decree, specify, restrain, oath”. The Greek word translated as “counsel” derives from roots meaning “volition, advice, be willing, be disposed”. Thus “determinate counsel” constitutes a “willing oath”, a solemn inviolable covenant.

2.23.9—foreknowledge—The foreknowledge of God is not predestination, notwithstanding arguments to the contrary. Predestination implies that God asserts “Things will be thus and so because I say so”. Foreknowledge implies that God asserts “Things will be thus and so, because I see so”. At the heart of the matter is the nature of moral agency. Either man is free to choose his own path or he is not. There has been one eternal philosophy which has espoused predestination and for that rebellion against God’s will, Lucifer was cast down.

2.23.15—taken—There are three words in Greek that are typically translated as “taken”. The first implies an “offering, offered to someone”. The second is more violent implying “seize or remove”. The third, which is used here, suggests “get a hold of”, a kind of middle ground between the two.

2.23.17—wicked hands—Although the Romans were the instruments of Jesus’ crucifixion, it was the Jews who had either insisted or permitted the action to be taken. The subject of the clause is ‘ye’. Therefore the latter part of the verse must be read “by wicked hands ye have crucified and slain”. The Jews are not exempt from condemnation simply because they did not actually drive the nails.

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Acts 2:23–24
MA 27
CR00-O 56
2.24 There can be no question that the Savior’s power over death came as a
direct gift from his Father in Heaven. Whether there was further instrumentality on the part of angels or of God himself on the morning of the
resurrection, we cannot at present tell. Central to our understanding of this
verse is the meaning of the phrase “having loosed the pains of death”. What
is missing in the articulation of the grammar are the subject and indirect
object. That is to say, who loosed the pains of death and for whom? Did
God loose the pains of death for the Savior, or did Jesus loose them for
himself? The third possibility is that Jesus loosed the pains of death for all, an
interpretation that seems most satisfying. The second issue has to do with the
conjunction “because”. Why was it that Jesus could not be “holden” of
death? Was it because he had “loosed” the pains of death or because God had
raised him up? Although an argument might be made for both, it would
seem more accurate to say that it was because of the power of God that Jesus
came forth from the tomb. In other word, God raised up Jesus from the dead
once the atoning sacrifice had been made sure for the rest of humanity.
2.24.9–11—pains of death—The Greek word which is here translated as
“pain” is one which is generally used for the suffering of childbirth,
meaning “travail, suffering”.
2.24.21—holden—The Greek word which is here translated as “holden”
derives from roots which mean “use strength, seize, retain, vigor, do-
mination, might”. The English word “holden” is an archaic part partic-
iple of the verb “to hold”.

2.25 The quote here is taken from the Psalms. Including a few introductory
verses seems appropriate in this case.

The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou
maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places;
 yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the LORD, who hath given
me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set
the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall
not be moved. (Psalm 16:5–8)

Given the discussion regarding 2.23 above, it would seem reasonable to
assume that Peter had these verses in mind as he began this portion of his
discourse.

2.25.2—David—The second king of United Israel and successor of king
Saul. David was the youngest of eight sons born to Jesse, although
only seven are ever named in the scriptural account.
2.25.7—foresaw—The Greek word which is here translated as “foresaw”
derives from roots which mean “behold in advance, notice previously,
keep in view, in front of, prior” The word implies both location and
foreknowledge. Jesus had his eye single to the glory of God from
before the foundations of the earth were laid and was therefore
successful in all that was given to him to do.
2.25.19–20—right hand—Figuratively speaking, Jesus sustains the Father
in all that He does. Because he is faithful in all that God has put into
his trust, Jesus will forever be in that eternal relationship. Lucifer is
the exact opposite; one who has been removed because he would not
support the author of the plan of happiness

2.26 Many scholars have pointed out long ago that Peter is most likely citing
the Psalms as is found in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old
Testament brought about in the fourth century before Christ. We ought not

24 Whom God hath raised up,
having loosed the pains of death:
because it was not possible that he
should be holden of it.

25 For David speaketh concerning
him, I foresaw the Lord always
before my face, for he is on my
right hand, that I should not be
moved:

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice,
and my tongue was glad; moreover
also my flesh shall rest in hope:
to be overwrought at the differences between the King James translation of Psalms and Acts.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. (Psalms 16:9)

Although much could be made of many of the differences, the most interesting one is the “glory/tongue” divergence. The Hebrew word which is translated as “glory” derives from roots which mean “weight, splendor, copiousness, honor, rich” in the good sense. In the negative, the word means “heavy, burdensome, severe, dull, grievous, affliction, be chargeable”. Because Jesus did not refuse to take upon himself the full weight and measure of the sins of mankind, he successfully accomplished the atonement. In that achievement he rejoiced because his brethren were then free to choose for themselves to follow after light and truth. Having accomplished the task to which the Father had set for him, Jesus was then in a position to be our Advocate, the High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek who would plead for mercy.

2.26.13–14—my flesh—That is to say, Jesus body would lie in the tomb for a short time, with every expectation that the intelligent spirit of life would re-enter its tabernacle to be perfected and sanctified through the power of the resurrection.

2.27 There is a translation of this verse which is superior to any other at present.

Because thou wilt not leave my soul in prison, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. (JST; Acts 2:27)

2.27.9—hell—As can easily be seen, the reference to hell is not to that final residence of Satan and his minions, but rather to the world of spirits, where both the faithful and the wicked await the day of their redemption from death.

2.27.15–16—Holy One—A direct reference to the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.27.19—corruption—The Greek word which is here translated as “corruption” derives from roots which mean “decay, rot thoroughly, ruin, pervert”. The Hebrew word derives from roots which mean “pit, destruction, batter, cast off, spoil utter waste, ditch, grave”. Although Jesus’ body was laid in a tomb, being there for hardly more than thirty-six hours, no significant decomposition would have been possible.

2.28 The Old Testament version of this passage varies somewhat from the New Testament citation.

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Psalm 16:11)

Whether as a result of the translation from Hebrew into Greek or by way of Peter’s inspired reading of the Psalm, it is nonetheless interesting that there is a change of tense from the Psalm to the passage in Acts, as if the blessing were a fait accompli. In the case of the Lord Jesus Christ there is absolutely no question that his mission upon the earth achieved that degree of completion. The Hebrew word which is translated as “pleasures” derive from roots which mean “delightful, sweet, agreeable”. The unity of the Father and
the Son was perfected in the Savior’s atoning sacrifice.

2.29 Notwithstanding the fact that David would eventually be raised from the dead and his soul would not remain in spirit prison, yet his body had seen corruption. His passing had been lamented by all Israel and his body laid in a tomb, a sepulcher which was still standing in the days of Jesus and the Apostles. Historians and archeologists argue incessantly as to the variant locations of David’s Tomb. They are likewise sanguine about the location to which Peter would have been referring. The traditional site, located on Mount Zion south of the walls of the Old City, is coupled with the traditional site of the Upper Room where Jesus purportedly celebrated the Passover Feast shortly before his crucifixion. In the book of 1 Kings the chronicler states that David was buried in the “City of David” which some scholars have suggested was located south of the city walls in conjunction with Mount Zion. This they assert because that is where David’s Tomb is located. That is a clever, but circular argument. Jesus was born in the "City of David", but that was not in the region south of the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, but rather in the village of Bethlehem. No doubt David was buried in Bethlehem, and the Tomb itself must still have been standing in the days of Peter and the Apostles. Best archeological estimates suggest that the original building in which the traditional Tomb of David is housed was built during the first or second century after Christ. It is unlikely that Peter was pointing at that particular edifice in evidence that David was both dead and buried. Certain scholars have pointed to Nehemiah 3:15–16 which recounts the repairs made to the city of Jerusalem after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, wherein is made reference to the “sepulchers of David”. That this may very well refer to the royal cemetery, yet it is unlikely that David himself was interred there. In the end, however, for the people in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, Peter’s argument is compelling: the Psalm did apply in part to David, but in the whole it clearly applied to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.29.13—David—The second king of United Israel and successor of king Saul. David was the youngest of eight sons born to Jesse, although only seven are ever named in the scriptural account.

2.30 The question which is generally ignored is when specifically did David receive this oath. Certain scholars point to 2 Samuel 7:12–17 wherein the Lord promises that he would be succeeded by one who would build the “house” unto the Lord’s name. Many have concluded that this was in reference to Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba who succeeded the second King of united Israel. A close reading of the passage, however, either presents an exercise in hyperbole or is indeed a reference to the King of Kings who would one day reign eternally upon the earth. Psalms 89 and 132 make additional reference to this promise, portraying it in the far grander scale than that of just Solomon.

2.30.4—prophet—Inasmuch as a prophet is one who has a fervent and abiding testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, David the King certainly qualifies. That his conduct with Bathsheba and Uriah did deprive him of exaltation we may accept, yet his witness of the Christ should not be summarily dismissed as a consequence.

2.30.13—oath—The Greek word which is here translated as "oath" literally means a "fence, limit, or restraint", derived from roots which mean “boundary-line” or “frontier”. The English word “oath” derives from Germanic and Celtic roots, implying a promise attested to by witnesses.

29 Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.
2.30.26—*flesh*—Many textualists have doubted the veracity of the phrase "according to the flesh", perceiving it as a gloss or marginalia. That it may be redundant, given the preceding phrase, does not detract from the truthfulness of the statement. Jesus was without question the legal heir to the throne of David, both physically and spiritually.

2.30.31—*Christ*—Simply put, the name "Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Messiah". In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean "anointed one". Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

2.31 David knew through the power and influence of the Holy Ghost that one day, one of his posterity would become the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords. He also was privy to the fact that the Messiah would suffer death at the hands of the wicked and then be redeemed from that death shortly after his demise. The Messiah’s spirit would enter into the world of spirits, but only for a very short time, so short that the Messiah’s body would suffer little or no effects from his interment. We do not know precisely what David understood about the Savior’s sojourn among the dead. It must have been somewhat disconcerting to David to discover that Jesus would not be coming among the wicked, during his brief stay in the world of spirits.

2.31.1—*He*—That is, the Psalmist David.

2.31.10—*Christ*—Simply put, the name "Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Messiah". In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean "anointed one". Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.
2.32 For all of the preamble, this witness is at the heart of the ministry of the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were all witnesses of the resurrected Christ. He had appeared unto them on numerous occasions, taught and blessed them beyond measure. Their testimony could not be brushed aside.

2.33 What had originally drawn the attention of the multitude to the Apostles in the temple was the great outpouring of the Holy Ghost which had been bestowed upon the disciples. There was a great wind, a sound that accompanied that wind, and the tongues of fire that resided upon the Apostles as they taught the people. Then the people were astounded by the linguistic gift, by which every man was taught in his own language and dialect. No doubt many of them were deeply moved by these experiences and the influence of the Spirit of God must have been poignant. Peter makes it clear that these manifestations were not of their doing, but an expression of the will of God, the fulfillment of an oath and covenant which the Father had made with His Son. Thus was the prophecy of Joel fulfilled in the Day of Pentecost and could be further fulfilled in the lives of those who would hold fast to the truth and live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. So appealing was this prospect, that the multitude would cry out to the Apostles as to what they should do next (see 2.37 below).

2.34 There were many of the faithful who were raised from the dead at the time of the Savior’s resurrection, but David was not one of them. Jesus himself used this same passage of scripture to confound the Pharisees. The problem that Jesus presented has to do with the respect due to one’s predecessors. The Messiah was to be the son of David and as a result would have called David “Lord”. In a lesser but comparable setting, could a son ever be referred to as “Dad” by his own father. It is almost unimaginable unless something really extraordinary had transpired to reverse their natural relationship. The central question is, then, why does David called the Messiah “Lord”? What would justify that? The final point Jesus made was to ask how David could worship the Messiah in his day if the Christ had not yet been born? The full text of the Psalm clearly expresses the degree to which the Messiah would come into his own kingdom and who would make that possible.

A Psalm of David.

The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth. The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the heathen, he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries. He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up the head. (Psalm 110)

The 110th Psalm is clearly a Messianic hymn. The Messiah will rule at the behest of God and by His power the will of the Christ would be established.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.</td>
<td>Acts 2:32, CR00-O 56, Acts 2:32–34, DHC 5 426, TPJS 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.</td>
<td>Acts 2:32–36, MA 27, Acts 2:33, AF 51, CR98-O 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,</td>
<td>Acts 2:34, AGQ 1 74, DS 2 97, EM 1 360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Those who accepted the Messiah’s rule would be blessed in every way conceivable. The power of the Messiah would be both secular and ecclesiastical, after the order of the Melchizedek Priesthood rather than that of the Aaronic. The Gentiles would be judged and delivered as well, by his hand.

2.34.2—David—The second king of United Israel and successor of king Saul. David was the youngest of eight sons born to Jesse, although only seven are ever named in the scriptural account.

2.34.14—LORD—The capitalized letters of “LORD” signifies in the King James Version of the Bible, the tetragram of the name of Israel’s God, the unpronounceable Hebrew letters YHWH. Anglicization of these letters has produced the English name “Jehovah”. In essence, the God of Heaven is speaking to another being to whom David refers as “Lord”.

2.34.18—Lord—The Hebrew word which is translated as “Lord” in Psalm 110, derives from roots which mean “ruler, sovereign, master, owner”. In this case, God is speaking to David’s sovereign.

2.35 Peter testified that David had not ascended into heaven and sat down on the right hand of God, but the Apostles were witnesses that Jesus of Nazareth had done that very thing because he was the Messiah. Jesus would remain at the Father’s side until the time came for the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven upon the earth, which government will be in effect in conjunction with the Second Coming of Christ. The choice of every man in that multitude on the Day of Pentecost was whether or not they would choose to be an enemy of Christ.

2.36 This is the message of the Church and Kingdom of God unto the entire world, that the Messiah, the Redeemer of mankind, has come into the world and has brought about the atoning sacrifice by which all men may be saved from death and hell. Without that message, Christianity is hardly more than a social philosophy. Therefore, in every dispensation, among every people, in every language, the gift of salvation has been preached; that every man might decide for himself whom he will follow. That good news is first taken to the House of Israel, that in their conversion the rest of the world, both Jew and Gentile, might be blessed and benefited as well.

2.36.7—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.36.18—ye—Whether they were active participants or passive observers, those who stood before Peter and the other Apostles were complicit in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. No matter that the Roman soldiers were the actors who actually drove the nails through his flesh; they were more guilty than the Romans since they should have known better. Some of them did know better.

2.36.22—Lord—He who will one day rule the inhabitants of the earth in justice and mercy, in the midst of his saints. No one will peep or mutter in that day.

2.36.24—Christ—He who has redeemed the children of the Father from death and hell, the Son of the living God, he whose right it is to reign in the hearts and minds of the faithful.

2.37 Peter’s arguments have been irresistible. He and the other Apostles have borne fervent witness of the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus. Of these things has God Himself testified by the outward manifesta-

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

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

 Acts 2:36
 DNTC 2 62, 76
 MD 392
 CR86-A 18
 Acts 2:36–38
 AF 123

37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest

 Acts 2:37
 JC 123
 CR90-A 31
tions of the power of the Holy Ghost which culminated in every man of the multitude hearing the principles of salvation taught in his own native tongue by those whom most would have considered illiterate Galileans. Therefore, they were guilty of that of which they had been accused: the denial, crucifixion, and death of the Savior of the world. Having been pierced to the heart by the Apostle’s inspired sermon, they are beside themselves with anxiety and distress. The multitude had arrived at a point where they had been laid bare, perfectly aware of their wickedness in supporting those who were determined to take the life of the Messiah. Their question is the same one which all of us, at one point or another, must ask of those who preside in the Kingdom of God. It is a question that derives from regret, abject sorrow, and humility. We ought not, nay, we cannot delay the positing of that question once we have been convicted of our sins.

2.37.8—pricked—The Greek word which is here translated as “pricked” derives from roots which mean “pierce thoroughly, agitate violently”. 2.37.15—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

2.38 The fact that the hearts of the multitude have been pricked implies that the members of the congregation had come to accept what Peter had testified about Jesus of Nazareth. We therefore must conclude that their agitation came as a direct result of their belief that Jesus is the Christ. Having faith in Jesus as the Son of God will give these men power sufficient to change their lives forever, which is repentance. That inward regeneration would be followed by baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, for those things which they had done amiss before they had been set upon the proper path that leads to eternal life. Having once been baptized, they would be prepared as worthy vessels, cleansed within that they might be filled with the power and influence of the Spirit of God. At that point, those with authority from God the Father would lay their hands upon the heads of the repentance and cleansed and commend the gift of the Holy Ghost to them, the promise that divine influence would guide and direct them throughout the rest of their sojourn upon the earth.

2.38.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

2.39 Inasmuch as the covenant people were to be the first beneficiaries of the promise of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39 For the promise is unto you,
any dispensation, the Jews of Palestine were graced by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ during his mortal ministry and then that of his chosen disciples. Their children as well had that same inheritance. Inasmuch as the visitors to Jerusalem were those from scattered Israel, they were likewise among the first to hear of the promise of Salvation through faith in Christ and repentance from sin. Geographically, then, the good word would be taken into all of the known world when these men returned home, first to their own family and friends and then to others of the nations from which they hailed. Temporally speaking, the Jews and their immediate posterity would be blessed by this knowledge, but there would be other times in which the fullness of the Gospel would be poured out, first to the House of Israel and from thence into all of the world

2.39.16–17—afar off—Firstly, this refers to those who lived at great distances geographically from Jerusalem. Scattered Israel would be visited by the Lord Jesus Christ wherever they might be found. The faithful would receive him and be blessed by him. The Shepherd had many flocks which he was determined to bring into one fold. Secondly, those “afar off” might also be thought of as those whose mortal lives lay yet in the far distant future. The immediate blessing was to be received by those Jews present on the Day of Pentecost and then to their children. Should we think of their grandchildren as those “afar off”? That is highly unlikely. The destruction of Jerusalem and then of the Jewish nation curbed much of the effective proselyting among the Jews by the Christian missionaries. A generation or so later, during the middle of the second century after the birth of Christ, the fullness of the Gospel of Christ together with the authority to administer the ordinances of salvation were lost to mortal men through apostasy and wickedness. The promise was, however, when that restoration took place that the House of Israel in all of its aspects would once again be given an opportunity to accept the principles and ordinances of salvation and exaltation. A third meaning for "afar off" might refer to those not of the House of Israel, the gentiles, would have the opportunity to receive the message of salvation. There are scholars who doubt whether Peter understood the extent to which this promise would be realized, but Jesus had taught his disciples that the Gentiles would eventually receive the Gospel of Christ throughout his entire mortal ministry.

2.40 One does not cry repentance without inviting the repentant into the peace and tranquility of discipleship through the ordinances of the Gospel. Together with that invitation is the command, "Be not of the world, even though you are in the world".

2.40.7—testify—The Greek word which is here translated as “testify” derives from roots which mean “attest or protest earnestly, hortatively”.

2.40.9—exhort—The Greek word which is here translated as "exhort" means "call near, invite, invoke, implore, console, beseech, entreat, comfort". This is the invitation to come unto Christ through the covenants of the Gospel.

2.40.15—untoward—The Greek word which is here translated as “untoward” derives from roots which mean "warped, winding, perverse, crooked; dry, hard, tough, parched". The English word "untoward" means "difficult to guide, influence, resistive".

2.41 The multitude received his word in that they responded positively to and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.
41 Then they that gladly received Acts 2:41
the invitation to accept baptism at the hands of those authorized to do so. It would be interesting to know precisely where those baptisms took place. Probably not in the Brazen Sea which lay in the Court of the Levites in the Temple proper. At that time there were no rivers or brooks nearby wherein the faithful might be immersed. It is likely that those immersions might have taken place in any number of the public pools which were used for bathing; the Pools of Bethesda come immediately to mind. An argument for one of the pools of Siloam can be made with good effect, noting the correspondence that some scholars have made between “Siloam” and “Shiloh” and the “waters” thereof, together with the “waters of Judah” identified as the “waters of baptism” as recorded in the Nephite version of Isaiah 48. Of course, there is the outside possibility that all three thousand converts were willing to make the trip down into the Jordan Valley for baptism. That these faithful souls were received into the Church of Christ by any other form of “baptism” other than complete immersion is untenable.

2.41.4—gladly—See Psalm 110 as cited in 2.34 where David attests that in the day of the Lord’s power his people would be willing.

2.41.20–21—three thousand—It was not necessary that Peter baptize all three thousand new converts. There were the other members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. There were the Seventy who were present, as well as many other priesthood bearers who were authorized to both baptize and bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.

2.42 As fine and as terse a description of the assemblies of the saints in every dispensation that we might hope for in the New Testament.

2.42.2—they—No doubt in reference to the converts. One wonders how long these men would remain in Jerusalem and environs before returning to their homes in the far-flung nations of the world. Certainly as the persecution intensified, particularly once Saul of Tarsus became an active participant, the disciples would find other places of residence than in the land of Judea. In the mean time, they met together frequently to worship together, to renew their covenants, and to be taught by their leaders.

2.42.7—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

2.42.8—doctrine—The Greek word which is translated here as “doctrine” derives from the same roots which produce “didactic”, meaning that which is “taught, instruction”.

2.42.10—fellowship—The Greek word which is here translated as “fellowship” derives from roots which mean “sharer, associate, partnership, participation”. These are those who were prepared to be of one heart, one mind, live in righteousness, and have no poor among them.

2.42.15—bread—While a case might be made for suggesting that the disciples ate at a common table, it is most likely that they renewing their covenants by partaking of the Sacrament. The Greek word

his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.
which is here translated as “bread” literally means a “loaf”. Interestingly enough, this refers to “raised” bread rather than unleavened bread.

2.42.18—prayers—Certainly the whisperings of the heart to God which were uttered by the faithful in all places and at all time, but specifically here as the disciples assembled together to hear the word of the Lord and to pursue the effects of their conversion to the truth.

2.43 Luke clearly associates all that which Peter has explained to the multitude with all that which happened afterwards among the new converts. The promise was that they would enjoy the same blessings that the Apostles did, and it proved so to be.

2.43.2—fear—The Greek word which is translated here as “fear” derives from the same sources as the English word “phobia”. It can not only evoke the notion of terror, alarm, or fright, but also carries with it the sentiment of awe and reverence. The meaning is therefore based on the context of the word’s use.

2.43.9—wonders—The Greek word which is here translated as “wonders” derives from roots which mean “prodigy, omen”. See also 2.19.

2.43.11—signs—The Greek word which is translated here as “signs” derives from roots which signify “mark, indication, token, wonder, miracle”. The word “sign” in English derives from Latin roots which mean “mark, figure, image”. Both suggest an outward manner of identification. See also 2.19.

2.43.16—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

2.44 In conjunction with the lesser Law, that of Moses, the principle of tithing was applied to covenant people. The higher Law of the Gospel of Jesus Christ contained elements which have to do with temporal salvation as well. Today we refer to this as the Law of Consecration. This is the Law by which Zion is established. It has nothing to do with Socialism or Communism, although there have been those who have attempted to demonstrate a connection. They have been utterly unsuccessful in their attempts. Consecration is made possible because of the deep and abiding affection which the members of a community universally have for one another. That love is made possible because of the atonement of Christ. Without faith, repentance, and the accompanying ordinances, the principles of the Law of Consecration cannot be lived. All forms of government which have patterned themselves after the principles of the Law of Consecration without the fundamental principles and ordinances of the Gospel in place have been miserable failures.

2.45 In the beginning of this dispensation, the saints of the Most High were commanded to enter into a similar arrangement with regard to their temporal affairs. Material assets were consecrated to the Church and Kingdom of

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

Acts 2:43

AF 438

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

Acts 2:44

JC 718

EM 4 1625

Acts 2:44-45

CR86-A 32

Acts 2:44-46

AF 438

JC 705

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.
God upon the earth; in return adequate stewardships were provided those who had entered into the Law. Surplus assets were either distributed to those who were in need or they were liquidated. Some needs were not altogether satisfied by those things which had been consecrated by the members of the society. The liquidated assets were used to purchase those things which Zion yet lacked. Apparently much the same thing was transpiring among the members of the Church in Jerusalem at this time.

2.46 The early disciples in Jerusalem apparently gathered in the Temple to continue their missionary labors, as guided and directed by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of God. Their sacramental meetings, however, appear to have been held in private homes, various families donating their open space for such assemblies. No doubt on any given Sabbath several such homes would have to be employed in order to accommodate the entire membership of the Church. Inasmuch as many of these early converts were not dwelling in their permanent homes, the local membership of the Church apparently opened their homes to these visitors until they had been sufficiently instructed in the principles of salvation that they could be sent back to their native lands completely prepared to teach the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and administer the ordinances thereof. It would also appear that many of the daily meals were provided from common resources so that one family would not have to bear the complete burden of providing for their visitors over a long period of time.

2.47 These were a happy and a prosperous people, filled with love and affection one for another. They rejoiced in the day of their salvation, grateful for the atoning sacrifice of Christ, and for the glorious opportunity they had to serve and bless one another. In their little community, they were not unlike the blessed of the Nephites who dwelt upon the land immediately after the visit of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were devout in all ways, but especially in their treatment of one another, not easily offended, forgiving and kind at all times and in all places. How could anyone looking upon such a scene of charity and brotherhood not wish to be part of the Church of Jesus Christ?

2.47.5—favoured—The Greek word which is here translated as "favour" derives from roots which mean "graciousness, gratifying, gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, rescue, liberality".

Chapter 3

1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

3.1 The implication of this translation is that Peter and John went to the in obedience to the Mosaic dictum to attend to their prayers at that exact time. A far superior translation of this verse suggests otherwise.

Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the ninth hour, for prayer. (JST, Acts 3:1)

The rigor of the Law of Moses had been fulfilled in the life, atonement, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, together with the establishment of the Church of Christ under the leadership of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Peter and John went to the Temple for prayer because they chose to do so, not because they were under a Mosaic commandment.

3.1.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the
presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the
name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he
must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of
his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be
sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be
open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to
that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and
the saints of God.
3.1.4—John—Frequently referred to as the “Beloved”. He is the author
of the Gospel of John, the three small Epistles of John, and the book
of Revelation, all in the New Testament. There are other manuscripts
which have been prophetically alluded to but have not, as yet, seen
the light of day. The desire of his heart was to remain upon the earth
as the Savior’s emissary until Jesus returned in glory. Jesus granted his
wish and thus became the faithful guardian ordained to stand as a
witness of the apostasy and darkness that descended upon the world.
He, with Peter and James, would be instrumental in the restoration of
the Melchizedek Priesthood in this last dispensation, by which the
Church and Kingdom of God was once more established upon the
earth. The account of his labors during the intervening millennia will
make fascinating reading for the faithful.
3.1.7—together—Although there can be no question that Peter and John
were in one another’s company that afternoon, some scholars have
suggested that the word translated as “together” in this verse ought to
be understood as meaning “about the same time”; that is in reference
to the events that had transpired in the previous chapter, around the
time of the Day of Pentecost.
3.1.15—prayer—Certain scholars of Judaism at the time of the Apostles’
ministry declare that prayer was to be held at the third hour, the ninth
hour, and at sunset. Other students of the text suggest that the sixth
hour, or noon, was the third designated time for prayer. In any event,
these would have been opportune times for meeting with potential
converts to the burgeoning Church of Christ.
3.1.18–19—ninth hour—Anciently, the hours of the day were counted
from the rising of the sun. Thus, the ninth hour would have been
about three o’clock in the afternoon. It was at that hour that Jesus
succumbed upon the cross.
3.2 Certainly the reader must perceive the similarity between the healing
of this congenital cripple and the healing of the man born blind (see JN 9.1–
34). Both would have been the objects of distain and ridicule. In the minds
of many Jews in that day and age, a birth defect of this nature came upon a
child because of wickedness, either on the part of the parents or for some
undisclosed censure on the part of the Lord God of Israel. Jesus had brushed
that false notion aside in his instructions to the Apostles, declaring that the
blind man was born with that defect that the glory of God might be made
manifest among the children of men. Here Peter and John will have no com-
punction about healing this faithful man from his affliction, they under-
standing that all things were possible to them that believed. Surely this man
was among that number who held that Jesus was the Christ.
3.2.13—they—We are not told who brought this man from his dwelling
to the Temple each day, but their duty to their fellow was soon to
become unnecessary.
3.2.25—Beautiful—Scholars and historians are not in agreement as to
which of the nine gates to the Temple at Jerusalem was called the

2 And a certain man lame from
his mother’s womb was carried,
whom they laid daily at the gate of
the temple which is called Beauti-
ful, to ask alms of them that
entered into the temple;
“Beautiful”. Some place it on the east near the Temple sanctuary itself, associating it with the “Corinthian Gate”. Others have equated it with the “Nicanor Gate”, one which served as a passageway from the Court of the Gentiles to the Court of the Women. The Greek word which is here translated as “Beautiful” derives from roots which mean “hour, instant, season, belonging to the right hour or season, flourishing”. Needless to say, this does little or nothing to identify the proper gate through which Peter and John were passing when they healed the crippled man. Hence, the confusion among the learned.

3.2.28—alms—The Greek word which is here translated as “alms” derives from roots which mean “compassionateness, beneficence, benefaction, active and tender mercy”.

3.3 That the crippled man was a disciple of Jesus we may assume, for otherwise the man could not have been healed. We not know for a certainty whether or not the man recognized Peter and John initially, but if he did not at the moment of asking alms, he most certainly did once the two Apostles told him to look upon them. If the lame man had known those who were passing by, his petition for alms might have been considerably more expansive than a request for small change. If he was not aware of the identity of those who stood before him at first, his recognition of them must have caused his heart to leap within him, knowing that these men were capable of rendering to him his heart’s desire.

3.3.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

3.3.4—John—Frequently referred to as the “Beloved”. He is the author of the Gospel of John, the three small Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation, all in the New Testament. There are other manuscripts which have been prophetically alluded to but have not, as yet, seen the light of day. The desire of his heart was to remain upon the earth as the Savior’s emissary until Jesus returned in glory. Jesus granted his wish and thus became the faithful guardian ordained to stand as a witness of the apostasy and darkness that descended upon the world. He, with Peter and James, would be instrumental in the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood in this last dispensation, by which the Church and Kingdom of God was once more established upon the earth. The account of his labors during the intervening millennia will make fascinating reading for the faithful.

3.4 Peter, John, and the other Apostles had been preaching daily in the Temple since the ascension of Jesus, and had, without question, passed through that same gate many times before. Is it not possible that the crippled man had seen and heard much of that which the disciples had said and done during that time? Peter’s request to have the man look upon him and upon John was not merely a focusing of the fellow’s faith, it was an invoking of his faith through realizing who it was with whom he was conversing.

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

Acts 3:4
JST CR96-O 23
3.4.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

3.4.9—John—Frequently referred to as the “Beloved”. He is the author of the Gospel of John, the three small Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation, all in the New Testament. There are other manuscripts which have been prophetically alluded to but have not, as yet, seen the light of day. The desire of his heart was to remain upon the earth as the Savior’s emissary until Jesus returned in glory. Jesus granted his wish and thus became the faithful guardian ordained to stand as a witness of the apostasy and darkness that descended upon the world. He, with Peter and James, would be instrumental in the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood in this last dispensation, by which the Church and Kingdom of God was once more established upon the earth. The account of his labors during the intervening millennia will make fascinating reading for the faithful.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

3.5 The man in his humble petitioning of the passersby undoubtedly made his requests with downcast eyes. He was, after all, a pariah in his own community, according to the self-righteousness of the Pharisees and Sadducees, inasmuch as he was a sufferer of “divine wrath” upon his person. How often had the Pharisees and others proffered their largesse to the poor in a pretentious way? It was for them a matter of form. They wished to have their beneficiaries know who their benefactors were. To his delighted surprise, however, he would not be looking into the eyes of hypocrites.

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

3.6 The servants of the Lord had been blessed such that they would always have sufficient for their needs. That was the essential promise given to the Peter and the other Apostles as they had eaten breakfast with their risen Lord on the shore of the Sea of Galilee after the resurrection (see JN 21.1–17). Their material needs would be provided in the Lord’s way and they would not have an abundance. For that reason they did not have the wherewithal to bless the man with a temporary supplement to his poverty. Instead they had the power and he had the faith to produce an effective and permanent solution to the lame man’s plight. Peter evoked the power of God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, a name which the cripple already knew and reverenced.

3.6.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and
3.6.22—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

3.6.23—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendency to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

3.6.25—Nazareth—Located due west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee, in the highlands above the Plain of Esdraelon. The adopted home of both Joseph and Mary, inasmuch as their royal lineage assigned them to the city of Bethlehem, a fact that is reflected in the account of the Savior’s birth in the second chapter of Luke. Jesus, though not born in Nazareth, was a resident there for most of his life. (See also MT-C 2.23.10)

3.7 In the case of the man born blind, the Lord had aided the young man in his faith by anointing his eyes with clay made of dust and spittle. Here Peter aides the man’s faith by contributing his own expectation that the man would be healed through their ministrations by raising him up.

3.7.7–8—right hand—Without becoming too mystical, we might point to the importance of the right hand as it is employed in all covenant making. We may think of Aaron and Hur on either side of the Moses, helping him hold the rod of Aaron aloft while Joshua and the hosts of Israel fought against the Amalekites. Do we not all sustain one another in our responsibilities by the right hand of fellowship and strength? So too this man is sustained and supported in his recovery from a physical affliction. He serves as a type for all those who seek for eternal life and salvation in the Kingdom of God.

3.7.16—feet—And by this we know precisely in what manner the man had been crippled since birth.

3.8 The faith of the crippled man is self-evident. The Apostle Peter had helped the man to his feet, but this was not a faltering arousal. He knew within himself as he began to rise from the place where he had lain for many years that he was healed every whit. There was no physical therapy needed; no transition time for a man who had never walked in his life. All of the attributes of an upright man, physical and psychological, were part and
3.8.3—leaping—The Greek word which is here translated as “leaping” derives from roots which mean “spring forth”, coupled with the idea of departing from a place of origin. An appropriate word indeed for one who had been a fixture at the Temple for most of his life.

3.8.17—leaping—The Greek word which is here translated as “leaping” derives from roots which mean “jump, gush”, and is represented in the second element of the word described in 3.8.3. The difference between the two words is that in the first, the “first” moment of rejoicing is implied, in the second the man’s enthusiasm continues unabated.

3.8.19—praising—The Greek word which is here translated as “praising” derives from roots which mean "story". The man was bearing his testimony as to what had happened to him.

3.9 As it had been with the man born blind, so now it was with him who had been lame since birth. Everyone on the temple grounds knew this man personally, whether out of pity or distain. They knew his manner of dress; they knew his appearance of his countenance. There could be no doubt as to his identity. Like the man born blind, the healed cripple is not bashful about expressing himself as to how he had been blessed.

3.10 Any anticipation that the chief priests and Pharisees had that they were rid of the bright and burning lights which had been John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ was now completely dashed. Clearly, the attempt to stamp out Christianity had only spread the conflagration. Could they continue to plot against the lives of Lazarus, the man born blind, the cripple at the Beautiful Gate, and every other person who was restored to full health and vigor at the hands of the Apostles? The days following the crucifixion and death of Jesus of Nazareth had, for them, become one recurring nightmare after another. The converts to Christianity multiplied, the miracles increased, the fingers of accusation and righteous indignation more and more were pointed at them.

3.10.11—alms—The Greek word which is here translated as “alms” derives from roots which mean “compassionateness, beneficence, benefaction, active and tender mercy”.

3.10.14—Beautiful—Scholars and historians are not in agreement as to which of the nine gates to the Temple at Jerusalem was called the “Beautiful”. Some place it on the east near the Temple sanctuary itself, associating it with the “Corinthian Gate”. Others have equated it with the “Nicanor Gate”, one which served as a passageway from the Court of the Gentiles to the Court of the Women. The Greek word which is here translated as “Beautiful” derives from roots which mean “hour, instant, season, belonging to the right hour or season, flourishing”. Needless to say, this does little or nothing to identify the proper gate through which Peter and John were passing when they healed the crippled man. Hence, the confusion among the learned.

3.10.24—wonder—The Greek word which is here translated as “wonder” derives from roots which mean “dumbfound, stupefaction, surprise, astonishment”.

3.10.26—amazement—The Greek word which here translates as “amazement” also produces the word “ecstasy” in English, and means “astonishment, bewilderment, displacement of the mind, literally ‘out of the stasis’”.

9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:

10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.
3.11 Apparently Peter and John had thought to depart the temple for a time, but the crippled man whom they had just healed detained them in his enthusiasm sufficiently that the multitude quickly gathered around the three. The astonishment increased as the healed man whom they all knew testified as to what had transpired. No doubt the man had rather gracious things to say of the two Apostles who stood with him.

3.11.9—helд—The Greek word which is here translated as “held” derives from roots which mean “use strength, seize, retain, vigor”. We ought not to suggest that the man was physically detaining the Apostles, but rather was loath to allow them to depart out of his sight. They were for him angels of mercy. His attitude toward Peter and John was the same that the Apostles had expressed toward Jesus as he was about to depart from them.

3.11.10—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a see”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

3.11.12—John—Frequently referred to as the “Beloved”. He is the author of the Gospel of John, the three small Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation, all in the New Testament. There are other manuscripts which have been prophetically alluded to but have not, as yet, seen the light of day. The desire of his heart was to remain upon the earth as the Savior’s emissary until Jesus returned in glory. Jesus granted his wish and thus became the faithful guardian ordained to stand as a witness of the apostasy and darkness that descended upon the world. He, with Peter and James, would be instrumental in the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood in this last dispensation, by which the Church and Kingdom of God was once more established upon the earth. The account of his labors during the intervening millennia will make fascinating reading for the faithful.

3.11.26—Solomon’s—Scholars are at odds regarding the origin, location, and purpose of that portion of the Temple complex at Jerusalem which has been traditionally called Solomon’s Porch. Some have identified this edifice on the eastern edge of the Temple mount as that which served as a hall of Judgment where the King of Israel administered his authority. Flavius Josephus suggests that because of its inherent aesthetic beauty this was the only portion of the Temple buildings left standing by the Babylonians when the city and Temple were destroyed in 589 BC. Other historians are dubious about the continuity of the structure since the time of Solomon. It was like unto a covered “stoa” which at some point in history was enclosed as dwelling places for the Levites who served at the Temple in their courses. In the days of the Savior it apparently was a far more open space for those who visited the Temple and was generally associated with the Court of the Gentiles.

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering.
3.12 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And when Peter saw this, he answered and said unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? (JST, Acts 3:12)

Herein we have the humility and lowliness of heart of Peter and his companion revealed. It is clear that the healed man had been referring to the Apostles in glowing terms. Peter could not permit their personal aggrandizement to continue, notwithstanding the man’s righteous ebullience. That Peter had felt “virtue” go out of himself as he had brought about the man’s restoration, there can be no doubt. Mark uses this precise word in describing how it was that the healing of the woman with the issue of blood had taken place, as does the Savior himself in Luke’s account. “Virtue” had gone forth out of the Lord when healings had taken place. Peter could not possibly have been oblivious to the process once he had experienced it. Norwithstanding his awareness of his role in the healing, he wished it to be clearly understood that the power of healing was in the power of Christ that had been bestowed upon him and not by any personal attributes that he might possess.

3.12.3—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

3.12.14—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3.12.16—marvel—The Greek word which is here translated as “marvel” derives from roots which mean “admiration, wonder, look loosely at, perceive, look upon”.

3.12.25—earnestly—The Greek word which is here translated as “earnestly” derives from roots which mean “stretch” combined with the idea of unity. That is to say, the multitude had its collective eyes fixed upon the Apostles with a unique singularity.

3.12.33—power—The Greek word which is here translated as “power” derives from roots which mean “to be able, possible, miracle, ability, abundance, meaning, strength”. It is the same word which is elsewhere translated as “virtue” (see LK-C 6.19.12, LK-C 8.46.12, and MK-C 5.30.8)

3.12.35—holiness—The Greek word which is here translated as “holiness” derives from roots which mean “piety, well-reverend, adored”.

3.13 In making reference to the ancient Patriarchs, Peter draws attention to the requirements that had been made of each. Abraham was commanded to offer up his son Isaac as a willing sacrifice to the God of Heaven. Isaac not only was a willing participant in his father’s act of worship, but would himself be required to give up his son Jacob, he who acquired the right of the

12 And when Peter saw it, he answered and said unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when...
Firstborn from his brother Esau, for more than twenty years in order to preserve a righteous posterity unto his father Abraham. Jacob himself would mourn the loss of his Firstborn Heir for about the same period of time when Joseph was sold into Egypt as a slave by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver. A little bit of reflective thought will reveal that Peter’s reference to the Lord God of Israel in conjunction with His three servants is not to be understood in a superficial way. Jesus was redeemed from his sacrifice through the power of the resurrection; he was sacrificed for a time that he might redeem the children of God from both death and hell; in spite of being sold by one of his brethren, Jesus overcame every obstacle impeding the prosperity and survival of his Father’s House. Many of the chief priests and Pharisees who had condemned Jesus before the Roman governor were apparently in the company that had gathered as a result of the miracle performed in behalf of the crippled man. These were those who had perversely intimidated Pilate into having the Messiah crucified (see MT-C 27.17–25, MK-C 15.9–14, LK-C 23.18–24, JN-C 18.38–40, and JN-C 19.4–15 for the most egregious of these denials).

3.13.4—Abraham—The undisputed “Father of the Faithful”. Modern biblical scholars are generally kind to Abraham as are most theologians in the sister religious of Judaism. The spiritual stature of Abraham is, for the most part, immeasurable by man. Abraham is one of the Lord God’s noblemen, whose faith and confidence in the divine word are equaled or excelled by few who have come into mortality upon this earth. Removing the Lord Jesus Christ from the list of candidates, however, would probably render our estimation of Abraham all but absolute. Abraham was one of three sons born to Terah during a millennium of poverty and famine. Through Abraham’s ministrations the promises made to the ancient fathers were preserved and re-established in earnest. In one of the most tender of moments recorded in secular or ecclesiastical history, the Lord God of Heaven instructed Abraham in the nature of the greatest gift that a loving God may bestow upon his creation when he asked for the sacrificed life of his son Isaac.

3.13.7—Isaac—The only son of the union between Abraham and Sarah. There was some strife between Isaac and Ishmael, the son of Hagar, as there had been between Sarah and her handmaiden who had been elevated to the role of wife to Abraham as the result of Sarah’s barrenness. Because Sarah was the first wife, the wife of the covenant, her son Isaac took precedence over the elder half-brother. The animosity engendered during those early years has not completely abated, even into modern times. Isaac was an active participant in the “sacrifice” required by God of his father Abraham.

3.13.10—Jacob—The younger of the twin sons born to Isaac and Rebecca. The elder son, Esau, despised his spiritual inheritance by marrying outside of the perpetual covenant established between God and his grandfather Abraham. The lot then fell to the faithful Jacob who was then forced to flee for his life. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and by his four wives founded the House of Israel, that covenant family by whom the entire population of the earth was to be instructed and redeemed.

3.13.19—Son—The Greek word which is here translated as “Son” derives from roots which mean “child, maiden, boy (one beaten), slave, servant, minister, sting”. Peter’s use of this word portrays Jesus as the atoning sacrifice, the Son given because of the infinite love that the Father has for a fallen world. Jesus is the Son of God, not just His

he was determined to let him go.
### 3.13.32—Pilate—With the death of Herod the Great, his kingdom was divided into four parts called tetrarchies. Herod’s son Archelaus ruled Judaea for approximately ten years, after which he was deposed. His kingdom was thereafter ruled by a series of Roman procurators or governors. According to our extant histories of the time, Pontius Pilate was appointed as the sixth governor of Judea in the twelfth year of the reign of Tiberius, or about 26 AD. Pilate lost his position in Palestine about the time of the death of Tiberius.

### 3.14 Peter rehearses the perfidy of the elders of the Jews which branded them as the villains that they were.

#### 3.14.5–6—Holy One—Can this be anything other than a reference to the sixteenth Psalm verse 10 wherein David declared that the Lord God would not allow His ”Holy One” to see corruption, a prophecy that was fulfilled in the fact that Jesus’ body lay in the tomb for hardly more than thirty-six hours.

#### 3.14.9—Just—The Greek word which is here translated as ”Just” derives from roots which mean equitable, innocent, self-evidently righteous”.

#### 3.14.13—murderer—The person of Jesus Barabbas, one of the seditionists of the time who had been released unto the Jews during Passover instead of Jesus of Nazareth.

### 3.15 Many of those standing in the congregation before Peter and his companions were party to the unrighteous act of putting to death the Son of God, he who was sent into the world to bring peace and harmony into the lives of the children of the Eternal Father. Peter and John were eyewitnesses of the life, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth. There could be no doubt that he had overcome all of his enemies. The healed man was an irrefutable witness that the power of God which Jesus had wielded while in mortality had remained among his disciples.

#### 3.15.4–6—Prince of life—The Greek word which is here translated as ”Prince” derives from roots meaning ”commencement, chief, corner, magistrate, power, rule, chief leader, author”. One of the roots gives rise to the English word ”arch”. Jesus most assuredly is the ruler of life, the author of life on this planet inasmuch as he was the instrument of creation in the hands of the Eternal Father. By His Word, the worlds came into existence, and by His Word, the worlds and their denizens will be redeemed and sanctified. Jesus holds the keys of both death and hell.

#### 3.15.15—we—Without doubt in reference to John and himself, but Peter was probably including the man who had just been healed from his lameness as well.

### 3.16 There is a superior translation of this verse available.

And this man, through faith in his name, hath been made strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is in him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. (JST, Acts 3:16)

What might otherwise have been construed as veiled mysticism, bordering on animism, is clearly articulated in terms of the Gospel of Christ. We hereby discover it is the faith of the man himself, in the name and person of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, that had brought about the miracu-
lous cure of congenital lameness. Because of his longtime defect and presence at the gates of the Temple, no one could doubt that the healed cripple was anyone other than who he was. This witness must have been terribly distressing to those who had fervently fought against Jesus and his disciples.

3.17 There is a superior translation of this verse.

And now, brethren, I know that through ignorance ye have done this, as also your rulers. (JST, Acts 3:17)

As close attention to the semantic value of the words will reveal, the Jews to whom Peter is speaking had ignored many things. First, they had not responded to John the Baptist, neither in his call to repentance or his witness of Jesus as the Christ. Second, they had ignored the teachings of the Gospel of Christ which were as clear a deposition of the light and truth of God as they could have possibly received. Thirdly, they had frequently ignored the miracles, the power of God manifested through the ordinances of the priesthood; at other times they had attributed them to the power of the devil or to trickery of some kind. Fourthly, they had hardened their hearts against the whisperings of the Spirit of God, cutting themselves off from all divine influence. Their ignorance had not been passive.

3.17.5—was—The first person singular conjugation of the archaic verb “witan” meaning “to know”. Another form of this verb is found in “wist” (see LK-C 2.49.13 and JN-C 5.13.6)

3.17.8—ignorance—The Greek word which is here translated as “igno-
arce” derives from roots which mean “not to know, not understand, lack of information or intelligence, ignore through disinclination”.

3.17.16—rulers—The Greek word which is here translated as “rulers” derives from precisely the same roots as 3.15.4–6. The emphasis here is on the fact that Jesus the “Prince” was put to death by the Jews and those whom they had accepted as “rulers”. He who was their King was put to death by usurpers.

3.18 During the time that Peter and the other disciples had served with Jesus, during his mortal ministry, many of the scriptures which prophesied of the Messiah were fulfilled before their very eyes. They were reminded time and again of how everything in their experience pointed to Jesus as the Son of God. Once the power and influence of the Holy Ghost was poured out completely upon the Apostles, all of the writings of the ancients became as an open book to them. They were edified and informed continually as they perused the record of the Jews. They then knew more than any scholar living at the time regarding the truth of that which had been written.

3.18.15—prophets—A man may only be a prophet if he bears testimony of the life, ministry, and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every inspired man, woman, and child who has testified of Christ at any time since the beginning of the earth fits into this category.

3.18.17—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendency to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested
that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

3.19 No one will inherit any degree of glory without having been cleansed from all sin. Those who will be “filthy still” are those who have become so determined in their corruption that they have no desire for reconciliation. They become sons of perdition, those lost for eternity from the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ and his Father. They will be cast out into outer darkness where they will suffer miserably for eternity. Peter invites the murderers of Christ to partake of the glory of the Celestial Kingdom rather than to be turned out altogether.

3.19.6—converted—That is to say, changed from their murderous disposition. Those who inherit some degree of glory in the many mansions of the Father will have put away all sin from their lives. Although they may not have wickedness imputed to them, neither will they have righteousness provided where none has been prevalent. Absence of sin may be salvation, but it is not exaltation.

3.19.12—blotted—The Greek word which is here translated as “blotted” derives from roots which mean “obliterate, erase, pardon”.

3.19.16–18—times of refreshing—The Greek word which is here translated as “refreshing” derives from roots which mean “recovery of breath, revival, cool off, relieve”. This word carries with it the sentiment of “renewal”. The “times of refreshing” have to do with the Second Coming and the renewal of the earth to its “paradisiacal glory”; that is to say, the glory of the Terrestrial world, or as it was in the days of Adam and Eve after the Creation and before the Fall.

3.20 There is a far better translation of this verse.

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you, whom ye have crucified; (JST, Acts 3:20)

The chief priests and Pharisees had gone to great lengths that they might not have the blood of Christ on their hands, at least publicly. Their jailing of Pilate was not so much for permission to put Jesus to death as it was for the Romans to put Jesus to death (see JN-C 18–19). Clearly they had not been successful in any manner to cloak their guilt; it must have been disconcerting to have one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth point that out in no uncertain terms.

3.20.5—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

3.20.6—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam

19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:
has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

3.21 From the very beginning of time, it was decreed that there would come a millennium in the temporal existence of the earth when the earth and its inhabitants would rest for a thousand years from all of the illnesses, biological, sociological, and spiritual, which it had suffered during the previous six thousand years. During that blessed time, the Messiah, the Son of the living God would dwell and reign upon the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. The Jews would have to look for that time to come before any hope of redemption from their regicide would flower.

3.21.1—Whoom—In reference to the Lord Jesus Christ who would make no public appearance in the world of men until the time of the Second Coming.

3.21.8–10—times of restitution—The Greek word which is here translated as “restitution” derives from roots which mean “reconstitution, restore (in health, home, or organization), reestablish in a good state”. The period of time prior to the Millennial reign will certainly satisfy any anticipation generated by this phrase. This is a dispensation of restoration, the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times.

3.21.25—prophet—A man may only be a prophet if he bears testimony of the life, ministry, and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every inspired man, woman, and child who has testified of Christ at any time since the beginning of the earth fits into this category.

3.22 In the eighteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses warns the Israelites that when they came into the land of Canaan they would be faced with the corruptions of the world. The abominations should be eschewed. It was sound counsel which they did not follow. Moses, being the glorious prophet that he was, foretold that in the deepest part of their apostasy there would be another Legislator who would come into their midst. Moses testified that the Law of that Legislator will need to be kept just a rigorously as what had been expected of the ancient Israelites.

The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that

21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.
which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him. But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him. (Deuteronomy 18:15–22)

The irony here is that the leadership in Jesus’ day was just as recalcitrant in their desire to remain in the dark, to not come into the presence of God. When the Lord God of Israel did come into their midst as the Lord Jesus, they put him away as soon as they possibly could, that they might remain in comfort, in the darkness of their own wickedness. Peter testifies to those standing before him in the Temple that Jesus was that prophet foretold, and his witness was that everything that had been prophesied concerning his mortal ministry had been fulfilled. To not hearken to those prophecies would mean their destruction as a covenant people, physically and spiritually.

3.22.2—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

3.22.9—Prophet—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility.

3.23 In a literal way, the Jews suffered a separation from their covenant homeland as tragic and destructive as anyone might expect. In AD 70 the city of Jerusalem and the Temple thereof was leveled. By AD 130 the nation of Judea was reduced to rubble, its inhabitants scattered to the four winds. Their experience was a cautionary tale for all. In our own time, the voice of the prophet of God may be heard, if the eyes, ears, and hearts of the inhabitants of the earth would open to see, hear, and understand. The Lord says, “Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.” Certainly, at the time of the Second Coming, when the Kingdom of God is established in its fullness upon the earth, those who will not submit to the authority of God, in the person of His Son Jesus Christ, will be summarily dismissed from any further participation.

3.23.15—Prophet—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility.

3.24 Samuel and Moses were clear types of the Lord Jesus Christ. Moses had been called into service as a Deliverer, a Redeemer at a time when the House of Israel weltered in abject bondage to one of the great military and intellectual powers of the world. Under divine instruction, Moses provided a Law, a
moral superstructure by which the liberty of the Israelites might be focused in righteousness. Jesus provided the Gospel of salvation, a higher Law by which man might focus his divine potential in eternity. Samuel was not only a Judge and the estabhsher of the Kingdom of Israel, he was a Priest of the Most High God. What is odd about his role as a priest is that he pertained to the tribe of Ephraim and not to Levi. He became a priest in the household of Eli, the High Priest of Israel, because he was consecrated to God by Hannah, his mother, as her Firstborn. The parallels between Samuel and Jesus should be obvious. Peter is deftly using the history of the House of Israel to demonstrate how Jesus' role in the eternal scheme of things had been illustrated in the lives and teachings of the prophets of Israel.

3.24.5—prophets—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility.

3.24.7—Samuel—The significance of Samuel in this discourse is to point out that the first two kings of United Israel were called up and anointed by this great man. He was a Kingmaker as Moses had been a Legislator. Jesus, as the Messiah, prepares, calls up, and anoints his disciples to be Kings and Priests just as Samuel had done during his ministry.

3.25 To Abraham were given glorious promises as part of his covenant with the Lord God of Israel.

Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 12:1–3)

Notice that the families of the earth were to be blessed in Abraham in some fashion, but the manner is not articulated here. The Lord is far more specific, however, when Abraham and Isaac fulfilled their responsibilities at Mount Moriah.

And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba. (Genesis 22:15–19)

Let no one doubt that the chief priests and Pharisees knew both passages of scripture and the fact that the latter citation involved the sacrifice of the only son born to Abraham and Sarah could not possibly have been lost on them. In Isaac would all of the blessings come. This, of course, is a type, another allusion to the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of the Father through whom the blessings of Heaven would be bestowed upon a repentant world. Peter has, by the power of the Holy Ghost, carefully crafted his sermon to

25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.
these rebellious Jews so that they might fully understand the magnitude of their betrayal of the Son of God. This is, as well, a tacit announcement that the Gospel and the priesthood would be taken from them and given to obedient peoples.

3.25.4—children—That is to say, the literal descendants of the servants of God. Of all people, the children of Israel should have known and abided by the truth. It is a matter of historical record, however, that a goodly portion of them were disobedient mockers. In some respects, they were a people who will be without excuse when brought before the tribunal of God.

3.25.7—prophets—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility.

3.25.11—covenant—The literal descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were promised that the principles of salvation and exaltation would be revealed to them first before being revealed to the world. Having once obtained that truth, that same posterity was to take the truth into a world filled with wickedness and error. The Jews had been somewhat lax in that responsibility.

3.25.20—Abraham—The undisputed “Father of the Faithful”. Modern biblical scholars are generally kind to Abraham as are most theologians in the sister religious of Judaism. The spiritual stature of Abraham is, for the most part, immeasurable by man. Abraham is one of the Lord God’s noblemen, whose faith and confidence in the divine word are equaled or excelled by few who have come into mortality upon this earth. Removing the Lord Jesus Christ from the list of candidates, however, would probably render our estimation of Abraham all but absolute. Abraham was one of three sons born to Terah during a millennium of poverty and famine. Through Abraham’s ministrations the promises made to the ancient fathers were preserved and re-established in earnest. In one of the most tender of moments recorded in secular or ecclesiastical history, the Lord God of Heaven instructed Abraham in the nature of the greatest gift that a loving God may bestow upon his creation when he asked for the sacrificed life of his son Isaac.

3.25.24—seed—Paul suggests in his letter to the Galatians that since the word “seed” is in the singular, that we ought to focus our attention on the Lord Jesus Christ as the one who would bless all of the kindreds of the earth. The disciples of Christ, laboring under his direction, however, can be the instruments by which the truth is carried into every corner of the world. This part of the covenant was given to the prophets of old.

3.26 Peter will soon be interrupted in his discourse to the multitude standing before him. But his final comment before he and John are taken into custody concerns the fact that because the Jews were children of the prophets, the heirs of the covenants made between Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the Lord God of Israel, they had been entitled to receive the fullness of the Gospel at the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. The cry of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and his disciples had been a call to repentance, an invitation to partake of the good things of the earth and the indescribable blessings of eternity. Many of the Jews in that congregation had been instrumental in seeing to it that Jesus was surrendered to the Romans falsely accused of sedition. They had insisted on his crucifixion, although they knew without a
doubt that he had done nothing to offend God. They had utterly refused to respond positively to the beckoning kindness of the servants of God and for that reason they would ultimately be rejected as a people and the promised light would dawn upon the gentle nations.

3.26.10—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

### Chapter 4

| Acts 4 | DN TC 1 771, 794 |
| Acts 4:1–12 | DN TC 2 124 |
| MD 76, 163 | EM 1 312 |
| EM 3 1050, 1078 | Acts 4:1–22 |
| DN TC 2 497 | DN TC 2 534 |
| Acts 4:1–22 | DN TC 2 62 |
| DN TC 3 299 | JC 706 |

4.1 It seems most likely that the priests and other Levites who were responsible for the welfare of the Temple had gotten wind of the healing of the man crippled from birth and were determined to squelch the two Apostles in their teaching.

4.1.9—priests—Under the Law of Moses, the priests were to be those Levites who were direct descendants of Aaron. The High Priest was to be the eldest direct descendant of Aaron who was worthy to serve as the mediator between God and His people. In the days of Moses, Aaron himself served in that capacity. In the days of David the King, the priests were organized into twenty-four courses who served in turn for a month in the Temple of the Most High. Thus, they would serve once every two years in the House of the Lord. During the Babylonian Captivity, twenty of the twenty-four courses were lost either through apostasy or intermarriage. Only four courses returned to the Temple site when it was rebuilt by Zerubbabel. Once the land of Israel fell into foreign hands, the administration of the priesthood was proscribed as well. By the time that the Romans were in power, the lifelong appointment of the High Priest had been reduced to a year, the selection either being made by the Romans or at least approved by them. Thus, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, very possibly would have been the High Priest of the priesthood in Jerusalem had not the Romans been in power. Because of the political influence gained by the priests during the Maccabean revolt, the desire to maintain that power surfaced frequently and found its organizational expression among the Sadducees.

4.1.12–15—captain of the temple—There are a variety of opinions as to who this official might have been. Most scholars perceive him as one of many captains chosen from among the priests and Levites who supervised proper conduct within the confines of the Temple by means of a cohort of Levites. Others understand him to be a priest second only to the High Priest who had direct responsibility for the security and sanctity of the Temple grounds.

4.1.18—Sadducees—Primarily a sect focused on the powers deriving from the Levitical priesthood in conjunction with the remnants of the Maccabean Kingdom (see MT-C 1.14–15). Ironically, their desires were more secular than religious, but they undoubtedly saw John the Baptist and Jesus as interlopers at best. They were poor guides of the people, for they sought for their own gain and not for the spiritual welfare of the children of Israel. (see MT-C 2.4.8–9)

4.2 Most of the priests, particularly those in leadership positions were die-hard Sadducees, a sect which placed itself in direct opposition to the Pharisaical notion of the afterlife and resurrection from the dead. There had been a delicate balance struck between these appositional schools of thought and

2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. | Acts 4:2 | AF 387 |
the fact that the rather popular aspects of Christianity seemed to side with the Pharisees was deeply disturbing to the Sadducees. The Apostles will frequently be subjected to physical and verbal abuse because of their testimonies of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Sadducees had wished that the whole episode regarding Jesus of Nazareth would have gone away. In this they were terribly disappointed. The Apostles met daily with the people to teaching the principles of salvation in conjunction with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The disciples correctly perceived the resurrection as the outward representation of the atonement of Christ. The victory over the tomb signaled the victory over personal sin as well.

4.2.2—grieved—The Greek word which is here translated as “grieved” derives from roots which mean “toil through, be worried, anguish, pain”. The Sadducees are not simply annoyed.

4.3 When a man was taken privately, as was Jesus, the chief priests and Sadducees had no scruples about conducting hearings after dark contrary to the Law of Moses. When Peter and John were apprehended before five thousand men, however, they thought for appearance’s sake they should be confined until they could be dealt with “appropriately”. Thus is their hypocrisy continually revealed.

4.3.11—hold—The Greek word which is here translated as “hold” derives from roots which mean “watching, observance, prison”.

4.3.20—even tide—Peter and John had healed the lamb man about three o’clock in the afternoon (see 3.1). Peter’s discourse and the other events surrounding this episode must have consumed more than two hours.

4.4 There are many scholars who have doubts that there were five thousand men in attendance at this instance who were converted to Christianity. Luke, however, does not say that the five thousand were converted. He simply states that there were five thousand men who were listening to what Peter had to say and from among them, many believed. The vast majority would not have been baptized in any event given the fact that they were guilty of knowingly putting an innocent man to death (see 3.14–19). Their sins could not be blotted out until after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Peter had addressed himself to those who were complicit in the crucifixion of the Lord; it is likely that those who “believed” were those who had been bystanders and witnesses of the healing of the man crippled from birth. Other academies have muddied the water somewhat by suggesting that the “five thousand” were the total number of those who had been received into the Church of Christ by this time. There is no contextual warrant for this conclusion.

4.5 Scholars have assumed that Peter and John were taken before the Great Sanhedrin and we may certainly conclude that members of that august body were in attendance at the hearing where Peter and John’s case was considered. It seems most likely, however, that these men who had congregated to censure the two Apostles were all directly connected with the Temple and who were partial towards the Sadducees’ philosophy. The fact that the Pharisees are not in attendance implies as well that this is not a formal hearing before the Great Sanhedrin.

4.5.11—rulers—The Greek word which is here translated as “rulers” derives from roots which mean “commencement, chief, chief constructor, masterbuilder, artificer, craftsman”. The English word “architect” comes from these same roots. Arguments to the contrary notwithstanding, it would appear that these were the men who were
directing the remodeling of the Temple which had begun during the reign of Herod the Great.

4.5.13—elders—The Greek word translated here as "elders" derives from roots which mean "senior, representative" which usually implied in Jewish circles that they would have been members of a Sanhedrin somewhere. In this case it was probably the Great Sanhedrin, the highest ecclesiastical council in Israel in that day. The Greek word is also the source for the English word "presbytery" and related words.

4.5.15—scribes—The scribes were the de facto scholars of the Law and the Prophets primarily because of their professional duties as the scriptural copyists. The strict rules and regulations regarding the perfection due to the texts of the Old Testament carried over into the philosophical orientation of the scribes. They were as demanding in their observance of the Law as they were in their diligence to pass the texts perfectly from one generation to another. Some scholars have suggested that the strict observance of the Law found its initial expression shortly after the return of the Jews from Babylon, and was intensified during the Maccabean period. In any event, the Pharisees considered themselves "separated" from the rest of the world, set apart as it were. As a result, many of the scribes gravitated toward the Pharisaical party politically.

4.6 The powers of the nation, political, ecclesiastical, and financial, were mightily arrayed against the disciples of Christ.

4.6.2—Anna—The father-in-law of Joseph Caiaphas. Anna was appointed high priest by Quirinus, the governor of Syria about AD 7. Seven years later he was forced to give up his ecclesiastical leadership of Israel by Valerius Gratus, one of the five procurators of Judea who preceded Pontius Pilate. Five of his sons would serve as high priest. He lived to be an old man.

4.6.4—high priest—In the days of Moses, the High Priest of the Levitical Priesthood was Aaron. Thereafter, the eldest righteous descendant of Aaron was to have that right bestowed upon him. Once set apart, he would serve for life. At the time of Jesus’ mortal ministry, the office of High Priest had become a political appointment bestowed by the Roman government. Generally it was a one-year appointment, but could be renewed. Thus, there were often more than one former High Priest alive at any given time. Caiaphas and his father-in-law Anna fell into that category.

4.6.7—Caiaphas—A Sadducee who served as High Priest between the years AD 18 and 36. His father-in-law, Anna, served from about AD 7 to 14. Caiaphas was deposed from his office by Vitellius (he who would one day be emperor of Rome) and, according to Christian historians, took his own life out of embarrassment and guilt.

4.6.9—John—The opinions of scholars vary, but most have settled upon two men who may be referred to here by Luke. The first was one of the sons of Anna who followed Caiaphas as the Roman appointed High Priest of Israel. The second was Jochanan ben Zaccai who became the president of the Sanhedrin after the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. He lived to be 120 years old and purportedly prophesied the eminent destruction of Jerusalem because of an extraordinary event involving the gates of the Temple, in conjunction with his reading of Zachariah.

4.6.11—Alexander—For the lack of another candidate, some scholars have settled upon Alexander Lysimachus, a rich benefactor of the

6 And Anna the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

Acts 4:6

JC 501

CR83-A 42
Temple who was deeply involved in the family of Herod Agrippa. It is his association with the Temple that commends this identity to us.

4.6.19—*kindred*—Probably members of the immediate family of Annas and Caiaphas, although some students of the scriptures imply a more expansive, though inexplicable, group of priests.

4.6.28—*Jerusalem*—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

4.7 If Peter and John were supposed to be intimidated by these illustrious men, the strategy failed miserably.

4.7.14—*power*—The Greek word which is here translated as “power” derives from roots which mean “miracle, miraculous power, able, possible”. This is a duplicitious and rhetorical question. The rulers knew precisely who Peter and John were and were acquainted with the miracles which Jesus had performed. The attempt here is to allow the Apostles to incriminate themselves.

4.7.18—*name*—There is no possible way that the rulers could be ignorant as to the loyalties of the two Apostles. Annas and the others are attempting to goad Peter and John into saying something by which they could be condemned, as they had condemned Jesus of Nazareth.

4.8 Jesus had promised the disciples that they would have the wherewithal to deal with their detractors when the time came (see *MT-C 10.18–20*). They would be blessed by the power and influence of the Father through the offices of the Spirit of God. Peter would not and could not be cowed by these wicked men any more than God Himself could be cowed. Peter spoke boldly because he was willing to do that which the Father through His Son had given him to do. The chief Apostle feared nothing that they could do because he was filled with faith, a faith that came from experience with the Lord Jesus Christ and from his personal obedience to the word of God.

4.8.2—*Peter*—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

4.8.17—*elders*—The Greek word translated here as “elders” derives from roots which mean “senior, representative” which usually implied in Jewish circles that they would have been members of a Sanhedrim somewhere. In this case it was probably the Great Sanhedrin, the highest ecclesiastical council in Israel in that day. The Greek word is also the source for the English word “presbytery” and related words.

4.8.19—*Israel*—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the prin-
4.9 Peter has a wry sense of humor, quite similar to that of the Savior (see JN-C 10.32–33). Everyone seems to be ignoring the fact that a man who had been crippled for more than forty years had been cured of his congenital ailment. This “act of kindness” was in the same order of magnitude as the healing of the man born blind or raising Lazarus from the dead. Seldom in the recorded history of Israel had any such thing taken place, and certainly not within living memory.

4.9.9–10—good deed—The Greek word which is translated here as “good deed” derives from roots that mean “beneficence, philanthropy, toil, effort, occupation”. Others have translated this word as “act of kindness”, as indicative and as astute as we might ever desire in a translation.

4.9.14—impotent—The Greek word which is translated here as “impotent” derives from roots which mean “strengthless, feebleness of body or mind, malady, frailty”. Almost any disease would qualify, but we are privy to the fact that Peter was referring to the man’s congenital lameness (see JN-C 5.3.8 for another general use of this word).

4.10 Peter is not tentative, hesitant, or timid in the presence of the leadership of his nation. He and John know precisely who they represent and are confident that for all of their trials and tribulations they are not going to be deterred by the protestations of the Sadducees and their accomplices. John the Beloved had been promised that he would not taste of death until the Second Coming (see JN-C 21.22–24); there was nothing that could be done to him that would change that blessing. Peter had been commanded to press forward in his ministry and, like Paul, he knew that in any case, whether he lived or died at the hands of the Jews or Gentiles, he would be blessed beyond measure. In this sense he was of the same mind as the Apostle Paul, having concluded that continuing life or ignominious death was all the same to him.

4.10.11—people—It is clear that Peter and John’s horizons had been considerably broadened. They had labored in the Temple, in the city of Jerusalem proper, and had responsibilities in Samaria and Galilee, but the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was destined to be taken into all of the world wherever the House of Israel had been scattered. This was not to be a local phenomenon.

4.10.13—Israel—in reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4.10.19—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

4.10.20—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested

9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.
that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

4.10.22—Nazareth—Located due west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee, in the highlands above the Plain of Esdraelon. The adopted home of both Joseph and Mary, inasmuch as their royal lineage assigned them to the city of Bethlehem, a fact that is reflected in the account of the Savior’s birth in the second chapter of Luke. Jesus, though not born in Nazareth, was a resident there for most of his life. (See also *MT-C 2.23.10*)

4.10.24—ye—Peter had made the same accusation in the Temple the afternoon before, to the multitude which had gathered as a result of the man having been healed from his congenital defect.

4.10.36–37—this man—Evidently the crippled man had been taken into custody with Peter and John. It should be no surprise that they did so, given his enthusiasm in the temple after he was healed.

4.11 The entirety of Psalms 118 bears reading at this point. The following verses, however, will suffice for our purposes here:

The stone which the builders refused has become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord; we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord. God is the Lord, which hath showed us light; (Psalms 118:22–27)

Jesus had cited this same passage of scripture as the conclusion to his parable of the Wicked Husbandmen which he had addressed to the chief priests and Pharisees (see *MT-C 21.42–45*). The men before whom Peter and John stood had failed miserably in their stewardship of the House of Israel. They were corrupt and malignant in every way. They had rejected the Heir, the Son of God, in favor of their own interests, personal power, and wealth. They were condemned beyond redemption at this point. Peter and John did not fear them for there was nothing to fear; the Sadducees and Pharisees were as decayed hollow trees which were about to feel the bite of the woodsman’s ax.

4.12 This is the sublime truth which every man, woman, and child who has ever lived will acknowledge. Every eye will see, every ear will hear, every knee will bend, and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ. In his resurrection we will all have immortality; through his atoning sacrifice we may have remission of our sins and find redemption. He is the Lamb slain before the foundations of the earth were laid, the Sacrifice of the Father whereby all of Creation might be perfected and sanctified. Jesus Christ was unique, and not solely because he was the Only Begotten of the Father in the flesh. He has

11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.
been and will be the only mortal to completely obey the voice of God in all things. He was without sin; no hint of rebellion ever manifested itself in thought, word, or deed. In his death we have life, escaping the awful monsters of death and hell.

4.13 The men who had gathered to censure the two Apostles were stunned by Peter’s reply to them. He was cogent, assertive, unrelenting, and determined in his approach. Clearly Peter and John did not pertain to any of the known sects of the day, and for a time they were flummoxed as to how these apparent bumpkins were able to confound them so readily. Then they remembered, in embarrassing terms no doubt, their verbal encounters with Jesus of Nazareth. They soon perceived that the Apostles had acquired all of their Master’s rhetorical faculties. It must have been a distressing realization.

4.13.6—boldness—The Greek word which is here translated as “boldness” derives from roots which mean “all-outspokenness, frankness, bluntness, publicity, assurance, confidence, pouring forth, utter, speak”. Coupled with this is the notion of speaking with authority, as had Jesus (see MT-C 7.29)

4.13.8—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

4.13.10—John—Frequently referred to as the “Beloved”. He is the author of the Gospel of John, the three small Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation, all in the New Testament. There are other manuscripts which have been prophetically alluded to but have not, as yet, seen the light of day. The desire of his heart was to remain upon the earth as the Savior’s emissary until Jesus returned in glory. Jesus granted his wish and thus became the faithful guardian ordained to stand as a witness of the apostasy and darkness that descended upon the world. He, with Peter and James, would be instrumental in the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood in this last dispensation, by which the Church and Kingdom of God was once more established upon the earth. The account of his labors during the intervening millennia will make fascinating reading for the faithful.

4.13.16—unlearned—The Greek word which is here translated as “unlearned” derives from roots which mean “unlettered, illiterate; writing, letter, note, epistle, book, learning”. Peter and John were not inclined to cite scholarly precedent, even though they knew and quoted the scriptures.

4.13.18—ignorant—The Greek word which is here translated as “ignorant” derives from roots which mean “pertaining to self, one’s own, private, separate”. The implication is that Peter and John could not be categorized. They did not pertain to the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, Herodians, or any other identifiable political or religious group. They were “idiosyncratic”, a word which derives from the same roots as the present word. From the perspective of the elders of the Jews who were judging them, they were “idiots”. Actual this latter word is far more

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.
complementary than it might seem at first blush.

4.13.21—marvelled—The Greek word translated here as “marvelled” means “admired”, a far more accurate and descriptive word as to the reaction of the elders of the Jews. The English word “Marvelled” derives from roots which imply the surprise which comes from having “seen” something extraordinary.

4.13.24–25—took knowledge—The Sadducees knew precisely who they had in custody. The realization here is that Peter and John had somehow acquired all of the skills by which they had been bested in their previous encounters with Jesus.

4.14 As was mentioned above, the man who had been healed had been taken into custody with Peter and John and had spent the night in the “hold” with them, much to his own satisfaction no doubt. The leadership of the Jews was stymied once again. How could they possibly dissuade anyone from accepting the divinity of what clearly had been the wielding of the power of God?

4.14.16—it—that is to say, the Sadducees could not possibly deny, as they had attempted to do in the past, that the present miracle had not really taken place. The man crippled from birth was an icon of the landscape of the Temple. Virtually everyone knew who he was and had been witnesses of his deformities.

4.15 The frustration in the room must have been almost tangible. The chief priests and the Sadducees were on the horns of a dilemma. They could not condemn the healing of the man born lame without incurring the ridicule of the people. They could not attribute the cure to the power of Satan for the same reason. Yet, to admit the obvious would be to suggest that there was something to the philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth, that their opposition had been a bad idea. Additionally, there was the insistence of the Apostles on the reality of the resurrection of Jesus which was, of course, anathema to the doctrine of the Sadducees.

4.15.13—council—There were at least two kinds of councils or Sanhedrins in the days of Jesus. The lesser court was comprised of twenty-three men and sought to resolve local conflicts. The greatest of the Sanhedrin was comprised of seventy-two men, ostensibly six men representing each of the twelve tribes. This would be like unto a supreme court for the nation. Depending on the nature of the offense, either could take jurisdiction.

4.16 One wonders as to how Luke became privy to the deliberations among the Sadducees, the chief priests, and the others after Peter and John had been ushered from the room. Some might suggest that perhaps Saul of Tarsus had been part of the company, but there is no warrant for that assumption, particularly in light of the heavy involvement of the Sadducees and the chief priests in the execution of the hearing. There may have been others who were ultimately convinced of the power and authority of the Church of Christ and later converted, giving to the disciples an account of the meeting. This, too, can been nothing more than mere speculation. The Sadducees and chief priests were now morally and intellectually bankrupt. They were confounded beyond action. In their stultified state they could do nothing more than slap the wrists of the disciples and lamely suggest that they cease and desist, a development that was as unlikely as anything they could have proposed.

4.16.28—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or

14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.
“established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

4.17 This decision is, of course, hardly more than bravado. There is nothing that the leadership of the Jews could do if the Apostles chose not to heed them.

4.17.12—straitly—The Greek word which is here translated as “straitly” derives from roots which mean “menace, forbid, threaten”. The English word “straitly” derives from roots which mean “bind tight, press together, causing hardship”. It differs considerably from its homophone “straight”, even though they are orthographically equal in some instances in archaic literature.

4.17.24—name—That is, the Apostles were to be charged that they could no longer administer to the people in any fashion in the name of Jesus Christ.

4.18 Historians suggest that this solemn warning given to Peter and John was to be a preamble to their ultimate incarceration for preaching in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. When they are next brought before the council, they are beaten for their disobedience, a flogging which they willingly accepted in the name of their Lord (see 5.40–42). When Peter is finally put in prison is not by the hand of the Jews, although it would be to their liking. Herod Agrippa was the instrument by which Peter was put in jail, shortly after the King slew James the son of Zebedee with the sword (see 12.1–4). It is interesting that when Lehi spoke to the people of Jerusalem about their personal and collective sins, the populace laughed him to scorn. Yet, when he spoke of the coming of a Messiah, a Redeemer who would bring about a remission of sins, they sought to take his life. The very name of Christ infuriates those who list to the voice of the wicked one.

4.18.19—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

4.19 One might ask the question as to whether Peter and John were engaging in civil disobedience or not. Did the Law of Moses proscribe teaching of the coming Messiah? The leadership of the Jews had determined that ministering to the people was a form of blasphemy, but blasphemy by definition exists when the name of God is taken in vain. In this case, Peter and John were well within their rights to teach of the resurrection and the atonement of Jesus Christ because he was the Son of God. The chief priests and Sadducees were usurpers of authority, notwithstanding their vaulted status within the Kingdom of Judah. John the Baptist had held the keys of the Kingdom of God upon the earth and those keys had not been employed in favor of the secular authority of Judea. In fact, it was quite the reverse. Jesus and the Apostles held the keys of the Melchizedek Priesthood, authority which took precedence even over that which John the Baptist held. The chief priests and Sadducees were attempting to dictate to the constituted ecclesiastical authorities what they could and could not do. Secularly, the Sadducees and other officers of Judaism had little or no power, inasmuch as the Roman government held sway. Peter could have justifiably replied, “By what power or name do you command us to cease and desist from our assigned tasks?” In fact, that is exactly how he replied.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

Acts 4:18
AF 523
Acts 4:18–19
CR83-A 42

Acts 4:19–20
DS 1 210
CR95-A 70
4.19.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

4.19.4—John—Frequently referred to as the “Beloved”. He is the author of the Gospel of John, the three small Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation, all in the New Testament. There are other manuscripts which have been prophetically alluded to but have not, as yet, seen the light of day. The desire of his heart was to remain upon the earth as the Savior’s emissary until Jesus returned in glory. Jesus granted his wish and thus became the faithful guardian ordained to stand as a witness of the apostasy and darkness that descended upon the world. He, with Peter and James, would be instrumental in the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood in this last dispensation, by which the Church and Kingdom of God was once more established upon the earth. The account of his labors during the intervening millennia will make fascinating reading for the faithful.

4.20 The Apostles had received a strict charge that they were to carry their witness into all of the world, beginning at that place; that is to say, in Jerusalem. The mandate was clear; there were no other options. The power and authority of God the Father accompanied them in everything that they did; their burning witness of the resurrected Christ was unquenchable. Peter and John knew the resurrected Savior. They knew that both the Father and the Son were aware of their witness of the truth. They could not deny that fact, nor dared they do it, lest they offend God and come under condemnation themselves.

4.21 There is a superior translation for this verse.

So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for many glorified God for that which was done. (JST, Acts 4:21)

What sort of threatenings could the Sadducees and chief priests array against the Apostles that could possibly deter them from obeying the God of Heaven? All these men could do is engage in bootless posturing. They knew they were exercisig unrighteous dominion, that Peter and John were not guilty of any crime against the Lord God of Israel. If the truth be known, the enemies of Christ had shot their bolt in their efforts to put Jesus out of mortality. They could not attempt to suborn Pontius Pilate again. The first attempt had broken any influence that they might have with the Roman governor and perhaps with the Roman government. They were on a downhill slide politically and must have sensed that. The possibility of rallying the inhabitants of Jerusalem against the Apostles as they seemingly had against Jesus also seemed dubious. The miracle involving the man crippled from birth had been much too public. Any serious action taken against Peter and John would have certainly been perceived by the public as petty jealousy.

20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Acts 4:20
CR91-O 10

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.

Acts 4:21
JST
rather than righteous indignation. As had always been the case in their dealings with Jesus, the leadership of the Jews once again found themselves powerless to do anything to the Apostles without also injuring themselves.

4.22 When would a person with congenital defects be forced to begin his mendicancy? At age thirteen, a Jewish boy is considered to be an adult, at least in a religious sense. He is a Son of the Law and therefore held directly accountable for his conduct before God and man. If we assume that the man had been no more than thirteen when he was first brought to the Temple to beg, his daily appearance before the inhabitants of Jerusalem and before the yearly pilgrims to the holy city would have been more than twenty years. Prosecuting this man or his healers would have been unconscionable and their open opposition at that time would have caused irreparable damage to the personal and political power of the Sadducees and their colleagues.

4.23 Many scholars have concluded that Peter and John returned to the congregation that had been gleaned through their preaching since the day of Pentecost, a number which may have been considerable. Others have suggested that they went to the place where they had been lodging since Passover, the upper room where they had celebrated the Last Supper with the Lord Jesus Christ. In any event, it is clear that the two Apostles went to meet with the other ten Apostles to report what had transpired and what had brought about their arrest and imprisonment.

4.23.10—company—The Greek word which is here translated as “company” derives from the same roots as 4.13.18. Thus, our assumptions about the meaning of the word “ignorant” are proven. Although the word could be used in conjunction with all of the members of the Church of Christ in Jerusalem, it is most likely that Luke is referring to the rest of the Quorum of the Twelve.

4.23.16–17—chief priests—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The “chief priests” designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of “chief priests” to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former.

4.23.19—elders—The Greek word translated here as “elders” derives from roots which mean “senior, representative” which usually implied in Jewish circles that they would have been members of a Sanhedrin somewhere. In this case it was probably the Great Sanhedrin, the highest ecclesiastical council in Israel in that day. The Greek word is also the source for the English word “presbytery” and related words.

4.24 The disciples of the early Church were blessed with clarity. They knew whom they worshipped and had no hesitancy in observing all that their Lord had required of them. They prayed to God the Eternal Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as they had been commanded.

4.24.14–15—one accord—Here was a body of men who were beginning to exemplify all that had been articulated by the Lord Jesus Christ during his mortal ministry. They were becoming a Zion people.

4.24.18—Lord—The Greek word which is here translated as “Lord” derives from roots which mean “bind, husband, absolute ruler” and produces in the English word “despot”. In other translations, the

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

Acts 4:23–30
MD 39, 166
PM 167

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:
word is rendered “Sovereign Lord”, suggesting that the disciples were expressing their commitment to the same notion that Peter had articulated before the elders of the Jews: that obeying God makes more sense than obeying the rabble that had usurped divine authority.

4.25 The scriptural reference here is to the second Psalm, and the whole of it bears citing.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? (Psalm 2:1)

In their prayer, the disciples will identify the “heathen” as King Herod Agrippa and Pontius Pilate. Herod, no doubt was considered such because he was more an Idumean rather than a Jew, an appointee of the Roman government. He had Jesus brought before him and, after a period of mockery, sent him back to Pilate. The machinations of the leadership of the Jews included putting Jesus out of the way so that he might be silenced forever. In this they would be frustrated in both the long and the short term.

4.25.8—David—The second king of United Israel and successor of king Saul. David was the youngest of eight sons born to Jesse, although only seven are ever named in the scriptural account.
4.25.15—rage—The Greek word which is here translated as “rage” derives from roots which mean “snort, make a tumult; grate the teeth, gnash”. The Hebrew word used in the second Psalm which is translated as “rage” is from a primitive root which means “tumultuous”.
4.25.19—imagine—The Greek word which is here translated as “imagine” derives from roots which mean “take care of, revolve in the mind, be of interest, concern, importance”. The Hebrew word that is used in the same passage in Psalms derives from roots which mean “murmur (in pleasure or anger), ponder”.
4.25.20–21—vain things—The Greek word which is here translated as “vain things” derives from roots which mean “empty”. The Hebrew word used in Psalms derives from roots which mean “worthless, empty”. All of the cogitations of the leadership of the Jews were to no avail, being ill-advised from the beginning.

4.26 The remainder of Psalm 2 follows:

The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Psalm 2:2–12)

Under the circumstances, could any passage of scripture have been more

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.
a propos than this one? The elements of this Psalm constitute the message and ministry of the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4.27 Here in this magnificent prayer are several essential truths encapsulated. First, that Jesus of Nazareth, he who was born of Mary in the city of Bethlehem, was literally the only begotten Son of God the Eternal Father in the flesh. Second, that this same Jesus had been foreordained in the councils of Heaven before the earth was framed, as the Messiah, the Anointed One, who would bring about the redemption of all creation. Thirdly, neither the Jews nor the Gentiles were sensitive enough to realize with whom they were dealing, and even when even a hint of illumination began to dawn upon them, they immediately rebelled and rejected any spiritual prompting contrary to their preconceived notions. As some of the most unlikely bedfellows that might be imagined, the corrupt political and ecclesiastical luminaries of the day, together with a multitude of suborned members of the covenant people, the Lord Jesus Christ was condemned and crucified contrary to all known and accepted law.

4.27.9—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. "Jesus" is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name "Yehoshua", "Oshea" or "Joshua". The name itself means "Savior", literally, "Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety".

4.27.15—Herod—The tetrarchy here is Antipas, one of the sons of Herod the Great, the same who at the behest of his erstwhile wife, Herodias, had John the Baptist beheaded.

4.27.17–18—Pontius Pilate—With the death of Herod the Great, his kingdom was divided into four parts called tetrarchies. Herod’s son Archelaus ruled Judaea for approximately ten years, after which he was deposed. His kingdom was thereafter ruled by a series of Roman procurators or governors. According to our extant histories of the time, Pilate was appointed as the sixth governor of Judea in the twelfth year of the reign of Tiberius, or about AD 26. Pilate lost his position in Palestine about the time of the death of Tiberius.

4.27.21—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as "Gentiles" means "foreigners" or "strangers", and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as "Gentiles" carries with it the notion of "massing" like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

4.27.26—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

4.27.29—together—Some ancient manuscripts add the words “in this very city”. While consistent with the disposition of the men who are praying, we ought not to conclude that such persecutions against the Son of God and against his disciples were limited to Jerusalem or to the land of Palestine. The nations of the earth with their conspirators from among the covenant people, have sought the destruction of the Church and Kingdom of God in every dispensation.

4.28 Jesus came into the world according to a foreordained plan, at a specific time and place that the mind and will of God might be accomplished. This is not to say that those who persecuted and taunted the Son of God were also foreordained to do so. All of the players in that episode which transpired in

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.
the Meridian of Time were free to do as they chose. They were not pawns in some cosmic game, but rather men and women who performed as they desired, as they had allowed themselves to be corrupted and blinded by this fallen world.

4.29 Peter and John knew that the power they had come upon them as they confounded the Sadducees and the chief priests had not come from within themselves, but rather as a result of the power and influence of the Holy Ghost which was upon them. We do not know if any of the other Apostles or disciples were nervous at the prospect of being imprisoned or otherwise dealt with harshly as they taught the principles of salvation. Their prayer, however, was that they would continue to be valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ in spite of the forces arrayed against them. They wished to avoid having fear taint their faith, that they might be true to the covenants which they had made, and that they might carry forth the work of the Father and the Son without any hesitancy whatsoever.

4.30 That which had facilitated the release of Peter and John in this instance was the clear power of God which had been exhibited in the healing of the man who had been born lame. The outward manifestation of the power of the priesthood wielded in the name of Jesus Christ had made it possible to teach the Gospel of salvation and exaltation without serious interruption. The disciples were not seeking for signs and wonders that they might personally be aggrandized in the eyes of the people, but that they might be protected from the proposed violence of the leadership of the Jews. The disciples hope that the same consternation experienced by the Sadducees and chief priests in this first instance might continue, that they might be stultified in their attempts of malignantly silence the preaching of eternal life through the name of Jesus Christ.

4.30.23—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

4.31 There are many instances recorded in the sacred history of the various dispensations of the Gospel of Jesus Christ where the voice of God spoke peace to the hearts and minds of the disciples. Often such words of comfort were accompanied by what others might interpret as an earthquake, a shaking of the building wherein the disciples were gathered. The voice of God to the ancient Nephites introducing the appearance of His Son, caused a quaking within their mortal frames. Nephi rebuked his recalcitrant brothers by a single touch of his finger, a touch which shook them to the very core of their being, a touch empowered by the Spirit of God which was upon Nephi mightily. And so we might point to countless similar experiences by which the servants of God were justified in their faith, sustained in their willing acceptance of the labors that had been placed upon their shoulders. The Twelve had been imbued with great power on the day of Pentecost, but they would continue to receive blessings of this kind throughout their lives, particularly in time of great trial and tribulation.

4.32 The family is primeval model for the Law of Consecration, whether neither the parents nor the children want for anything so long as there is plenty. In every dispensation since the days of Adam and Eve, commandments from God the eternal Father and His Son have commissioned the establishment of a people who were to be of one heart and one mind, to

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

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

32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own;
dwell in righteousness, and to have no poor among them. Enoch and others established entire cities where these principles were employed on a day to day basis. Not every attempt has been successful, given the weakness of human will and faith in the face of personal sin. In anticipation of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, there will arise a people led by prophecy and the priesthood of God who will be as successful in implementing the principles of the Celestial Kingdom into their lives as any people who have ever lived upon the earth.

4.32.15—soul—Several ancient manuscripts add the phrase “and there was no kind of difference or dissension among them”. Whether these words were originally written by Luke or were added later by some well-intended transcriber, the sentiment expressed is accurate and inspired.

4.32.37—common—Many have attempted to twist this description into a form of communism like unto that which manifested itself in eastern Europe and elsewhere during the last century. Communism as espoused by Engels, Marx, and others, was fundamentally a godless state which encouraged neither love nor devoted friendship. It was a forced equality, and hardly anything more. That its perpetrators were fired by even baser motives has been satisfactorily demonstrated in the subsequent history of the movement.

4.33 At the heart of all happiness is an act of obedience to God the Father. The Apostles’ continuing witness of the principles of eternal life as modeled in the life and atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ enhanced the power of the Spirit of God within them, and from thence to the entire membership of the Church of Christ in that dispensation.

4.33.7—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

4.33.14–15—Lord Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

4.33.18—grace—The Greek word which is here translated as “grace” derives from roots which mean “graciousness, gratifying, divine influence on the heart, cheerful, calmly happy, joyful”. How could such a people not be happy? The principles of divine law always bring joy into the lives of those who abide by them. As was said also of another people who strove to be obedient to the principles of eternal life, so it may be said of those disciples who dwelt in Jerusalem at this time: “surely there could not have been a happier people among all of the people who had been created by the hand of God”.

4.34 Judas Iscariot, in a fit of avarice, condemned the humble sacrifice of Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, when she poured out a great quality but they had all things common.  

33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.  

CR86-A 32  
Acts 4:32–35  
EM 3 1113  
Acts 4:32–37  
DNTC 2 44, 114, 432, 485  
JC 705, 718  
EM 1 312  

4.34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as  

CR83-A 42  
Acts 4:33  
EM 4 1570  
CR86-A 32  
Acts 4:34–35  
AF 438
of spikenard upon the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in anticipation of his
death and burial (see JN-C 12.1–8). Jesus’ reply was simple enough. The
disciples would always have the poor among them, and selling the spikenard
that Mary had offered in sacrifice would not have made much of a dent in
the poverty of the saints. There was a way to alleviate poverty, a Law by
which all material ills might be healed. Living the Law of consecration and
stewardship would be the means by which the disciples of Christ might enjoy
perpetual prosperity. The spirit of love which would abide in the hearts of
the saints would spur great generosity and would curb material excesses of all
kinds. Truly it may be said of all of those who have entered into this Law
with all of their hearts: they were never in want for all things needful.

4.35 A stark contrast is going to be made by Luke with his account of blessed
state of Joses Barnabas in his offering, together with the selfish actions of
Ananias and Sapphira in their perfidy. A man or woman wishing to enter
into this Celestial society which is governed by the Law of consecration and
stewardship must formally recognize that all that he or she apparently pos-
sesses, the earth and all of its blessings, belong to the Creator, He whose
right it is to reign. A saint willing to dwell in this benevolent setting must
agree to consider nothing to belong to himself or herself, but that it has been
willingly surrendered for the common good. Such a person is not left desti-
tute or naked, but is given a stewardship with which he or she is expected to
magnify the general good of the Church and Kingdom of God on the earth.
The disciple’s motivation is the Christlike love which he or she has for the
body of Christ. From the surplus, then, the poor are given their steward-
ships, who thereby are given the opportunity to learn to be productive and
secure in their labors for and in behalf of their brethren.

4.35.7—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles”
derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political lan-
guage, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair
between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John
the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Mes-
siah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business
of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles consti-
tutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ.
From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not
pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat
infrequent in practice.

4.36 Here we are introduced to the traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus,
otherwise known as the Apostle Paul. We are not privy to the details of his
conversion, but it is clear that he was held in high esteem by the governing
councils of the Church of Christ. It is possible that he may have been one of
the Seventy, but is more likely that he was one of those who, on the day of
Pentecost, received the fullness of the Gospel of Christ at the hands of the
Apostles. Here we see one of his first acts of piety after having accepted the
ordinances of salvation and exaltation.

4.36.2—Joses—An Anglicized form of the Greek transliteration of the
Hebrew name Joseph.

4.36.9—Barnabas—An early disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ about
whose conversion we know little. That he pertained to the tribe of
Levite is clear; whether he was a descendant of Aaron and therefore a
priest after that order, we do not know. Linguists suggest that “Bar-
 diminished by the form “spikenard,” the latter element
meaning a “prophet, inspired man”.

35 And laid them down at the apostles’ feet, and distribution was
made unto every man according as he had need.

36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is,
being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the coun-
try of Cyprus,
4.36.17—*consolation*—The Greek word which is here translated as “consolation” derives from roots which mean “imploration, hortation, solace, intercessor, console; call near, invite, invoke, beseech”. Our English word “paraclete” derives from the same roots and which is used almost exclusively in reference to the Holy Ghost. That he was a powerful witness and preacher of the Gospel of Christ, filled with the Spirit of God, there can be no doubt, for the Apostles dubbed him so.

4.36.19—*Levite*—With the rejection of the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ before Sinai, the House of Israel was deprived of the Melchizedek Priesthood. The lesser priesthood was then bestowed upon the tribe of Levi, that same tribe to which Moses and Aaron belonged. Thus, the Levitical Priesthood governed the religious affairs of the House of Israel until the mortal ministries of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ. The direct descendants of Aaron were ordained priests, and the eldest righteous descendant of Aaron served as the High Priest of Israel. We do not know the place which Joses Barnabas held in that organization.

4.36.25—*Cyprus*—A large island in the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea approximately 140 miles long and fifty miles wide. How and why Barnabas hailed from that place is unknown.

4.37 We are not told precisely where this land was located, but it is likely that he had liquidated property which belonged to himself on the island of Cyprus. Having received that sum of money, Barnabas brought it all, holding nothing in reserve, and bestowed it upon the Church in his desire to enter into the Law of consecration and stewardship. His exacting obedience made him an active participant in the spreading forth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, because he was, as his sobriquet implies, filled with the Spirit of God and breathed peace to those who were seeking truth and peace.

4.37.14—*apostles*—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

Chapter 5

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,
ship. They were expected to dedicate all of their time, talent, and means for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on the earth. They were to be mutual benefactors and beneficiaries of this high and holy societal state. They wished to have all of the benefits of such a society, but they desired to have an advantage as well, something that would distinguish them from their fellows financially. At the heart and soul of Zion is the trust and confidence that all participants have in one another, having a knowledge that they were all to be of one mind, to be one heart, to dwell in righteousness, and to have no poverty among them. Ananias and Sapphira violated the spirit of their covenant in an egregious fashion. They wished to reap all of the rewards that pertained to Zion, but they did not wish to make the requisite sacrifice.

5.1.6—Ananias—One of an erstwhile couple who attempted to enter into covenant of consecration but held a portion back to gain an advantage over their brethren. His conspiracy did not fare well.

5.1.8—Sapphira—One of an erstwhile couple who attempted to enter into covenant of consecration but held a portion back to gain an advantage over their brethren. Her participation in the conspiracy did bode well for her.

5.2 Ananias and Sapphira were conspirators together; they had concurred in their duplicity. In their chicanery they thought to deceive the Spirit of the Lord and for their pains were revealed for what they were. The entire selling price was to be rendered to the Church and Kingdom of God if they were to be found prepared to enter into the deep and abiding spiritual relationship with the rest of the members of the community. Holding back a portion of the selling price of their possession clearly demonstrated a lack of faith in the system, a faithlessness that would have brought destruction to the rest of the Church had their nefarious plot been allowed to succeed.

5.2.25—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

5.3 Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of a soul-destroying hypocrisy, one that would have eventually consumed the unity of the Kingdom of God upon the earth. They were sinning against God, against themselves, and against their fellow men all in the name of a petty greed that sprang from an unwillingness to trust those who professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The nature of Peter’s question to Ananias is extraordinary. Why was it that Satan had such power over one who professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Was the act of withholding a portion of the selling price of the possession the only transgression of which Ananias and Sapphira were guilty? Were there other undisclosed sins which had not been addressed before their baptism into the Church? Had they been guilty of any kind of wickedness since having received those magnificent covenants at the hands of the Apostles? We are not explicitly told, but some act on their part had given Lucifer an inroad into the minds and hearts of Ananias and Sapphira such that they were willing to attempt a deception that was virtually impossible to pull off.

2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?
5.3.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

5.3.4—Ananias—One of an erstwhile couple who attempted to enter into covenant of consecration but held a portion back to gain an advantage over their brethren. His conspiracy did not fare well.

5.4 Contrary to the efforts of godless men to force the institution of communism upon the populations of all nations, those who sought to depart from Babylon in order to become citizens of Zion were free at every step to become a part of that holy union. In our own dispensation, no one came to be associated with their brethren in Zion without having reached a mutual accord between themselves and the appropriate priesthood leaders. Once the willing participant and his Bishop were of one mind, the transactions that precipitated the transition into full fellowship with the covenant people could take place. It must not have been much different in the days of the ancient Apostles. Ananias and Sapphira had already come to an agreement with the Apostles as to what would be necessary to become part of the establishment of Zion. During the process of doing what they had promised to do with their possessions, Satan breathed a spirit of doubt into their hearts and minds, which prompted them to hedge their fullfledged membership in that community by withholding a significant portion of the moneys obtained from the sale of the property. What sort of conduct had they been engaging in, that led them to blindly believe that they could deceive the servants of God? What brought them to tell the lie? These are the essential questions which Peter raises. The lie was destructive to their mutual faith, a circumstances evoking dire consequences, but the undisclosed sins had far more serious consequences in conjunction to a community devoted to righteousness.

5.5 There may be some who think this punishment harsh, but given the intent of Ananias and Sapphira in succumbing to the degree of corruption with which they had been tempted, and the potential consequences upon the early Church membership, this seems no less expedient than the destruction of Achan and his family in their theft from God when the city of Jericho was taken and destroyed. To have allowed Achan to continue in his wickedness would have been to permit an internal corruption that would have destroyed the confidence which the children of Israel had in their leadership. Luke is patently clear that the examples of Ananias and Sapphira served as a definitive cautionary tale for all of those who thought to associate themselves with the Apostles in any other fashion than the one which the Lord Jesus Christ had pointed out.

5.5.1—Ananias—One of an erstwhile couple who attempted to enter into covenant of consecration but held a portion back to gain an advantage over their brethren. His conspiracy did not fare well.

5.6 Note that even though it was within the power of Peter and the other Apostles to restore Ananias to mortality through the ordinances of the

4 While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him
Priesthood of God, they chose not to do so.

5.6.6—wound—That is, the men prepared Ananias’ body for burial by wrapping him in traditional burial clothing.

5.7 One wonders as to why it was that Sapphira did not accompany her husband when the latter attempted to deceive the Apostles with the feigned contribution. Had she been with him when the transaction regarding the selling of their possession came to fruition? Had she carried to their home the amount which they sought to hide from the Church of Christ? That she was a willing participant in the erstwhile charade we may be absolutely certain. The death and burial of her husband would come as a great shock, to say the least.

5.8 Sapphira and Ananias had their stories aligned perfectly. She knew precisely what to say in regard to their commitment to the Church, together with their mutually devised deception which they had attempted to perpetrate upon the Apostles of Christ. Peter’s questions are obviously rhetorical. It is also clear that Sapphira’s participation in the fraud was not passive. She had been an active participant in this instance, and perhaps there were other nefarious activities in which she and her husband had engaged which had dulled their spiritual sensitivity such that they thought to deceive those who cannot be deceived.

5.8.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

5.9 What sort of wickedness had been present in the lives of these erstwhile disciples that caused them to think that they could perpetrate such a crime against the people of the Lord God of Israel? What sort of sinning would bring them into attempting this collusion of deception? In both cases, the revelation that Peter and the others were well aware of the answers to those questions unhinged their spirits from their bodies and they were ushered into the spirit world where they would wait upon the mercy and forgiveness of God once they had sufficiently repented of their presumption and arrogance.

5.9.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

5.9.15—tempt—The Greek word which is here translated as “tempt” derives from roots which mean test, endeavor, scrutinize, entice, dis-
principle, piercing, attempt, trial, through, across, beyond”. As the case with all those of think of themselves in more exalted terms than can ever be justified, Ananias and Sapphira thought that they could slip by the scrutiny of the Apostles, and thereby enjoy the profits that would derive from their deception. It was doomed to failure from the outset, though these two wicked people could not foresee the results because of their own self-inflicted blindness.

5.10 We are specifically told that the young men spoken of here are the same ones who prepared Ananias for burial; therefore we might correctly conclude that those preparations and the final disposition of the body had taken approximately three hours to perform (see 5.7). Sapphira suffered the same fate as her husband for precisely the same reasons. These two were not deprived of their lives simply to serve as an example of the consequences of sin. They departed this life because they had failed to measure up to the commitments which they fully understood and yet were willing to forfeit for mere financial advantage. They had at one time been devoted disciples, fervent in their faith, who had allowed themselves to be compromised by the adversary. They had been of sufficient faith at one time to be invited to participate in a far more sacred and divine community than that which the world could offer. What precisely brought about their fall from grace we do not know, but every man should consider his own place and commitment to the things which he knows to be true so that he not fall err in the same fashion.

5.11 The two groups spoken of here could be those who had already entered into the law of consecration and those disciples who had not as yet made that sacred commitment. On the other hand, they may be the body of the all of the disciples and others who were aware of the fate of Ananias and Sapphira who were not yet disciples. In either event, the application of the word “fear” varies according to the faith and knowledge of those spoken of here.

5.11.3—fear—The Greek word which is translated here as “fear” derives from the same sources as the English word “phobia”. It can not only evoke the notion of terror, alarm, or fright, but also carries with it the sentiment of awe and reverence. The meaning is therefore based on the context of the word’s use.

5.11.8—church—The Greek word which is here translated as “church” derive from roots which mean “calling out, meeting, congregation, assembly”. This Greek word produces “ecclesiastical” and related words in English. The English word “church” derives from old Germanic and Greek sources which have to do with the meeting place, rather than the people gathered together. The assembly of those who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ, who keep his commandments, and remember him always. The officers and teachers within the Church have been placed there by the Lord to help facilitate the assembly to measure up to the full stature of Christ as a result of the covenants they have made. The formal organization of the Church was established by God to clearly indicate how and when the body of Christ should be instructed in their duties to preach the gospel, perfect the saints, and redeem the dead. The material holdings of the Church are provided so that the responsibilities of the membership of the Church might be accomplished in an orderly fashion, that all who participate in the building up of the Kingdom of God on the earth might sense in part the contributions they have made and are making to the establishment of Zion.

10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.
5.11.12—many—Not only those who were disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also those who were acquainted with the Kingdom of God upon the earth.

5.12 Much has been written regarding the proper arrangement of verses 11 through 15 in order to make sense of the text. As will be seen, a simple inspired addition of one word clears up any misunderstanding of the text and obviates the necessity for the rather tortuous arguments in favor of a restructuring of the passage. Much of what Luke narrates here came as a direct result of the fervent prayer of the disciples after the first appearance of Peter and John before the elders of the Jews (see 4.24–30).

5.12.4—hands—While one may interpret this word as meaning that the Apostles "worked" many miracles, it undoubtedly has reference to the ordinances which they performed for and in behalf of the faithful. They literally laid their hands upon the heads of those who were ill or otherwise afflicted.

5.12.7—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term "apostles" derives originally signified "I send a message". In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not attained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

5.12.10—signs—The Greek word which is translated here as "signs" derives from roots which signify "mark, indication, token, wonder, miracle". The word "sign" in English derives from Latin roots which mean "mark, figure, image". Both suggest an outward manner of identification. These are the natural consequences of the power of God, the priesthood, having been bestowed upon the sons of God (see 2.19.10).

5.12.12—wonders—The Greek word which is here translated as "wonders" derives from roots which mean "prodigy, omen". The faithful would have the Heavens opened to them, by ordinances, teachings, and direct revelation (see also 2.19.5).

5.12.18—they—Again, it is difficult to identify the antecedent of this pronoun. Is Luke referring to the Apostles or to the general body of the Church of Christ? Given the logistics involved, it would seem that the specific unity in the Temple at Jerusalem was in reference to the Quorum of the Twelve. The membership of the Church was far greater at the time than most theologians have guessed.

5.12.22–23—one accord—The Greek word which is here translated as "one accord" derives from roots which mean "be of the same breath, be of the same passion". The English word "accord" derives from roots which mean to be of "one heart". Luke uses this phrase frequently (see 1.14.5–6, 2.1.14–15, 2.46, and 4.24.14–15)

5.12.25–26—Solomon’s porch—Scholars are at odds regarding the origin, location, and purpose of that portion of the Temple complex at Jerusalem which has been traditionally called Solomon’s Porch. Some have identified this edifice on the eastern edge of the Temple mount as that which served as a hall of Judgment where the King of Israel administered his authority. Flavius Josephus suggests that because of Acts 5:12
AF 168
Acts 5:12–15
MM 2 364
Acts 5:12–16
DHC 4 574
DNTC 2 44
TPJS 206
EM 1 88
Acts 5:12–17
JC 707
its inherent aesthetic beauty this was the only portion of the Temple buildings left standing by the Babylonians when the city and Temple were destroyed in 589 BC. Other historians are dubious about the continuity of the structure since the time of Solomon. It was like unto a covered “stoa” which at one point was enclosed as dwelling places for the Levites who served at the Temple in their courses. In the days of the Savior and the Apostles it apparently was a far more open space for those who visited the Temple and was generally associated with the Court of the Gentiles. It served as a place for open preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

5.13 There exists a superior translation of this verse which clarifies Luke’s intent.

And of the rulers durst no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them. (JST, Acts 5:13)

We do not know whether Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had previously joined themselves to the Church of Christ, but certainly the Sadducees and perhaps the Pharisees as well, made it perfectly clear that such an action would be considered heresy.

5.13.11—them—Probably in specific reference to the Apostles, although the whole of the Church would be implied (see 5.12.18).

5.14 Whereas men of prominence and wealth sought to maintain themselves apart from the Church of Christ in order to preserve their political and ecclesiastical influence, there were great numbers of people who, according to their faith and humility, cleaved unto the Kingdom of God

5.14.15—women—Some scholars have made an issue out of the fact that women suddenly appear as disciples of Christ, joining themselves with the Church and Kingdom of God. Even a cursory reading of the four Gospel reveals that the faith of women had been dully represented from the very beginning of the dispensation.

5.15 There are endless polemics as to whether Peter’s shadow actually healed anyone. It is clear, however, that the faith of the people in the power that rested upon the Apostles was such that they thought that the shade of his person could work miracles. Although there are notable exceptions, most healings take place after a prescribed manner, as clearly articulated in the scriptures as anyone might hope for. The anointing with oil and the imposition of hands has ever been the pattern, established since the days of Adam and Eve. The diseased were presented to the Apostles so that they might be more easily seen, much in the same fashion as the palsied man had been lowered through the roof of the house that Jesus might more easily administer to him (see LK-C 5.17–25). No doubt Peter was as compassionate as time and strength allowed him to be.

5.15.25—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to

13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. (JST, Acts 5:13)

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) (EM 1 10)

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.
that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

5.15.29—overshadow—The Greek word which is here translated as “overshadow” derives from roots which mean “cast a shade upon, envelop in a haze of brilliancy, invest with preternatural influence”. Given the diversity of manifestations possible, we might forego any definitive speculation as to what actually occurred on these occasions.

5.16 In addition to the inhabitants of the city of Jerusalem being blessed and strengthened by the Apostles, there were multitudes of others who expressed faith in the testimonies of others, friends, relatives and acquaintances, who bore witness of the power of God, the priesthood of Jesus Christ which resided within Peter and the other Apostles. These came to Jerusalem to be healed and they were not disappointed. The diseased and the possessed responded to the administrations of the Twelve and the membership of the Church of Christ continued to increase dramatically. One may easily imagine the consternation of the Sadducees and others who witnessed this daily manifestation of success. For them these developments would have constituted one public relations disaster after another. Dispatching Jesus of Nazareth had brought no peace of mind or stability to their precarious political and ecclesiastical situation. The Twelve Apostles were far more productive as a body than Jesus had ever been on his own. The more the membership of the Church and Kingdom of God grew among them, the more their public embarrassment increased. They would attempt to bring some sense of order to their situation, but they were on a fool’s errand.

5.16.13—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

5.17 For the Sadducees, the public displays of divine power by the Apostles were exasperating. If these healings and exorcisms continued, they concluded, the tense political and religious stability which they were attempting to maintain would collapse into chaos. If the truth be known, however, they were more jealous than patriotic.

5.17.3—high priest—We are not told which of the two, either Caiphas or his father-in-law Annas, is the person to whom Luke is referring. The Romans recognized Caiphas and the Jewish people recognized Annas. Some ancient texts do, however, insert “Annas” into the narrative at this point and Luke designates Annas as the high priest elsewhere (see 4.6) In the end, the distinction is wholly academic inasmuch as they were, for the most part, of one mind.

5.17.17—sect—The Greek word which is translated here as “sect” derives from roots which mean “take for oneself, preference, make a choice, party; disunion, schism”. These roots produce in English the word “heresy”, although anciently the term was not as negatively charged semantically as it is today.

5.17.20—Sadducees—Primarily a sect focused on the powers deriving from the Levitical priesthood in conjunction with the remnants of the Maccabean Kingdom (see MT-C 1.14–15). Ironically, their desires were more secular than religious, but they undoubtedly saw John the Baptist and Jesus as interlopers at best. They were poor guides of the

16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,
people, for they sought for their own gain and not for the spiritual welfare of the children of Israel. (see MT-C 2.4.8–9)

5.17.25—indignation—The Greek word which is here translated as “indignation” derives from roots which mean “hot, glow, fervid, earnest, heat, zeal, ardor, jealousy, malice, covet”. Although the semantic spectrum for this word is broad, it does not take much imagination to discern the sentiments of the Sadducees.

5.18 Taking the Apostles into custody once again was motivated by a desire on the part of the Sadducees to get the disciples of Jesus out of the public view, and to deprive them of a forum wherein they could openly teach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is interesting that the arrests of the Apostles seem to take place late in the afternoon, assuring that that they would be available for a hearing the next day and also guaranteeing that they would not be at the Temple immediately after the hour of prayer.

5.18.7—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

5.18.13–14—common prison—We should not be surprised to discover that this keep was the same in which Peter and John had been incarcerated after the healing of the man lame from birth (see 4.3) In any event, the Greek words translated as “hold” in the earlier verse and as “prison” here are precisely the same.

5.19 One wonders at the imperative of having the Apostles at the Temple the next morning. Surely this liberation of the Apostles was not solely for the embarrassment of the Sadducees or merely to peak them with the escape. There were other instances recorded when the servants of the Lord were imprisoned, remaining captives for many days until they were finally set free by divine means. The intervention of the Lord is generally for the benefit of the faithful and humble, and not for the tweaking of the wicked. No doubt there were among those congregated at the temple, souls who needed the comfort and witness of the Twelve, and that a delay would have been injurious to their spiritual well-being.

5.20 The Apostles were set free, not to preserve their lives against the machinations of the wicked, but to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to a body of people who were willing to listen to the principles which they had to offer.

5.20.15–16—this life—That is, the words of eternal life which bear witness of the truth that through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, all mankind may be saved from death and hell, even as many as will receive it.

5.21 The disciples have no difficulty exiting the jail and making their way to the designated teaching station. It is because of their explicit obedience to divine direction that the Apostles are continually successful.

18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

Acts 5:19

DHC 5 31

CR83-O 40

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But

Acts 5:21

JC 69
5.21.19–20—*high priest*—We are not told which of the two, either Caiaphas or his father-in-law Annas, is the person to whom Luke is referring. The Romans recognized Caiaphas and the Jewish people recognized Annas. Some ancient texts do, however, insert “Annas” into the narrative at this point and Luke designates Annas as the high priest elsewhere (see 4.6) In the end, the distinction is wholly academic inasmuch as they were, for the most part, of one mind.

5.21.23—they—One is at a loss to decide with certainty who these fellows were. Both “council” (5.21.31) and “senate” (5.21.36) seem to evoke the Great Sanhedrin. Some scholars have suggested the leadership of the sect of the Sadducees is implied; other have asserted that they were the extended family of the high priest. That these all constituted a gathering of the self-important we may be certain.

5.21.31—council—The Greek word which is here translated as “council” derives from roots which mean “joint session”, in reference to the Great Sanhedrin. It may also refer to a “tribunal” of any sort. It is likely that many members of the ruling body of Israel were in attendance, but most likely those of the Sadducees predominated.

5.21.36—senate—The Greek word which is translated here as “senate” derives from roots which mean “aged, old, eldership”. This word is also frequently used to identify the Great Sanhedrin, but clearly Luke did not refer to the same body twice, but was making reference to at least two different categories of men

5.21.41—Israel—in reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5.22 How disconcerting would the absence of the Apostles from the prison have been to the jailers? Since the Sadducees and their colleagues would not accept the truth of the matter, that they had been divinely aided in their release from the prison, they would most likely conclude that the Apostles had been liberated by a fellow conspirator among the jailers or the officers. The prospect of facing Annas and Caiaphas with such a report must have been unnerving.

5.23 The guards that had been placed to watch the tomb where Jesus’ body had been placed were told by the high priest and others to testify that they had fallen asleep while on duty, and that in their slumber the disciples of Jesus had come and had taken the body of the Savior away (see MT-C 28.11–15). How ironic it was, then, that there appeared to be no other explanation as to how the Apostles escaped from the common prison. The third instance, the escape of Peter from a similar, if not the same prison, was even more disturbing (see 12.3–11, 18)

5.23.4—truly—We should probably conclude that this was accompanied by a rather stiff oath on the part of the officers.

5.23.10—safety—The Greek word which is translated here as “safety” literally means “not-fail” and derives from roots which mean “secure, made fast”.

5.23.13—keepers—There are in Greek three distinct words which may be translated into English as “keepers”. The first means to “watch, guard from loss or injury, keeping the eye upon, note, fulfill a command, hold fast” (see MT-C 24.8.7 in reference to the guard set to watch Jesus’ tomb). The second, that which is used here, specifically means to “prevent from escaping”. The third implies a “fortress or full

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.
5.24 How were the Sadducees going to explain what had transpired? Miraculous healings, exorcisms of evil spirits, power over prisons, all these were almost inexplicable. Some might claim that all was done was by the power of magic, or with the assistance of evil spirits, in which case the Sadducees and their comrades, together with their religious philosophy appeared to be quite inept. No doubt someone among them expressed the opinion that they had received assistance from one of their own number, but a breech in that defensive wall would have been as untenable as the first opinion, that they were somehow richly endowed with mystical powers. The truth of the matter, that they were indeed the servants of the living God, must have seemed as a knife twisting in the very bowels of the leadership of the Jews.

5.24.4—5—high priest—We are not told which of the two, either Caiaphas or his father-in-law Annas, is the person to whom Luke is referring. The Romans recognized Caiaphas and the Jewish people recognized Annas. Some ancient texts do, however, insert “Annas” into the narrative at this point and Luke designates Annas as the high priest elsewhere (see 4.6) In the end, the distinction is wholly academic inasmuch as they were, for the most part, of one mind.

5.24.8—11—captain of the temple—There are a variety of opinions as to who this official might have been. Most scholars perceive him as one of many captains chosen from among the priests and Levites who supervised proper conduct within the confines of the Temple by means of a cohort of Levites. Others understand him to be a priest second only to the High Priest who had direct responsibility for the security and sanctity of the Temple grounds.

5.24.14—15—chief priests—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The “chief priests” designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of “chief priests” to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former.

5.24.20—doubted—The Greek word which is here translated as “doubted” derives from roots which mean “thoroughly nonplussed, much perplexed”.

5.24.24—this—Either a reference to the rather disturbing escape from prison, or the whole Christian problem.

5.25 What a shock to the system! The escapees had not escaped very far. If anyone had seriously entertained the notion that the Apostles had gained their liberty by means a defector within the ranks of the Sadducees, they certainly were not doing much to exploit their freedom or to protect their fellow conspirator. The disciples were once again within the walls of the temple, in a place where they could be easily apprehended. This was inexplicable, unless the Apostles had absolutely no fear of anything that the chief priests and elders could do to them. Any consternation that the council and senate may have had at the disappearance of the disciples of Jesus from prison was now intensified by the Apostle’s apparently complete disregard for their power and prestige. The disciples, of course, were doing no more than their Master’s will, as instructed by the angel of God.

24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.
5.26 If the captain of the temple or any of the officers had hard feelings toward their former prisoners, it was clear to them that they could not flagrantly and publicly exhibit those sentiments as they took them into custody. The Apostles were addressing a body of people who willingly heard their words, accepting the principles of the Gospel with humility and peace. So powerfully had the Spirit worked upon the minds and hearts of the multitude that it was clear to the officers that they could do none of the disciples an injustice of any kind. Whether the audience would have actually taken the lives of the captain of the temple and the officers or not is a matter of conjecture, but it is explicitly said by Luke that that delegation feared for their personal welfare in light of the receptivity of the congregation. This perception was probably due to their own guilty consciences.

5.27 As extraordinary as the escape had been in the eyes of the officers and captain of the temple, the cheerful lack of resistance on the part of the disciples must have disturbed the men considerably. All the Apostles needed to do was to raise a small hue and cry and the multitude would have rescued them in a trice. In this the disciples exemplified the patience and forbearance of the Lord Jesus Christ during the closing hours of his life.

5.27.12—council—This may or may not be the fully constituted Great Sanhedrin (see 5.21.31), but it certainly is a gathering of determined oppressors who are incensed at their own inability to control the disciples of Jesus.

5.27.15—16—high priest—We are not told which of the two, either Caiaphas or his father-in-law Annas, is the person to whom Luke is referring. The Romans recognized Caiaphas and the Jewish people recognized Annas. Some ancient texts do, however, insert “Annas” into the narrative at this point and Luke designates Annas as the high priest elsewhere (see 4.6) In the end, the distinction is wholly academic inasmuch as they were, for the most part, of one mind.

5.28 The irony of the accusation that the high priest made against the Apostles is that the elders of the Jews had stood before the procurator of the province, Pontius Pilate, and had willingly accepted the guilt associated with the crucifixion upon themselves and upon their children (see MT-C 27.24–29).

5.28.5—straitly—See 4.17.12.

5.28.14—15—this name—The name of the Lord Jesus Christ by which the disciples did and said all things.

5.28.21—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

5.28.26—intend—The Greek word which is here translated as “intend” derives from roots which mean “will, be willing, disposed”. This word is somewhat passive as opposed to other Greek roots which are far more determined. The distinction is similar in the meanings of “prefer” versus “choose”. The Apostles had not been directly accusing the council and the senate of murder, but the high priest was suggesting that they were not doing enough to disabuse the people of the idea. These are the words of a guilty man; it would be a lie to assert otherwise.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.

Acts 5:27–32
DNTC 2.67

Acts 5:28
CR86-A 47
Acts 5:28–32
AF 523
5.29 The chief priest and elders of the Jews had, indeed, “straitly charged” Peter and John that they could not speak of or teaching the doctrines of Jesus of Nazareth. The Apostles, however, had not made any commitment to desist. In fact, it was quite the reverse (see 4.18–20). What they said on the forgoing occasion they reaffirm here, but rather than frame it in the form of a rhetorical question, Peter simply stated what the intent of the disciples of Christ was. They were going to obey the voice of God in all things. An angel had delivered them from the clutches of the priests and elders and had then commanded them to repair to the temple to resume their labors. This they would do until they were commanded to do something else.

5.29.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

5.29.6—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

5.30 If the high priest had been delicate in his use of the Greek word which has been translated as “intend” (see 5.28.26), then Peter here gives him ample opportunity to rephrase his indictment. Peter openly condemns those gathered that they had been directly responsible for the torment and crucifixion of the Son of God as the Savior was working out the salvation of all mankind through his atoning sacrifice. Peter clearly illustrates the contempt which the leadership of the Jews had for the Lord when they insisted that Jesus be crucified by alluding to the Law of Moses.

And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. (Deuteronomy 21:22–23)

The elders of the Jews desired to have that scriptural opprobrium in order to lash out at the vestiges of Jesus’ disciples once he was dead. Jesus resurrection from the dead had made that attempt vacuous.

5.30.8—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself

29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts 5:29

30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Acts 5:30

FPM 244

MD 322

EM 2 732

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5.31 There is no true repentance or forgiveness of sins without the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance, the power to change one’s life for the better, comes only after someone has acquired faith sufficient unto salvation. It is our confidence in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, a sense of his perfect love for us, that spurs us to conform our lives to the principles of eternity. Forgiveness of sins likewise can come into our lives only when we accept the ordinances set by the Father for the remission of sins. Those ordinances are effective because His Son did all that was necessary to satisfy the Law of Justice and invoke the power of the Law of Mercy.

5.31.7–8—right hand—The hand of power and of sustenance
5.31.12—Prince—Jesus is the heir apparent of God the Eternal Father. During the Millennium, Jesus will reign upon the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords for a thousand years. Until that day in which every eye will see, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior will be the Prince of God in waiting.
5.31.15—Savior—The Greek word here implies deliverance and preservation as well as salvation.
5.31.21—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5.32 By the mouth of two or three witnesses the truth of all things may be established. Peter and the other Apostles, though Twelve men, might be considered by the council and the sensate as being but one voice. The Holy Ghost is the second witness of the truth and unless these men be completely depraved, they should be influenced in some degree by that divine power.

5.32.4–5—his witnesses—The Apostles were chosen by Jesus Christ to be his special witnesses, to testify in a personal way of his life and teachings, his death and resurrection, his power and authority in heaven and on earth. Although they were willing to do so, they did not volunteer or put themselves forward (see JN-C 15.16).

5.32.14–15—Holy Ghost—The commandment is to repent and be baptized. Those who obey are given the opportunity to receive the Holy Ghost to be a guide and comfort in their daily walk and talk. Those who continue to hearken to the voice of the Spirit will enjoy the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.

5.33 The men were infuriated to madness. Peter had clearly testified that they were directly responsible for the vilification and betrayal of the Son of God; that the eternal Father of heaven and earth had provided the means by which Jesus of Nazareth was redeemed from the grave and in turn was enabled to provide salvation for all of mankind as the Messiah; and that the Apostles and the powers of Heaven stood as united witnesses of the divine origin and destiny of the Lord Jesus Christ. What drove these men into this jealous rage and homicidal intent was that they knew that what Peter was saying was true.

5.33.7–10—cut to the heart—The Greek word which is here translated as “cut to the heart” derives from roots which mean “sawn asunder; exasperate”.

5.34 Was Gamaliel a convert to Christianity as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus appear to be? We cannot, at this point, determine precisely what means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gama-
his motivations were for coming to the defense of Peter and the other Apostles. He may have stepped forward simply because he felt a philosophical affinity with the disciples of Christ because of their stance on the literal resurrection from the dead. He may have spoken up in their behalf simply because of the natural antipathy which the Pharisees and Sadducees had for one another. The third possibility is, of course, that he actually believed the things which he was saying.

5.34.10—Pharisee—An extremely orthodox Jewish sect that believed that only a rigorous adherence to the Law of Moses would save the children of Israel. Their demands, however, went far beyond the constraints of the Law, to the point that almost every man was unconditionally condemned by their philosophy. Their attention was so focused on the minutia of their own reasoning that they were unable to comprehend the simplicity of what was demanded by the Gospel of Christ. Had they been able to forsake momentarily the pride and vanity which they felt over their elaborate readings of Moses, they might have seen the purpose for which the Law had been given was to point them directly at the mortal Messiah. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were undoubtedly both of this sect, as was Saul of Tarsus.

5.34.12—Gamaliel—The grandson of the renowned Hillel and the mentor of Saul of Tarsus. He was president of the council during the latter part of his life, having succeeded his father Simeon in that office. He was the first of seven men who were called “Rabban,” an exalted title more honorific than either “Rab” or “Rabbi”. According to tradition he was a direct line “receiver” of the Law, the thirty-fifth in the series of men who transmitted the Law of Moses from generation to generation. He was not only “a” doctor of the Law, he was considered to be “the” doctor of the Law.

5.34.30—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

5.35 Gamaliel’s appeal to the council and the senate is the quintessence of theological logic. Either the Lord God of Israel is the prime operator in the universe or He is not. Citizens of the Kingdom of God have a responsibility to live the principles and ordinances of the Law. To step outside of the prescribed roles assigned to them by the God of Heaven smacks of arrogance and self-righteousness. To take life because of religious differences without the direct mandate of Lord God violated the very intent of the Law.

5.35.8—Israel—in reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

5.35.15—intend—The Greek word which is here translated as “intend” is the active counterpart of the word used in 5.28.26. Whereas the council and senate had been coy in their use of the passive term, Gamaliel has no hesitancy in declaring that their proposed action is

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

Acts 5:35
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decidedly ill-advised.

5.36 Even though the identity of the failed insurrectionist mentioned by Gamaliel cannot be verified, that fact is not germane to the point that the good doctor is making. Gamaliel’s article of faith here is that the works of men do not ultimately succeed, while the works of God abound and prosper.

5.36.7—Theudas—A vast amount of argument and speculation had been conjured in order to identify the man to whom Gamaliel referred. There was a Theudas who raised an insurrection against the Romans some ten years after the appearance of the Apostles before the council and the senate recorded here. At the heart of the discussion is the accuracy of the chronology of Flavius Josephus and that of Luke. Those laboring by their faith only have a tendency to impugn the historical account of Josephus, while those taking a more empirical view suggest that Luke may have misspoke himself in naming Theudas in his narrative. There is, of course, a simpler solution: that there may have been another “Theudas” whose adventures have not survived in writing in any other place except here in the book of Acts.

5.36.12—somebody—That Theudas considered himself to be important there can be no doubt, but as to what he pretended to we can only conjecture. If the Theudas named by Luke were the same as mentioned by Josephus, we could readily conclude that he was a pretended Messiah, one of the individuals predicted by the Lord Jesus himself as he presented to his disciples the events that would transpire shortly after his death (see MT-C 24.4–5). If Luke correctly identified “Theudas” as an otherwise unidentified insurrectionist who lived before the time of the death and resurrection of the Savior, he might very well have claimed himself to be the king of the Jews, as had many others who advocated the expulsion of the Romans. The party of the Zealots was undoubtedly filled with many who were of this sentiment; men like unto Jesus Barabbas (see LK-C 23.19 and JN-C 18.40) and the two men crucified with Jesus of Nazareth.

5.37 Gamaliel makes reference to another man who rose up against the authority of Rome. Judas of Galilee had been no more successful than had been Theudas in establishing his cause.

5.37.1—After—While the identity of Judas of Galilee may be more substantive, the controversy regarding Theudas is still not clarified by this temporal reference. Again, if we follow the narrative and chronology of Flavius Josephus there is no Theudas to resort to prior to AD 45.

5.37.6–8—Judas of Galilee—Most historians agree that this insurrectionist lived about the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. Josephus identifies him as having lived at the time of the second taxation by Cyrenius about AD 6 or so. Whereas Theudas may have wished to be a king, Judas of Galilee simply refused to pay the tax and found a great number of his fellow countrymen who were willing to join his rebellion. Some scholars have associated Judas with the founding of the Essenes, but if the archeological community be correct, Judas would have been born two hundred years too late. That he shared some of the philosophy of the Essenes did not necessarily make him a card-carrying member of that esoteric group ensconced on the shores of the Dead Sea.

5.38 Gamaliel’s counsel is elegant: if Jesus of Nazareth and his disciples were no more than a political or theological aberration flitting across the stage of 36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let Acts 5:38–39

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history, they, too, in the end would fail. If the movement were even partially like unto that of the Maccabees who had rebelled against their foreign two hundred years previous, that movement begun by the ancestors of the high priest and the Sadducees, than they should not desire to thwart it, inasmuch as the Sadducees held that the rebellion against the Greek ruler Antiochus IV had been justifiable and the will of the Lord God. Gamaliel’s argument for leaving the disciples of Jesus alone was a theological one. The argument of the high priest and the Sadducees was one founded in guilt and personal vendetta against those who spoke so clearly in their involvement with the demise of the Son of God.

5.39 There is a superior translation of this verse.

But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; be careful, therefore, lest ye be found even to fight against God. (JST; Acts 5:39)

Gamaliel undoubtedly struck a nerve. The high priest and his party knew that Jesus was innocent of the crimes of which he had been accused before the Roman governor. There is sufficient evidence that they also knew precisely who Jesus was, the Messiah who was fulfilling all of the prophecies that had been made of him. But because they were motivated by personal gain and power, both political and ecclesiastical, they had rejected Jesus out of hand, much as the wicked husbandmen of the parable who were determined to slay the heir to the estate which they had taken for their own.

5.40 Wherein the high priest and the Sadducees agreed with Gamaliel is that they would not kill the Apostles. Their callous vindictiveness, however, was not completely assuaged. The thrashing that they gave the disciples was vicious and extreme, completely consistent with the frustration that the adversaries felt in not being able to destroy the Church and Kingdom of God.

5.40.5—agreed—The Greek word which is here translated as “agreed” derives from roots which mean “convince, pacify, conciliate, assent (to authority), rely”.

5.40.12—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

5.40.14—beaten—The Greek word which is here translated as “beaten” derives from roots which mean “flay, scourge, thrash”. This in fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy (see MK-C 13.9).

5.40.17—commanded—Half-hearted and ineffective, effects that the Sadducees themselves were conscious of.

5.40.27—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

5.41 If indeed, as the explicit definition of the word in 5.40.14 implies, the

them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught:

39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 And they departed from the

CR96-A 7
Acts 5:38–41
CR88-A 24
Acts 5:39
JST
Acts 5:40
DHC 3 (54)
Acts 5:40–42
AF 523
Acts 5:41

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Apostles were scourged, they would perceive themselves having suffered a similar affliction as had Jesus in the final hours of his mortal ministry. If the disciples were to be treated no differently than the master, then they were disciples indeed.

5.41.18—shame—The Greek word which is here translated as “shamefully” derives from roots which mean “render infamous, contemn, maltreat, disgrace, dishonor”. The Lord Jesus Christ had been shamefully treated in his own scourging and in having been “hung” on a tree so that he might appear before the people as having been “cursed” by God.

5.42 The Apostles had not been duplicitous in any fashion. They had submitted to the beatings and the haranguing by the high priest and the Sadducees, but they had not committed to do anything other than that which they had been commanded to by God the Eternal Father and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. There was no civil law by which the Apostles could be constrained, and since the deaths of John the Baptist and Jesus, any divine power and authority that they might have presumed had been stripped from the leadership of the Jews. The Apostles were imbued with the priesthood of God and spoke by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost. There was no one who could legitimately oppose them.

5.42.17—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

5.42.18—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

6.1 In every dispensation, the weaknesses of human nature are most starkly revealed when the principles of godliness are introduced. Perfection, salvation, and exaltation are not achieved in a day. As the Church of Jesus Christ grows it also develops, like any living organism, and frequent adaptations are required as the Gospel of Jesus Christ is incorporated into the lives of the faithful. As those who bear the burdens of the Kingdom improve in their understanding, as they observe the conditions of the membership of the

presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

Chapter 6

1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

acts 6

MM 4 165

acts 6:1–3

CR00-A 78

acts 6:1–4

JC 705, 718

acts 6:1–6
Church, they recognize emerging problems and seek for inspired solutions. In this particular case, the circumstances extant among the members of the Church required that several men be appointed and authorized to handle the temporal affairs the saints. In these matters they would be administering duties usually assigned to the Aaronic Priesthood. For that reason, many scholars have concluded that these seven disciples were called as Bishops among the saints of God. Other academicians have chosen to refer to them as “deacons”. In any event, these men were initially given charge of the temporal affairs of the Church in Jerusalem among those who had been received into the law of consecration.

6.1.19—Grecians—It is highly unlikely that these members of the Church of Christ were actually Gentiles. It is far more likely that they were Jewish converts to the Church who had been born outside of the nation of Judea. In most cases their native tongue would have been some dialect of Greek.

6.1.22—Hebrews—Given the explanation provided in 6.1.19, we should probably understand these members of the Church of Jesus Christ to be disciples who had been born in Palestine, who had for their native tongue some popular dialect which derived from ancient Hebrew, most likely Syriac or Aramaic.

6.1.25—widows—We may not know precisely what caused the problem wherein the widows of the Greek-speaking members of the Church in Jerusalem were being neglected. Some authorities have suggested bigotry of some kind, but the problem could have been easily generated by nothing more than an inability on the part of the Greek widows to adequately communicate their needs.

6.1.30—daily ministration—Under the Gospel law, it is the responsibility of the membership of the Church to watch over the widows and the fatherless, inasmuch as they would often be unable to provide for themselves. The Greek word which is here translated as “ministration” derives from roots which mean “attendance, aid, service, teacher, minister, pastor”. It is also the source for the English word “deacon”; hence, the observation in 6.1.

6.2 As the presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood upon the earth, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was indeed responsible for all of the affairs of the Church and Kingdom of God on earth. Their primary concerns, however, had to do with ministering to the spiritual needs of the saints. They were also directly charged with the responsibility of carrying the Gospel of Christ into all of the world. There were aspects of their callings which they could easily delegate to others; but there were portions of their responsibilities which could only be performed by themselves. While they were in a position to easily resolve seeming inequalities among the saints, their primary tasks, those which took up most of their waking hours, were not of a temporal nature.

6.2.17—reason—The Greek word which is here translated as “reason” derives from roots which mean “agreeable, fit, pleasing”. The question here is whether it was “fit, pleasing, or agreeable” to the Twelve that they serve tables; or was it agreeable to the Spirit of the Lord. This is not a matter of pride or lack of condescension; it is a matter of priorities. The Apostles had been taught well that to be the “servant” of all is to be as the Lord Jesus Christ. The central issue was that if the Twelve spent their time attending to these minor problems, they would not have the time or energy to fulfill the assignments which pertained specifically to their ordination as especial witnesses of the
Savior. The conundrum here is similar to that encountered by Moses in the wilderness when the people would stand in line all day to receive judgment from him. His father-in-law, Jethro, recommended that he select captains of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands to judge the lesser matters so that he could deal directly with the far more difficult issues. In that way, both Moses and the people would not wear themselves out.

6.2.23–25—word of God—That is, the dissemination of the Gospel among the disciples and those who were seeking the truth and had not yet found it.

6.2.27–28—serve tables—That is, to attend to tasks which fell outside of their prescribed responsibilities; in this case, to see to it that the Greek and Hebrew widows were treated with equality.

6.3 The elders of the Church were given the charge to recommend seven men who, in their estimation, would oversee the circumstances of the widows, primarily the Greek women (see 6.5) but perhaps including the Hebrew widows, in a fair and attentive way.

6.3.8—seven—A sufficient number of men so that the task of attending to the widow’s needs would not be overly burdensome for any one of them. Alma the elder, in providing for the needs of his people at the waters of Mormon, selected and ordained authorized priests at a ration of one for every fifty disciples. Initially there were four such priests. In short order there was a need to add five more because of the increasing membership of the Church of Christ.

6.3.11–12—honest report—That they might be trusted by all of the members of the Church.

6.3.16–17—Holy Ghost—That they might be discerning and inspired in all of their dealings with the saints.

6.3.19—wisdom—That their experience might prove useful in attending to the task which was to be put upon them.

6.3.23—appoint—The Greek word which is here translated as “appoint” derives from roots which mean “permanently place down, designate, constitute, convoy, ordain, set apart”. Note that it is the presiding authorities “appoint” while other officers and members may recommend and sustain.

6.4 The expanding Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth needed continuous guidance from those who had been called and ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ. Their tasks embraced the salvation of every man, woman, and child who lived in their day. Their love of the membership of the Church, almost all of whom had entered into the waters of baptism at their hands, could easily distract them from the dire needs of the rest of humanity. Therefore it was needful to appoint these seven men, full of love and faith, to attend to the needs of the local members of the Church in Jerusalem.

6.4.8—prayer—Every member of the Church of Christ was commanded to pray without ceasing. The Apostles were, however, serving as prophets, seers, and revelators. They were responsible for receiving light and truth for the entire Church as need arose. Their prayers were not merely for themselves, but for the advancement of the Kingdom of God upon the earth. This was one of their spiritual duties which they could not delegate to others.

6.4.12—ministry—The Greek word which is here translated as “ministry” derives from precisely the same roots as 6.1.30–31 and 6.2.27–28. In other words, the Apostles were not abdicating their roles as...
servants in the Kingdom of God; they are simply clarifying what the nature of that service was. In this sense, every priesthood bearer is a “deacon”.

6.5 There is as much misinformation and speculation regarding the source of the office of these seven men as one might find on any topic in the sectarian world. While there may very well have been apparent similarities between the organization of the Jewish synagogue and the early Christian Church it does not necessarily mean that the Apostles were following that structure as a model. The seven men were called and ordained as a response to divine revelation. Although all of their given names are Greek in origin, they were undoubtedly all Jews. Given the linguistic nomenclature, one wonders if their specific tasks were focused on the Greek widows.

6.5.10—Stephen—A learned and particularly eloquent servant of God who, after the Lord himself, appears to be the first Christian martyr in the days of the Apostles (see 7.1–60).

6.5.22—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotos in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

6.5.24—Prochorus—Little or nothing is known about this faithful member of the Church. Traditional Christianity, however, asserts that he served as the bishop of Nicomedia, an ancient city in northwestern Asia Minor, and later died as a martyr in Syrian Antioch. He was supposed to have been the author of the apocryphal New Testament volume, “Acts of John” which, of course, is ludicrous.

6.5.26—Nicanor—Not to be confused with any of the historical figures of the same name. To date, there is nothing else known of Nicanor other than this reference recorded by Luke.

6.5.28—Timon—There are several traditions regarding the ministry and fate of Timon, all of which have little in common with the truth.

6.5.30—Parmenas—There is a longstanding tradition that he was martyred in Philippi during the reign of the Roman Emperor Trajan.

6.5.32—Nicolas—Traditional Christianity has done much to slander the name of Nicolas. He is made out to be the founder of, or at least the inspiration behind, the nefarious apostle sect roundly condemned by John the Beloved in the book of Revelation.

6.5.34—proselyte—The Greek word here which is translated as “proselyte” derives from roots which mean to “drawn near, arrive from a foreign region, visit, worship, assent, consent”. Needless to say, the word can also refer to one who has come to accede to the principles of Judaism, regardless of their ethnic background. The English word “proselyte” derives from the Latin importation of the Greek word which came to be applied specifically to “aliens residents” dwelling in Rome. Its modern meaning has narrowed to mean “converts” from one religion to another. How this word applies to Nicolas is open to conjecture. Some scholars suggest that he was a Greek who was converted to Judaism and from thence to Christianity; others suggest that the conversion was merely from Judaism to Christianity.

6.5.36—Antioch—More than likely Luke is referring to the city in Syria...
where many of the early Christians dwelt after the persecutions began in Jerusalem and throughout Judea.

6.6 We believe that a man must be called of God, through revelation, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel of Christ and administer the ordinances of salvation by the power of the priesthood. In order for these seven men to be enabled to perform their tasks, they had to be ordained or set apart by the laying on of hands of the Apostles. The early members of the Church understood these principles well, and once these seven had been selected and sustained in their new callings by the members of the Church of Christ, the power and authority of the priesthood was exercised in their favor.

6.7 Notwithstanding the censure of the Apostles by the council and the senate, that they should no more teach in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is clear that they did. The Apostles knew, as did the Sadduces, that the action taken by that body of men had no legal significance.

6.7.3–5—word of God—That is, the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ increased. It seems clear that the seven who had the responsibility to care for the widows in Jerusalem had other evangelical assignments given to them as well.

6.7.15—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

6.7.23—priests—At first blush this announcement regarding the priests seems incongruous. Most priests and Levites had a tendency to favor the philosophy and political orientation of the Sadducees and therefore felt great antipathy towards the Christians. However, when we remember that Zacharias, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist all hailed from a priestly family it is easier to imagine that the cause of the Sadducees was not universally held by all of the descendants of Aaron.

6.8 Although the seven chosen to attend to the widows in Jerusalem are sometimes referred to as “deacons” it is clear from the conduct and effect of Stephen’s labors that he was a bearer of the higher or Melchizedek priesthood. By that authority he was able to administer to the sick and attend to those possessed of evil spirits, just as Jesus and his Apostles had. This is not to say that Stephen and the others were additional Apostles; there is nothing in the sacred text that would justify that. But it is certain that they possessed great power which transcended that of the Levitical order.

6.8.2—Stephen—A learned and particularly eloquent servant of God who, after the Lord himself, appears to be the first Christian martyr in the days of the Apostles (see 7.1–60).

6.9 There exists another translation of this verse.

And there arose certain of the synagogue, who are called Libertines, and also Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia, and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. (JST, Acts 6:9)

The experience of the Day of Pentecost had deeply impacted the residents of

| 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. | Acts 6:6  
|——|——|
| 7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. | Acts 6:7  
|——|——|
| 8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. | Acts 6:8  
|——|——|
| 9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. | Acts 6:9  
|——|——|
these communities who had come to Jerusalem as part of the Passover celebration (see 2.37–42). Nearly three thousand converts from among those pilgrims had accepted baptism, membership in the Church and Kingdom of God on the earth. The leadership of the foreign synagogues no doubt thought of Christianity as a threat, particularly since the conversion of so many had affected them financially. The leadership of these foreign synagogues were as frantic to put an end to the Christian incursions into their congregations as were the Pharisees and Sadducees. Notwithstanding their great opportunities for education and cultural enlightenment, they were no match for the divinely inspired Stephen.

6.9.7—synagogue—Many scholars have surmised that these foreign Jews had built their synagogue separate from the synagogues of the permanent residents of Jerusalem because of the contempt which the native Jews had for the Greek-speaking participants of the Diaspora. It may have been the reverse, but we may only chose sides of the argument at this point rather than discern the truth of the one view or the other.

6.9.15—Libertines—A great deal of speculation has arisen over the identity of these people. Some scholars, interpret the name as an observation about their former status as slaves, and having earned their freedom through right conduct or financial means, chose to refer to themselves ever after as “freed-men” or Libertines. Given the antipathy of the Jews in every generation towards slavery, it seems unlikely that such a group would continually remind themselves in public, particularly in Jerusalem, that they had once been in bondage. Other scholars and historians have made a case for there having been a city or a region in North Africa which bore the name of Libertina. Given the grouping of the Libertines with the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, this later explanation seems more likely. The inspired version states that these Jews were “called” Libertines which may return us to the first speculation, especially if this were a title used as an opprobrium by the Jews native to Jerusalem against those who had once been slaves.

6.9.17—Cyrenians—In reference to a Greek city on the north African coast approximately 800 miles due west of Jerusalem. It was the chief of five settlements that constituted the major population centers of the province of Cyrenaica or Pentapolisita. Many Jews settled there and the city later became a major Christian center as well. Simon, the man who was enlisted to bear the cross for Jesus as the latter was on his way to be crucified, was a resident of that city.

6.9.19—Alexandrians—Alexandria was the Greek, Roman, and Christian capital of Egypt. It was located on the western edge of the Nile delta, approximately 375 miles west of Jerusalem. In terms of culture and education, Alexandria ranked second only to Rome in the days of the Apostles. The largest library of the known world was located in that city. Jews who hailed from that place could hardly be deemed bumpkins in any fashion.

6.9.24—Cilicia—A province in the southeastern portion of that which is modern-day Turkey. It was bordered on the west by Pamphylia and Pisidia, on the north by Galatia, Cappadocia, and Commagene. At the time of the Apostles it was frequently considered an administrative part of Syria. Tarsus, the town that Paul the Apostle called home, was the chief city of that region. Whether or not Saul took part in any of these disputations we may only guess.

6.9.27—Asia—Undoubtedly, the Roman province of Asia Minor is
meant here. It is located on the western end of the peninsula between
the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Its capitol was at Ephesus.

6.10 Those who rely upon their own wisdom and learning to do battle
against one filled with faith and the power and influence of the Holy Ghost
are doomed to failure. The Spirit of God knows precisely what ought to be
said in order to reveal to the adversaries of the Lord the error of their
thinking and the folly of their conduct.

6.10.7—resist—The Greek word which is here translated as “resist”
derives from roots which mean “stand against, oppose”

6.11 When argument and other intellectual endeavors fail, the wicked resort
to any means to destroy those whom they perceive as a threat to their station,
power, and wealth. The leadership of these foreign synagogues will mis-
represent all that Stephen had to say in order to have him dispatched by the
deceived multitude. The tactics of those who oppose the Church of Christ in
our present dispensation have not varied much. Blasphemy and impiety were
the most effective charges that could be brought against Stephen if they
wished to have him put to death

6.11.2—they—that is, the leadership of the foreign synagogues in Jeru-
usalem. It is intriguing to witness the perfidy of the Scribes, Pharisees,
and Sadducees in others not of their camp.

6.11.3—suborned—The Greek word which is here translated as “sub-
orned” derives from roots which mean “throw in stealthily, introduce
by collusion, underhanded”. The English word “suborned” derives from
roots which mean to “furnish, prepare, or embellish secretly”.

6.11.15—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to
their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a
reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the
name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means
“drew him out”.

6.12 The leadership of the foreign synagogues was determined to dispatch
Stephen in any way that they could. They raised an insurrection against the
evangelist and brought prosecution contrary to the Law of Moses, that very
Law which they asserted that Stephen had spoken against.

6.12.3—stirred—The Greek word which is here translated as “stirred”
derives from roots which mean to “move together, excite to sedition”.

6.12.6—people—Who soon became a mob.

6.12.9—elders—The Greek word translated here as “elders” derives from
roots which mean “senior, representative” which usually implied in
Jewish circles that they would have been members of a Sanhedrin
somewhere. In this case it was probably the Great Sanhedrin, the
highest ecclesiastical council in Israel in that day. The Greek word is
also the source for the English word “presbytery” and related words.
They probably did not need much stirring to get them to a point that
they would be willing to deal with Stephen in a summary way.

6.12.12—scribes—The scribes were the de facto scholars of the Law and
the Prophets primarily because of their professional duties as the
scriptural copyists. The strict rules and regulations regarding the
perfection due to the texts of the Old Testament carried over into the
philosophical orientation of the scribes. They were as demanding in
their observance of the Law as they were in their diligence to pass the
texts perfectly from one generation to another. Some scholars have
suggested that the strict observance of the Law found its initial

10 And they were not able to
resist the wisdom and the spirit by
which he spake.

Acts 6:10

JC 587

11 Then they suborned men,
which said, We have heard him
speak blasphemous words against
Moses, and against God.

Acts 6:11

AGQ 4 50

12 And they stirred up the people,
and the elders, and the scribes, and
came upon him, and caught him,
and brought him to the council,

Acts 6:12

AGQ 4 50

JC 70
expression shortly after the return of the Jews from Babylon, and was intensified during the Maccabean period. In any event, the Pharisees considered themselves “separated” from the rest of the world, set apart as it were. As a result, many of the scribes gravitated toward the Pharisaical party politically.

6.12.25—Council—There were at least two kinds of councils or Sanhedrins in the days of the Apostles. The lesser court was comprised of twenty-three men and sought to resolve local conflicts. The greatest of all the Sanhedrin was comprised of seventy-two men, ostensibly six men representing each of the twelve tribes. This would be like unto a supreme court for the nation. Depending on the nature of the offense, either council could take jurisdiction. We are told below (7.1) that the high priest was in attendance so that we might conclude that it was the Great Sanhedrin to which Stephen had been taken.

6.13 Once before the Sanhedrin, the “suborned” men raised their hue and cry against Stephen.
6.13.10–11—ceaseth not—The Apostles had been commanded by the council and the senate to cease and desist from teaching in the name of Jesus Christ. The leadership of the foreign synagogue had no hesitancy to pour salt into any open wound.

6.13.18–19—holy place—No doubt in reference to the Temple at Jerusalem, but a wider application could have been made. Jesus had prophesied that not one stone of the Temple would be left upon another (see MT-C 24.2). He also was fairly explicit about the destruction of the entire city of Jerusalem (see MT-C 15–18) and the destruction of the Jewish nation (see MT-C 24.22). It was the responsibility of the Apostles and those who labored with them to testify of these things in anticipation of their fulfillment, in the hope that some of the people might repent and escape the inevitable destruction which would come at the hands of the Romans.
6.13.22—law—Meaning the Law of Moses. No doubt Stephen had implied that the Gospel of Christ would supersed the lesser Law that had been given because of the rebellion of the children Israel while in the wilderness.

6.14 This hearkens back to the misrepresentation of the Savior’s words which he spoke concerning the destruction of his personal temple, his physical body, that would be raised up in three days (see MT-C 26.61). Again this is a twisting of Jesus’ observation and Stephen’s teachings. Was Jesus going to directly destroy the Temple in Jerusalem? Of course not. The wicked would be the instrument by which the wicked would be destroyed. Was the accusation brought against Stephen by the suborned men true, that he taught that the customs contained within the Law of Moses would be changed? Yes, but again there is misrepresentation. All that was good and holy about the Law of Moses, fit for an exaltable people, could easily be found in the principles and ordinances associated with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Whether or not Stephen had said anything about the cessation of animal sacrifice is left to conjecture.

6.14.11—Nazareth—Located due west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee, in the highlands above the Plain of Esdraelon. The adopted home of both Joseph and Mary, inasmuch as their royal lineage assigned them to the city of Bethlehem, a fact that is reflected in the account of the Savior’s birth in the second chapter of Luke. Jesus, though not born in Nazareth, was a resident there for most of his life.

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

Acts 6:13
JC 169
EM 1 127
6.14.22—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means "is born". The cognate in Hebrew means "drew him out".

6.15 One is reminded of Abinadi before King Noah and his priests shortly before his martyrdom. We may also easily think of Nephi the son of Lehi whose countenance distressed his brethren at a time when they were prepared to kill their younger brother. Nephi and Lehi, the sons of Helaman, while being held prisoners by wicked and depraved men, also gave their antagonists a similar witness of their divine mission to preach the principles of eternal life to all those for whom they had charge. The connection to the physical appearance of Moses, however, after his forty days with the God of Heaven could not have been lost on all those who were in the room. The Spirit was so mightily upon the evangelist that he was transfigured before them all. This held the murderers in check until Stephen had had the opportunity to deliver the essential portion of his message to them.

7.1 What follows is a detailed account of Stephen’s defense before the council regarding the false accusations made against him, together with his fervent testimony regarding those things which had been accurately reported concerning his teachings. The latter was more infuriating than the former to the elders of Judah. One should probably conclude that Luke’s account comes from his traveling companion, Paul, he who had been Saul of Tarsus before his own conversion to Christianity.

7.1.4—5—high priest—We are not told which of the two, either Caiaphas or his father-in-law Annas, is the person to whom Luke is referring, The Romans recognized Caiaphas and the Jewish people recognized Annas. Some ancient texts do, however, insert “Annas” into the narrative at this point and Luke designates Annas as the high priest elsewhere (see 4.6) In the end, the distinction is wholly academic inasmuch as they were, for the most part, of one mind.

7.2 Stephen will rehearse the history of the covenant people from Abraham to Jesus, continually demonstrating how those who should have known better behaved poorly. The irony of this narrative is that Stephen will testify of his vision of the Father and the Son just as Abraham bore his witness of the Lord God of Israel. Abraham was nearly martyred for his words; Stephen paid the ultimate price for faithfulness.

7.2.4—Men—As linguists have adequately pointed out, this word is a redundancy produced by a literal translation of an idiomatic phrase "men-brethren", common in Greek. Therefore, Stephen is addressing two categories of people, not three.

7.2.5—brethren—The Greek word which is here translated as "brethren" derives from roots which mean “from the womb”. Although it can be understood figuratively, what is to be understood in this instance is that Stephen is speaking to those who were peers in the House of Israel.

7.2.7—fathers—The Greek word which is here translated as “fathers” derives from roots which refer to one’s literal or figurative ancestors. Stephen is addressing those who were supposed to be the shepherds of...
Israel.

7.2.13—appeared—The record of Abraham’s life as recorded in the book of Genesis does not speak of the Lord’s appearance to the Patriarch. However, in Abraham’s own account of the episode, he is filled with the vision of the Almighty and the Lord God Jehovah spoke with him directly.

7.2.17—Abraham—The undisputed “Father of the Faithful”. Modern biblical scholars are generally kind to Abraham as are most theologians in the sister religious of Judaism. The spiritual stature of Abraham is, for the most part, immeasurable by man. Abraham is one of the Lord God’s noblemen, whose faith and confidence in the divine word are equaled or excelled by few who have come into mortality upon this earth. Removing the Lord Jesus Christ from the list of candidates, however, would probably render our estimation of Abraham all but absolute. Abraham was one of three sons born to Terah during a millennium of poverty and famine. Through Abraham’s ministrations the promises made to the ancient fathers were preserved and re-established in earnest. In one of the most tender of moments recorded in secular or ecclesiastical history, the Lord God of Heaven instructed Abraham in the nature of the greatest gift that a loving God may bestow upon his creation when he asked for the sacrificed life of his son Isaac.

7.2.18—Mesopotamia—The part of the world which is here entitled as “Mesopotamia” has been called by many names: Chaldea, Sumeria, Babylonia, among others. “Mesopotamia”, strictly speaking, means the land “between the rivers”; that is, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers which flow from the north, southeastward into the Persian Gulf. Called “the Island” by Arabian cartographers, it is a verdant area approximately 700 miles long and from 20 to 250 miles wide. Together with Egypt and Palestine, Mesopotamia forms part of the “fertile crescent”. Anthropologists often refer to this area as the “cradle of western civilization”.

7.2.23—Charran—A variant spelling of the proper name “Haran”. Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees and traveled northwestward until he came to a well-watered place among the nation of the Mittani. Abraham and his family called the place “Haran” after the third son of Terah who had died in the land of Chaldea. Some traditions assert that Haran died as a result of a similar sacrifice as that to which Abraham was submitted. The region about Haran eventually took on the name of “Paddan-aram”, probably meaning “the way of the high plains”. There is no warrant to somehow equate “aram” and “Abraham” as some erstwhile scholars have suggested.

7.3 Abraham was born in the city of Ur in the land of the Chaldeans, in the southwestern portion of Mesopotamia. It was a nation and people heavily influenced by idolatry and wickedness, especially that brand of impiety that developed in the land of Egypt. As a relatively young man, Abraham was nearly offered up as a living sacrifice by his father Terah. Some ancient rabbinical accounts state that all three of the brothers, Abraham, Nohor, and Haran, were offered up, the later perishing at the hands of the idolatrous priests. Abraham decided that it was needful for him to obtain another place of residence and, at the direction of the Lord, departed into what is now known as Paddan-aram, where he settled himself in a place which he and Nohor called “Haran” after their martyred brother.

7.3.19—land—Haran was no more a land of promise for Abraham than

3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.
was the land of Bountiful for Lehi and his family. It was merely a place of respite. Abraham would find his inheritance in the land of Canaan. Nehor, however, would remain in Paddan-aram.

7.4 Abraham gathered unto himself Sarai his wife, Nehor and his wife, together with Haran’s son, Lot, and his wife, and left Ur of the Chaldees and traveled to the far north country where they settled for a time. Terah, an unabashed idolater and the father of Abraham and Nehor, followed after them. We are not told how old Abraham was when the sacrificial attempt was made on his life, nor do we know how long Abraham and Lot dwelt in Haran with Nehor and Terah, but his personal record clearly states that he was 62 years of age when he left Haran for Palestine, notwithstanding the fact that Moses wrote that he was seventy-five at the time. Clearly there are some discrepancies, and we do not know if Stephen was citing the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint, or tradition when he makes his comment about the death of Terah. Also, we are not certain as to the precise origin of Luke’s account of Stephen’s discourse and whether it was transcribed perfectly. In any event, we ought not to become overly agitated when all accounts do not seem to square with one another in some of the details. A little imagination, coupled with a little faith, will do much to help us understand that the authors of the scriptures were men, attempting to do the best they could. If there are faults, they are the mistakes of men; therefore, condemn not the things of God.

7.4.10—Chaldeans—The land of Chaldea traditionally refers to the southern regions of the Mesopotamian Valley nearest to what is now referred to as the Persian Gulf. Occasionally, the name would refer to larger tracts of territory when the inhabitants were militarily more proactive. According to anthropologists, there came a time when the “Chaldeans” came to mean the educated class of the region, especially once the Babylonian empire became extensive. This educated caste constituted the priests, magicians, and astronomers of the society.

7.4.14—Charran—A variant spelling of the proper name “Haran”. Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees and traveled northwestern until he came to a well-watered place among the nation of the Mittani. Abraham and his family called the place “Haran” after the third son of Terah who had died in the land of Chaldea. Some traditions assert that Haran died as a result of a similar sacrifice as that to which Abraham was submitted. The region about Haran eventually took on the name of “Paddan-aram”, probably meaning “the way of the high plains”. There is no warrant to somehow equate “aram” and “Abraham” as some erstwhile scholars have suggested.

7.4.18—when—The implication of Stephen’s teaching is that Abraham did not leave Haran until after his father had died. This poses some mathematical problems if taken literally as translated. The record in Genesis states that Terah was seventy years old when he sired Abraham, Nehor, and Haran. Assuming that Abraham was the eldest, Terah would only have been 132 years old when Abraham left Haran forever. In other words, Terah would have lived another 73 years after Abraham’s departure. Scholars have attempted a number of explanations as to how this could be, but none are very satisfactory.

7.5 The promises for Abraham and his posterity were afar off. Literally centuries would pass before the land of Palestine could even nominally be attributed to the House of Israel. While generations would pass with the descendants of Abraham occupying the promised land, yet eventually they

4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a

Acts 7:5
DS 1 88
would be cast out of their inheritance, first by the Assyrians and then by the Babylonians. The Jews returned from Babylon and established themselves in the lands of their first inheritance, but they too were overwhelmed from time to time by various warring factions who saw Palestine as a link to their political fortunes. By AD 130, the Kingdom of Judah ceased to exist and the inhabitants thereof and their posterity have been scattered all over the world.

In these latter days, another gathering has begun, filled with political and economic intrigue, but the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham has not yet been fully realized. The promises and covenants of God are eternal. The earth, ultimately, is the inheritance of the faithful; the heart of that eternal inheritance will be in the Zion of our God, which Zion will cover the earth, north to south, east to west. The temporary holdings which Abraham and his seed have held in the land of Palestine are but faint shadows of that which will be given to those who have overcome the world and the temptations thereof.

7.5.2—he—The Lord God of Israel.
7.5.4—him—Abraham
7.5.6—inheritance—The Greek word which is here translated as “inheritance” derives from roots which mean “heir, portioning, acquisition, patrimony, getting by apportionment, sharer by lot”. In other words, during the time of Abraham’s mortal life, the only possessions that he had in Palestine were those which he himself bought from the inhabitants.
7.5.31—possession—The Greek word which is here translated as “possession” derives from roots which mean “holding down, occupancy”.
7.5.44—child—By this time, neither Ishmael nor Isaac had been born.

7.6 The quote from the book of Genesis is as follows:

And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. (Genesis 15:12–16)

The Amorites occupied the land of Canaan at the time of Abraham who, though wicked, had not as yet completely rejected all attempts to restore them to truth and light. Another four centuries would pass before they were completely ripened in iniquity. The prophecy here is interesting and far more complex that it may seem at first blush. The first issue has to do with the period of time that the House of Israel was in actual servitude to the Egyptians. Simple chronology reveals that the descendants of Abraham were slaves in Egypt for no more than 144 years. The children of Jacob and their families may have lived as many as 80 years under the patronage of Joseph after the latter became second only to the Pharaoh. Including the 80 years with the 144 years of abject slavery, the House of Israel was only in Egypt a maximum of 224 years. How then may we reckon the 400 or 430 years spoken of in the promises made to Abraham? As many scholars have pointed out, the time frame must begin at the point when the Lord God first made the promise to Abraham; that is to say, that the four centuries of sojournning began once Abraham left Ur, or perhaps once he left Haran. Since we do not possess, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.
know exactly how long Abraham was in Haran, we might speculate 30 years, thus resolving the differences between the account in Genesis and that in Exodus. Thus, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all would have sojourned in strange lands, subject to the despotism of the potentates in the countries through which they and their families passed, and not just the posterity of Jacob in Egypt. It probably would be unwise to equate “four hundred years” of Stephen’s discourse with “fourth generation” of the book of Genesis. When Jacob and his family entered into Egypt, they were there as invited guests; eighty years later they would be enslaved; 144 years after that they would be led out of Egypt by Moses and Aaron. The “fourth generation” was the one which Moses and Aaron represented: Levi (1), Kohath (2), Amram (3), and Moses (4). The time covered by those four generations is no more than 224 years and not 400 years.

7.6.14–15—strange land—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all spent a portion of their lives in Egypt, as well as in other lands which were not their own.

7.6.18—they—In reference to the tyrannical rule of the Egyptians.

7.6.23—bondage—The Israelites were reduced to slavery once a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph rose to power. .

7.6.25—entreat—The Greek word which is here translated as “entreat” derives from roots which mean “exasperate, bad character, mischievousness, malignity”.

7.6.28–30—four hundred years—The book of Exodus and the epistle to the Galatians both state that the sojourn of Abraham and his posterity in lands not their own was to be 430 years. The record in Genesis either rounds off the time to an even four hundred years or the two calculations were made using different parameters. It would appear that Stephen is following the account as given in Genesis.

7.7 This, of course, is a continuation of the verses from Genesis cited above (see 7.6). Most scholars define this dictum quite narrowly in that they point to the Egyptians and to the Ten Plagues, together with the other miracles of the Exodus and declare the prophecy fulfilled. With a little thought it is possible to perceive how this particular element has been repeatedly fulfilled time and again, as the remnants of the House of Israel have been scattered among the nations and maltreated. Stephen, of course, is specifically referring to the historical event of the conquest of Canaan under the direction of Joshua.

7.7.13—judge—The Greek word which is here translated as “judge” derives from roots which mean “decide, distinguish, try, condemn, punish”. The Hebrew word used in Genesis translated as “judge” derives from roots which mean “rule, strive, judge”.

7.7.27–28—this place—That is, the land of the Amorites, the land of Canaan (see 7.6). Some students of the scriptures have tried to assert that the original prophecy in Genesis was in reference to Mount Sinai, the place where Moses brought the House of Israel to worship the God of Heaven, but this is not the case; it is clearly referring to the land which was given to Abraham by covenant, in which he was living at the time the prophecy was made. At that time, the patriarch was dwelling between Bethel and Ai, some ten or twelve miles north of Jerusalem.

7.8 When Abraham was 99 years of age, the Lord God of Israel promised him a son who would be born of Sarai. The birth of Isaac was to mark the beginning of a regenerated people, a family who would be dedicated to the

8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him Acts 7:8

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principles of truth and righteousness. Baptism and the other saving ordinances would be an essential part of the covenant, as they had been and would be in every other dispensation when the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ would be upon the earth. As a peculiar outward mark of the covenant, however, the Lord required all male members of Abraham’s household be circumcised as a token of their willingness to be faithful. Circumcision, like other ritualistic acts, has existed in many cultures, at many times and places, motivated by a variety of reasons, not always religious in nature. We do not know whether the covenant of circumcision was instituted among any peoples other than Abraham’s posterity, but the rationale behind the covenant was given to Abraham in particular has been clearly articulated by God Himself.

And God talked with him, saying, My people have gone astray from my precepts, and have not kept mine ordinances, which I gave unto their fathers; And they have not observed mine anointing, and the burial, or baptism wherewith I commanded them; But have turned from the commandment, and taken unto themselves the washing of children, and the blood of sprinkling; And have said that the blood of the righteous Abel was shed for sins; and have not known wherein they are accountable before me. But as for thee, behold, I will make my covenant with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. And this covenant I make, that thy children may be known among all nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham; for, a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come of thee, and of thy seed.

And I will establish a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; that thou mayest know forever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old. And thou shalt observe to keep all my covenants wherein I covenanted with thy fathers; and thou shalt keep the commandments which I have given thee with mine own mouth, and I will be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee and thy seed after thee, a land wherein thou art a stranger; all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Therefore thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. And this shall be my covenant which ye shall keep between me and thee and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations; He that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised, and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant. (JST, Genesis 17:4–20)

As can be seen in the citation above, the motivation for the establishment of the covenant of circumcision came as a result of an extreme departure from the principles of eternity. So pervasive was the apostasy that the Lord God
thought it wisdom to put as much covenantal distance between Abraham and his family and the rest of the children of men as was possible.

7.8.8—circumcision—The Hebrew word which is used to represent "circumcision" derives from roots which mean to "cut short, curtail, blunt, destroy" particularly regarding the prepuce. The Greek word derives from roots which mean to "cut around with a single stroke". Circumcision was given to Abraham and his posterity as a sign of their place as a covenant people.

7.8.11—Abraham—The undisputed "Father of the Faithful". Modern biblical scholars are generally kind to Abraham as are most theologians in the sister religious of Judaism. The spiritual stature of Abraham is, for the most part, immeasurable by man. Abraham is one of the Lord God’s noblemen, whose faith and confidence in the divine word are equaled or excelled by few who have come into mortality upon this earth. Removing the Lord Jesus Christ from the list of candidates, however, would probably render our estimation of Abraham all but absolute. Abraham was one of three sons born to Terah during a millennium of poverty and famine. Through Abraham’s ministrations the promises made to the ancient fathers were preserved and re-established in earnest. In one of the most tender of moments recorded in secular or ecclesiastical history, the Lord God of Heaven instructed Abraham in the nature of the greatest gift that a loving God may bestow upon his creation when he asked for the sacrificed life of his son Isaac.

7.8.13—Isaac—The only son of the union between Abraham and Sarah. There was some strife between Isaac and Ishmael, the son of Hagar, as there had been between Sarah and her handmaiden who had been elevated to the role of wife to Abraham as the result of Sarah’s barrenness. Because Sarah was the first wife, the wife of the covenant, her son Isaac took precedence over the elder half-brother. The animosity engendered during those early years has not completely abated, even into modern times. Isaac was an active participant in the "sacrifice" required by God of his father Abraham.

7.8.18–19—eighth day—As commanded by the Lord in order to signify the number of years a father should wait before performing baptism for the remission of sins. For the most part, within the Church of Jesus Christ, the ancient practice of circumcision and naming of a son at eight days of age has been replaced by another ordinance. Circumcision is performed primarily as a manner of health with little religious significance.

7.8.23—Jacob—The younger of the twin sons born to Isaac and Rebecca. The elder son, Esau, despised his spiritual inheritance by marrying outside of the perpetual covenant established between God and his grandfather Abraham. The lot fell to the faithful Jacob who was then forced to flee for his life. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and with his four wives founded the House of Israel, that covenant family by whom the entire population of the earth was to be instructed and redeemed.

7.8.26–27—twelve patriarchs—The House of Israel was founded by Jacob and his four wives. The first, Leah, brought six sons and one daughter into the family: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah. Jacob’s second wife, Rachel, was the younger sister of Leah. She had great difficulty in conceiving children, but eventually brought forth two sons, Joseph and Benjamin, the birth of the latter costing her her life. Bilhah, Rachel’s handmaiden, was given
by her mistress to Jacob in marriage that she might bear children
while Rachel was childless. Of the union between Jacob and Bilhah
two sons were born, Dan and Naphtali. After the same fashion, Leah
gave her handmaiden, Zilpah, to Jacob in marriage and she became
the mother of two sons, Gad and Asher. These twelve sons became
the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel and, as a result, are often
called the “twelve patriarchs”.

7.9 The enmity between Joseph and his ten older brothers was extreme. The
right of the firstborn initially fell to Reuben, he being the eldest child of
Jacob’s first wife, Leah. Reuben, however, committed a grievous sin, the
result of which was his ineligibility to assume the right of the firstborn. The
lot then fell to the eldest son of the second wife, Rachel. Joseph was wise,
kind, and filled with the spirit of God. Jacob nurtured Joseph to be his direct
heir as he would have Reuben, had the latter proven faithful to his cove-
nants. As has been the case in many families, the older brothers could not
bear being ruled by a younger sibling, notwithstanding his righteousness and
the propriety of his claim to lead the family in his father’s absence. He was
sold to Midianites on their way to Egypt for twenty pieces of silver. In all of
this discourse up to this point, Stephen has alluded to the jealousies that
existed in the families of the covenant people. Abraham and his two brothers
had their lives attempted by their father; Ishmael and Esau were covetous
of their younger brethren; the siblings of the boy Joseph went to extremes to
divest themselves of one whom they thought a threat to the state of affairs in
the House of Israel. That Stephen addressed the Sanhedrin as “brethren and
fathers” was no act of courtesy as much as it was a preamble to an indictment
of their own conduct toward Jesus of Nazareth (see 7.2).

7.9.3—patriarchs—that is, the other sons of Jacob that consti-
tuted the House of Israel.

7.9.8—Joseph—the twelfth child and eleventh son born to Jacob, and
the firstborn son of Jacob and Rachel. When Reuben, Leah’s first-
born, transgressed the law of chastity with Bilhah, he lost the blessings
of the firstborn. Those blessings then passed to Joseph who was the
firstborn son of Jacob’s second wife, Rachel, notwithstanding the fact
that he was considerably younger than his siblings. He was seventeen
years old when he was sold into slavery in Egypt.

7.9.12—Egypt—a land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta
region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of
animal and vegetable life.

7.10 Betrayal at the hands of his brethren, exposure to the brutality of
foreign nationals, abject subjugation in the houses of the mighty, inordinate
temptations at the hands of wicked men and women, and unjust imprison-
ment were among countless indignities heaped upon Joseph the son of Jacob.
Could there be a more apt type of the Lord Jesus Christ during the days of
his mortal ministry? Stephen knows precisely what he is doing. The allusions
are not lost on the Sadducees and the chief priests either. The rise of Joseph
to power in Egypt is easily comparable to the resurrection and exaltation of
the Lord Jesus Christ. Joseph’s brethren ultimately thought him dead; the
murderers of Jesus thought him safely disposed of as well, notwithstanding
the rumors of his resurrection from the dead. As Joseph would appear in the
courts of the most powerful nation of his day, so also would Jesus appear to
Stephen standing on the right hand of God in the heavens.

7.10.12—favor—Part of the favor given to Joseph came as a direct result
of his interpretation of the butler’s dream, which in turn was

9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but
God was with him.

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour
and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him
governor over Egypt and all his house.
enhanced by Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams.

7.10.14—*wisdom*—The divine wisdom which guided Joseph in all of his adventures was manifested plainly to Pharaoh as Joseph masterfully laid out a glorious plan which would, during the years of plenty and famine, make Pharaoh the most important, the most powerful, and most wealthy potentate that Egypt would ever know.

7.10.19—*Pharaoh*—From the very beginning of the establishment of the Egyptian people, the king of the Egypt was called Pharaoh, perhaps in honor of the first king whose given name was such. This practice continued until the Greek conquest of Egypt after which the kings were called Ptolemy, in honor of the Greek conqueror himself.

7.10.21—*Egypt*—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.11 The age of Abraham and his immediate posterity was a time of extraordinary want. For a thousand years the necessities of life were in short supply. Abraham had departed from Ur and Haran, in part, because he and his family could not prosper there. In the land of Canaan circumstances, while improved, were not sufficient to bear all those who dwelt in the land. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all eventually found their way to Egypt in order to have some respite from the continuing famine. For seven short years, as Pharaoh’s dreams had indicated, there was plenty and to spare, a superabundance that had not been seen in centuries. The seven years that followed the abundance, however, were so grievous that the memory of the plenty seemed to evaporate in the minds and hearts of the inhabitants of the land.

7.11.5—*dearth*—The Greek word which is here translated as “dearth” derives from roots which mean “fail, absent, destitution, scarcity”. The English word “dearth” derives from Germanic roots which mean “costly, highness of price”. Hence, when John the Revelator hears the voice say “A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny” it is of this “dearth” of which we have been speaking that is recounted.

7.11.11—*Egypt*—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.11.13—*Chanaan*—A variant spelling for the land of Canaan.

7.12 As the circumstances became more dire, Jacob sent ten of his sons to purchase grain from the Egyptians, not knowing that his beloved son Joseph was the overseer for the plenty that grew along the banks of the Nile River. We do not know whether Jacob suspected the perfidy of his sons in the death of the rightful heir, but in any event he dared not send the remaining child of his wife Rachel to accompany them on their journey.

7.12.3—*Jacob*—The younger of the twin sons born to Isaac and Rebecca. The elder son, Esau, despaired his spiritual inheritance by marrying outside of the perpetual covenant established between God and his grandfather Abraham. The lot fell to the faithful Jacob who was then forced to flee for his life. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and with his four wives founded the House of Israel, that covenant family by whom the entire population of the earth was to be instructed and redeemed.

7.12.8—*corn*—The grain referred to here was probably wheat or barley. Indian corn or maize was unknown in the eastern hemisphere during this time.
7.12.10—Egypt—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.13 The first excursion into Egypt was moderately successful, but filled with dire omens for the ten brothers. Joseph, whose identity was not yet revealed to his brethren, accused them of being spies in the land of Egypt and kept Simeon as a nominal hostage against their return with Benjamin. In addition, each of the returning brothers found that their purchase monies for the grain had been placed inside of their grain sacks. Jacob is distressed beyond measure; he felt himself bereft of two sons and perceived the prospect of losing another. Had it not been for the severe intensity of the famine in the land of Canaan, Jacob undoubtedly would have kept Benjamin at his side. The events which followed revealed to Joseph that his brothers had, at least in some measure, repented of their crime against him. They were willing to do anything rather than have their father overwhelmed by the loss of Benjamin. The true identities of all were revealed, and Pharaoh promised respite in the land of Egypt for all who counted themselves kindred of his seer, Joseph.

7.13.6—Joseph—The twelfth child and eleventh son born to Jacob, and the firstborn son of Jacob and Rachel. When Reuben, Leah’s first-born, transgressed the law of chastity with Bilhah, he lost the blessings of the firstborn. Those blessings then passed to Joseph who was the firstborn son of Jacob’s second wife, Rachel, notwithstanding the fact that he was considerably younger than his siblings. He was seventeen years old when he was sold into slavery in Egypt.

7.13.20—Pharaoh—From the very beginning of the establishment of the Egyptian people, the king of the Egypt was called Pharaoh, perhaps in honor of the first king whose given name was such. This practice continued until the Greek conquest of Egypt after which the kings were called Prolemy, in honor of the Greek conqueror himself.

7.14 Only sixty-six persons pertained to Jacob’s family in the land of Canaan in the account given in Genesis. Joseph had married an Egyptian woman and she had added two sons to the posterity of Jacob. Joseph, Ephraim, Manasseh, and Jacob himself brought the total to seventy. Therefore, that total given in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament constitutes the House of Israel gathered in Egypt, once Jacob and his household arrived from Canaan. In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Jewish scholars supplied the names of the children and grandchildren of Ephraim and Manasseh, adding another five members to the family. In Greek, a son Machir and a grandson Galaad are attributed to Manasseh; two sons, Sutalam and Taam, and a grandson, Edem, are attributed to Ephraim. It is apparent that Stephen is drawing the materiel for his narrative from the Septuagint. To be completely fair, there are many other arguments which attempt to reconcile the apparent discrepancy between Moses’ writings and Stephen’s discourse. The one given above, however, is the simplest and, therefore, the most elegant.

7.14.3—Joseph—The twelfth child and eleventh son born to Jacob, and the firstborn son of Jacob and Rachel. When Reuben, Leah’s first-born, transgressed the law of chastity with Bilhah, he lost the blessings of the firstborn. Those blessings then passed to Joseph who was the firstborn son of Jacob’s second wife, Rachel, notwithstanding the fact that he was considerably younger than his siblings. He was seventeen years old when he was sold into slavery in Egypt.

13 And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph’s kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.
7.14.8—*Jacob*—The younger of the twin sons born to Isaac and Rebecca. The elder son, Esau, despised his spiritual inheritance by marrying outside of the perpetual covenant established between God and his grandfather Abraham. The lot fell to the faithful Jacob who was then forced to flee for his life. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and with his four wives founded the House of Israel, that covenant family by whom the entire population of the earth was to be instructed and redeemed.

7.15 The House of Israel would dwell in Egypt for 224 years before being led into the wilderness by Moses and Aaron. Needless to say, neither Jacob nor any of his sons would live long enough to be part of that departure. According to the scriptural record, Jacob lived to be 147 years old, and at his death was carried by his sons into the land of Canaan where he was interred in the cave of Machpelah, a site near Hebron, a city approximately 20 miles south of Jerusalem, with his father and grandfather, Isaac and Abraham. Machpelah is not to be confused with another sepulcher located near Shechem (see 7.16.6).

7.15.2—*Jacob*—The younger of the twin sons born to Isaac and Rebecca. The elder son, Esau, despised his spiritual inheritance by marrying outside of the perpetual covenant established between God and his grandfather Abraham. The lot fell to the faithful Jacob who was then forced to flee for his life. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and with his four wives founded the House of Israel, that covenant family by whom the entire population of the earth was to be instructed and redeemed.

7.15.6—*Egypt*—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.16 Flavius Josephus states in his history of the Jews that the eleven brothers were buried in the cave of Machpelah, but there is no scriptural warrant for his assertion. Joseph is explicitly buried in Shechem, but the wording of this verse would have us believe that more than one of the brothers is interred with him in site purchased by Jacob. At present we cannot be absolutely certain, but perhaps at least the bones of Benjamin found their way to a resting place beside his elder brother. As a speculation, perhaps those of the twelve who died before Joseph were taken to Machpelah, but those who died after Joseph’s demise were taken to Shechem.

7.16.6—*Sychem*—An alternate spelling for the city of Shechem. It is a town of central Palestine located approximately 33 miles north of Jerusalem. It cannot be equated with the site for the cave of Machpelah (see 7.15).

7.16.13—*Abraham*—As has been pointed out many times before, this gaff is obviously not a product of Stephen or Luke, but rather of an ignorant editor who confused the sepulchers of Abraham and Jacob. Jacob is the historical figure who purchased the burial ground next to Shechem in which Joseph’s bones were interred by the children of Israel once they began the conquest of Canaan in the days of Joshua.

7.16.24—*Emmor*—An alternate spelling of Hamor, a Hivite prince of Shechem, from whom Jacob bought his sepulcher.

7.16.26—*father*—As the italicized lettering clearly indicated, this is an emendation made by the translators. That Hamor had a son named “Shechem” is a matter of historical record; that the city may have been named after that son may also be true. That Hamor undoubt-
7.17 If there were seventy-five male members of Jacob’s family when they first gathered in Egypt, the females would have been of a like number, making a family contingent of approximately 150 souls. Abraham had many in his household who had been converts to the religion which he espoused. One wonders if this were not the case with both Isaac and Jacob. From these modest beginnings, however, a great nation arose in the midst of the Egyptian We can only speculate as to the number of descendants of Jacob who would have been alive to flee the slavery of the Egyptians after 224 years. The book of Numbers indicates that at Mount Sinai, the House of Israel numbered 603,500 males over the age of 20 who were fit to go to war. This did not include the Levites. The total population must have been several millions.

7.17.7—promise—The exodus from Egypt was to take place in the fourth generation of their having entered into Egypt (see 7.6). In conjunction with that exodus was the promise that the children of Abraham would thereafter have a land of their own.

7.17.15—Abraham—The undisputed “Father of the Faithful”. Modern biblical scholars are generally kind to Abraham as are most theologians in the sister religious of Judaism. The spiritual stature of Abraham is, for the most part, immeasurable by man. Abraham is one of the Lord God’s noblemen, whose faith and confidence in the divine word are equaled or excelled by few who have come into mortality upon this earth. Removing the Lord Jesus Christ from the list of candidates, however, would probably render our estimation of Abraham all but absolute. Abraham was one of three sons born to Terah during a millennium of poverty and famine. Through Abraham’s ministries the promises made to the ancient fathers were preserved and re-established in earnest. In one of the most tender of moments recorded in secular or ecclesiastical history, the Lord God of Heaven instructed Abraham in the nature of the greatest gift that a loving God may bestow upon his creation when he asked for the sacrificed life of his son Isaac.

7.17.22—Egypt—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.18 Several historical explanations have been proffered to illuminate why a people who had been blessed magnificently by Joseph the son of Jacob would reject their benefactor out of hand. Some scholars have suggested that “knew not” in this case means that they “did not approve” of Joseph. It is hard to imagine a scenario in which after more than a half a century of beneficent rule, Joseph would be rejected in spite of the bounty that he had brought to the country. He had been tantamount to a national hero, regardless of his religion or politics. Some scholars suggest that it was the ouster of the Hyksos Kings, the Shepherd King of Mesopotamia, that caused Joseph and his Semitic family to be discredited among the ruling class. In any event, Joseph’s memory was no longer a protection for the children of Israel.

7.18.8—Joseph—The twelfth child and eleventh son born to Jacob, and the firstborn son of Jacob and Rachel. When Reuben, Leah’s first-born, transgressed the law of chastity with Bilhah, he lost the blessings of the firstborn. Those blessings then passed to Joseph who was the firstborn son of Jacob’s second wife, Rachel, notwithstanding the fact that he was considerably younger than his siblings. He was seventeen

17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.

18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.
7.19 One wonders at the manner in which the Israelites were enslaved. Was it in an instant, the result of a governmental coup which cast out the previous ruling class? Was it a process, a lulling to sleep of a substantial working class, one that proceeded in slow deliberate way? Stephen’s recounting of the destruction of the infants in the waters of the Nile was undoubtedly told as a reminder of the slaughter of the infants shortly after Jesus’ own birth. The irony of that connection, however, was that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus had to flee into Egypt in order to escape the infamy that sought the Savior’s life.

7.19.4—subtilly—The Greek word which is here translated as “subtilly” derives from roots which mean “be crafty against, circumvent”. One wonders when the act of “subtilly” began. Clearly there is a nefarious plot against the Israelites, one of which they were not initially aware.

7.20 Moses was born in a time of political tension similar to that into which Jesus was born. The Egyptians suspected conspiracy against their nation on every hand and focused upon the Israelites who had become, in their estimation, a threat to their national security. The male children were to be destroyed by casting them into the river Nile. Herod’s method of dispatching the pretender to the throne was more comprehensive and far more effective. Neither potentate, Herod or Pharaoh, were successful in eliminating the true objects of their paranoia.

7.20.3—time—That is to say, the time of the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham concerning the inheritance due his children and the manner in which they would obtain it (see 7.6 and 7.17).

7.20.4—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

7.20.10—fair—The Greek word which is translated here as “fair” derives from roots which mean “urbane, handsome”. The Hebrew word used in Exodus 2:2 means essentially the same thing and is translated as “goodly”.

7.21 All of the machinations of Pharaoh and Herod did nothing to deter the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Moses and Christ. In fact, all of the persecutions simply moved things along that much more felicitously. One wonders at the source of the compassion of Pharaoh’s daughter, the proximity of Moses’ sister Miriam, and the easy manner by which Moses was reinserted back into his own hearth and home. Divine intervention must be in operation, but we are not privy to the mechanics of that intervention that made the rescue of Moses from the diabolical plans of the Pharaoh and his courtiers possible. It would not be surprising to discover that Pharaoh’s daughter was a soul of great personal spirituality and that Miriam knew precisely where to place the ark of Moses’ cradle so that the princess might easily find it.

7.21.7—Pharaoh’s—From the very beginning of the establishment of the Egyptian people, the king of the Egypt was called Pharaoh, perhaps in honor of the first king whose given name was such. This practice continued until the Greek conquest of Egypt after which the kings were called Ptolemy, in honor of the Greek conqueror himself.

7.22 As the Babylonians came to metaphorically represent the world and all

| 19 | The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. |
| 20 | In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father’s house three months: |
| 21 | And when he was cast out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. |
| 22 | And Moses was learned in all Acts 7:22 |
of its wealth and luxury, and the Assyrians the type for merciless militarism, so also the Egyptians represented the academic prowess of the ancient world. As the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter, Moses received a supreme education. Ancient traditions surround the early history of Moses, bestowing upon him supernatural skills and mastery in almost every aspect of human endeavor. To what degree any of these sources accurately reflect the truth of Stephen’s assertion, we may observe that notwithstanding Moses’ great accomplishments he was also extraordinarily humble.

7.22.2—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

7.22.11—Egyptians—The inhabitants of the land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.22.16—words—We often speak of Moses, as he did of himself, that he was “slow of speech”, that he was somewhat tongue-tied. That this was true in his facility with the Egyptian language cannot be countenanced; that he struggled with the language of the Hebrews would be understandable. It should also be observed that Moses claimed his inability to speak properly after an absence from Egypt of nearly forty years.

7.23 We do not know precisely when Moses became aware of his true heritage, notwithstanding the testimony of cinematographers. The Apostle Paul, however, makes it perfectly clear that at some point Moses utterly refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, thus putting aside any claim that he might have had to the Egyptian throne (see HEB-C 11.24–26). As to his initial motivation for doing so we may only speculate. Was Moses aware of the prophecy given to Abraham that after a time of slavery that the children of Israel would be liberated from their captivity? When did he become aware that he would have a direct responsibility in their deliverance? We may not know for certain, but clearly in this episode wherein the Egyptian was slain Moses knew that he was to be the divine defender of his people.

7.23.21—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7.24 It is interesting to note that Moses was prepared at that very day to lead the children of Israel into the wilderness to worship the Lord God of their fathers. But here were a people completely unprepared to receive him as their deliverer. It would require another forty years of slavery, daily intensifying, before they were ready to even consider a departure from the flesh pots of Egypt. A similar scenario would play out at the foot of Mount Sinai when they refused to come into the presence of God and receive the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the priesthood power by which it was administered. They would initially refuse to enter into the land of promise out of fear of the inhabitants of that land. Another forty-year delay would be imposed upon the House of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai because of their lack of spiritual preparation.

7.24.12—avenged—Much has been written to excuse the slaying of the Egyptian. It should be sufficient that the Lord God never held Moses accountable for that execution.

23 And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:
7.24.20—Egyptian—An inhabitant of the land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.25 Was there no record of the prophecies given to Abraham kept among the children of Israel? There must have been or Moses could not possibly have had such an expectation of his people. The Israelites were in bondage and the time had come for their release. That fact must have been as clear as glass. Moses knew by revelation that he was to be the instrument of their deliverance and initially assumed that his brethren would know of his role in their lives by the same means. By the same token, with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ came a long-awaited fulfillment of prophecy. Most of those associated with the events surrounding the coming of the Messiah also knew by revelation that the child born in Bethlehem was the Son of God. How could any of the children of Israel, once they were acquainted the prophecies made by all of the holy prophets regarding the Savior, not clearly see in Jesus of Nazareth the precise fulfillment of those divine predictions? Stephen is presenting an indictment of the leadership of the Jews which puts them in the unsavory category as all of the rebellious and spiritual bankrupt since the beginning of time.

7.26 Any hopes that Moses may have had that the children of Israel were prepared to receive him as their Lawgiver or deliverer from slavery were dashed by the rebellious attitude of the Israelites, as personified in the abusive Hebrew. Many of the Israelites had bought into the culture of the Egyptians and were willing to work themselves into positions of power and wealth by oppressing their own kinfolk. This Moses was willing to help correct, but the viciousness of a portion of the people coupled with the passiveness of the masses made the task impossible at that time. It would require another forty years before they would be ready to forsake the wretched lives which they had among the Egyptians. To say that Jesus of Nazareth came among a people of a similar mentality would be to state the obvious. The Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and priests had all inveigled themselves into the power structure of the Romans, tenaciously hanging on to what wealth and prestige they had been able to accrue over the years. The doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, together with the transcendent power which God had poured out upon His Son, posed a threat to the status quo, in the minds of the leadership of the Jews.

7.26.9—them—That is to say, two of his brethren among the Hebrews.

7.27 The very question that the offending Hebrew asked of Moses is essentially the same question that the Jews asked of Jesus throughout his ministry: “Who gave you the authority to do these things?” The answer was the same in both cases, had the parties been willing to open their eyes and perceive the truth. Did the Israelite who did his neighbor wrong know that he was practicing evil? Were the chief priests aware that they had gone beyond the pale in their persecution of Jesus and his Apostles? There can be but one answer. They knew precisely what they were about and did not care that any man had been appointed by God to accomplish any task in the which they might have had some selfish investment.

7.28 The Apostle Paul makes it quite clear in his letter to the Hebrews that Moses departed from Egypt as a result of his faith in God rather than a “fear” of the Pharaoh. Paul implies in his epistle that the Lord God of Israel had given instructions to Moses that he must needs flee for his life so that he

25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

26 And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?
might be able to accomplish the task that he had been given. The “fear” then spoken of in the book of Exodus, was in reality a “reverence” for the mind and will of God that caused him to obey the will of the Lord. In this sense, the Lord’s instructions to Moses were similar to those given to Peter near the end of Jesus’ mortal ministry, that he and the other Apostles would have to absent themselves from their master’s company in order to survive the wrath of the chief priests and elders of the Jews.

7.28.9—*Egyptian*—An inhabitant of the land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.29 Moses dwelt with Jethro, the high priest of Midian, for forty years, receiving training from him in the principles of the Melchizedek Priesthood. This Jethro, who is also called Reuel or Reguel in the Old Testament, had received the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God by direct ordination from one generation to another back to the time of Abraham. Moses married one of Jethro’s daughters, Zipporah, and with her brought forth two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

7.29.3—*Moses*—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

7.29.15—*Midian*—A variant spelling of Midian, a land traditionally located on the east side of the Gulf of Aqaba, a projection of the Red Sea between Arabia and the Sinai peninsula. Some scholars suggest that at the time of Moses a goodly portion of the Sinai pertained to Midian.

7.30 During that extensive interview between God and Moses, the Lawgiver was commanded to “call upon God in the name of mine Only Begotten, and worship me”. Certainly Moses recorded all that the Lord communicated to him on that occasion, but clearly wicked men have excised them from the text. When those deletions took place we may only guess, but we ought not be surprised to discover that Stephen was here alluding to what may have been common knowledge among the scholars at the time.

7.30.3—*forty years*—Longstanding tradition holds that Moses spent the first forty years of his life as a prince in Egypt, the next forty years as a priest in Midian, and the last forty years of his life leading the House of Israel during their sojourn in the wilderness of the Sinai.

7.30.16—*Sina*—A variant spelling for Sinai, one of the many names that have been applied to the various locations where Moses communed with the Lord God of Israel. Mount Horeb is another. Some scholars suggest that Horeb is in reference to the whole range of mountains and Sinai is the very mount of communion. Others, however, assert the opposite. In general, most biblical scholars have settled on the mountainous region near the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula as the location of for both. As to the exact prominence upon which Moses received the Law of God, there are as many opinions as there are peaks in the region.

7.30.18—*angel*—In a superior translation of the passage referred to in Exodus 3, it is the “presence” of the Lord that speaks from the burning bush to Moses.

7.31 Many have written extensively regarding the significance of the burning bush to Moses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acts 7:30</th>
<th>30. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DNTC 1 5</td>
<td>29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>31 When Moses saw it, he</td>
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bush which was not consumed by the “fire” which was upon it. We do not need, at this juncture, to pursue all of the possible ramifications of that singular event. It is interesting, however, that the chief priests and elders of the Jews had before them one who was substantively filled with the power of God such that he appeared to be an angel (see 6.15); that is, one who appears to be burning but is not consumed. Moses was not uninformed or inexperienced. His education, first at the hands of the Egyptians and then at the feet of his father-in-law, was not insubstantial. No doubt he was familiar with accounts of other prophets, seers, and revelators who had come into the presence of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Surely Moses’ turning aside to see this manifestation of the power of God was not prompted by idle curiosity.

7.31.2—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

7.32 During the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ the Sadducees had come to him with a ridiculous story regarding seven of their number who had all taken a single woman to wife in fulfillment of the Law of Moses and the levirate responsibility of the next of kin. The Sadducees did not believe in the literal resurrection of the dead and therefore thought their little anecdote quite clever. Jesus response to their specific question was wonderful (see LK-C 20.34–36), but his observation regarding their disbelief in the resurrection was devastating (see LK-C 20.37–38). The Sadducees were irreparably stung and from that point in his ministry no man desired to test the perspicacity of the Savior. Jesus cited this same scripture which Stephen quotes here, that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is not a god of the dead, but of the living, implying that the three greatest patriarchs of the House of Israel lived on in the spirit after their mortal ministries were accomplished. A great number of the Sanhedrin, together with the high priest, were Sadducees; the direction that Stephen’s discourse was taken them must have been unnerving.

7.32.12—Abraham—The undisputed "Father of the Faithful". Modern biblical scholars are generally kind to Abraham as are most theologians in the sister religious of Judaism. The spiritual stature of Abraham is, for the most part, immeasurable by man. Abraham is one of the Lord God’s noblemen, whose faith and confidence in the divine word are equaled or excelled by few who have come into mortality upon this earth. Removing the Lord Jesus Christ from the list of candidates, however, would probably render our estimation of Abraham all but absolute. Abraham was one of three sons born to Terah during a millennium of poverty and famine. Through Abraham’s ministrations the promises made to the ancient fathers were preserved and re-established in earnest. In one of the most tender of moments recorded in secular or ecclesiastical history, the Lord God of Heaven instructed Abraham in the nature of the greatest gift that a loving God may bestow upon his creation when he asked for the sacrificed life of his son Isaac.

7.32.17—Isaac—The only son of the union between Abraham and Sarah. There was some strife between Isaac and Ishmael, the son of Hagar, as there had been between Sarah and her handmaiden who had been elevated to the role of wife to Abraham as the result of Sarah’s barrenness. Because Sarah was the first wife, the wife of the covenant, her
son Isaac took precedence over the elder half-brother. The animosity engendered during those early years has not completely abated, even into modern times. Isaac was an active participant in the “sacrifice” required by God of his father Abraham.

7.32.22—Jacob—The younger of the twin sons born to Isaac and Rebecca. The elder son, Esau, despised his spiritual inheritance by marrying outside of the perpetual covenant established between God and his grandfather Abraham. The lot fell to the faithful Jacob who was then forced to flee for his life. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and with his four wives founded the House of Israel, that covenant family by whom the entire population of the earth was to be instructed and redeemed.

7.32.24—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

7.33 The chief priests and elders of Israel would have the people believe that the only holy ground in all of Israel was the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus prophesied that not one stone would remain upon another once the city had fallen to the Romans after the First Jewish Rebellion in AD 67. No doubt Stephen had said much the same and for this, and other items of doctrine, had been brought before the council. The question raised by Stephen’s discourse here, is why was it that the ground was holy? Was it not because the Lord was present, as indicated by the burning bush that was not consumed. The leadership would have to ask themselves when the last time was that such a glorious manifestation had been recorded within the confines of the temple. When was the last time that an angel appeared to one of the priests? Was it not to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist? And what of John’s testimony regarding Jesus of Nazareth? All of these things must have grated upon the ears and hearts of the membership of the council.

7.34 Whereas the children of Israel had been somewhat truculent about leaving Egypt when Moses first sought to deliver them, yet forty years later their circumstances had worsened considerably. Whereas they might have been originally “subtilly” enticed by the Egyptians when the new Pharaoh arose to power, they were now completely subjected as a people. The oppressions grew daily and would intensify until the time of their deliverance from their masters. Moses would be sent into Egypt as the emissary of the Lord God of Israel. If the covenant people were to be delivered at all, it would be through Moses and none other. The House of Israel would be persuaded to swallow their pride and submit to the Lord’s servants, or else they would perish in their unbelief. How similar this is to the Savior’s own observation about himself as the “stone” that was rejected by the builders that would become the “head of the corner” (see LK-C 20.17–18). This quote from Psalm 118 follows on the heels of the Savior’s parable of the Wicked Husbandmen, those rebellious servants who sought to slay the “heir” that they might take possession of the vineyard (see LK-C 20.9–16). That the leadership of the Jews knew that Jesus spoke of them, there can be no doubt (see LK-C 20.19). None of this is lost on the council as Stephen addressed them.

7.34.1–6—I have seen, I have seen—This is a broad translation of the Hebrew phrase “Seeing, I have seen”, an intense expression denoting omniscience and compassion.

7.34.15—Egypt—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta
region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.35 Again, Stephen draws a parallel between Moses and Jesus. They were those who had been refused and yet would ultimately have to be accepted if salvation and redemption were to come to the House of Israel. We do not know the precise wording Stephen used in Aramaic in addressing the council, but it is not beyond possibility that he drew near the word "Adonai" just had Jesus had drawn near the articulation of the name Jehovah when he said "Before Abraham was, I AM" (see JN-C 5.58)

7.35.2—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means "is born". The correlate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

7.35.14—judge—The Hebrew word which is employed in the Old Testament derives from roots which mean “sentence, vindicate, punish, govern, litigate”.

7.35.26—deliverer—The Greek word which is here translated as "deliverer" derives from roots which mean "ransom, price, loosen, redeemer". It is intriguing that there is another word in Hebrew which is frequently translated as "judge", which is the fundamental source for the spoken Hebrew title for deity, "Adonai". Many scholars have quibbled about the distinction between "adonai" and "adoni", but this was a mcing of words begun in the second century AD when the Jewish elders were devising the masoretic text and reinventing their religion so as to exclude Christianity.

7.36 Moses showed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt as had Jesus in the land of Israel. At the day of Pentecost, Peter and the other Apostles had pointed to this specific undeniable attribute of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ (see 2.22).

7.36.10—wonders—The Greek word which is here translated as "wonders" derives from roots which mean "prodigy, omen". See also 2.19.

7.36.12—signs—The Greek word which is translated here as "signs" derives from roots which signify "mark, indication, token, wonder, miracle". The word "sign" in English derives from Latin roots which mean "mark, figure, image". Both suggest an outward manner of identification. See also 2.19. Certainly the rod which changed into a venomous serpent qualified as a sign to the children of Israel, as did the dramatic change from leprosy and clean flesh as Moses put his hand in to his bosom. The ten plagues, the crossing of the Red Sea, the provision of water on several occasions, the provision of manna and quail, the endurance of their clothing, their victories in war, the removal of the wicked in various ways, all these and many others signs demonstrated to anyone who had eyes to see that Moses was extraordinarily gifted. Of course, he credited the Lord God Jehovah in all of these things.

7.36.17—Egypt—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.36.21—Red sea—That is to say, that tongue of the Egyptian sea that separates Egypt from the Sinai peninsula. The southern border of Israel.

7.36.26—wilderness—The southern reaches of the wilderness of Sin

35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

36 He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

Acts 7:37
JC 45
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wherein lay Horeb and Sinai. Their travels would also take them into the wilderness south and east of the Dead Sea.

7.37 Whereas the Sadducees and Pharisees might waffle somewhat regarding the divine ministry of John the Baptist, they could not avoid the fervent witness of the great Lawgiver himself regarding the coming of a prophet like unto Moses. He counseled them to hearken to his voice, and by association, their children were to hearken as well. Moses was a type, a similitude of the Only Begotten of the Father. The life and teachings of Moses were to be prophetically symbolic of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Moses provided a preparatory Gospel: Jesus presented the fullness of the Gospel of Christ. Moses seemed to control the elements, the waters and manna in the wilderness. Jesus did all this and more as he labored among the faithful. The most vital comparison was, however, that the children of Israel had rebelled against the authority and direction of Moses time and again with little remorse. The chief priests and elders of the Jews, before whom Stephen then stood, had been those, among others, who had sought the life of the Lord Jesus Christ because of their pride and wickedness.

7.37.4—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means "is born". The cognate in Hebrew means "drew him out".

7.37.11—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7.37.13—prophet—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility. Here the reference is to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

7.38 The Lord God of Israel spoke with Moses face to face in the wilderness and the Law was committed to the prophet’s care that it might be delivered to the covenant people. This was attempted on two different occasions. The first time that Moses went up into the mountain, he received the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and a commission to reveal all of the saving ordinances to the people gathered at the foot of Sinai. This the children of Israel refused, having turned back to the gods of Egypt and their own carnal desires. Instead of completely casting off this wicked and adulterous people, the Lord gave a lesser law, a preparatory Gospel governed by a lesser priesthood, the Aaronic Priesthood which embraced the Levitical order. All of these things had been engraved upon stone tablets. The first set of tablets containing the principles and ordinances pertaining to the Melchizedek Priesthood, were broken by Moses when he found the House of Israel celebrating their apostate religion in a rather indecorous fashion. The second set of stone tablets contained all that was necessary to preserve the lesser Law of Moses among the Israelites.

7.38.8—church—The assembly of those who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ, who keep his commandments, and remember him always. The officers and teachers within the Church have been placed there by the Lord to help facilitate the assembly to measure up to the full stature of Christ as a result of the covenants they have made. The formal organization of the Church was established by God

37 This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

Acts 7:37–40

38 This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

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MD 547
to clearly indicate how and when the body of Christ should be instructed in their duties to preach the gospel, perfect the saints, and redeem the dead. The material holdings of the Church are provided so that the responsibilities of the membership of the Church might be accomplished in an orderly fashion, that all who participate in the building up of the Kingdom of God on the earth might sense in part the contributions they have made and are making to the establishment of Zion. The Greek word which is here translated as “church” derives from roots which mean “calling out, meeting, congregation, synagogue”. It is also the source for English words like “ecclesiastical”. In other places in the New Testament, this word is translated as “assembly”. There are several words in Hebrew that have been translated as “assembly”, but the one that most likely would have been used with the idea of “church” derives from roots which mean “fixture, concourse, family, crowd, congregation, testimony, witness”.

7.38.22—Sinai—A variant spelling for Sinai, one of the many names that have been applied to the various locations where Moses communed with the Lord God of Israel. Mount Horeb is another. Some scholars suggest that Horeb is in reference to the whole range of mountains and Sinai is the very mount of communion. Others, however, assert the opposite. In general, most biblical scholars have settled on the mountainous region near the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula as the location of for both. As to the exact prominence upon which Moses received the Law of God, there are as many opinions as there are peaks in the region.

7.38.30—lively oracles—The Greek words which are here translated as “lively oracles, derive from roots which mean “live, living, quick; utterance of God, orator, said, thought, reasoning, topic”. Another phrase which conveys the same meaning is “continuous or modern revelation”. Other scholars have suggested “doctrines of life”, principles of eternal life”, and we see no need to dispute them.

7.39 There is a superior translation for this verse.

Whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, (JST, Acts 7:39)

There is no reference to Moses having been physically cast out from among the Israelites, but there is no question that Jesus was indeed “thrust” out from Jerusalem as he was taken to the site of his crucifixion. Stephen in his masterful discourse is intertwining the lives and teachings of Moses and Jesus.

7.39.2—whom—A grammatical reference to Moses, but by extension refers to the Lord God as well. To refuse the one is to refuse the other.

7.39.9—thrust—The Greek word which is here translated as “thrust” derives from roots which mean “shove, push off, reject” and is the same word used to describe the action of the Hebrew man in 7.27. It is the agency of man which causes his separation from God and his servants.

7.39.16—hearts—The rejection of Moses and the Law of God was not simply a practical matter, a desire for food and drink which they once enjoyed along the banks of the Nile River. This was a conscious decision not to conform their lives to the principles of righteousness; they preferred the wickedness of the world.

7.39.21—Egypt—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,

Acts 7:39

JST
region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.40 There is a superior translation for this verse.

Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us; for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. (JST, Acts 7:40)

The request by the House of Israel for Aaron to make them gods by which they would travel in the wilderness was not a demand for generic gods; the children of Israel had specific ones in mind, by which they could indulge themselves, in order to succumb to the lustful desires of their hearts. We are not told how often the Israelites had debauched themselves in Egypt at the feet of these licentious gods, but clearly they were aware of the practices of the Egyptians and in their newly found freedom were desirous to partake of that perversion as they had seen others do. They were laboring in their hearts to commit sins and persuaded Aaron to facilitate their wickedness.

7.40.3—Aaron—The brother of Moses was three years the prophet’s senior and so far as we can tell, had remained in Egypt during Moses’ forty year absence. He was completely fluent in the dialect of the Hebrews and more than adequately familiar with the common language of the Egyptians, and for those reasons had become the spokesman for the prophet.

7.40.15—Moier—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

7.40.24—Egypt—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

7.40.26—wot—The first person singular conjugation of the archaic verb “witan” meaning “to know”. Another form of this verb is found in “wist” (see LK-C 2.49.13 and JN-C 5.13.6)

7.41 Whether as a result of long years of cultural adaptation or merely a perversive and precipitous decline into concupiscence and moral depravity, the children of Israel found themselves at odds with the God of Heaven. In a few moments’ time they debased themselves with inexcusable debauchery just at the point when the Lord God was prepared to allow them into His presence through the principles and ordinances that pertained to eternal life. These were not an ignorant and witless people; they were the covenant children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who sinned against the greater light, and as a result were relegated to a lesser system of religious guidance, a carnal law, since they were determined to live on that level.

7.41.5—calf—The amount of material written about the golden calf and why it was chosen by the Israelites as an object of worship is as varied as it is contradictory. Both the faithful and the infidels seem to have something to say about the matter. We are not certain as to the gender of the calf and therefore erudites are left to explore the origins and cultural aspects of both Apis and Hathor as Egyptian gods. This, of course, is only the beginning. Other learned men have managed to drag every mention of bovine worship, however slight, as a significant addition to the over nature of what happened at the foot of Mount

40 Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

Acts 7:40
JST
Acts 7:40–41
AF 51

41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.
Sinai. Most of these attempts at explication are bootless and do not edify.

7.42 Stephen is not here speaking of the children of Israel in the wilderness, but rather of their long apostate history once they entered into the promised land. The quote is from the book of Amos.

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? (Amos 5:21–25)

Amos is speaking in the days before the Assyrian captivity, when the northern Kingdom of Israel was destroyed. It is interesting to note in passing that when the Kingdom of Israel was founded by Jeroboam that his first political act was to make two golden calves, one of which he set up at Bethel and the other at Dan. He declared them to be the gods which had delivered them from Egypt. Certainly much of the religious activity in the northern reaches of the promised land was somewhat tainted by this mixture of truth and falsehood. The children of Israel experienced much of the same problem as they wandered in the wilderness for forty years.

7.42.11–13—host of heaven—Whether this was a worship of the sun, moon, and stars, or of imaginary gods which these celestial bodies supposedly represented, the effect was the same. The children of Israel forsook the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in favor of the comfortable, carnally minded deities of the peoples into whose lands they entered.

7.42.20–23—book of the prophets—The traditional arrangement of the synagogue rolls of scripture were divided into three major sections: The Pentateuch, or the five books of Moses, sometimes called the Law; the Haphtaroth, or appointed sections of the Prophets; and the Megilloth, containing works like Ruth, Esther, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes. Perhaps it is to the Haphtaroth that Stephen is referring. The so-called twelve minor Prophets were also often contained in a single scroll.

7.42.28—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7.43 This verse is a continuation of the quote from the fifth chapter of Amos. Stephen is clearly drawing his citation from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is The God of hosts. (Amos 5:26–27)

The rejection of Moses and the Law which had been given to Israel through him was as deliberate as the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ by the chief
priests and elders. The attempt on the lives of John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth through the slaughter of the innocents is alluded to here by Stephen.

7.43.8—Moloch—A variant spelling for the name of the Ammonite fire-god Molech. The same god was known among the Moabites as Chemosh. The idol was essentially a brass furnace with the face of a calf into which infants were cast as human sacrifices. We do not know if the children of Israel practiced sacrificial infanticide in the wilderness, but they certainly did once they took possession of the land of Canaan.

7.43.11—star—The Greek word which is here translated as "star" derives from roots which mean "constellation". The Hebrew word used in Amos which is translated as "star" derives from roots which mean "heap up, hilly; prick, penetrate, blister; rolling, blazing, prince". Needless to say, there is some ambiguity here as to what is meant, literally or figuratively.

7.43.15—Remphan—Much has been speculated about the origins of both "Remphan and the corresponding "Chion". Some scholars have suggested that the latter was the Hebrew name for the Egyptian god which was worshipped in the Greek language as "Remphan". Some scholars have gone so far as to suggest that the names referred to the Greek god "Saturn". It is likely that none of these postulations hits very close to the mark.

7.43.30—Babylon—Note that the Hebrew reads "beyond Damascus" in reference to the Assyrian Captivity in 721 BC about which Amos was writing. Stephen substitutes "Babylon" to remind the Jews of their own captivity 150 years later by the Babylonians in 589 BC. The two-fold application of Amos' prophecy allows for a third fulfillment, that which would terminate in the destruction of Jerusalem, the Temple, and the nation by the year AD 130. None of this is lost on the members of the Sanhedrin before whom Stephen is discoursing.

7.44 There is a superior translation for this verse.

Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the pattern that he had seen. (JST; Acts 7:44)

Stephen's point in making mention of the Tabernacle in the wilderness is that the worship of God is not restricted to a single place. The House of Israel moved from campsite to campsite during the forty years, their place of worship moving with them. When they entered into the land of Canaan, the Tabernacle was not set up in Jerusalem. A place is holy because the people there are holy.

7.44.5—tabernacle—Stephen is comparing the true tabernacle revealed through the prophet Moses with that of Molech which the children of Israelpitched in their own apostate hearts.

7.44.7—witness—The portable tabernacle was divinely inspired, built after a fashion that the Israelites had never before seen. In and of itself it was an outward testimony of the many revelations given to the House of Israel through the prophet Moses. In addition, within the most sacred sanctuary of the Tabernacle was the Ark of the Covenant, the tablets of stone upon which the Law was inscribed, the rod of Aaron, and an omer of manna, all of which bore an outward testimony of the mercy of God upon His children in the wilderness.
7.44.17—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means "is born". The cognate in Hebrew means "drew him out".

7.44.26—fashion—The far superior translation of this verse replaces "fashion" with "pattern".

45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

Acts 7:46–47

MM 1111

7.45 The Tabernacle in the wilderness continued to serve the spiritual needs of the Israelites once the conquest of Canaan began in earnest.

7.45.1—Which—in reference to the Tabernacle itself.

7.45.11—Jesus—A Greek form of the name "Joshua", the warrior leader of the House of Israel after the translation of Moses.

7.45.17—Gentiles—The Greek word which is translated here as "Gentiles" derives from roots which mean "race, habit, tribe, foreign, pagan". The word also produces the word "ethnic" and related forms in English.

7.45.20—drave—An archaic third person preterit conjugation of the verb "to drive"

7.45.32—David—in reference to the Great King of Israel, the son of Jesse and the father of Solomon.

45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

Acts 7:46–47

MM 1111

7.46 David had been a man after the heart of the Lord God, but in his career as the King of Israel made some terrible mistakes. The affair with Bathsheba, the plot against the life of Uriah her husband, and the seemingly endless warfare that enveloped the spiritual life of the son of Jesse rendered him unfit to built a house unto God. Therefore, it was left to his son, Solomon, to establish the edifice. David, however, was allowed to gather many of the materials that would be used in the construction of the Temple.

7.46.1—Who—in reference to David the King.

7.46.11—tabernacle—that is, a permanent tabernacle, the Temple that was to be built in the city of Jerusalem.

7.46.16—Jacob—the younger of the twin sons born to Isaac and Rebecca. The elder son, Esau, despised his spiritual inheritance by marrying outside of the perpetual covenant established between God and his grandfather Abraham. The lot fell to the faithful Jacob who was then forced to flee for his life. Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and with his four wives founded the House of Israel, that covenant family by whom the entire population of the earth was to be instructed and redeemed.

7.47 The building of the Temple at Jerusalem required the labors of more than 183,000 men for a seven year period. The dimensions of the Temple were precisely double that of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The amount of gold and silver accumulated for the building is almost incomprehensible. The stones cut for the building, together with the cedar timbers provided by Hiram of Tyre are legendary in size and number. No edifice to any God in the ancient world can be satisfactorily compared with that which Solomon built to the Lord God of Israel.

7.47.2—Solomon—Also called Jedidiah by Nathan, the prophet of God. The youngest son of David and Bathsheba, the daughter of Ammiel (sometimes Eliam). At the death of Absalom, David granted Bathsheba’s wish that her young son Solomon would be David’s political heir. Solomon would ascend to the throne of Israel before his father’s death as a response to the machinations of Adonijah, Abiathar, and
Joab. Solomon would extend the boundaries of the kingdom of Israel and expand the infrastructure of the nation considerably, including the building of the great Temple in Jerusalem. Later in life, Solomon engaged in excesses that would endanger his salvation.

7.47.4—him—In reference to the God of Jacob and not to Solomon.

7.48 Stephen may be alluding here to the testimony of Solomon himself when the Temple was dedicated in his day.

And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven: And he said, LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepeth covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day. Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there; that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive. (1 Kings 8:22–30)

Solomon knew perfectly well that the Temple was a similitude of the dwelling place of the Lord God of Israel in Heaven. It was a sacred place because the people had dedicated the land, the courts, and the entire edifice to Him. It was the best they could do to honor Him outwardly. That same honor should have been within their hearts as well. The leadership of Israel understood the relationship between the Temple and themselves. They should have looked upon their own bodies, and those that pertain to others, as places of holiness. Yet they frequently took life indiscriminately, having no respect for the breath of life that was housed in their tabernacles of clay. They defiled their bodies with one another as they defiled the confines of the House of the Lord. Their whole spiritual and physical lives had been commercialized

7.48.15—prophet—The citation of the next passage is from the sixty-sixth chapter of Isaiah.

7.49 The entire passage evoked by Stephen is included below; the rest of the chapter has great bearing on the time and place of Stephen’s discourse and is well worth the reading.

Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my...
footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not. (Isaiah 66:1–4)

The description given of those who offered sacrifice according to their own lights had fallen far short of that which the God of Israel had given to Abraham and the other patriarchs and prophets. The Jews had belfouled the Temple grounds long before the Roman legions desecrated it with their standards and their sacrifices. The sacrifices had become a mockery. So depraved had they become that when the Son of God did call to them, none of those who were considered the intermediaries between God and man would listen, they stopped their ears, closed their eyes, and hardened their hearts. This is not a light hammer with which Stephen is striking the anvil.

7.50 With this citation from Isaiah, Stephen seems to abruptly end his discourse and level the condemnation of God at the chief priests and elders of Israel. Even though Stephen did not directly quote verses 3 and 4 of Isaiah 66, those words would have pummeled the minds and hearts of his audience. Stephen had all but accused them of human sacrifice (certainly they were in the case of Jesus of Nazareth), sacrificers of dogs and swine upon the altars of Israel, worshippers of idols, and purveyors of abominations. We might expect at this point that the members of the Sanhedrin were getting somewhat restless.

7.51 If there had there been any doubt in the minds of the chief priests and elders as to Stephen’s intent, all of that was swept away by the evangelist’s direct condemnation of a wicked and an adulterous generation. Stephen’s rebuke is quite similar to the one delivered by Jesus against the leadership of the Jesus just prior to his pronouncement of doom upon the people, the city, the Temple and the nation (see MT-C 23:29–33).

7.51.2 —stiffnecked—The Greek word which is here translated as “stiff-necked” derives from roots which mean “hard-naped, obstinate”. It is said that metaphorically, this referred to an ox which could not be broken into a yoke, that he might do his ordained labor. Obviously an ox which will not turn its head to the right or to the left cannot be directed by the teamster.

7.51.4 —uncircumcised—The outward sign of the covenant with Abraham meant nothing if the heart and mind of the child of God had not partaken of the intent of the covenant.

7.51.14–15 —Holy Ghost—How long has the gift and power of the Holy Ghost been working upon the hearts of the children of men? Since the days of Adam and Eve. Those of the covenant people who did not enjoy the blessings proffered by this member of the Godhead were those who utterly rejected his promptings and enticements to righteousness.

50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.
7.52 It would appear that Stephen is continuing in the same vein as the Lord
had in his criticism of the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and others (see MT-
C 23.34–38). Although the leadership would not have been directly con-
scious of the attitude of the inhabitants of Jerusalem who persecuted Lehi in
the days of the prophet Jeremiah, yet we know from the patriarch’s own
record that the murderous intentions of the people came to the fore as soon
as Lehi testified of the coming of the Messiah. The council and senate had
feeably protested against Peter and the other Apostles that they were of a
mind to bring the blood of Jesus upon them in the eyes of the people (see
5.28). If there had been any such thing merely alluded to prior to this
discourse, Stephen makes it perfectly clear where the blame lay.

7.52.4—prophets—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who
bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is
commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for
whom he or she has responsibility.

7.52.16—shewed—An archaic third person preterit form of the verb “to
show”.

7.52.23–24—Just One—Jesus Christ was one in whom no man could
find legitimate fault. The Savior was absolutely sinless, having never
rebelled against the word and will of his Father.

7.52.26—whom—Meaning, of course, Jesus of Nazareth.

7.53 The Priesthood of Aaron, though a lesser priesthood than that of the
Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God, still held the keys of the
ministry of angels. The House of Israel received all that they had from God
through direct revelation. The world finds this passage quite difficult. To
those who have the teachings of the living prophets before them, however,
the meaning is as plain as day.

7.53.8—disposition—The Greek word which is here translated as “dis-
position” derives from roots which mean “arrangement, institution,
instrumentality, prescribe, arrange thoroughly”.

7.54 It is difficult to determine precisely when the chief priests and elders of
the Jews became aware of the magnitude of that which Stephen was teaching
them. The Sadducees and others may have simply ignored the implications
of the discourse in general, even though Stephen’s comparisons between them-
selves and the rebellious Israelites of the past were becoming more strident.
It would have been possible for them to remain intellectually slippery up to the
point when Stephen unleashed his clearly articulated condemnation of the part
they played in the persecution, torment, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

7.54.8–11—cut to the heart—The Greek word which is here translated as
"cut to the heart" derives from roots which mean “be sawn asunder;
exasperate”. See 5.33.7–10 where is recorded another unseemly
response to the preaching of the truth.

7.54.14—gnashed—The Greek word which is here translated as "gnash"

derives from roots which mean "grate with the teeth, in pain or rage".

This differs from the word used in Mark to describe the actions of the
possessed boy whom Jesus healed at the foot of Mount Tabor (see
MK-C 9.18.13).

7.55 Stephen has been filled with the power and influence of the Holy Ghost
since before he began his declamation before the members of the Sanhedrin
(see 6.15). How can anyone with even a modicum of intelligence read Luke’s
account of Stephen’s martyrdom and not come away with at least a rudiment-
ary understanding of the nature of God the Father and His Son? The

52 Which of the prophets have
not your fathers persecuted? and
they have slain them which shewed
before of the coming of the Just
One; of whom ye have been now
the betrayers and murderers:

Acts 7:52
MA 68
PM 33, 79

53 Who have received the law by
the disposition of angels, and have
not kept it.

Acts 7:53
DNTC 3 143

54 When they heard these things,
y they were cut to the heart, and they
gnashed on him with their teeth.

Acts 7:54
MD 315
Acts 7:54–60
AF 37
AGQ 4 50
MD 285

55 But he, being full of the Holy
Ghost, looked up steadfastly into
heaven, and saw the glory of God,
and Jesus standing on the right
hand of God,

Acts 7:55
AGQ 1 158
DHC 5 426
DS 3 108
TPJS 312
Father and the Son are separate, distinct individuals, exalted beings filled with truth and light. Otherwise, this whole scene becomes a mockery of mankind in general. The Father and the Son have revealed themselves to their servants on several occasions in precisely the same way. The prophets, seers, and revelators of every dispensation have testified as to the nature of divinity, clearly and without ambiguity. It is taken the deliberate imposition of the philosophies of men upon the doctrines of Christ to muddy the theological waters of traditional Christianity. There is nothing more important in all eternity than for a man to know why it is that God appears in the form of a man when He has presented Himself to His children. It is one of the fundamental ingredients of faith unto salvation that a man understand the true nature of God and his relationship to Him. Stephen was filled with the Holy Ghost because he was a man possessed of that kind of faith.

7.55.25–26—right hand—Stephen saw Jesus on the right hand of God; Paul says the same to the Hebrews; Joseph and Sidney as well.

7.56 In every sense of the words, Stephen was a prophet, seer, and revelator. He was a prophet because such is the station of those who have received fervent witnesses of the divine mission and the truth of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was a seer, because the heavens were opened to him in vision and he could without hesitancy bear testimony as to the nature of God the Father and of His Son. Revelators are those who are permitted, yea commanded, to present to those around them the things which they have received through personal revelation. A man or woman may be a prophet and a seer and not be a revelator. Some revelators have very narrow fields of action while others may have the commission to range the entire world as living witnesses of the eternal light and truth which have been given to them by revelation. Stephen’s field of labor obviously included Jerusalem.

7.56.11–13—Son of man—As is clearly stated in other places, God the Father is also referred to as the Man of Holiness. Jesus is the Son of the Man of Holiness. This is the truth of the matter notwithstanding the teachings of the sectarians to the contrary.

7.57 These men have just been buffeted by their own guilt. They have had presented to them the unvarnished truth regarding the nature of their perfidy in dealing with the Savior of mankind. Men of their ilk had dwelt among the covenant people since the beginning and were instrumental in being a plague and a torment to the faithful. Being as self-righteous as they were, the chief priests and elders of the Jews had not contemplated the implications of their actions with regard to Jesus of Nazareth and his Apostles. Now, standing naked to the world, they are driven by the truth of their own depravity to silence anyone who would dare shine a ray of light on their apostasy and corruption. They scream out so as not to hear Stephen’s testimony. They put their fingers in their ears so as not to hear any more of his words, and they devote themselves to their uncontrollable desire to destroy the man who has brought such blinding light into their darkened lives.

7.58 Just as the trials and hearings that condemned the person of the Lord Jesus Christ were blasphemously illegal, so also was this mockery concerning Stephen the evangelist. Nothing of the proceedings followed the instructions given in the Law of Moses. The sole intent at that moment seemed to be to silence this prophet, seer, and revelator whose testimony concerning them burned the chief priests and elders to the core. We are not told where the council was being held. It may have been convened in the synagogue of the Libertines (see 6.9) or it may have been in a location set aside for the Great
Sanhedrin. In any case, the convocation took place within the city walls. When Stephen’s fate was sealed by the wickedness of these men, he was taken outside the walls of the city and stoned to death. It is interesting that they did not request permission of the Romans to commit this murder of an innocent man.

7.58.13—witnesses—Those from the synagogue of the Libertines who first brought charges against Stephen (see 6.13–14).

7.58.26—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

7.59 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And they stoned Stephen; and he, calling upon God, said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (JST, Acts 7:59)

None of the mandated formalities were followed in the stoning of Stephen. This was not an execution defined by the Law of Moses. This was a premeditated murder of one of the servants of God by a mob enflamed by their own guilt and rage.

7.59.7—God—Stephen prayed to God the Eternal Father in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as have the faithful in every dispensation. That has been the practice of the disciples of Christ since the very beginning of time. There are recorded instances, however, when the Savior has been addressed directly. On these occasions, however, Jesus himself was actually present, communing with the one offering the prayer. Thus, at his stoning, Stephen makes his petition to Jesus directly because the Savior is present before him. We see this same exception when Jesus visited the Nephites at the temple in Bountiful after his resurrection. Again, the same thing occurred when he appeared in the Kirtland Temple to Joseph and Oliver. Jesus has never forbidden his disciples to address him when they were in his company, but he has always commanded them to pray to the Father in his name.

7.59.10–11—Lord Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

7.60 Stephen was the perfect disciple, attempting to exhibit all of the qualities which he had acquired through his association with the Lord Jesus and his Apostles. During his last moments on the cross, Jesus uttered “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (see LK-C 23.46). It should be noted that while Jesus depended upon the Father to provide for him after his death, Stephen recognizes the role of the Redeemer in the course of his eternal life. There was none else unto whom Stephen could relinquish his spirit. Jesus from the cross forgave those who had crucified him, because they had done so in ignorance (see LK-C 23.33–34). The chief priests and elders at the time, however, had not been included in Jesus petition, but only the Roman soldiers who had done the deed. One wonders at Stephen’s petition to Jesus, the source of his generosity. Perhaps being the prophet, seer, and revelator that he was, the evangelist knew that which was about to transpire among the people, that the retribution which was to be poured out upon them because of their wickedness dwarfed anything that could be seen as a reprisal for his own stoning. He had no desire to be the cause of intensifying the suffering of any soul.

59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (JST, Acts 7:59)

60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (JST, Acts 7:60)

JC 587
FPM 194
8.1 Scholars have used this verse to demonstrate that Saul of Tarsus was a member of the Great Sanhedrin. While it is by no means impossible, it seems unlikely. That Saul was a member of the lesser council which governed the Jews from Cilicia seems far more plausible (see 6.9). The murder of Stephen uncorked the demon in the bottle. Persecutions of all kinds mounted against the saints who lived in Jerusalem proper. It became nearly impossible to conduct daily activities of any kind, much less the religious devotion which they had once enjoyed at the Temple. While some of the members of the Church of Christ may have been frightened by the threats made against their lives, most of the faithful no doubt left the city at the instructions of the Apostles. As time progressed they would receive other instructions suggesting the proper resorts wherein they might find safety. By the time of the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the faithful had made their way to Pella and other designated places where they might escape the ire of the Roman legions. The scattering of the Church simply expanded the scope of their missionary work (see 8.4). The Samaritans, as will be seen shortly, responded well to the teaching of their new neighbors. With the members of the Church safely ensconced elsewhere, the Apostles continued in their divinely appointed mission to teach the principles of salvation to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and undoubtedly still used the Temple as a place to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The chief priests and elders had learned to their own hurt that it was impossible to jail or otherwise constrain the disciples of Jesus.

8.1.2—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

8.1.23—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

8.1.34—Judaea—In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the province of Judea stretched from Malath to the south to the Plain of Esdrælon on the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the River Jordan on the east, comprising approximately 5,000 square miles.

8.1.36—Samaria—When the Assyrians conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BC, they carried away into captivity all those who might have been considered the political, social, and economic leaders of the ten tribes, leaving behind a vast number of the “common people” to be governed by Assyrian surrogates. In the process of time, the surrogates and the oppressed began to intermarry, or at least to produce offspring together. The resultant mixing of Gentile and Israelite blood offended their cousins to the south in the Kingdom of Judah, and a bitter relationship, if it may be called a relationship, ensued bringing the social wrath of all concerned upon the heads of the mixed culture. Samaria had been the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, and for that reason, it is supposed, all Assyrian-Israelite offspring were called by that name as an opprobrium. The parable of the Good Samaritan could have involved other nationalities as the major characters, but the power of the juxtaposition of the Samaritan with the Levite and the Priest was poignant almost beyond our comprehension.
8.1.39—*apostles*—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

8.2 As it had been with Jesus, so also was the burial of Stephen. Notwithstanding the indignation of members of the council, Stephen’s body was treated with great respect and reverence.

8.2.2–3—*devout men*—We do not know who these men were. The Apostles might have been mentioned specifically if they as a body had been responsible for the evangelist’s interment. The regular members of the Church, if Luke’s account here is sequential, would have already left the city. Might these men have been like unto Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who were sympathetic to Christianity, notwithstanding the antipathy of the rulers of the Jews?

8.2.5—*Stephen*—A learned and particularly eloquent servant of God who, after the Lord himself, appears to be the first Christian martyr in the days of the Apostles (see 7.1–60).

8.2.12—*lamentation*—If our understanding of the customs be correct, no public mourning could be made over one who had been executed at the instigation of the Great Sanhedrin. Either this “great lamentation” was one conducted in abject privacy, or the stoning of Stephen did not have the legal support that would have prohibited the acts of kindness that were heaped upon the martyr.

8.3 Saul enthusiasm against the Christians seems unbounded. He was dedicated to a cause in which he thought that he was doing God a service. He would rue these excesses for the rest of his life (see 22.3–4, 26.9–11, and 1 TM C 1.12–13)

8.3.3—*Saul*—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

8.3.6—*havock*—The Greek word which is here translated as “havock” derives from roots which mean “filth, insult, maltreat, loosen, break up”. The English word “havock” derives from roots which refer to “pillaging”. The modern spelling is “havoc”.

8.3.5—*haling*—The Greek word which is here translated as “haling” derives from roots which mean “trail, drag, draw”.

8.4 If the world will leave the truth alone, righteousness will eventually fill the earth. If the world devotes itself to persecuting and destroying those who are imbued with the principles of light, the conversion will take place that much faster. For all of their attempts to constrain and eliminate the disciples of Jesus, all that the chief priests and elders managed to do was to facilitate the dissemination of the Gospel throughout all of the land of Palestine.

8.5 Jesus had labored among the Samaritans from time to time during his mortal ministry. His experience with the woman at the well at Sychar led to a great body of the Samaritans accepting Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, the

2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.
Savior of the world (see JN-C 4.1–42).

8.5.2—

Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.5.9—Samaria—It is unlikely that Luke is referring to the ancient city of Samaria. That city was completely destroyed by John Hircanus in 109 BC. Herod the Great built a new city on the ruins and called it Sebaste, in honor of the Greek name of Augustus Caesar. Scholars are at a loss, therefore, as to which city Philip went to preach. Some prefer Sebaste; others suggest Neapolis, a city built upon the ruins of Shechem; while still others point to Sichar. Each of the sites has its particular appeal, but we frankly do not know.

8.5.12—

Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendency to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

8.6 Jesus stated to his disciples that the Samaritans in Sichar were as fields “white already to harvest” (see JN-C 4.35). Jesus and the Apostles remained in Sichar another two days, convincing the populace that Jesus was the Christ. We are not told whether or not the Samaritans were baptized and confirmed members of the Church of Christ at that time (see JN-C 4.40), but if they had not been counted among the disciples then, they certainly would have been in the days of Philip. If Jesus and Apostles had indeed provided the saving ordinances for those at Sichar, the labors of Philip probably took place at some other city in Samaria.

8.6.13—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip...
and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.6.19—miracles—Those who hold that the seven men chosen to provide for the widows in Jerusalem were “deacons” have little or no understanding the powers of the priesthood and the respective roles which each play in the promulgation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Miracles are primarily the purview of the Melchizedek Priesthood, by which ailments of all kinds may be dealt with in a spiritual way. “Deacons” as officers of the Aaronic Priesthood, are not given to producing “miracles” of the type which is articulated here.

8.7 As mentioned above in 8.6.19, administering to the sick and afflicted was a function of the Melchizedek Priesthood rather than that of the Aaronic Priesthood.

8.7.2–3—unclean spirits—The Greek phrase which is here translated as “unclean spirits” derives from roots which mean “impure, lewd, demonic, foul,” and “current of air, human spirit, rational soul, vital principle, angel, demon, ghost.” Let no one doubt that the minions of Satan can and do take possession of the bodies of men, when in their rebellion and depravity they permit such usurpation. Against the adjurations proffered in the name of Christ by those holding the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God there can be no serious resistance made by any of that wicked host that followed Lucifer into darkness and ruin.

8.7.21—palsies—In Greek, the word used here is primarily in reference to those who have been paralyzed for some reason; injury, stroke, and the like. In English, the word “palsy” not only includes the notion of paralysis, but also tremors caused by such diseases as Parkinson’s. Regardless of the nature of the affliction, the power of God through His Son was effective for those who exercised their faith.

8.8 The happiness that entered into the lives of the inhabitants of the Samaritan city came in part because many of them were relieved of the various afflictions that had beset them. The larger portion of their happiness came, however, in their hope for salvation which had been produced by their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

8.9 The Greek used in this passage implies that Simon was hardly more than a slight of hand artist. It is the various translations which intensify his villainy. Was he a servant of Lucifer, engaged in destroying the fragile faith of the early Church or was he merely an extremely clever man whose tricks lent him a certain mystical aura in the eyes of the people? We at present do not know. He was, in any event, a man grounded in the affairs of this world, tempted by fame, fortune, and power. As Peter would point out, his desire to receive the priesthood was for him an opportunity to exercise unrighteous dominion rather than to be a blessing to those around him.

8.9.8—Simon—There has been as much foolishness written about this man as could ever be desired by the most fanciful. Traditions abound, fabrications generated in every age, yet the fact remains that little historical truth accompanies the name. That he was a pitiable man there can be no doubt. Of his conversion to Christianity, we may conclude that it was seriously flawed.

8.9.16—sorcery—The Greek word which is here translated as “sorcery” is derived from roots which mean “practice magic, Oriental scientist, magician”. Another Greek word translated as “sorceries” derives from

7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:
roots which mean “medication, druggist, poisoner, magician”, and provide English with the word “pharmacy” and related nomenclature. The English word “sorcery” derives from Latin roots which mean “lots, chance, decisions by lot”.

8.9.18—bewitched—The Greek word which is here translated as “bewitched” derives from roots which mean “put out of one’s wits, astound, insanity, be beside one’s self”. The English word “bewitched” derives from Old English roots which suggest “idolatry, divination”.

8.9.22—Samaria—It is unlikely that Luke is referring to the ancient city of Samaria. That city was completely destroyed by John Hycannus in 109 BC. Herod the Great built a new city on the ruins and called it Sebaste, in honor of the Greek name of Augustus Caesar. Scholars are at a loss, therefore, as to which city Philip went to preach. Some prefer Sebaste; others suggest Neapolis, a city built upon the ruins of Shechem; while still others point to Sychar. Each of the sites has its particular appeal, but we frankly do not know.

8.9.29—great one—The Greek word which is here translated as “great one” is the source in English for the prefix “mega-” Simon was content to allow the people to think of him in any majestic terms that they desired, so long as they honored him. He was an entertainer who came to believe his own press.

8.10 The people of the city in Samaria lauded Simon, attributing to him powers which he had not, gracing him with accolades which he did not deserve. He did not disabuse them when he suggested that he was endowed with divine power. Simon was willing to allow the masses to think of him in glowing terms, by which he was honored and enriched. That Simon was a gifted deceiver there can be no doubt. To what degree was he a minion of the devil? To that same degree that he allowed others to believe falsehoods about his relationship with God. Had Simon ever had the priesthood bestowed upon him, he no doubt would have quickly turned to priestcraft, setting himself up before the people rather than holding up the Father and the Son whose priesthood it is.

8.11 The inhabitants of the Samaritan city could not explain that which Simon performed before them. They attributed his eye-deceiving tricks to God, a mistake that Simon was not willing to disabuse them of. He had consistently astounded them with his feats of prestidigitation.

8.11.6—regard—The Greek word which is here translated as “regard” derives from roots which mean “hold the mind towards, pay attention to, be cautious about, apply oneself to, adhere to”.

8.11.14—bewitched—The Greek word which is here translated as “bewitched” derives from roots which mean “put out of one’s wits, astound, insanity, be beside one’s self”. The English word “bewitched” derives from Old English roots which suggest “idolatry, divination”.

8.11.17—sorceries—The Greek word which is here translated as “sorceries” is derived from roots which mean “practice magic, Oriental scientist, magician”. Another Greek word translated as “sorceries” derives from roots which mean “medication, druggist, poisoner, magician”, and provide English with the word “pharmacy” and related nomenclature. The English word “sorcery” derives from Latin roots which mean “lots, chance, decisions by lot”.

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.
8.12 Once Philip began to preach the truth as contained in the scriptures and to testify of the fulfillment of those prophecies in the life and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, the people immediately saw through the fraud that had been perpetrated upon them and accepted all of the ordinances which were offered to them. The Samaritans were baptized in droves at the hands of Philip the evangelist. We are not told whether or not Simon ever attempted to heal anyone, but it is likely that he did not. Philip attended to his duties with discernible power; he healed those among the faithful Samaritans in the name of Christ and by the power of God; he taught the truth under the power and influence of the Holy Ghost such that the Samaritans could easily perceived the spirit by which he did all things. The difference between Simon and Philip was as the difference between night and day. We are not told precisely where the baptisms took place, but we may rest assured that the ordinance was performed properly, by immersion, by one holding the proper authority.

8.12.5—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.12.18–19—Jesus Christ—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

8.13 We probably ought not to doubt the sincerity of Simon in the beginning, any more than we should doubt others who have accepted the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Christ in faith and then latter fell away from the truth. Simon’s heart was not sterile soil. That he may have later been overshadowed by the cares of the world, or had not completely forsaken a hidden sin which would impair the growth of the word of God, is well within the realm of possibility, but initially he was as taken by the teachings of Philip as were the other Samaritans. Simon knew that he was not what the people of the city made him out to be, but Philip was clearly all that Simon ever had hoped to be in terms of his effectiveness with the people.

8.13.2—Simon—There has been as much foolishness written about this man as could ever be desired by the most fanciful. Traditions abound, fabrications generated in every age, yet the fact remains that little historical truth accompanies the name. That he was a pitiable man there can be no doubt. Of his conversion to Christianity, we may conclude that it was seriously flawed.

8.13.14—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:12
AF 136, 163
Acts 8:12–17
DHC 2 256
DNTC 1 740
JC 778
MD 359
EM 1 98
CR02-O 91
Acts 8:12–20
EM 2 813, 814

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

Acts 8:13
JC 587
and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.13.16—wondered—The Greek word which is here translated “wondered” is the same as is translated as “bewitched” in 8.9.18 and 8.11. We should correctly assume that the translations of the same benign words above in such a negative way come as a result of the cultural traditions surrounding Simon. The people are not “bewitched” and neither is Simon. They are simply dumbfounded.

8.14 It is mildly entertaining to hear the learned of the world speak of the gift of the Holy Ghost as if they knew something of it. The same is true when those who think they are wise make insipid observations regarding the priesthood of God and those who bear that priesthood. The Gift of the Holy Ghost is bestowed by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority to do so, who bear the Holy Priesthood after the Order of the Son of God. This blessing comes only once a child of God has exercised faith in Jesus Christ, has repented of all their wrong doing, and has accepted the ordinance of baptism by immersion for the remission of those sins.

8.14.4—apostles—The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles who constituted the Presidency of the Church in former days.

8.14.8—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

8.14.11—Samaria—A city in the province of Samaria, rather than the city of Samaria itself (see 8.5.9).

8.14.15–17—word of God—That is, the Gospel of Jesus Christ which had been preached unto the Samaritans by Philip.

8.14.22—Peter—Simon Peter, the president of the Church of Jesus Christ after the ascension of the Savior into Heaven.

8.14.24—John—The brother of James, the son of Zebedee, and most likely what we would call today the Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

8.15 One might ask the question as to why, since Philip was a bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood, it was necessary for Peter and John to come to the city in Samaria in order to lay on their hands on the heads of those who had been baptized for the Gift of the Holy Ghost. This is a question which derives from our perspective as members of a vast congregation of believers scattered throughout the world. There are some ordinances so sacred, that at the beginning of every dispensation, only the prophets, seers, and revelators were permitted to perform them. As the Church grew, as men proved themselves faithful in all things, the power to perform those sacred ordinances was delegated to others. Today, a faithful bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood, under the direction of the presiding officers of the Church, may be permitted to lay hands on the head of those being confirmed members of the Church and bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost. We often do not perceive the great trust which our Father in Heaven has expressed in His sons.

8.16 A man who has been baptized for the remission of sins has submitted himself to a great principle of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But if he does not receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost, he has not received the full weight and

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord
measure of the blessing which was intended by that baptism. Accepting baptism without its accompanying confirming blessing would be like unto accepting the Law of Moses without any anticipation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the sacrifices looked forward to the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, so also baptism looks forward to perfect communion with God the Father and His Son through the auspices of the power of the Holy Ghost.

8.16.20—21—Lord Jesus—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

8.17 All of the ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are to be performed in the manner which the Lord has directed. Baptism must be performed by complete immersion in water; the Gift of the Holy Ghost must be performed by the laying on of hands. Man has no right whatsoever to change any of the ordinances established before the foundations of the earth were laid. Men have done so in the past and as a result cut themselves off from the salvation of God.

8.18 Simon was a charlatan, a worker of illusions. He had expressed faith in Christ and had received baptism at the hands of Philip the evangelist. That he was still afflicted with some of his previous deformities of soul we may conclude without hesitation. This does not necessarily mean that he had received baptism as part of some nefarious deception, however. Simon’s initial humility seemed to fail him when he observed the great power which the Apostles wielded. Immediately he perceived that in their power there was a reality. If he were to possess this truth he then could return to his role as a “great one” among the Samaritan. In this sense he was as a pig returning to his sty, or a dog to his vomit. Changing one’s world perspective is sometimes quite difficult for those who have trafficked in the vanities of the world.

8.18.3—Simon—There has been as much foolishness written about this man as could ever be desired by the most fanciful. Traditions abound, fabrications generated in every age, yet the fact remains that little historical truth accompanies the name. That he was a pitiful man there can be no doubt. Of his conversion to Christianity, we may conclude that it was seriously flawed.

8.18.21—money—Attempting to purchase the power and authority of God has, as a result of this episode in the scriptures, become known as “simony”

8.19 We are not told what happened precisely that convinced Simon that the power and influence of the Holy Ghost had come upon those who were blessed by Peter and John. It may be that Simon himself had received that blessing as well, had felt the great comfort and immediate illumination that had come to his heart and to his mind. As soon as his mind turned to avarice and power among the people, however, that influence certainly would have diminished, perhaps fading altogether. In any case, Simon’s impression was that the Apostles had a gift which if he were to possess he would rise above all those around him.

8.20 Simon’s motivation was for personal power and self-aggrandizement. In this sense he was partaking of that same spirit which had destroyed Lucifer in the premortal existence. Lucifer desired to usurp the power of God that he

| 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. | Acts 8:17  AF 487  DHC 2 269  DHC 4 350  TPJS 99  EM 1 310  EM 2 813  Acts 8:17–18  EM 2 543  Acts 8:18–24  AF 187  JC 587  MD 792 |
| 18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, |  |

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

| Acts 8:19–20  CR82-A 44 |
| 20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of | Acts 8:20  CR97-A 60  Acts 8:20–23 |
might rule over all of the creations of the Father as a “great one”. He wished to be uniquely distinguished from all of the other spirit children of God. He had no compunction about destroying the opportunity for salvation of any and all so long as he rose to the top of the heap. That spirit had reentered the heart of Simon with a vengeance, and with a Satanic grasping, thought to usurp the power of love and unity among the saints and replace it with egomania. This, of course, would have eventually destroyed the Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth.

8.20.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

8.21 As Lucifer had aspired to be the Anointed One and more, so also Simon desired to be revered by the membership of the Church as were Philip and the Apostles. He did not think upon what was required of one who bore the burdens of the Lord; he only wished to be thought of in a reverential manner. He surmised that if he possessed the power to bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost that this reverence would be forthcoming. Peter censured Simon in no uncertain terms. If Simon did not forsake his determined desire to advance himself in the eyes of the people, he would never progress beyond the few simple truths which he had accepted; in fact, it was likely that he would lose altogether that which he had managed to acquire. He certainly was not prepared to receive any degree of the priesthood.

8.22 We will be judged by the desires of our hearts, whether or not we are able to bring our desires to fruition. Men who would seek the lives of their enemies, whether or not they become the direct instruments of their mortal destruction, will be punished for the joy which they feel when their enemy’s life is taken. Such was the judgment against David the King at the death of Uriah. By the same token, men who would have received the Gospel of Christ had they been given the opportunity during their lives, will be blessed as if they had accepted it while in the flesh.

8.22.13—thought—Simon had not sinned in the sense that he had broken some outward principle of the law of the Gospel. Yet, as Jesus had taught time and again (see MT-C 5.21–48), it is the thoughts of our minds and hearts that would ultimately cause us to do that which was right or cause us to descend into heinous sin. Therefore he cautioned us to control our thoughts that our actions might follow suit.

8.23 Peter makes it clear, if the Greek translation is accurate, that Simon had been poisoned in his mind and heart because of his former ties with a carnal and fallen world. He had not forsaken all that had alienated him from the Spirit of God.

8.23.9–11—gall of bitterness—The Greek word which is here translated as "gall" derives from roots which mean "green, bile, poison, anodyne". The Greek word which is translated here as "bitterness" derives from roots which mean "pack, press down, squeeze, seize, arrest, God may be purchased with money.

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Acts 8:22
AF 118

Acts 8:23
CR01-A 30
capture”. Historians suggest that “gall of bitterness” as a Hebrew phrase means the “quintessence of bitterness” although there is little evidence in the translation of that idiom into Greek. In fact, there is no example of this particular idiom in the Old Testament.

8.23.15—17—bond of iniquity—The Greek word which is here translated as “bond” derives from roots which mean “a joint tie, ligament, uniting principle, control”. The Greek word which is here translated as “iniquity” derives from roots which mean “wrongfulness”.

8.24 Such an unruly gaggle of apocryphal accounts of Simon’s history have hounded his reputation for so many centuries that it is difficult for most readers to be anything but cynical about the magician’s petition to John and Peter to pray for him. His reputation has been smeared just as surely as has the reputation of many others in the scriptures. Many ancient manuscripts of this particular event contribute additional phrasing which states that Simon pleaded for forgiveness, weeping continuously that he might be forgiven of his wicked thoughts. As is their wont, modern cinematographers have commercialized the legends regarding Simon Magus, giving these scurrilous fabrications about him an air of validity. We ought to be cautious that our thoughts regarding the innocent do not condemn us before the judgment bar of Christ.

8.24.3—Simon—There has been as much foolishness written about this man as could ever be desired by the most fanciful. Traditions abound, fabrications generated in every age, yet the fact remains that little historical truth accompanies the name. That he was a pitiful man there can be no doubt. Of his conversion to Christianity, we may conclude that it was seriously flawed.

8.25 We are not told precisely when the Apostles went into the other cities of Samaria. The text will allow us to suggest that they did so on their return trip. Philip’s initial success, however, may very well have prompted an increased presence of the Church in the province of Samaria which in turn would have necessitated frequent forays by the Apostles to those newly enlightened people. Without being too doctrinaire, we could suggest that “preaching the word of the Lord” might have been done before the members of the Church of Christ, those who had been baptized by Philip and recently confirmed by Peter and John. When the disciples “preached the gospel” they were crying repentance and salvation to those who had not as yet heard the “good news” of redemption and salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

8.25.2—they—Peter and John, though Philip may have joined with the Apostles on their journey home.

8.25.16—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

8.25.20—gospel—that is to say, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance from sin, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.

8.25.26—Samaritans—When the Assyrians conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BC, they carried away into captivity all those who might have been considered the political, social, and

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.
economic leaders of the ten tribes, leaving behind a vast number of the “common people” to be governed by Assyrian surrogates. In the process of time, the surrogates and the oppressed began to intermarry, or at least to produce offspring together. The resultant mixing of Gentile and Israelite blood offended their cousins to the south in the Kingdom of Judah, and a bitter relationship, if it may be called a relationship, ensued bringing the social wrath of all concerned upon the heads of the mixed culture. Samaria had been the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, and for that reason, it is supposed, all Assyrian-Israelite offspring were called by that name as an opprobrium. The parable of the Good Samaritan could have involved other nationalities as the major characters, but the power of the juxtaposition of the Samaritan with the Levite and the Priest was poignant almost beyond our comprehension.

8.26 The servants of God do His will as they are inspired by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost or as they are directed by those who have been empowered to direct the affairs of the Kingdom of God. We are not told whether the angel was the spirit of a just man made perfect, a translated being, a resurrected personage, or one of the presiding officers of the Church. What we do know is that Philip was explicitly obedient to the word of the Lord and because of that he was instrumental in bringing life and salvation to a humble and penitent soul.

8.26.9—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotos in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.26.16—south—Had Philip returned to Jerusalem with the Peter and John, he would have needed to go south and west to arrive in Gaza in a timely fashion. It seems like, given the context of the narrative, that Philip was still laboring in one of Samaritan villages.

8.26.19—way—The Greek word which is here translated as "way" derives from roots which mean "road, progress, mode, means". Obviously, Philip was to travel south from wherever he was when the angel approached him, until he intersected the road that went from Jerusalem to Gaza.

8.26.22—down—Jerusalem was in the mountains of Judea while Gaza was near the Mediterranean coast.

8.26.24—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

8.26.26—Gaza—One of the five major cities of the Philistines, and the southernmost. It has been continuously inhabited for thousands of years.

8.26.29—desert—The Greek word which is here translated as “desert” derives from roots which mean “lonesome, waste, solitary”. It must

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

Acts 8:26–39
AF 140
MD 241
DNTC 1 57
Acts 8:26–31
CR98–A 34
have seemed curious to Philip that he was being instructed to go to a place where there were no people dwelling. He was a missionary after all.

8.27 Philip would be at the right place at the right time to be a blessing to the eunuch because he had chosen to follow divine counsel.

8.27.11—Ethiopia—An expansive geographical area south of Egypt that straddled the Upper Nile. The bounds and limitations of the nations which have borne that name have varied over the centuries. Scholars assert that at the time of Philip “Ethiopia” corresponded to Nubia, which stretched from the first cataract at Aswan to Khartoum, the capital of modern Sudan, located as the confluence of the White and Blue Nile Rivers.

8.27.13—eunuch—The Greek word which is here translated as “eunuch” derives from roots which mean “bed, castrated, impotent, unmarried, state officer”. Historians are at odds as to the literal meaning of the word and it may have come to mean anyone closely associated with the ruling family of a country, regardless of whether they had been emasculated or not.

8.27.18—Candace—There is just as much controversy and confusion about Candace as there is about her “eunuch”. Most historians had stated that there was no woman “Candace” who was queen of Ethiopia. In order to explain the seeming discrepancy, some learned men have suggested that she was the “queen mother” of the male monarch responsible for the more secular matters of the kingdom. Other scholars, in the absence of evidence, have proposed that Candace fell victim to a misogynistic culture which erased all mention of her once she departed mortality. About the time such theses as these become popular, new evidence is uncovered which throws them all into a cocked hat. There are many ancient authorities which state conclusively that there were a series of female rulers of Nubia and Ethiopia, several of them sporting the name of Candace.

8.27.30—treasure—It is intriguing to note that the Greek word which is here translated as “treasure” is the same word which is used for the name of the city of Gaza itself. One wonders at the possibility of some political connection between the city and Ethiopia. Was the eunuch a special envoy of the queen who dwelt in Gaza?

8.27.35—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

8.27.38—worship—Many scholars have concluded that the eunuch was a gentile convert to Judaism. While that may have been the case, there is little evidence to draw that conclusion. The scattering of the Jews throughout the ages would have brought them into contact with a great number of cultures and rulers. It is by no means impossible that certain Jewish families rose to prominence after a time, just as Joseph the son of Jacob had risen to prominence because of his extraordinary talents. That the eunuch was of the Jewish faith there can be no doubt; that he was a Jew genetically we may only surmise.

8.28 We cannot be certain as to which feast or celebration had brought the

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

28 Was returning, and sitting in
eunuch to Jerusalem. If the eunuch had been living in Gaza, almost any celebration might have sufficed. If the eunuch had traveled from Ethiopia proper for to worship, however, it would seem reasonable to assume that he had come up for Passover. One then wonders how much time had passed since the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Had the eunuch been in attendance at that particular feast? Had he tarried in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost? Had he remained in the City as part of his worship? There is no way to know for certain, but it is clear that the eunuch was substantively prepared to receive the teachings of Philip with great ease and practical faith.

8.28.2—returning—From Jerusalem possibly to Gaza (see 8.27.30), but likely to Ethiopia itself.

8.28.9—Esaias—The Greek form of the name of the prophet Isaiah.

8.28.11—prophet—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility. Here the reference is to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

8.29 If the eunuch were in reality the treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia, his attire and entourage must have been tremendously intimidating. Like the Apostles, however, Philip does not hesitate when given divine instruction as to what he should do next. Philip was an apt student and was therefore an apt servant. Like Nephi of old, he knew that he would be able to do whatever was required of him, even the teaching of this great man who sat reading in his chariot at the side of the road.

8.29.6—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.30 It would not be amiss to ask the question as to why the eunuch had paused at that particular spot in the highway where he could be easily approached by Philip. One immediately thinks of men like Amulek who was inspired to go to one of the gates of the city of Ammonihah to await the arrival of Alma the Younger. Very little of that which impinges upon the eternal future of any man is the product of serendipity or coincidence. Philip is sent to that particular place and time because the eunuch would be there. The eunuch is there because he has been inspired to tarry until he comes to an understanding of the particular passage of scripture that has captured his imagination. The eunuch may very well have been promised by the Lord that someone would come to him if he waited, just as Simeon and Anna had been promised their view of the infant Messiah.

8.30.2—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.
8.30.12—prophet—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility. Here the reference is to the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

8.30.13—Esias—The Greek form of the name of the prophet Isaiah.

8.31 Who had originally drawn the attention of the eunuch to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah? Had he been a bystander at one of the frequent sessions taught by the Apostles at the Temple in Jerusalem? Was he then attempting to see in Isaiah what the disciples of Jesus apparently saw? Even those who are supposed to be the illuminated have great difficulty in comprehending the magnificent prophecies of the prophet Isaiah. His views were glorious, his writings magnificent, his imagery enduring and provocative. The prophet’s great synopsis of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ in conjunction with his mortal ministry must have deeply affected the honest in heart who waited upon the coming of the Messiah. This was certainly true of the Eunuch.

8.31.16—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.32 Here the eunuch refers specifically to the seventh verse of Isaiah 53. Verses 1 through 7 are cited below.

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened he not his mouth.

(Isaiah 53:1–7)

If the eunuch had had any contact with the disciples of Jesus or Jesus himself before this encounter with Philip, he may have already begun to suspect that Jesus of Nazareth may have had something to do with the fulfillment of this prophecy by Isaiah. All that he lacked was to have someone show him how all of the elements of the prophecy fit together. He needed to have a disciple point to the facts of Jesus’ mortal life, facts which he did not then have at his
8.32.16—*sheep*—We ought not to become overly exercised at the apparent transposition of the “lamb” for “sheep” in this passage. Luke is again quoting from the Septuagint which has its own peculiar idiosyncrasies. In any event, the principles involved are basically the same.

8.33 This is the following verse from the one given above. Cited below is the remainder of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.

He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his know\-\(\textit{\textbf{ledge}}\) shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

(Isaiah 53:7–12)

Much can and has been written regarding the fulfillment of this passage of Isaiah in the life and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the most concise is that found in the teachings of the prophet Abinadi as he stood before wicked King Noah and his priests.

8.34 The question of the eunuch is a natural one. Throughout the writings of Isaiah, the prophet and his family are frequently used as types for the House of Israel, as harbingers of the future. Long standing Jewish tradition held that many of the prophecies of Isaiah dealt directly with the coming of the Messiah, much in the same way that the Psalms did. The apparent ambiguity of Isaiah was troubling the eunuch and he was in a quandary as to what he should believe about the passage.

8.34.3—*eunuch*—The Greek word which is here translated as “eunuch” derives from roots which mean “bed, castrated, impotent, unmarried, state officer”. Historians are at odds as to the literal meaning of the word and it may have come to mean anyone closely associated with the ruling family of a country, regardless of whether they had been emasculated or not.

8.34.4—*answered*—The use of this word in the English translation would give us to understand that Philip had apparently asked the eunuch a question and the latter was now responding. The Greek word which is here translated as “answered” derives from roots which mean “conclude for oneself, respond, begin to speak, expected discourse”.

8.34.5—*Philip*—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he

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

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?
apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.35 Many scholars have speculated as to where Philip might have taken the eunuch scripturally as he taught him the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The only passage that we are completely confident about, however, is Isaiah 53. Even if the evangelist dwelt solely upon that singular chapter it would have taken him considerable time to present to the burgeoning disciple all that was implied by the prophet. There can be no question that Philip explained the entire chapter; the message of those verses is particularly adapted to faithful discourse.

8.35.2—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.35.16—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

8.36 No doubt Philip taught the eunuch the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Clearly the treasurer was a man of faith, and had taken in all that Philip had taught him concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Apparently he was a moral man as well, one who had tried to live by the Law of Moses all of his adult life; he had been prepared in every way to enter into the covenant of discipleship. Can there be any doubt that Philip had instructed the man regarding baptism by immersion for the remission of sins? Perhaps the eunuch knew of the place where he could be baptized and had taken Philip with him in the chariot for that very purpose. Notice that there has been no coercion on the part of Philip. The evangelist has taught him the truth and the man has responded in kind.

8.37 Philip knew that the eunuch was prepared for the blessings which attended baptism and willingly acceded to his request. All that remained was for the man to confess his witness that he was convinced, in his heart and in his mind, that the Gospel was true. The eunuch readily confessed his faith.

8.37.2—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.37.18—19—*I believe*—Several ancient manuscripts do not put these words into the mouth of the eunuch. For that reason, many scholars have been led astray as to the validity of this confession. The very best manuscript that we possess includes the testimony of the eunuch and so we ought not to doubt its authenticity. One might ask the question as to what might have contributed to this lapse in the ancient texts. We may conclude that it serves as a fair warning that the Arian heresy has had far more influence in the history of Christianity than hitherto believed.

8.37.21—22—*Jesus Christ*—The author of eternal salvation, both of the body and the spirit through the power of the resurrection and his atoning sacrifice for sin.

8.38 We may only speculate as to where the baptism of the eunuch took place. Some historians have suggested two or three locations which may have been blessed with sufficient water for the ordinance to be performed. The Valley of Elah and the stream thereof has been recommended. This is a place twenty miles south and west of Jerusalem where David slew Goliath. The stream today is dry except during winter. We may not know if the flow was greater in the days of Philip and the eunuch. Another site suggested is Wadi el-Hasi, a place of springs and pools located just north of Gaza. Although we may not know the exact location, we can be certain that the eunuch was “buried” in the water available at some point along the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. All arguments to the contrary, valid baptisms are only performed one way, by immersion, and by those who have been divinely appointed to do so.

8.38.18—*Philip*—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5—13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26—39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8—9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.38.21—*eunuch*—The Greek word which is here translated as “eunuch” derives from roots which mean “bed, castrated, impotent, unmarried, state officer”. Historians are at odds as to the literal meaning of the word and it may have come to mean anyone closely associated with the ruling family of a country, regardless of whether they had been emasculated or not.

8.39 The question which at this point seems unavoidable, is when did the eunuch receive the confirming ordinance which would have given him the blessings of the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Peter and John had been sent to the city of Samaria to bestow that gift upon those who had received baptism at the hands of Philip. What now would happen to the eunuch? He had been baptized, but unless something had transpired in the meantime, Philip was no more authorized to bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost in Philistia than he had been in Samaria. If the man were a resident of Gaza it would have been a relatively simple matter for the Apostles to send one of their own to that city to finish the work that Philip had begun. If he were returning to Ethiopia, however, the deed would appear to be half-done. It is interesting to note that at least one major manuscript of the Acts speaks thusly of the event: “The
Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch; but the angel of the Lord snatched away Philip.” It must certainly be within the realm of possibility that the Apostles provided Philip with the keys to bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost after their experience with him in Samaria. Thus, when the eunuch was baptized, Philip would have laid his hands upon his head and confirmed him a member of the Church of Christ and would have bestowed upon the Gift of the Holy Ghost as well.

8.39.16—17—caught away—Had the angel appeared to Philip and given him another commission? Had the spirit worked upon the heart of the evangelist that he immediately withdrew from the eunuch and made his way to Azotus? Was he translated from Gaza to Azotus by divine means as have been other faithful servants of the God of Heaven? We do not know precisely; we only know that whatever happened, the eunuch was consummately happy and the evangelist was on his appointed errand elsewhere.

8.39.18—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

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40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

8.40 Philip’s ministry is only recounted in general, but it is clear that he must have enjoyed great success in Caesarea, a place that he eventually made his abode. Of his eventual ecclesiastical responsibilities after his divine commission to preach throughout the coastal areas of Palestine we know little or nothing.

8.40.2—Philip—Clearly not the Apostle from Bethsaida, but an active evangelist whose labors among the Samaritans (see 8.5–13) and his teaching of Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–39) were considered extraordinarily notable by Luke in his narrative. He also taught the principles of the Gospel of Christ along the western coast of Judea, from Azotus in the south to Caesarea in the north (see 8.40) where he apparently settled with his family (see 21.8–9). In that place, Philip and his four virtuous daughters entertained Paul and Luke at the end of the former’s third missionary journey.

8.40.6—Azotus—A city on the Mediterranean coast about twenty-two miles north of Gaza. Anciently it was both a Hyksos and a Philistine city. As the latter it was known as Ashdod, the city into which the Philistines carried the Ark of the Covenant after it was taken in the battle in which Phinehas and Hophni, the sons of Eli, were slain.

8.40.15—cities—Several communities lie on route between Azotus and Caesarea, including Jamnia, Joppa, and Apollonia, if Philip stayed near the coast, and Lydia, Antipatris, and Narbata if he traveled somewhat inland. Perhaps Philip made himself available to all of them, as the text suggests. Philip and his family apparently settled in Caesarea.
inasmuch as he is there with four of his daughters as Paul made his
way to Jerusalem at the end of his Third Missionary Journey (see 21.8–9)

8.40.20—Caesarea—A seaport on the Mediterranean about 70 miles
northwest of Jerusalem, built by Herod the Great in 22 BC in honor
of Caesar Augustus. It was, for all intents and purposes, a Roman city
with all of the amenities of what that empire provided. It served as the
Roman capital of Palestine for more than five hundred years. Before
Herod’s great labor was performed there, Caesarea was known as
“Strato’s Tower”, a Phoenician seaport named after a Sidonian king.
Straton, the Greek form of the name, Abdastart.

9.1 Saul of Tarsus, he who would one day be well-thought of as Paul the
Apostle, is somewhat quixotic. Saul was a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, but
taught at the feet of a moderate Pharisee, Gamaliel. Gamaliel had suggested
patience in the matter of Jesus Christ and his disciples (see 5.34–39). Saul’s
antipathy seems odd given his discipleship to Gamaliel, but clearly he had
somehow persuaded himself that the Christian Church was a deep and abiding
threat to conservative Judaism. He was not only vocal in his opposition,
but proactive in his determined approach to the eradication of the disciples
of Jesus (see 8.3).

9.1.2—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity,
would become Paul the Apostle.
9.1.4—breathing—The Greek word which is here translated as “breath-
ing” derives from roots which mean “inhale, animated by, bent
upon”.
9.1.6—threatenings—The Greek word which is here translated as “threaten-
ings” derives from roots which mean “menace, forbid, straitly”.
9.1.8—slaughter—The Greek word which is here translated as “slaugh-
ter” derives from roots which mean “slay, murder”.
9.1.18–19—high priest—We are not told which of the two, either
Caiaphas or his father-in-law Annas, is the person to whom Luke is
referring. The Romans recognized Caiaphas and the Jewish people
recognized Annas. Some ancient texts do, however, insert “Annas”
into the narrative at this point and Luke designates Annas as the high
priest elsewhere (see 4.6) In the end, the distinction is wholly aca-
demic inasmuch as they were, for the most part, of one mind. Given
the generally accepted chronology, Saul would have most likely
approached Caiaphas in this matter.

9.2 For those of us who live in societies where freedom of speech, freedom of
religion, and the nominal separation of church and state is commonplace,
Saul’s actions seem politically heretical. One must keep in mind, however,
that the religious governance of the Jewish people in the time of the Apostles
was extremely powerful, especially since the priestly cast had been in political
control of Palestine at the time of the Roman conquest.

9.2.5—letters—The Greek word which is here translated as “letters”
derives from roots which mean “enjoin, communication by writing”.
It also serves as the source for the English word “epistle”. Saul was
asking for written warrants for the arrest of Christian Jews.
9.2.7—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the
history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast
of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the

Chapter 9

1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against
the disciples of the Lord, went unto
the high priest,

Acts 9
AF 181, 234
EM 3 1050
Acts 9:1
GD 434
Acts 9:1–2
JC 713
MM 1 200
Acts 9:1–9
DNTC 2 187,
202, 444, 461
DS 3 153
MD 54, 823
PM 281
EM 1 321
CR81-O 93
Acts 9:1–18
AF 131
DS 1 198
Acts 9:1–22
DS 3 91

2 And desired of him letters to
Damascus to the synagogues, that if
he found any of this way, whether
they were men or women, he might
bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Acts 9:2
JC 70
name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

9.2.10—synagogues—Congregations of Jews were not independent. They recognized the authority of the high priest and that of the Great Sanhedrin. Had some military and political power ruled Syria other than the Romans, Saul’s campaign against the Christians of his day would have been conducted in a far more discreet manner.

9.2.18—way—The Greek word which is here translated as “way” derives from roots which mean “road, progress, mode, means”. Several modern sectarian religions have chosen to identify themselves with this particular English word as a clever way to refer to their brand of Christianity.

9.2.31—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

9.3 Paul will testify before King Agrippa that the appearance of the pillar of light which enveloped him took place at midday (see 26.13). We do not know precisely where Saul was when the vision took place, but tradition has it located about 10 miles southwest of Damascus at a small village called Deraya. If this be correct, then we may conclude that Saul made his journey to Damascus by passing through the provinces of Perea and Decapolis rather than through Samaria and Galilee. This would be consistent with all that we know about ultraorthodox Pharisaical attitude regarding Samaria. The variations in the King James translation accounts of Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus should not trouble us at all, especially when we have at our disposal far more reliable manuscripts and translations.

9.3.8—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

9.4 The artistic world throughout the centuries have portrayed Saul as having fallen from a horse that he had presumably been riding when he was struck down by the light. How this notion originated we may only guess, but there is absolutely no scriptural authority for the assumption. As some observer has aptly said, “Painters are, in almost every case, wretched commentators”. Not much has changed in the two hundred years since that witticism was first penned.

9.4.3—fell—This effect is commonplace for those who have come into the presence of divine beings, whether as an act of reverence or as a product of fear.

9.4.8—heard—We do not know precisely when during the vision that Saul was stricken with blindness. At some point he closed his eyes against the severity of the light from which Jesus spoke (see 9.8 below).

9.4.14—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

9.4.19—me—Whether Saul had joined in the persecution of the Lord Jesus Christ during his mortal ministry we do not know, but his

3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?
attacks against the disciples of Christ were certainly viewed as an attack against Jesus as well (see MT-C 25.41–46).

9.5 At first blush, Saul’s question seems almost ridiculous. Who else but God could have affected the Pharisee in such a manner? It will be remembered, however, that one of no less spiritual stature than Moses ask the same question of the being who appeared to him in the burning bush. That Saul knew that he was dealing with deity there can be no question. His awareness that he was in dire circumstances was immediate and having been reprimanded by God, Saul wished to know how he had offended the supreme being. Had Saul been chaffing at the counsel of Gamaliel? Had he begun to doubt his own convictions regarding his attitude regarding the Christian sect? Scriptural psychologists have tried to impose their discipline upon the life of Saul, but not convincingly so. Saul’s anger at the Christians was similar to that which motivated James and John at the village of Samaria, for which attitude Jesus gave the brothers the sobriquet of “Boanerges” (see LK-C 9.51–56). It is his inordinate anger that had been the means by which Satan had gained control over Saul of Tarsus. The erstwhile servant of God had been drinking from the devil’s fountain of filthy water rather than from the Savior’s fountain of living water, momentarily preferring hatred over love.

9.5, 7—Lord—The Greek word which is translated here as “Lord” derives from roots which mean “supremacy, supreme in authority, controller”. Some scholars suggest that the use of the word in this verse should be understood differently than that in the next verse. Those who suggest so desire to have their readers doubt the intense nature of Saul’s perspicacity at the time of the vision.

9.5, 27—Pricks—The Greek word which is here translated as “pricks” derives from roots which mean “point, sting, poison, goad, divine impulse”. The analogy is mixed, but clear in its application to Saul. Whether speaking of an ox-goad which is held in the hand of the driver to motivate his animal to go in the proper direction or to a series of pointed nails attached to the box of the wagon to keep the ox from kicking the burden to pieces, the effect is the same. The animal only injures himself if he persists in his determination to destroy his owner.

9.6 Large portions of verse five and the present verse are often excluded in modern translations, beginning with “It is hard for thee...” and ending with “And the Lord said unto him...” The argument against these thirty words is purely textual in nature, many ancient manuscripts not having the passage. Some scholars suggest that part of the phrasing was borrowed from Paul’s later account before Agrippa (see 26.14). This, of course, does not make the additional material invalid or nefarious in any way. The finest manuscript that we have of these verses includes the entire text given in the King James version of Acts.

9.6.3—Trembling—If this passage is assumed to be a mere editorial gloss, then one must wonder what Saul’s overall emotional condition was. Had he instantaneously switched spiritual directions without fear or remorse? The Greek word which is here translated as “trembling” derives from roots which mean “dread, terrify, fear”.

9.6.5—Astonished—If Saul were not “astonished” at the vision and the voice, did he receive the experience in a passé fashion, nonplussed? Most textualists are long on theory and short on common sense. The Greek word which is here translated as “astonished” derives from roots which mean “stupefy, amaze, dumbfound, surprise”.

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.
9.6.26—city—A reference to Damascus which was probably less than ten miles away, a three hour journey if Saul had been on foot.

9.7 There is a superior translation of this verse which brings it into harmony with the other accounts of Paul’s vision.

... And they who were journeying with him saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him who spake to him. (JST; Acts 9:7)

All of the arguments which attempt to explain the apparent differences between the accounts of Paul’s vision are rendered bootless by this excellent revelation through the servants of God and His Son.

9.8 There are ancient manuscripts which state that Saul saw “nothing” in place of “no man”. That the Pharisee was quite blind there can be no doubt; he indeed saw “nothing”. Additionally, however, we might make an argument that he was no longer in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore no longer saw the personage of the Savior. That Saul had seen the Savior in the light which enveloped him is quite certain, even though there have been arguments to the contrary. It seems unlikely as well that this was the singular instance of an interview between Paul and Jesus. The nature of Paul’s service to the Church and Kingdom of God throughout his life would have afforded many opportunities for direct instruction. The New Testament is replete with allusions to those moments of divine discourse between the Master and his faithful disciple.

9.8.2—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

9.8.28—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles north-east of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

9.9 Several scholars have made the comparison between Saul’s three sightless days and the experience of Alma the Young after the angel cut him short in his career of self-destruction. In Alma’s case, the fasting was compulsory; in Saul’s it was apparently voluntary. One wonders at the experience of Paul and Barnabas on the isle of Cyprus when they were opposed by Elymus Bar-Jesus (see 13.7–12). Sergius Paulus, the Roman governor, believed in Christ as a result of that exhibition of divine power, but one cannot help but suggest that in Elymus was ultimately found another repentant soul, given the nature of his momentary affliction.

9.10 The history of Ananias is somewhat veiled, save that he was entrusted with a great many tasks which would have only been required of a man of piety and faith. Although the text does not say so directly, it would appear that Ananias had by that time been given the authority to bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Of greatest interest is that Ananias recognized the voice of the Lord. Certainly that aided him in the rather extraordinary task which under other circumstances might have seemed suicidal.

9.10.8—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles north-east of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tra-
diation that these things originated in Syria.

9.10.10—Ananias—As is the case with most biblical characters, there is a vast amount of sectarian tradition regarding Ananias, not only among Christians but among Muslims as well. That he was a good man there can be no doubt, but the fact remains that he is only mentioned one other time in the New Testament (see 22.12).

9.11 How like Amulek of Ammonihah when he was commanded to take Alma the Younger into his home. Alma had been driven from the city with a death warrant over his head. Amulek, however, was willing to receive him into his house because that was the will of the Lord. Ananias, had he not received the direct revelation from God, would not have dared to associate himself with the likes of Saul of Tarsus.

9.11.16—Straight—Anthropologists and other scholars have proposed that the current street in Damascus which bears the name “Straight” was the one referred to by the Lord. They testify that it was a colonnade leading from the east gate of the city through the center of town to the west gate. Ananias’ home is traditionally placed in the northeast quadrant of the city directly north of the east gate.

9.11.23—Judas—Notwithstanding all of that has been written, we have no idea who this character was.

9.11.27—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

9.11.29—Tarsus—The principle city of the province of Cilicia, noted for culture, commerce, and education. Because of its political choices during the civil wars of Roman, Augustus made it a “free city”. No doubt that it was this gesture that allowed Saul to become a Roman citizen by birth.

9.12 Saul of Tarsus had been promised that once he entered into the city of Damascus that he would be given further instructions as to what he should do (see 9.6). Apparently these later instructions were also received by vision, but clearly a vision not perceivable with the natural eyes. Additionally, we do not know if Saul’s “letters” were specific or general. In other words, we do not know if Saul knew the name of Ananias before the time of vision, even though it is certain that Ananias would have been the presiding authority of the Church of Christ in Damascus. Without question, a man like Ananias would have been a primary target for the Pharisee. No messenger from the house of Judas could possibly have persuaded Ananias to attend to the needs of Saul, hence the Lord Himself provided the motivation.

9.12.10—Ananias—As is the case with most biblical characters, there is a vast amount of sectarian tradition regarding Ananias, not only among Christians but among Muslims as well. That he was a good man there can be no doubt, but the fact remains that he is only mentioned one other time in the New Testament (see 22.12).

9.13 Ananias’ candor with the Lord has disturbed some people, but only those who have not received the Lord into their lives as had Ananias. Ananias was a bearer of the priesthood of God and had, like Abraham, proven himself to be a “friend of God”. He loved the Lord God of Israel and did not fear Him. Ananias, therefore, felt free to ask for clarification when the task seemed insurmountable. Many of the ancient prophets, included Moses, enjoyed this same conversational relationship with the Lord, raising similar issues when the directions seemed to be counterintuitive. Ananias was not afraid to die; he merely wished to know if he were going to.
9.13.2—Ananias—As is the case with most biblical characters, there is a vast amount of sectarian tradition regarding Ananias, not only among Christians but among Muslims as well. That he was a good man there can be no doubt, but the fact remains that he is only mentioned one other time in the New Testament (see 22.12).

9.13.21—saints—In reference to the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ, those who have covenanted to no longer partake of the wickedness of the world. The Greek word used here means “those not of the earth”.

9.13.23—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

9.14 Persecution against the membership of the Church of Christ had begun in Jerusalem. As was noted before (see 8.1), the departure of all of the saints from the capital city, except for the Apostles, was probably a result of divine instruction. Ananias may have had some anxiety regarding the members of the congregation in Damascus. Should be warn the other disciples that danger is lurking nearby? Should they protect themselves from persecution as they had previously? These were legitimate concerns for a man in Ananias’ position.

9.14.8–9—chief priests—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The “chief priests” designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of “chief priests” to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former.

9.15 Saul’s training and cultural background facilitated his ministry in its many facets. His labors in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece, and Italy were enhanced by the fact that he was by birth a Roman citizen. His formal education and religious instruction as a Pharisee, as a master of the scriptures, made him an effective instrument in the hands of God to bring the truth to the children of Israel who had been blinded by the philosophies of men. Being filled with the power and influence of the Holy Ghost graced his already fearless nature with a sublimity which few could resist, including the corrupt King Agrippa.

9.15.14–15—chosen vessel—When precisely did Saul qualify himself for this calling? All that we have recorded of him is antithetical to the nature of the task which was to be assigned to him. Clearly Saul had been chosen long before his birth to serve as the great missionary and correspondent that he was. That he had been distracted from his mortal task is clear. The vision on the road to Damascus constituted a radical course correction in his life, but one which was not inconsistent with his foreordination to the priesthood and his role in the salvation of mankind through his ministry and writings.

9.15.24—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks them-
selves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

9.15.31—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

9.16 The ministry which Saul entered into was one which he entered into gladly. Was he griefstricken for the evils that he had committed against the disciples of Christ? No doubt, but a man does not take upon himself a calling such as was presented to Saul unless there is also a great love in place for the children of men. Saul, during the three days of his blindness, came to sense the love which the Father and the Son had for him personally, together with their desire that he reach out to the children of men with the same kind of compassion which they had for him. This was the motivation of Saul of Tarsus.

9.16.4—shew—Is this to be a product of experience or of revelation? Some scholars have argued that as much as Saul had persecuted the members of the Church before his conversion, that the rest of his life would be filled with assaults against his person that he might be reminded every day of the scoundrel that he had been. It seems odd, however, that God would bring a man into the fold simply so that He could beat him up for the rest of his life. It is far more likely that Saul was given a preview of his missionary labors so that he could count the cost of his discipleship, that he might freely chose to enter into the labors which had been set before him.

9.17 Saul had been promised that his eyesight would be restored to him through the ministrations of Ananias. But the Lord had other, as yet undisclosed, blessings which would come through Ananias’ blessing. The healing of Saul’s blindness preceded his baptism and the confirming blessing coupled with the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Saul’s anticipated joy must have increased considerably as the fulfillment of his second revelation during his brief period of blindness was finally realized.

9.17.2—Ananias—As is the case with most biblical characters, there is a vast amount of sectarian tradition regarding Ananias, not only among Christians but among Muslims as well. That he was a good man there can be no doubt, but the fact remains that he is only mentioned one other time in the New Testament (see 22.12).

9.17.10—house—The house of Judas on the Straight Street where Saul had been taken after his vision on the road to Damascus.

9.17.14—hands—Many of the great spiritual blessing ordained for the children of men are bestowed by the laying on of hands, including this priesthood blessing of healing which Ananias performed for Saul.

9.17.18—Brother—One of the greatest revelations ever given to mankind is the truth that God is the Father of all, and that we are all brethren of the same Celestial family. That this may be understood by some people as being figurative should not distract us from one of the sublime precepts of eternity. It is no meaningless sentiment that leads the members of the Church of Jesus Christ to cordially refer to one another as “Brother” and “Sister”; it is a daily reminder to us of whose children we really are and what we can grow into in our maturity.

16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.

17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.
9.17.19—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.
9.17.23—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

9.18 We are not privy to the precise cause of Saul’s blindness. Some well-meaning scholars have proposed that his experience on the road to Damascus had injured his eyes such that when he was healed the injured portions of cornea flaked away. Other learned men had pointed to the wording of the text and have opined that it is the effect of the healing that is being referred to; that is to say, that Saul’s recovery was so instantaneous that it was as if his eyes had been covered by some natural obstruction. Be that as it may, we are left with the miraculous healing of Saul’s vision through the power and influence of the holy priesthood of God. Ananias was no ordinary man; he was a servant of God imbued with the authority requisite to work the will of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the earth. Our thoughts ought to turn to the experience of the man born blind (see JN-C 9.5–7). While we may quibble about the significance of the clay which was used to anoint the man’s eyes, we must keep to the forefront that the healing was not the product of the anointing of the man’s eyes, but the result of the faith of the young man coupled with the priesthood of the Son of God.

9.18.22—baptized—Saul was immersed in water, probably by Ananias, for the remission of his sins and for membership in the Church and Kingdom of God. Thereafter Ananias would have laid his hands upon the head of Saul in order to bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost upon him.

9.19 Saul would have been debilitated by his unusual fast. Having received the object of his worshipful attitude, he was prevailed upon to partake of nourishment. It is interesting that at Ananias’ word the rest of the disciples of Jesus readily accepted Saul of Tarsus into their midst. There was no expression of fear or dismay, in part because of their confidence in their priesthood leader and secondly because of the great change in demeanor that had accompanied his conversion to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Not only was the healing of Saul’s eyes a miraculous event, stirring the hearts of the faithful, but also the knowledge that one of the greatest threats to the safety of the Church had been received into her bosom in full faith and fellowship.

9.19.6—meat—the sixteenth century primary meaning of this word signified food of all kinds, not just the flesh of animals.

9.19.12—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

9.19.21—Damascus—the capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

9.20 Although we may not know which office of the priesthood that Saul held in the beginning, we may be assured that shortly after his baptism and confirmation he was ordained to the ministry. With that authority, he entered into the synagogues of the Jews and delivered unto them the message of salvation through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, he who was and is the Son of the living God.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

Acts 9:19—31
DNTC 2 78, 79, 215, 461

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

Acts 9:20
PM 151

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9.20.2—straightway—The Greek word which is translated here as “straightway” derives from roots which mean “straight, level, true, at once, immediately, directly, shortly”. The English word “straightway” means “directly, without delay”.

9.20.5—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

9.20.8—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

9.21 The astonishment of those in the synagogue was not an expression of those who were members of the Church of Christ, but rather of the Jews who had been expecting Saul’s arrival to Damascus with letters from the high priest to apprehend the Christians for heresy, that they might be put in prison and punished according to their notion of the Law.

9.21.7—amazed—The Greek word which is here translated as “amazed” derives from roots which mean to “be startled, beside oneself, astonish”. The English word “amazed” derives from Old English roots which mean to “confuse or bewilder”.

9.21.15—destroyed—The Greek word which is here translated as “destroyed” derives from roots which mean “sack, ravage, waste”. It has the connotations of treating another as a mortal enemy, of spoiling that enemy of his goods, and of taking the life of one’s enemy. The astonishment of the Jews in the synagogue of Damascus cannot possibly rival the astonishment that we should experience when we come to realize how forgiving the members of the Church were when Saul accepted the Gospel of the Lord.

9.21.20–21—this name—Meaning, of course, the name of Jesus Christ by whom all salvation and exaltation is made possible. That the Jews did not believe that fact, does not change the truth of the matter.

9.21.23—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or

21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said: Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came either for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?
"established in peace". The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, "established in peace" is by definition, the City of the great King.

9.21.38—39—chief priests—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The "chief priests" designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of "chief priests" to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former.

9.22 Saul’s training as a scholar, as a Pharisee, was such that he became a formidable advocate of the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Once the keystone of his faith was in place, Saul quickly understood how the scriptures pointed directly to Jesus of Nazareth as the promised Messiah. It was for him an instant crystallization of everything that he had ever read. He could easily discern between the traditions of men and the doctrines of the Kingdom of God.

9.22.2—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

9.22.9—confounded—The Greek word which is here translated as "confounded" derives from combinations which seem to mean "pour, commingle, throw into disorder, perplex, uproar, stir up". The literal meanings of the roots, however, signify "union, with, together, completeness, convene closely; pour". Rather than being "confounded" Luke may have intended that we understand that the people were brought into "unity"; that is to say, were converted to the Gospel of Christ as a result of his teaching (see 2.6 for another possible instance of this effect).

9.22.11—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

9.22.15—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

9.22.21—Christ—Simply put, the name "Christ" is the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Messiah". In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean "anointed one". Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendency to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets,

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.
priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

9.23 Saul’s effectiveness disturbed the recalcitrant Jews to distraction. Whether these were members of the synagogue at Damascus or other conspirators from Jerusalem we do not, at present, know. Murder by assassination is, of course, the final resort of the spiritually and intellectually inept. 9.23.4–5—many days—Many scholars point to Paul’s epistle to the Galatians as evidence that the “many days” amounted to three years, most of which he spent in Arabia. Paul’s point in the context of that epistle, however, was to assert that no mortal had taught him the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that he had his understanding through direct revelation and through the power of the Holy Ghost. It does not necessarily follow that he did not have conversations with the Apostles in Jerusalem such as those recorded in verses 26 through 29 below.

9.23.9—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

9.24 There is a superior translation of this verse.

But their lying in wait was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. (*JST*, Acts 9:24)

The intensity of the hatred which the enemies of Saul and the Church was such that they were willing to inconvenience themselves in the extreme. If they had spent as much time pursuing the truth of the matter which Saul had been preaching, Satan would not have had so great a hold on their hearts.

9.24.3–4—laying await—The Greek word which is translated as "laying await" derives from roots which mean to "plan or plot against someone". The English word "await", derives from an obsolete form which means to "watch for with hostile intent". A modern permutation appears in the phrase "lying in wait".

9.24.8—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

9.25 How Saul came to know that his life was being sought, whether by mortal or divine means, we can only surmise. Some traditions suggest that the Jews went to the king of that region, Aretas, and fabricated a case against Saul for being a spy for Herod, with whom Aretas was at odds because of the abandonment of Antipas' first wife, Aretas' daughter. Although the story has some political intrigue, there is nothing in the text of the New Testament that would indicate anything but clandestine, cold-blooded murder in the hearts of the Jews. Paul does indicate in his second letter to the Corinthians, however, that the governor of Damascus, not Aretas, was somehow involved in the conspiracy against his life.

23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:

24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Acts 9:24

JST

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.
9.26 The argument that Saul's visit to Jerusalem took place three years after his conversion undergoes a strenuous test in the face of Luke's account of the reaction of the members of the Church in Jerusalem. Had the archenemy of the disciples of Christ been converted in a miraculous manner, would not the leadership of the Church in Jerusalem have been informed immediately that such a transformation had taken place? Would not have Ananias or one of the other disciples in Damascus been sent to Jerusalem to relay the wonderful news? The fact that some of the Apostles and others of the Church are somewhat dubious about the new convert would imply that very little time had passed between Saul's departure from Jerusalem with letters from the high priest and his sudden return with Barnabas. We must continuously keep in mind that we are given connected vignettes of Paul's life and ministry and not day by day accounts. Therefore, common sense often helps us in working out the chronology of events more than the tired, traditional postulations made by uninspired men.

9.26.3—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

9.26.7—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, "flowing peace" or "established in peace". The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, "established in peace" is by definition, the City of the great King.

9.27 Paul says to the Galatians that he did not go up immediately to Jerusalem to "confer" with the Apostles after his baptism in Damascus. For what reason did he go then? The Greek word in Galatians which is translated as "conferred" derives from roots which mean "lay up in addition, impart, consult". Saul did not return to Jerusalem to seek counsel from the Brethren as to what he should do next; he did not go to be taught the Gospel. He had already seen in vision that which he was to do; that which he was to teach was imparted by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost (see 9.16). This is not to say that he possessed more authority than the leading council of the Church of Christ. He recognized their authority and had no doubt been counseled by the Lord to make himself available to the Apostles, to report his stewardship as it were.

9.27.2—Barnabas—By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul's experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city. Again, Barnabas' account seems fresh, rather than three years old.

9.27.10—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term "apostles" derives originally signified "I send a message". In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not

26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assay to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

Acts 9:26–28
JC 714

27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.
pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

9.27.38—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

9.27.43—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

9.28 If we are to believe traditional scholarship, this period of time lasted only fifteen days, inasmuch as that is what Paul says to the Galatians of his visit with Peter in Jerusalem three years after his conversion. If our running proposition regarding this initial visit be true, then we must conclude that we do not know precisely how long Saul preached in and around Jerusalem after he came with Barnabas to the Apostles shortly after his baptism. It may have been less than two weeks; it could have been more.

9.28.12—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

9.29 It would appear that like Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah, Saul had been inspired to undo some of the damage that he had caused or permitted while associating with the Greek synagogues in his early career as a persecutor of the Church of Christ (see 6.9—15, 7.57—60, and 8.1—4). It is clear from the text that the Greeks had not changed their minds about the value of homicide.

9.29.10—11—Lord Jesus—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

9.29.16—Grecians—That is to say, Jews who were born outside of Palestine whose native tongue was Greek who were living at that time in and around Jerusalem. Saul had returned to Jerusalem to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who had been instrumental in taking the life of Stephen (see 6.9—10). Paul’s native country was Cilicia, a country which had been subjected by Greek-speaking peoples for generations (see 2.9—11 for a description of how extensive the influence of the Greek language had become in the ancient world.)

9.30 There is a superior translation of this verse.

When the brethren knew this, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. (JST, Acts 9:30)

In short order, Saul had been banished from both Damascus and Jerusalem as a result of the rabid attempts on his life. It is reasonable to assume that he

28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. Acts 9:30 JST
9.30.4—brethren—That is, the presiding Brethren of the Church, the Apostles.

9.30.11—Caesarea—A seaport on the Mediterranean about 70 miles northwest of Jerusalem, built by Herod the Great in 22 BC in honor of Caesar Augustus. It was, for all intents and purposes, a Roman city with all of the amenities of what that empire provided. It served as the Roman capital of Palestine for more than five hundred years. Before Herod’s great labor was performed there, Caesarea was known as “Strato’s Tower”, a Phoenician seaport named after a Sidonian king, Straton, the Greek form of the name, Abdastart.

9.30.17—Tarsus—The principle city of the province of Cilicia, noted for culture, commerce, and education. Because of its political choices during the civil wars of Roman, Augustus made it a “free city”. No doubt that it was this gesture that allowed Saul to become a Roman citizen by birth.

9.31 The fact that Saul was no longer a proactive agent against the members of the Church must have dampened some of the enthusiasm for the work of destruction. Additionally, historians inform us that the Jews of Jerusalem were being plagued by the consequences of some of their duplicity with the Roman government and their preoccupation allowed the Christian congregations to move forward basically unopposed.

9.31.4—churches—Some scholars and theologians get themselves in a bit of a dither regarding the plural used here. The reference is similar to referring to the Jews as a collection of synagogues, the congregations rather than the religion. All of the Christians were able to gather to their various places of worship without interference.

9.31.8—Judea—In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the province of Judea stretched from Malatha on the south to the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the River Jordan on the east, comprising approximately 5,000 square miles.

9.31.10—Galilee—At the time Jesus and his disciples were teaching the principles of salvation to the inhabitants of this province, Galilee stretched from the Plains of Esdraelon on the south to Cadasa on the north; from the western bank of the Jordan to the border with Phoenicia, a district approximately sixty by thirty miles. It contained within its boundaries much of the land inherited by the tribes of Issachar, Naphthali, Zebulun, and Asher.

9.31.12—Samaria—When the Assyrians conquered the northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BC, they carried away into captivity all those who might have been considered the political, social, and economic leaders of the ten tribes, leaving behind a vast number of the “common people” to be governed by Assyrian surrogates. In the process of time, the surrogates and the oppressed began to intermarry, or at least to produce offspring together. The resultant mixing of Gentile and Israelite blood offended their cousins to the south in the Kingdom of Judah, and a bitter relationship, if it may be called a relationship, ensued bringing the social wrath of all concerned upon the heads of the mixed culture. Samaria had been the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, and for that reason, it is supposed, all Assyrian-Israelite offspring were called by that name as an opprobrium. The parable of the Good Samaritan could have involved other nationalities as the major characters, but the power of the juxtaposition of the Samaritan

31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.
with the Levite and the Priest was poignant almost beyond our comprehension.

9.31.27—comfort—The Holy Ghost is, by definition and nomenclature, the Comforter promise by Jesus to his disciples (see JN-C 14.16)
9.31.33—multiplied—That is to say, the missionary efforts of the saints became progressively more effective.

9.32 There is a superior translation of this verse.

And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all these regions, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda. (JST, Acts 9:32)

One of the great privileges of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ in any dispensation is the opportunity to come into direct contact with the prophets, seers and revelators of the Lord. The servants of God also rejoice in the company of the faithful. The Church had grown tremendously throughout all of Palestine and Peter was inspired to tour the various congregations that he might know of their spirit, that he might be a blessing and a benefit to all with whom he came in contact. In the process of time he eventually came to a community where the power of the priesthood of God was in sore need.

9.32.7—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a see”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

9.32.18—saints—In reference to the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ, those who have covenanted to no longer partake of the wickedness of the world. The Greek word used here means “those not of the earth”.

9.32.22—Lydda—A town on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa, approximately ten miles from the latter. Anciently it was called Lod. In the time of Vespasian, near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) the city was completely destroyed. In the reign of Hadrian during the first third of the second century AD, the city of Diospolis (in honor of Roman god Jupiter) was built on its ruins. Today Lod is the site of Israel’s Ben Gurion International Airport

9.33 Simon Peter had been present at the healings of several people who had been thus afflicted (see MT-C 4.24, MT-C 8.5–13, and LK-C 5.17–26). By this time the senior Apostle, like Jesus before him, could discern when men and women had sufficient faith to be healed of their maladies.

9.33.9—Aeneas—A member of the Church of Christ as Lydda. We may presume, given the circumstances of the day, that Aeneas was a Jewish convert with a Greek name. His Hebrew name would have been Hananiah. As his narrative progressed, Luke frequently employed non-Hebrew names, perhaps in an attempt to demonstrate that as the Church grew it came into contact with faithful Greeks and Romans who were willing to be subject to salvation. The first gentile of record

32 And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.
who joined the Church was Cornelius.

9.33.22—palsy—An incapacitating nervous disorder. In Greek, the word used here is primarily in reference to those who have been paralyzed for some reason; injury, stroke, and the like. In English, the word “palsy” not only includes the notion of paralysis, but also tremors caused by such diseases as Parkinson’s. Regardless of the nature of the affliction, the power of God through His servants was effective for those who exercised their faith.

9.34 Let no one doubt that Peter administered to Aeneas in the manner which had been decreed since the days of Adam and Eve. Aeneas was anointed with oil and then that anointing was sealed by Peter with a concurrent blessing that he should arise from his bed of affliction and be about his labors. As is frequently the case in the scriptural narrative, we are not told the reason why the sick and afflicted are healed. While it may be the result of compassion, Aeneas had after all been sick for a number of years, it is likely that there were tasks which the disciple wished to accomplish that were beyond his strength so long as he suffered from the palsy. The faith and righteous desires of Aeneas were in harmony with the will of God. Peter, therefore, had no compunction about laying his hands upon the head of this faithful man. He also makes it clear that it is Aeneas’ faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that has facilitated the blessing.

9.34.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

9.34.6—Aeneas—A member of the Church of Christ as Lydda. We may presume, given the circumstances of the day, that Aeneas was a Jewish convert with a Greek name. His Hebrew name would have been Hananiah. As his narrative progressed, Luke frequently employed non-Hebrew names, perhaps in an attempt to demonstrate that as the Church grew it came into contact with faithful Greeks and Romans who were willing to be subject to salvation. The first gentile of record who joined the Church was Cornelius.

9.34.7—Jesus Christ—The author of eternal salvation, both of the body and the spirit through the power of the resurrection and his atoning sacrifice for sin.

9.35 It would seem that Aeneas had a great desire to serve in a missionary capacity, so that after his healing he devoted a great deal of his time preaching the principles of salvation throughout the Plain of Sharon. He apparently was extraordinarily effective in his ministry.

9.35.6—Lydda—A town on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa, approximately ten miles from the latter. Anciently it was called Lod. In the time of Vespasian, near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) the city was completely destroyed. In the reign of Hadrian during the first third of the second century AD, the city of Diospolis (in honor of Roman god Jupiter) was built on its ruins. Today Lod is

34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.
9.35—Saron—Although there is some evidence that there may have been a village called “Saron” near to Lydda, it is most likely that Luke is referring to the entire district of “Sharon” which was a ten-mile wide plain on the Mediterranean coast that stretched approximately fifty miles from Dor in the north to Joppa in the south.

9.36 Tabitha was one of the great women of the scriptures, frequently dubbed the Relief Society Sister of the New Testament. That she loved those around her there can be no question; that that love was reciprocated is self-evident.

9.36.5—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

9.36.10—Tabitha—The Syriac or Hebrew name of the dead woman.

9.36.16—Dorcas—The Greek transliteration of “Tabitha”.

9.36.25—almsdeeds—The Greek word translated as “almsdeeds” derives from roots which mean “compassionateness, beneficence, tender mercy”. The English word “almsdeeds” is an archaic and obsolete form which means the “habitual practice of blessing the poor and unfortunate”.

9.37 The death of Tabitha was an incomprehensible loss to the community of Joppa. Her ministry among the inhabitants of the city was so profound that her passing deeply troubled everyone who knew her. We do not know her age, although many have speculated that she was far too young to have merely died of old age or complications thereof.

9.37.7—8—those days—At the time that Aeneas had embarked upon his missionary labors.

9.37.19—washed—The corpse was traditionally washed and dressed for burial.

9.37.25—26—upper chamber—According to Jewish theology, the body remained in state for three days, whenever possible, in the anticipation that the person might be revived by the power of God. It was believed that the spirit of the dead person waited near the body for three days, after which the person was considered truly dead. The raising of Lazarus after more than four days had been without parallel in human history (see JN-C II). Certainly the expectation that Peter could raise their friend from her death bed was the motivation of the members of the Church behind placing her in the upper chamber against his arrival.

9.38 There is a superior translation of this verse.

And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring that he would not delay to come to them. (JST, Acts 9:38)

What would have been the motivation of the disciples of Joppa to have Peter come down to them from Lydda if it were not to raise Tabitha from the dead? The disciples of Christ were not uninformed dolts. They knew that Peter could, through the power and influence of the priesthood of God which the Savior had placed upon him, do anything that the Lord Jesus Christ had done. Raising a man, woman, or child from the dead was not...
beyond the scope of Peter’s ministry, and the membership of the Church knew and accepted that fact. Some well-meaning scholars have intimated that the two men may have been sent before Tabitha died, thus proposing an echo of the raising of Lazarus. That, however, is not how Luke’s narrative reads. There is no room for chronological ambiguity here; the sequence of events is clear.

9.38.4—Lydda—A town on the road from Jerusalem to Joppa, approximately ten miles from the latter. Anciently it was called Lod. In the time of Vespasian, near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (AD 70) the city was completely destroyed. In the reign of Hadrian during the first third of the second century AD, the city of Diospolis (in honor of Roman god Jupiter) was built on its ruins. Today Lod is the site of Israel’s Ben Gurion International Airport.

9.38.8—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

9.38.15—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer“. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

9.38.30—delay—The desire of the disciples was that Peter would come before the interment. Notwithstanding arguments to the contrary, this requested haste had nothing to do with the sickness to which Tabitha had succumbed.

9.39 The appeal of the women gathered to honor Tabitha was tender and heartfelt. They perceived in the faithful disciple a great goodness which had been lost to the world through an untimely death. If she had been a young woman, the tragedy would have been all that much greater. Tabitha must have been a seamstress of exquisite skill, her clothing beautiful and well-made. Perhaps she was attempting to pass along those skills to the other members of the Church in Joppa. Perhaps the widows were in a cooperative whereby they were attempting to provide for themselves financially as they learned from the good woman how to make such well-crafted garments. The loss of their mentor would surely have cast many if not all of them upon the mercy of a cruel and vicious society. Hence, their appeal to Peter was not just because she was a good and gracious disciple of Christ, but that she was the only means by which they could prosper in righteousness. With their skills improved by Tabitha’s expertise they could establish themselves as independent tradesmen. Can there be any doubt that the widows fully expected that Peter would exercise the power of the priesthood to restore their friend and teacher to mortality? What other reason would there be for showing to Peter the magnificent clothing that Tabitha had made? Just about any other scenario would portray the widows as whining parasites who had lost their one of their resources of charity. If these women were members of the Church of Christ, their attitude would have been completely contrary to the principles of the Gospel of Christ, particularly that of self-reliance.

39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.
9.39.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

9.39.22—widows—There is the faintest possibility that some of the widows were not disciples of Jesus, but the likelihood is that most of them were. One wonders if these women had been some of those who had been watched over by the seven in Jerusalem before the saints were scattered by the persecution raged there under the direction of Saul and others.

9.39.34—Dorcas—The Greek transliteration of “Tabitha”. This was the name of a woman who had died in Joppa who was raised by Peter from the dead.

9.40 There is a superior translation of this verse.

But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. (JST, Acts 9:40)

All of the people who had been milling about in abject distress were excused from the room. Luke does not tell us if there were other bearers of the priesthood who remained with the Apostle as he brought Tabitha back to life, but it seems likely that there was at least one. Although the story of the raising of Tabitha is an event that will stand on its own merits, it is interesting that Luke relates the episode in a manner similar to Mark’s account of the raising of the daughter of Jairus from death (see MK-C 5.35–43). The mild linguistic connection between Tabitha’s name and the command used by the Savior to bring the young girl back to life has some appeal as well. We probably ought not to make too much of this, however. That Tabitha was administered to in proper priesthood fashion is more than probable; that Peter sought the guidance and inspiration of the Lord in this matter is a matter of record. What a sweet experience it must have been for both Peter and Tabitha to have shared that moment of reanimation together! Tabitha surely would have known who Peter was and his role in bringing her back to her wonderful life of service in Joppa.

9.40.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

9.40.19—Tabitha—The Syriac or Hebrew name of the dead woman
9.41 There is a superior translation of this verse.

And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. (JST; Acts 9:41)

As he had for the crippled man at the Temple, Peter now extended his hand to Tabitha in order to help her to her feet. The members of the Church of Christ at Joppa must have been elated at the restoration of Tabitha to mortality. She clearly had been one of the mainstays of the community, particularly in helping those without husbands to maintain themselves in their living. Whether members of the Church or not, all those who had attended Tabitha in the preparations for her burial knew without question that she was died of her illness. Their testimonies coupled with that of Tabitha would be the means of bringing many people in Joppa and neighboring communities into the Church of Christ.

9.41.17—saints—In reference to the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ, those who have covenanted to no longer partake of the wickedness of the world. The Greek word used here means "those not of the earth".

9.42 The preaching of the Gospel of Christ to the inhabitants of Palestine continued to expand with good effect. The saints were edified, built up, and they multiplied. Those around them, friends and neighbors, perceived the truth through the power of the Spirit which dwelt within them as they sought the truth. There were many more for whom the miracles were a deciding factor. The healing of Aeneas and Tabitha must have been a compelling factor in their conversion. At some point, however, the outward signs and miracles would needs be complemented by a rich spiritual life, a living witness brought about by communion with the infinite.

9.42.7—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

9.43 One wonders at the decision of Peter to reside with Simon in Joppa. Some scholars have written elaborate theological treatises regarding the Apostle’s choice of lodging, little of which has bearing on the truth of the matter. Peter lived with Simon because Simon invited him to stay. Peter accepted because there was nothing in those circumstances which would have compromised his position as President of the Church of Christ.

9.43.12—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

9.43.15—Simon—A tanner who lived in Joppa with whom Peter dwelt for a time.

9.43.17—tanner—The Greek word which is here translated as “tanner” derives from roots which mean “hide, animal skin, currier”. While it is true that those who touched dead animals were considered “unclean” for a time, this does not suggest that all those who dealt in leather goods were anathema to the Jews. Nor are we to automatically assume that Simon dealt with skins of unclean animals simply because

41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.
he was a tanner. A little thought would lead us to consider the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, an edifice comprised in part from animal pelts. Additionally, what medium was used to preserve the words of the ancient prophets if not parchment? In fact, it was considered the commandment of the Lord God to record His word upon the finest parchments that could be made from kosher animals.

10.1 Some scholars have attempted to demonstrate a doctrinal development over the period of the mortal ministry of Jesus Christ and that which followed in the administration of the Twelve Apostles. These scholars would have us believe that there was a gradual awareness that one day the covenants of the Lord God of Israel would be extended to those not descended from the patriarch Abraham. The fact of the matter is that the notion that the inhabitants of the earth would all be given the opportunity to receive salvation had been taught by all of the holy prophets since the days of Adam and Eve. There is, ultimately, no distinction that can be made between the House of Israel and the rest of humanity except in the area of responsibility. Many have made much that the covenants were to come to the descendants of the Patriarchs because they were somehow exaltable far easier than the rest of mortal men. What we see in the history of the world is something quite strikingly different than what that assumption would predict. If those who have come to earth through the loins of the faithful were to be among the very best of the spirits of God the Father, then many of them have been miserable failures in their responsibilities to be a blessing to the rest of the children of God, just as Judas Iscariot failed to measure up to his premortal ordination. Who but the children of the faithful put the Lord Jesus Christ into the hands of the Romans? Who but the children of faithful persecuted to death the disciples of Jesus? The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were to be the means by which further truth and light were to come into the world. They were to be the servants of all of the spirit children of God. They would be given the principles of righteousness first, because of the covenant, and then they were to take those principles to all others. For that reason the children of Abraham were given great wealth that they might have the means to carry light and life to the ends of the earth. Some of these foreordained individuals succumbed to the temptations of the world and lavished that sacred wealth upon themselves and failed to measure up to the tasks which had been given unto them by inheritance. When the strength of the covenant began to dwindle in the hearts and minds of the descendants of the Patriarchs, the Lord in His wisdom took the fullness of the Gospel from the House of Israel and bestowed it upon others in order that a portion of the truth might be preserved. In the last days, that truth was again restored in its fullness through seeming Gentiles who were in fact the direct descendants of the Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Ephraim. Thus the rights of the Firstborn have once again been established, a portion of their inheritance wealth bestowed, and the labors of that ministry to carry the principles of eternal life and salvation into all of the world has begun in earnest once again. Thus the conversion of Cornelius came as no surprise to anyone, save for the uninformed. Peter was given the great privilege to disabuse his brethren in the Church of their misinformation and bigotry.

Chapter 10

1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,

Acts 10
AF 164
AGQ 3 29
AGQ 4 89
DHC 4 555
DNTC 1 369, 370, 869
DNTC 2 138
DS 3 91, 245
JC 363, 719
MD 31, 143, 527, 644
PM 507
TPJS 199
EM 3 1050, 1078
Acts 10:1–2
AF 56
Acts 10:1–5
TPJS 265
Acts 10:1–8
DNTC 2 28, 96
MD 35
Acts 10:1–48
DS 1 182, 198
DS 3 144
MLM 237
with all of the amenities of what that empire provided. It served as the Roman capital of Palestine for more than five hundred years. Before Herod's great labor was performed there, Caesarea was known as "Strato's Tower", a Phoenician seaport named after a Sidonian king, Straton, the Greek form of the name, Abdastart.

10.1.9—Cornelius—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to Judaism. He ought not be confused with the other centurions who came in contact with Christianity anonymously.

10.1.11—centurion—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman army, the sixtieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would be a comparable rank today: some suggest sergeant; others propose captain.

10.1.14—band—As the scholars and historians have determined, a Roman Legion was comprised of from 3,000 to 6,000 men, usually governed by six tribuni or "chief captains". The Legion was subdivided into ten cohorts or "bands" of about 600 men. Each cohort or band was divided into three maniples and the maniples into two centuries of from 50 to a hundred men each commanded by a centurion.

10.1.17—Italian—A particular division of one of the Roman Legions stationed in Palestine. A band called "Italian" was not uncommon in a Legion, meaning that the soldiers were primarily from Italy rather than from Syria or some other province of the Empire. Certain scholars have gone so far as to suggest that this cohort belonged to the Tenth Roman Legion, which occupied Palestine for a long period of time. We ought to be aware, however, that Fifth and Fifteenth Legions were also stationed in Palestine about the same time.

10.2 We are not given any details as how or why Cornelius had found comfort in Judaism. That he was a Roman rather than of any other nationality is vouchsafed to us in Luke's declaration that the centurion was an officer in the "Italian" cohort. His wife, children, and servants had all apparently embraced the worship of the Lord God of Israel as well, which have led some scholars to speculate that perhaps the centurion had taken a Jewish wife. We have only tradition to support such a notion.

10.2.2—devout—The Greek word which is here translated as "devout" derives from roots which mean "well-reverent, pious".

10.2.7—feared—The Greek word which is here translated as "feared" derives from the same roots which produce the word "phobia" and related words. The Greek will allow sentiments akin to "reverence" and "awe".

10.2.16—alms—The Greek word which is here translated as "alms" derives from roots which mean "compassionateness, beneficence, benefaction, active and tender mercy".

10.2.24—alway—The Greek word which is here translated as "alway" derives from roots which mean "through all time, constantly". The English word "alway" is an archaic form of the word "always" which dates back to the Middle English period of the English language.

10.3 The conversion of Cornelius to Christianity from Judaism would be relatively simple. He was a man of great humility and integrity. The real conversion story of this episode would be that which transpired in the hearts of those who accompanied Peter to Caesarea.

10.3.9—teninth hour—As is the case with most biblical timing, the hours of the day commenced counting at sunrise. Cornelius would

2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.
have received the vision of the angel about three o'clock in the afternoon, the customary hour of the Jews for public prayer.

10.3.15—angel—Any number of methods might have been employed to bring Cornelius to a knowledge of the truth of Christianity, but the Lord chose one that would have been immediately recognized as having been employed among the children of Israel since the days of the Patriarchs.

10.3.26—Cornelius—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to Judaism. He ought not be confused with the other centurions who came in contact with Christianity anonymously.

10.4 We ought not to disparage Cornelius for his demeanor at the appearance of the angel of God. There is an almost universal response to the appearance of an emissary from the God of Heaven, regardless of their background, their ethnic or cultural heritage. The immediate response is one of almost involuntary comparison between the glorious countenance of the angel and the fallen state of him who has been blessed by the vision. Even those with long experience with the things of the spirit are somewhat unnerved when they are approached by God in such a fashion. The faithful worship of God over a long period of time provides the man or woman with some courage in the face of a divine interview, but no man’s confidence can be perfected while in this state of existence without the perfect assurance that comes from the personal approbation of God Himself that the man’s course of action in this life has been pleasing to Him. Cornelius had not yet arrived at that point.

10.4.25—alms—The Greek word which is here translated as “alms” derives from roots which mean “compassionateness, beneficence, benefaction, active and tender mercy”.

10.4.31—memorial—Ancient Israel offered up sacrifices as a memorial unto God. With the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of the sins of mankind, in preparation for a glorious resurrection from the dead, men were expected to offer up a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Of this, Cornelius had capably demonstrated.

10.5 The angel needed to be quite specific about who Cornelius was to contact inasmuch as “Simon” was a ubiquitous name in Palestine. In Greek, Simon’s sobriquet was “Cephas”; in Latin it was “Petrus” or Peter.

10.5.6—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

10.5.11—Simon—Anti-papists, in their zeal to condemn the Catholic Church by assailing their resort to Peter as the bearer of the Keys of the Kingdom, have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. In their attempts to denigrate the Roman Church they have fallen back on the age-old tactic of ad homonym attacks on him who was, without question, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles during his life and the de facto President of the Church of Christ after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus into Heaven. That Peter was mortal and had failings can be freely admitted, but like most detractors, the shrill protesters have ended up saying more about themselves than they have the object of their assault. That Peter had moments of weakness is a given, but those things which he has been most generally derided for, he was not guilty of. Those who have berated this man will one day hang their heads in shame and beg his forgive-
ness for their arrogance and stupidity. Simon was a fisherman by trade who forsook all in order to join Jesus in the salvation of mankind. Jesus gave him the sobriquet, "Peter", because of his primary role as the "Prophet, Seer, and Revelator" to the world once Jesus had departed mortal life. Tradition has it that Peter was crucified head-downward because he did not feel worthy to suffer on the cross in exactly the same fashion as did his Master. We cannot begin to imagine the nature of his lingering death.

10.5.13—**surname**—The Greek word which is here translated as “surname” derives from roots which mean “entitle, invoke”. The English word “surname” derives from Old French roots which literally mean “over-name”, a name given in addition to one’s birth name. Jesus gave Simon the name “Peter” or “Cephas” in conjunction with his role in the Church of Christ as a “seer” (see JN 1.42).

10.5.15—**Peter**—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.6 Not only is the angel quite specific about who Cornelius should seek out, but also precisely where the Apostle would be in the rather large town of Joppa. How many tanners who lived by the shore were named “Simon”? Apparently, only one. It is interesting that the Lord chose this method of introducing Cornelius to the Church and Kingdom of God. There were other evangelists in the region, Philip for one who had been instrumental in bringing the eunuch from Candace’s court into the covenant of Christ (see 8.27–40). The eunuch, however, had been a practicing Jew, and most likely a Jew by birth. Cornelius’ circumstances were considerably different. We do not know if the centurion had taken upon himself the full weight and measure of the covenant of Abraham through circumcision, but his fervent desire and worthiness to follow the will of the God of Heaven would be doubted by certain members of the Church, notably the Pharisees who had become Christians. These pious men were still heavily influenced by their strict cultural baggage as ultra orthodox Jews. It would require an extraordinary demonstration of the will of God, in company with the presiding authority of the Church, that would open their eyes to the notion that all of the world was to be received into the Kingdom of God through faith and repentance. The fulcrum for this shift in attitude would take place in the home of Cornelius the Roman centurion.

10.6.5—**Simon**—A tanner who lived in Joppa with whom Peter dwelt for a time.

10.6.7—**tanner**—The Greek word which is here translated as “tanner” derives from roots which mean “hide, animal skin, currier”. While it is true that those who touched dead animals were considered “unclean” for a time, this does not suggest that all those who dealt in leather goods were anathema to the Jews. Nor are we to automatically assume that Simon dealt with skins of unclean animals simply because he was a tanner. A little thought would lead us to consider the
construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, an edifice comprised in part from animal pelts. Additionally, what medium was used to preserve the words of the ancient prophets if not parchment? In fact, it was considered the commandment of the Lord God to record His word upon the finest parchments that could be made from kosher animals.

10.7 We are not told exactly why Cornelius did not venture to visit Simon Peter in person. It may have been something as simple as his military responsibilities at the time prohibited him from traveling from Caesarea to Joppa at that particular moment. It is far more likely, however, that he was following the instructions of the angel to the letter (see 10.5). The fact that the wonderful manifestations of the Spirit of God took place within Cornelius’ own home certainly clarified the Gentile issue once and for all for those of the Church who attended Peter in his visit with the centurion. The glory of God which was poured out in the House of the Lord on the day of Pentecost would be replicated in the home of Roman soldier.

10.7.8—Cornelius—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to Judaism. He ought not be confused with the other centurions who came in contact with Christianity anonymously.

10.7.20—devout—It is interesting that the word that is used here to describe the soldier in Cornelius’ service is the same employed to describe Cornelius himself and his relationship toward God (see 10.2.2). This has led some to suppose that Cornelius had been progressive in his attitudes towards the men under his command, that he had been instrumental in introducing others to Judaism in concert with his own conversion. It may be, however, that this particularly body servant to Cornelius was a Jewish conscript.

10.8 The three men sent to Joppa to bring Peter to Caesarea had the complete confidence of Cornelius. He told them in detail all that had transpired in the vision so that they could repeat the same when they found the Apostle at the home of Simon the tanner. The vision had taken place about three o’clock in the afternoon. The preparations for the trip southward must have also taken a little time. We are not told how they traveled, whether on foot, by cart, or horseback, but they probably would not have been able to travel the thirty-five miles between Caesarea and Joppa by nightfall. Luke tells us that they arrived at Simon’s house about noon the following day. Did they journey as far as they could that afternoon and then lodged at an inn in Apollonia or some other village along the road? We have no way of knowing that at present. If they had traveled by horse, however, they could have left Caesarea at daybreak and arrived in Joppa by the time Peter had experienced his own vision (see also 10.33).

10.8.15—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

10.9 About the time Cornelius’ house servants were drawing near to Joppa and the home of Simon the tanner, Peter went up to the roof of the house to meditate and to pray. The buildings in Palestine at the time of the Apostles were typically flat and were designed for a number of different kinds of activities. As resorts for spiritual regeneration, however, rooftops were constantly employed.

10.9.3—morrow—The next day.

7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

Acts 10:9
AGQ 5 89
Acts 10:9–15
MM 2 411
Acts 10:9–16
DNTC 2 101
Acts 10:9–20
10.9.6–7 — went on — The question here is whether we should understand this phrase as meaning "commenced" or "continued". We have no way of knowing; it could have been either. The whole matter hinges on their mode of travel.

10.9.16 — Peter — In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona's name is changed to Peter, "a stone", which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as "a seer". Simon's future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.9.26–27 — sixth hour — Without question we should understand this to mean the noontime hour.

10.10 Were Peter following his Jewish traditions, the earliest he could have had breakfast would have been near the third hour after morning prayers (see 2.15). We are not certain why the Apostle had not yet broken his fast and had waited until "dinner" or lunch as we would say today. That he was famished is clearly indicated by the narrative and those of Simon's household were making preparations for him to eat.

10.10.19 — trance — The Greek word which is here translated as "trance" derives from roots which mean "displacement of the mind, bewilderment, amazement, astonishment" and is the roots source for the English word "ecstasy". The English word "trance" derives from Middle French roots which mean to "pass, pass away, die, swoon, be in fear", but with the notion of the state being temporary, as in "transient".

10.11 The "vessel" of Peter's dream was made by tying the four corners of a sheet together creating a sort of bag in which were ensconced the animals which he was about to see. As is the case when dreams or visions of this kind are related, many scholars throughout the centuries have attempted to give significance to each of the images employed in the revelation. We would be remiss if we did not consider at least the most plausible one. Perhaps Peter was to understand by the sheet, a representation of the earth in its four quarters upon which the carnal, beastly, and unclean nations of the world have dominion. This kind of imagery would have been familiar to Peter as it has been employed before in the writings of the ancient prophets.

10.11.8 — vessel — The Greek word which is here translated as "vessel" derives from roots which mean "implement, equipment, apparatus", with the additional notion of usefulness.

10.11.19 — knit — The Greek word which is here translated as "knit" derives from roots which mean "bind, tie, wind".

10.12 When the sheet out of heaven came in contact with the earth, the four corners apparently were loosed allowing the material to lie flat upon the ground. Peter then was able to see all that had been contained within the "vessel". The fact that the sheet contained "all manner" of beasts would suggest that both clean and unclean animals were together on the sheet. Under the strict dietary laws given under the auspices of the Law of Moses, only certain kinds of animals might be safely consumed. Most of the animals used by the Gentile nations to represent their glory and honor have been in the...
“unclean” category; i.e., lions, leopards, eagles, serpents, and the like. Such animals might be despised or feared, but they could not be consumed without incurring the wrath of God.

10.13 This is an extraordinary petition if we consider that Peter was expected to offer up all of the animals that were displayed before him. The clean animals which were there upon the sheet would have been acceptable under Jewish law, but the unclean animals would have been an abomination upon the altars of Israel.

10.13.9—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.13.10—kill—The Greek word which is here translated as “kill” derives from roots which mean “breathe hard, smoke, blow, sacrifice, immolate”. The sacrifice of unclean animals would imply the covenant of God as well.

10.14 The animal sacrifices expected in the Law of Moses were of three kinds: sacrifice for sin, peace offerings, and burnt offerings. A burnt offering was completely consumed upon the altar of sacrifice, leaving nothing for the worshipper to partake of; this was an act of complete consecration. In the peace offerings and the sacrifice for sins, family members, offended parties, neighbors, and the priests of the Aaronic priesthood were invited to partake of the roasted animal as an expression of repentance, forgiveness, humility, and well-being. Peter is horrified that anything unclean could possibly be offered up as part of a divine covenant. And to partake of such a sacrifice would be against everything that he understood as a man of God.

10.14.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.14.16—common—The Greek word which has been translated here as “common” derives from roots which mean “defiled, profane”. We may understand that even “clean” things can become defiled by coming in contact that which is unclean.

10.14.18—unclean—That which was prohibited by the Law of Moses.

10.15 The distinction between clean and unclean animals had been made in the beginning by God Himself. He had made the prohibitions according to

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. Acts 10:13–15 FPM 294

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. Acts 10:14–15 AGQ 589

15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God
His own wisdom for the benefit and blessing of His children upon the earth. If, for whatever reason, the Lord were to remove any such prohibitions, His servants would have to recognize that decision or stand condemned. The “vessel” descended from heaven, together with all of the animals which were contained therein. So also all of the children of men were present in Heaven, sons and daughters of God, long before the bounds and limitations of the nations had been established. A man might be considered “unclean” because he has not yet entered into the covenants which could cleanse him. The Lord was saying to Peter, all men regardless of their ethnic background were subject to salvation, even as many as desired to do so.

10.16 The vision or dream was repeated three times which in ancient parlance gave it an authority indisputable. The sheet was then bound together in the corners and was received into heaven from whence it came. Thus, the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob expressed His desire that all of His sons and daughters might be brought back into His presence, the Kingdom from which all of them had originally come.

10.17 Even those who preside in the Church and Kingdom of God upon the earth are led along in their understanding line upon line and precept upon precept, accordingly as time, place, and circumstance dictate. The epiphany regarding the Church and the Gentiles which will accompany the visit to Cornelius will be all the more profound because of Peter’s lingering puzzlement regarding the vision of the clean and unclean animals which he had been commanded to sacrifice unto God. When that understanding finally came, Simon Peter would not hesitate in any fashion to move ahead into the obvious course of action that the Savior had laid out before him, knowing that the time had come for the Gentiles to be embraced into the covenants of God. He would, however, help his fellow countrymen to understand the things which they would experience beneath the roof of the centurion.

10.17.3—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a see”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.17.4—doubted—The Greek word which is here translated as “doubted” derives from roots which mean “thoroughly nonplussed, perplexed”.

10.17.23—Cornelius—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to Judaism. He ought not be confused with the other centurions who came in contact with Christianity anonymously.

10.17.26—enquiry—Did the three men make their way directly to the home of Simon the tanner or did they have to ask around town where they might find the house? We do not know. The only concern generated by the question reflects on the time it had taken to travel from the doorstep of Cornelius’ home to that of the place where Peter resided.

10.17.28—Simon’s—a tanner who lived in Joppa with whom Peter dwelt for a time.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate.
10.18 We are not privy to the frame of mind of Cornelius’ servants. They were devout, it must be assumed, and tenaciously loyal. Depending on the nature of the tension between the Jews and the Romans at that hour, the presence of the Roman soldier may very well have caused some consternation on the part of the tanner’s family. Asking for such a prominent member of the Christian faith at a time of great persecution against the disciples undoubtedly must have been somewhat unnerving.

10.18.6—Simon—Anti-papists, in their zeal to condemn the Catholic Church by assailing their resort to Peter as the bearer of the Keys of the Kingdom, have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. In their attempts to denigrate the Roman Church they have fallen back on the age-old tactic of *ad homonym* attacks on him who was, without question, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles during his life and the *de facto* President of the Church of Christ after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus into Heaven. That Peter was mortal and had failings can be freely admitted, but like most detractors, the shrill protesters have ended up saying more about themselves than they have the object of their assault. That Peter had moments of weakness is a given, but those things which he has been most generally derided for, he was not guilty of. Those who have berated this man will one day hang their heads in shame and beg his forgiveness for their arrogance and stupidity. Simon was a fisherman by trade who forsook all in order to join Jesus in the salvation of mankind. Jesus gave him the sobriquet, “Peter”, because of his primary role as the “Prophet, Seer, and Revelator” to the world once Jesus had departed mortal life. Tradition has it that Peter was crucified head-downward because he did not feel worthy to suffer on the cross in exactly the same fashion as did his Master. We cannot begin to imagine the nature of his lingering death.

10.18.10—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.19 We ought not to be overly concerned about the numerical association between the “three” men and the “three” times the vision was presented to Peter. It is sufficient to know that Simon Peter knew and understood the voice of the Spirit when it came to him.

10.19.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

| Acts 10:19 | 19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. | 190 |
| AF 42, 159, 160 | | |
| DNTC 2 461 | | |
the saints of God.

10.19.13—three—Some ancient manuscripts state that only the two servants appeared at the door. Others specify no number. The only question is whether the “devout” Roman soldier was sent to accompany the servants merely for protection because of his personal “loyalty” to the centurion or whether Cornelius’ officer had a vested interest in his commander’s request.

10.20 The servants sent from Cornelius would have no problem convincing Peter to go with them back to Caesarea. The Spirit of the Lord simply removed any hesitancy that Peter might otherwise have had. The men had exercised their faith in the word of their master and commander. They had done all that they could do under the circumstances. It was then left to the Lord to do what was necessary. Simon Peter’s willingness to go with them to Cornelius must have come as a great relief to their minds and hearts. In the end, it was not Cornelius that was making request of the Apostle, it was the Lord himself who inspired the centurion to seek him out.

10.21 Peter knew that the men who stood at the door were sent by God for an important task. The Apostle may have suspected that there was a connection between them and the revelation he had just received, but he could not be immediately certain until he discovered what they were about. Therefore he put to them the most logical question that could be devised under the circumstances. The messengers will be more than willing to share all that had been communicated to them by their master. Here we can clearly see that the Lord need not provide information when there are those who are in a position to provide it. The effect is one of unity and mutual dependency. These men were soon to be members of the Church of Christ.

10.21.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.21.8—which—Scholars point to this clause, troubled that it does not appear in many ancient manuscripts. Is there anything lost or gained in either case? The world frequently becomes exercised about such issues, but generally finds itself in the thick of thin things. This is, without doubt, one of them.

10.21.14—Cornelius—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to Judaism. He ought not be confused with the other centurions who came in contact with Christianity anonymously.

10.22 The faithful servants of Cornelius lay out their master’s petition to Simon Peter in the precise fashion in which he had given it to them. Their appeal is relatively unvarnished, save for their possible effusive estimation of his character in the eyes of the entire nation of the Jews. But these are men who have been well-treated and Cornelius has proven himself fair in the execution of his duties as a representative of the Roman military.

10.22.4—Cornelius—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to

20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

Acts 10:21–35

DN TC 2 128, 163, 202, 290, 305, 464, 504

22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.
Judah. He ought not to be confused with the other centurions who came in contact with Christianity anonymously.

10.22.6—centurion—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman army, the sixtieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would be a comparable rank today: some suggest sergeant; others propose captain.

10.22.8—just—The Greek word which is here translated as “just” derives from roots which mean “right, self-evident, equitable, innocent, holy”.

10.22.17–18—good report—The Greek word which is here translated as “good report” derives from roots which mean “be a witness, testify, evidence”. We do not know how well known Cornelius was throughout all of Palestine. That he was known among the Jews at Caesarea and environs there can be no doubt. His servants may be engaging in mild hyperbole.

10.22.25—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

10.22.27—warned—The Greek word which is here translated as “warned” derives from roots which mean “useful, needed, wealth, price, utter an oracle, divinely intimate, be called, be admonished, reveal”.

10.23 Whether the three servants of Cornelius had traveled the thirty-five miles from Caesarea in six hours or had made the trip in eighteen hours or so, they were not quite prepared to make the return trip at that moment. Peter immediately perceived their condition and invited them into the tanner’s home. In spite of all of the exaggerated claims regarding Peter’s ambivalence concerning the acceptability of the Gentiles, it is quite evident here that his attitude at this early point in the Church’s short history is not as bigoted as some would have us believe. The two servants may have been Jews, but the Roman soldier, whether Jewish or not, would have been considered unclean because of his association with a foreign power, much in the same way the publicans were despised. Neither Peter nor Simon hesitates to afford the messengers room and board for the night. We do not know at what hour the next day the company left on their way to Caesarea, but the account clearly suggests that the trip took the men the better part of two days to travel from Joppa to the home of Cornelius.

10.23.13—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.23.19–20—certain brethren—The ostensible reason for the brethren accompanying Peter may have been to afford Peter protection in an uncertain situation. Peter undoubtedly allowed this unnecessary action in order to have substantive and competent witnesses of that which was about to happen. Peter knew that he was in no danger for
the Lord had so stated (see 10.20). In another account of this episode, Peter states that there were six men who accompanied him to Caesarea (see 11.12).

10.23, 22—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

10.24 Cornelius’ faith that Simon Peter would come as he had been bidden was perfect. He knew that the Lord’s servant would be as obedient as he had been. His confidence in the message that Peter was to deliver to him was such that he had no hesitancy to invite his family and neighbors to be present when Apostle made his appearance. Cornelius did not know exactly what Peter was going to say, but he did know that whatever it was, it would be the mind and will of the Lord God of Israel. Apparently his associates had great personal confidence in Cornelius as well, for they were all within the house waiting for the Apostle to arrive as well.

10.24.3—4—morrow after—Cornelius had received his revelation on the first day about the ninth hour. His servants arrived at Peter’s residence about noon of the second day. They all left for Caesarea sometime during the third day and arrived at Cornelius’ house sometime during the fourth day.

10.24.8—Caesarea—A seaport on the Mediterranean about 70 miles northwest of Jerusalem, built by Herod the Great in 22 BC in honor of Caesar Augustus. It was, for all intents and purposes, a Roman city with all of the amenities of what that empire provided. It served as the Roman capital of Palestine for more than five hundred years. Before Herod’s great labor was performed there, Caesarea was known as “Strato’s Tower”, a Phoenician seaport named after a Sidonian king, Straton, the Greek form of the name, Abydastart.

10.24.10—Cornelius—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to Judaism. He ought not be confused with the other centurions who came in contact with Christianity anonymously.

10.25 The reverence expressed towards Peter by Cornelius was complete. We may smile a bit at the centurion’s deference, but this is a forgivable error on many levels. First, the revelation given to Cornelius had been delivered by an angel, an angel who apparently was not authorized to give the centurion the message from God the Father. He might have thought of Peter as one holding superior authority to that of the angel. Second, this may have been Cornelius’ first experience with revelation and the fulfillment thereof. He might have thought of a thousand reasons as to why the Apostle might not come, but held tenaciously to his faith that God could not lie. When Peter came through the door, the centurion’s faith was confirmed, a moment of joy in any man’s experience. Thirdly, Cornelius may very well have sensed the great endowment which had been poured out upon Peter through the power of the priesthood, both in his ordination as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ and as one who was filled with the power and influence of the Holy Ghost. His prostrating himself before Peter was not much different than that which John the Beloved did during his interview with the angel on the isle of Patmos. The gentle correction in perception was the same in both instances. Besides, there is far more safety in being overly deferential than the reverse when dealing with divine emissaries.

10.25.3—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus
clearly states is to be understood as “a see”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.25,7—*Cornelius*—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to Judaism. He ought not be confused with the other centurions who came in contact with Christianity anonymously.

10.26 In one of the ancient manuscripts of Acts, there is an addition to the narrative that states that before arriving at the centurion’s house, one of the servants traveling with Peter ran ahead and informed Cornelius that Peter had arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius then, according to the account raced out of his home to greet the Apostle, thus prostrating himself in public rather than in private. Cornelius was not ashamed of his faith. Peter’s generous humility is typical of the senior Apostle. If the truth be known, it is typical of all of the true servants of God.

10.26,2—*Peter*—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a see”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.27 The grammar of this verse gives credence to the above mentioned manuscript which related that Cornelius had gone outside of his home to properly greet his invited guest. Cornelius’ friends and relatives, together with his domestics were gathered together that they might hear the word of the Lord from the mouth of the Apostle Peter. How long they had been waiting we are not told, but we ought not to be surprised if they had been gathered to Cornelius’s home at the earliest time that Cornelius could have possibly expected his servants to return. Again, this gathering is another demonstration of the faith of Cornelius in the word of the Lord given him by the angel.

10.28 Peter’s willingness to leave Joppa with the servants of Cornelius testifies that he already understood a good portion of that which the Lord had taught him in the vision given him on the rooftop of Simon the tanner. Cornelius would have been considered unclean by the vast majority of Jews, even though they might not have been impolite about it. Peter at this point knows clearly what direction the Church is supposed to take in this particular matter and undoubtedly perceives that Cornelius’ conversion to Christianity is not going to be unique. Peter’s vision coupled with that of Cornelius will prove to be the pivotal revelations that will move the Church of Christ ahead so that the Gospel might be taught to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, whether or not they were literal descendants of Abra-
ham, Isaac, or Jacob.

10.28.5—them—This might have seemed a little abrupt and perhaps a little painful for those who had been gathered at the behest of Cornelius. But Peter was clearly addressing those who had accompanied him from Joppa as well, “certain brethren” of the Church who probably had had some difficulty themselves walking into the home of the Roman centurion.

10.28.21—Jesu—That is, one of those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

10.29 Peter knows the import of the revelation which he has received. He also comprehends the nature of Cornelius’ humility and his desire to do the will of God. Peter’s question is somewhat rhetorical. The servants have already described for Peter much of that which had transpired to the centurion. Many in the audience, however, had not been privy to that which had been communicated from Cornelius to Peter through the servants. It was for their benefit that Peter requested the rehearsal. Also, it was an opportunity for Cornelius to bear his testimony to those gathered regarding the merciful kindness of the Lord God of Israel.

10.29.7—gainsaying—The Greek word which is here translated as “gainsaying” derives from roots which mean “promptly”. The English word “gainsaying” derives from roots which mean “say against”. Peter knew precisely what he was about when he left Joppa.

10.30 Cornelius’ account of his vision is simple and concise, an unaffected relating of what had transpired.

10.30.2—Cornelius—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to Judaism. He ought not be confused with the other centurions who came in contact with Christianity anonymously.

10.30.4–5—Four days—This is in complete harmony with the chronology of Luke narrative (see 10.24.3–4)

10.30.11–12—this hour—That is to say, the very hour in which Cornelius was addressing his friends and relatives. Some scholars have concluded, therefore, that the audience was held at three in the afternoon, but that is unlikely inasmuch as Cornelius states that he had been fasting until “this hour” and then at the ninth hour had the revelation. If Cornelius were following Jewish custom he would have been fasting past the hour of morning prayer, which would have been approximately nine o’clock in the morning (see 10.9–10 for an example of this custom as followed by Peter). Later that afternoon, about three, he held his interview with the angel. We may suppose that he was still fasting since he drew attention to the fact as a preamble to his vision.

10.30.16–17—ninth hour—approximately three o’clock in the afternoon (see 10.3).

10.30.31–32—bright clothing—The brightness and glory of those who have come from the presence of God are often described in this fashion.

10.31 We ought not be perplexed that Cornelius’ telling of his experience is not a verbatim account of that which Luke gave at the beginning of the present chapter. It is interesting to read the various accounts given by those who said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of

29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

Acts 10:30–31
AGQ 2 150
Acts 10:30–32
DNTC 2 96
MD 35
Acts 10:30–44
CR89-A 40
Acts 10:30–48
AF 131
who have come into the presence of divine messengers. Each telling is given according to the needs of the audience and according to the spiritual circumstances of the narrator. Each version provides us with insights into the richness of the experience. Life is not a two-dimensional experience, but a multifaceted one and we ought to accept each narration as a gift from that God who provided the original revelation.

10.31.3—Cornelius—A good man, possibly a philosophical convert to Judaism. He ought not be confused with the other centurions who came in touch with Christianity anonymously.

10.31.10—alms—The Greek word which is here translated as "alms" derives from roots which mean "compassionateness, beneficence, benefaction, active and tender mercy".

10.32 Cornelius’ emphasis in this retelling of his experience is that the angel told the centurion to invite Peter to come to Caesarea, notwithstanding the political and religious complications involved. In the forepart of this chapter we might suppose that Cornelius was to request of Peter some comforting message by way of his servants, but here the Roman soldier makes it clear that the angel expected the Apostle to make the two-day journey to Caesarea and to teach him in his own home. Cornelius was not oblivious of the sentiments which were certainly felt by those whom he had invited to hear the Apostle speak. The gathering of Romans and Jews under one roof was an invitation to social disaster on every hand, so strong were the feelings of all parties concerned. Cornelius’ testimony was that all of this had been orchestrated by the Lord Himself through the offices of the angel. He was confirming that which Peter had already testified regarding the equality of all men in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This exchange between Peter and Cornelius will have been like unto missionary companions bearing their specific personal testimonies regarding a principle of truth.

10.32.4—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

10.32.8—Simon—Anti-papists, in their zeal to condemn the Catholic Church by assailing their resort to Peter as the bearer of the Keys of the Kingdom, have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. In their attempts to denigrate the Roman Church they have fallen back on the age-old tactic of ad homonym attacks on him who was, without question, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles during his life and the de facto President of the Church of Christ after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus into Heaven. That Peter was mortal and had failings can be freely admitted, but like most detractors, the shrill protestors have ended up saying more about themselves than they have the object of their assault. That Peter had moments of weakness is a given, but those things which he has been most generally derided for, he was not guilty of. Those who have berated this man will one day hang their heads in shame and beg his forgiveness for their arrogance and stupidity. Simon was a fisherman by trade who forsook all in order to join Jesus in the salvation of mankind. Jesus gave him the sobriquet, “Peter”, because of his primary role as the “Prophet, Seer, and Revelator” to the world once Jesus had departed mortal life. Tradition has it that Peter was crucified head-downward because he did not feel worthy to suffer on the cross in exactly the same fashion as did his Master. We cannot begin to imagine the nature of his lingering death.

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side; who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.
10.32.12—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a see”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.32.21—Simon—A tanner who lived in Joppa with whom Peter dwelt for a time.

10.32.23—tanner—The Greek word which is here translated as “tanner” derives from roots which mean “hide, animal skin, currier”. While it is true that those who touched dead animals were considered “unclean” for a time, this does not suggest that all those who dealt in leather goods were anathema to the Jews. Nor are we to automatically assume that Simon dealt with skins of unclean animals simply because he was a tanner. A little thought would lead us to consider the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness, an edifice comprised in part from animal pelts. Additionally, what medium was used to preserve the words of the ancient prophets if not parchment? In fact, it was considered the commandment of the Lord God to record His word upon the finest parchments that could be made from kosher animals.

10.33 Cornelius recounts his response to the angel’s instruction by saying that he “immediately” sent his servants to Joppa to find Peter. This would imply that the two servants and the soldier probably left the afternoon of Cornelius’ vision; that is, sometime between three o’clock and sunset (see 10.8 where this issue is discussed in more detail). The centurion’s compliment to Peter about his immediate response to the three messengers should not be interpreted as condescension, but rather as an expression of Cornelius’ joy and delight in having a servant of the living God beneath his roof. As the host of Peter’s entourage, Cornelius invites Peter to speak his mind to those who have been gathered, for they will hearken to the Apostle as if he were an angel sent from the presence of God. These are an openhearted people whose trust and confidence in Cornelius is such that they are prepared to believe anything that Peter has to say. Cornelius is waiting for any word that would show him the next thing that he should do in order to please God.

10.34 The whole notion of traditional Judaism was one of exclusion. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were subject to salvation, but the rest of humanity was on its own, outside the pale. The essence of this attitude is bound up in the question asked of Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” (see LK-C 10.29). The spirit of the question was to exclude as many from one’s circle of associates as was possible. Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan was a stunning reply, an unrelenting rebuke of the whole philosophy of isolationism in any of its permutations. We see this same attitude in the question “Who is a true Christian?” wherein is expected a denouncement of everyone save one’s own sectarian party. We as individuals are at varying degrees of understanding, in our comprehension of the truths of eternity. Those who are struggling with multiplication and division ought not to slur those who are working their way through calculus. By the same token those

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

| Acts 10:34 | AGQ 3 112 |
| AGQ 5 162 |
| DHC 4 262 |
| CR97-A 25 |
| CR99-O 32 |
| CR01-A 43 |
| Acts 10:34–35 |
| AF 57 |
| AGQ 2 2 |
| DS 1 5 |
| DS 2 130 |
| FPM 298 |
who are finding joy in solving quadratic equations ought not to mock those who are struggling with square roots. Traditional Christianity lashes out at Latter-day Saints, pontificating upon principles about which they have no notion; often the saints return in kind. What part do slander and bitterness have in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? Peter’s conclusion of the matter while standing under the roof of Cornelius the centurion has application in the greater arena of daily life. Salvation and exaltation come to those who embrace one another in truth. The faithful are saved together, or not at all. “If ye are not one, ye are not mine,” Jesus said. Therefore, we ought to spend our time figuring out what we have in common with our neighbor rather than distancing ourselves through pride, bigotry, and ignorance. God the Father does not do this, why should we?

10.34.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.34.17—respecter—The Greek word which is here translated as “respecter” derives from roots which mean “favor an individual, show partiality, acceptor of face, favoritism”.

10.35 The qualifications for being received into the Kingdom of God are relatively simple. Again, we should turn to the statement which caused the scribe to ask “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus had been asked which of all of the commandments of God was the greatest. The response was that men should love God with all their heart, might, mind, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves, “Fearing God”, in the scriptural sense, should be understood as meaning “loving Him”. Perhaps we should likewise understand that “working righteousness” should be equated with “loving our neighbor”. Jesus testified that upon these two great commandments hang all the Law and the prophets. Those two commandments also constitute the heart and soul of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

10.36 Notwithstanding the fact that the Jews did little to magnify their responsibility to bring salvation to the nations of the earth as part of the Abrahamic covenant, the principles of eternal life which were included in the Law of carnal commandments were in actuality designed for all men. However one might perceive the Law of Moses, the Gospel of Christ was clearly intended for more nations than one. The great difficulty was that the Jews’ interpretation of the Law had been for so long focused on isolationism, that most Jews and Gentiles had great difficulty in perceiving Christianity in a different light.

10.36.2—word—Meaning the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, that sublime revelation of unity.

10.36.5—sent—Because of the covenant established between Abraham and the God of Heaven, Abraham’s posterity would be privileged to receive any divine communication to His children first. The children of Abraham were then expected to carry that truth to the rest of the inhabitants of the earth. The Jews had been somewhat negligent in

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

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this matter, but the disciples of Christ were poised to do that very thing when the time was right.

10.36.10—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

10.36.14–15—Jesus Christ—The author of eternal salvation, both of the body and the spirit through the power of the resurrection and his atoning sacrifice for sin.

10.36.18–20—Lord of all—In other words, Peter is stating categorically that salvation through Jesus Christ is not limited to the Jews, the House of Israel, or any other hereditary covenant people. Jesus is the designated Redeemer of all mankind through his atoning sacrifice and resurrection from the death.

10.37 One wonders at the catalyst that brought the angel of God to Cornelius in the first place. Cornelius was at least a philosophical convert to Judaism, if not a practical convert. How long had that been the case? Perhaps many years? What was the nature, the content of Cornelius’ fervent prayers to God? What was troubling him? Had he somehow come in contact with the teachings and ministry of Philip the evangelist when the latter settled in Caesarea? Was the heated controversy between the Jews and the Christians in that place such that it caused him consternation sufficient that he petitioned the God of Heaven for a resolution? We do not know for certain. But it is most likely that Cornelius, his family and friends were well acquainted with Jesus of Nazareth, his life and doctrines.

10.37.5—ye—To whom is Peter referring here? One might make a case for suggesting that the Apostle is addressing the Jewish members of the Church who had accompanied him from Joppa. Certainly they would have been privy to the rise of the Gospel and the preaching which had begun in Galilee and then had spread into the other provinces of Palestine. But with a little concerted thought we may perceive that Cornelius and his household were probably no less familiar with the history and doctrines of Christianity.

10.37.12—Judaea—In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the province of Judea stretched from Malathia on the south to the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the River Jordan on the east, comprising approximately 5,000 square miles.

10.37.16—Galilee—At the time Jesus and his disciples were teaching the principles of salvation to the inhabitants of this province, Galilee stretched from the Plains of Esdraelon on the south to Cadaea on the north; from the western bank of the Jordan to the border with Phoenicia, a district approximately sixty by thirty miles. It contained within its boundaries much of the land inherited by the tribes of Issachar, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Asher.

10.37.21—John—The brother of James, the son of Zebedee, and most likely what we would call today the Second Counselor in the First Presidency of the Church.

10.38 Peter begins his review of the ministry of Jesus Christ with that of John the Baptist. Many scholars have pointed out that Mark, as the amanuensis of Peter, proceeds in the same fashion. Jesus’ formal mortal ministry began as he submitted himself to the priesthood authority of John the Baptist in the waters of the River Jordan. Having fulfilled all righteousness at the
moment of baptism, the Father exhibited His pleasure by sending the Holy
Ghost to the two men as they still stood in the waters of the river Jordan

10.38.3—*Anointed*—The Greek word which is translated here as
"anointed" derives from the same roots which produce "Christ" in
English. Jesus was anointed the Messiah long before the foundations
of the earth were laid, in the grand councils held in Heaven when the
plan of salvation and exaltation was presented to the children of God
who were assembled there. In that great gathering, Jesus became the
Lamb of God, the ultimate Sacrifice by which men would be re-
ciled to God the Father and the denizens of Heaven. Peter refers here
to the descent of the Holy Ghost and the sign of the dove as an
earthly "anointing" of the Spirit by which the Baptist would recognize
the Savior of the world.

10.38.4—*Jesus*—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the
Savior was provided by revelation. "Jesus" is the Hellenized version of
the Hebrew name "Yehoshua", "Oshea" or "Joshua". The name itself
means "Savior", literally, "Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety".

10.38.6—*Nazareth*—Located due west of the southern tip of the Sea of
Galilee, in the highlands above the Plain of Esdraelon. The adopted
home of both Joseph and Mary, inasmuch as their royal lineage
assigned them to the city of Bethlehem, a fact that is reflected in the
account of the Savior’s birth in the second chapter of Luke. Jesus,
though not born in Nazareth, was a resident there for most of his life.
(See also *MT-C 2.23.10*)

10.38.13—*Power*—The authority by which Jesus was enabled to heal the
sick and drive the illicit possessors of human bodies from their victims
was not derived from his baptism or from the descent of the Holy
Ghost. Jesus received his authority directly from the Father, an order
of the priesthood which was specific to the Son of God. This priest-
hood, together with the keys thereof, Jesus bestowed upon his Apost-
tles while he yet sojourned with them in his mortal ministry.

10.39 Any Apostle, by definition, must be a personal eyewitness of the life,
ministry, atoning sacrifice, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
While many may quibble about those called to this high and holy calling in
other dispensations, we need only point to the Apostle Paul who was, as he
said, one born out of time, in that he did not know the Savior personally.
That he was a servant of God qualified to bear the title of Apostle no one can
doubt. How he came by that witness we may only speculate as to the details.
The same of true of all others who have borne the Apostolic Priesthood and
have presided in the Church and Kingdom of God.

10.39.2—*We*—Certainly in reference to Peter and the other Apostles. In
addition, many of the brethren who traveled from Joppa to Caesarea
with Peter were also among those who were eyewitnesses of the
Savior’s life and ministry. We may wish to include the evangelist
Philip whose ministry took him to Caesarea during that period of
time.

10.39.14-17—*Land of the Jews*—That is to say, in the provinces of Pales-
tine which once pertained to the ancient Kingdom of Israel which
were primarily inhabited by the Jews.

10.39.20—*Jerusalem*—There has been much speculation as to the lin-
guistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name
literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or
"established in peace". The great city of Salem, built in the days of
Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:
enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, "established in peace" is by definition, the City of the great King.

10.40 The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was an assured fact, notwithstanding the arguments of the elders of the Jews to the contrary. He was seen by family members, his brethren of the Twelve, and a minimum of five hundred members of the Church of Christ on at least one other occasion. The faithful rejoiced in his presence; the wicked had no need of that witness.

10.41 The Apostles, in the upper room, dined with the resurrected Christ on the evening of the day Jesus arose from the tomb, as did Cleopas and his companion in the little village of Emmaus. Later, on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus would again partake of a meal with his closest associates. Of other occasions during which Jesus may have partaken of food and drink in the presence of his disciples we have no record, but certainly as his visited with the scattered flocks of Israel, such opportunities afforded themselves in one fashion or another. The whole purpose of these events was to confirm to the minds and hearts of Jesus’ disciples that a literal resurrection from the dead had taken place. Why not appear unto all men? Because the process of salvation comes through faith, repentance, and obedience to the ordinances and covenants of the Gospel of Christ. A man cannot be saved in his sins, no matter what his knowledge may be; he must be saved from his sins through faith in Jesus Christ.

10.42 If we follow the narrative of Mark as a resource for the commandments given to the Apostles after Jesus’ resurrection from the dead, then we will have that which must have been deeply impressed upon the mind of Peter.

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. (Mark 16:15–16)

Note the words “all the world” and “every creature”. Who is exempted as objects of the labors of the Apostles in their duty to disseminate the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

10.42.25—Judge—Both as one who executes the demands of justice and as a deliverer according to the principle of mercy.

10.42.27—quick—An ancient word in the English language which is used to represent the "living"

10.43 Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not sufficient for the salvation of any man, though it is absolutely vital in the process that will lead such a man to redemption and sanctification. Repentance from sin, that is, the practical changing of one’s orientation to God and to his fellow men is not sufficient either. A man who has charged the course of his life toward the good is still held accountable, under the law of justice, for all that he did amiss at any point in his life. A man may be a rascal for the first thirty years of his life and then live the next seventy years completely free of offense toward God and man to no avail, inasmuch as the transgressions of his libertine years must needs be accounted for. God the Eternal Father cannot allow the least degree of sin in the lives of any of His children. Hence the importance of the covenants between the believer and the Son of God. Repentance is made effective through faith in Christ; faith in Christ leads one to the covenants.

40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

Acts 10:40
JC 697
CR99-O 31

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

Acts 10:41
MM 3 387

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

Acts 10:42
AF 57, 107, 145
DHC 4 256
DNTC 3 572
JC 252, 676
MA 155
MD 398
EM 2 721
CR90-O 36
CR99-A 45

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Acts 10:43
AF 253
DNTC 1 144, 251, 484
MD 605
MM 2 14
PM 26, 79, 293
EM 2 724
CR90-O 37

204
which establish as saving relationship between the believer and Jesus Christ. Hence, a man is born again, through baptism and the Gift of the Holy Ghost, his sins paid for through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Savior’s blood was shed in his agony, beginning in the Garden of Gethsemane, an agony which came as he personally suffered the punishments for all that had been done amiss in every repentant man’s life.

10.44 In a subsequent relating of this event, Peter states that one of the convincing aspects of his exchange with Cornelius and his household was that the Holy Ghost fell upon the Gentiles as had fallen earlier upon the Jewish members of the Church. Peter uses the phrase “in the beginning” to temporalize the Jewish experience. But to which specific instance is he referring? Most traditional scholars point to the day of Pentecost. As a result of this supposition, they suggest that a rushing wind and tongues of fire must have accompanied the speaking in tongues which is referred to below (see 10.46). That may have been the case, but the narrative does not specifically say so. It is interesting that Peter makes no specific mention of speaking of tongues in his later account to the members of the Church, albeit he may have glossed it in his general statement.

10.44.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.45 Traditional Christianity is so obsessed with the outward manifestations of the power and influence of the Holy Ghost that they cannot perceive how any of those who accompanied Peter to Caesarea could have recognized His attendance at the gathering without some sort of tangible evidence. Those personally acquainted with the workings of the Spirit know precisely what might have happened to convince the six disciples with Peter that the blessings of God were destined to be upon the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The question remains, however, as to what event Peter was referring when he said that the Holy Ghost had fallen upon Cornelius’ household as it had upon the first members of the Church. Did none of the disciples never have the power and influence of the Holy Ghost touch them in some fashion prior to the day of Pentecost? Were none of them affected by the presence of the Holy Ghost at the baptism of Jesus? How did Peter and the other disciples of Christ obtain a testimony of Jesus as the Son of God if it were not by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost? The primary function of the Holy Ghost is not to inspire a man to speak in a foreign language; the Holy Ghost is a Comforter, a Testifier, a Witness, a Revelator and those who come under His influence are divinely inspired with a testimony which cannot be denied except at the peril of a man’s soul.

10.45.5—circumcision—The Hebrew word which is used to represent “circumcision” derives from roots which mean to “cut short, curtail, blunt, destroy” particularly regarding the prepuce. The Greek word derives from roots which mean to “cut around with a single stroke”. Circumcision was given to Abraham and his posterity as a sign of

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:44
AGQ 5 134
Acts 10:44–47
CR90-O 36
Acts 10:44–48
DHC 2 256
DNTC 2 83
DS 1 53
Acts 10:45
JC 251
EM 1 283
their place as a covenant people.

10.45.15—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.45.20—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

10.46 Which languages did Cornelius and his household speak that the disciples of Jesus were impressed? Greek? Latin? There would be nothing unusual about that; most would have been native speakers of the same. Did they speak in Aramaic, the Hebrew dialect commonly spoken in Palestine at that day? Nothing would be particularly surprising about that, given the frequent exchanges between the Romans and the Jews. Did they speak in classical Hebrew? Did they speak the language of Heaven that was first taught to Adam and Eve? We know not, but in either case, the disciples understood what was being said and were patently aware that these Gentiles were bearing testimony of Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice in a fashion which they knew to be absolutely true.

10.46.13—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

10.47 Upon witnessing and experiencing this tremendous outpouring of the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, Peter turned to his companions, the six disciples who had accompanied him from Joppa to the home of Cornelius, and asked the obvious question. Was there anything, either in the scriptures or in the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, that would otherwise explain what had transpired before their very eyes? Had there not been an equation made between the household of the centurion and every other potential disciple of Christ that had come out of the House of Israel? Should righteous men and women who have been favored by God to such an extent as had Cornelius and his family, be denied membership in the Church of Christ simply because of their ethnic background?

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,  

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?
10.48 The previous question asked by Peter appears to be rhetorical, but in fact the six disciples agreed whole heartedly with the Apostle’s estimation of the situation. Then the man who held the keys of the Church of Jesus Christ upon the earth declared that the time had come that the doors of the Kingdom of God should be opened to the faithful, regardless of their ethnicity. Cornelius and his household, even all that believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, were then taken to a place where they could be completely immersed in water as a token of their willingness to take upon themselves the name of Jesus, to be his sons and his daughters, to remember him and his sacrifice always, and to keep his commandments at all times and in all places. After that saving ordinance had been performed, Peter would then have placed his hands upon the head of each convert and would have confirmed them members of the Church of Christ. At that same time he would have bestowed the Gift of the Holy Ghost which was that they would enjoy the constant companionship of the third member of the Godhead so long as they were true and faithful to the terms of the covenant which they had made with the Lord.

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Chapter 11

1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

Acts 11:1–18

EM 1 283
diately after the conversion of Cornelius and his household, then we may perceive the certainty that Peter had that his course of action represented the mind and will of God. Peter was the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator of God, and as such was authorized to reveal that mind and will to the children of men upon the earth. We are not told whether any other Gentiles were received into the Kingdom as he made his way to Jerusalem, but undoubtedly many heard and rejoiced at his preaching.

11.2.3—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

11.2.8—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchi-zedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

11.2.14—circumcision—One has to ask the question as to how many members of the Church were at that time not circumcised Jews? The baptism of Cornelius was odd by the fact that he was a Gentile, perhaps the first Gentile received into the Kingdom. Therefore, the notion that the circumcised members of the Church could be distinguished from those that were not circumcised seems ludicrous. The “contenders” were more likely members of the Church who had been conservative Jews, like the Pharisees, before they had been baptized.

11.3 The argument of the “circumcised” does not particularly sound like one which would have been generated by any of those who had spent time with the Lord Jesus Christ in his mortal ministry. This is the argument that one frequently heard from the scribes and Pharisees as Jesus ministered to what were considered the dregs of Jewish society, albeit with a new target. Clearly those who were criticizing the President of the Church of Christ did so as a result of the heavy cultural and religious baggage that they had brought with them when they accepted baptism at the hands of the Apostles. These were men whose rigid interpretation of the Law of Moses condemned as “unclean” anyone who came in contact with the spiritually dead, as the Gentiles were considered to be.

11.3.7—uncircumcised—The Hebrew word which is used to represent “uncircumcised” derives from roots which mean to “cut short, curtail, blunt, destroy” particularly regarding the prepuce. The Greek word derives from roots which mean to “cut around with a single stroke”. Circumcision was given to Abraham and his posterity as a sign of their place as a covenant people.

11.4 Notwithstanding the fact that Simon Peter was the mouthpiece of the Lord God of Israel upon the earth, yet he was a humble man who knew the hearts and minds of those around him. He wished his brethren to be as he

3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them,
was, freed from cultural and religious biases which had the potential to canker their souls and constrict the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The membership of the Church, those who had received the fullness of the Gospel, knew for themselves that there would come a time when the principles of salvation and exaltation would be carried into all the nations of the earth. The singular issue was the timing of that blessing, when it was to be poured out. Peter’s narration of the events as they transpired is clear and concise. He ably led his brethren to the same conclusion which he had made. This progressive and logical approach, accompanied by the witness of the Spirit of God, was sufficient to have the body of the Church accept the revelation and the newest members of the Church of Christ with great joy.

11.4.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

11.5 Peter’s discourse confines itself to the essential points of his experience. He mentions nothing of Simon the tanner, the fast in which he had been engaged, or the hour of the day in which the vision took place. The essential facts had to do with the four-cornered sheet that descended from heaven and was placed before him. Peter understood the significant elements of his vision. The whole of humanity is of one family, gathered together upon the earth to experience mortality. The bounds and limitations of each nation have been set, the responsibilities for every people assigned. Yet for all of the differences, all of mankind is bound up in the same “vessel”, a sheet tied together at the four corners. Notwithstanding the natural state of the various animals which dwell on the earth, the promise is that there would come a time when the lion would lie down with the lamb, the leopard would abide with the kids, serpents and babes would associate without danger to either. This state is that of the Garden of Eden; it is the state that will be present during the Millennium when the earth is restored to its paradiasiacal glory (see 10.10–11).

11.5.7—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

11.5.12—trance—The Greek word which is here translated as “trance” derives from roots which mean “displacement of the mind, bewilderment, amazement, astonishment” and is the roots source for the English word “ecstasy”. The English word “trance” derives from Middle French roots which mean to “pass, pass away, die, swoon, be in fear”, but with the notion of the state being temporary, as in “transient”.

11.6 The saints of God look forward to a time when the animals of the world would not have enmity toward one another, when the violence and viciousness of the beasts would come to an end. Could that condition ever exist if the children of men never learn how to get along with one another in saying,

5 I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping
harmony and peace? The establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ in every dispensation has been to provide a foundation upon which Zion might be established. Not every attempt to build up the Kingdom of God in peace has been successful. What failures that have transpired have taken place because of the unwillingness of men and women to put off their carnal nature. When men and women become like little children, full of faith and love, they become of one heart and mind, dwelling in righteousness, and there is no want among them. What is true of individuals may be true of nations as well. It is possible for the nations of the earth to be of one mind and one heart? Certainly. That will come in a day when every knee will bow, every eye shall see, every ear shall hear, and every mouth confess that Jesus is the Christ, the King of Kings (see 10.12).

11.7 The voice of God commanding Peter to offer in sacrifice the unclean animals which stood before him on the sheet would have been as horrifying a notion to the orthodox Jewish members of the Church of Christ as it had been to Peter. One can almost feel the universal cringe. This was as powerful a moment as that given to Abraham when he was called by the Lord God to offer up his only son Isaac (see 10.13).

11.7.10—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

11.8 This is not studied candor on Peter’s part, but rather a simple relation of his reaction to the proposal that the Lord had made. He understands the difficulty that his brethren are having with the concept of the Time of the Gentiles having arrived in their day. He is attempting to help them have the same kind of epiphany that he had experienced with the Vision and the visit to Cornelius’s home in Caesarea. He will be successful because he is being absolutely honest in his narration of the story. He has no hesitancy revealing to his brethren the negative reaction that he had had to the revelation of the Lord (see 10.14).

11.9 As was indicated above, that which was “common” was that which had come in contact with something “unclean” (see 10.14–15). The bottom line here was that Cornelius was not “unclean” because he was a Gentile, nor was Peter or any other of the six men who accompanied him to Caesarea “common” because they had entered into Cornelius’ house and had contact with him. Although Peter’s brethren would come to accept his interpretation of the vision in conjunction with Cornelius and his household, it is unlikely that they fully perceived the other implications of the vision which would impact other aspects of their cultural biases.

11.10 That the vision and the instructions which accompanied the vision occurred three times could not possibly be lost of Peter’s brethren in the Church insasmuch as they, too, were devout Jews, well-versed in the language and imagery of the Old Testament. This would have been particularly true things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

Acts 11:9
FPM 188, 298
TSWK 609
of those who had once been scribes and Pharisees. That the sheet came down and went back into heaven would have been significant; that it transpired three times would have not gone unnoticed (see 10.16).

11.11 Peter correctly perceived the connection between the two servants and the Roman soldier who appeared on his doorstep in Joppa and the nature of the vision which had just ended. The full weight and measure of his comprehension would come as the Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon Cornelius and his household in Caesarea.

11.11.5–6—three men—As was indicated above (see 10.19), there has been an occasional manuscript variance in the number of men who appeared at the door of Peter’s abode in Joppa. We probably ought to content ourselves with the fact that there were three men, two servants and a soldier, that constituted the entourage sent from Cornelius.

11.11.17—Caesarea—A seaport on the Mediterranean about 70 miles northwest of Jerusalem, built by Herod the Great in 22 BC in honor of Caesar Augustus. It was, for all intents and purposes, a Roman city with all of the amenities of what that empire provided. It served as the Roman capital of Palestine for more than five hundred years. Before Herod’s great labor was performed there, Caesarea was known as “Strato’s Tower”, a Phoenician seaport named after a Sidonian king, Straton, the Greek form of the name, Abdastatt.

11.12 The divine stamp of approval on the entire episode between Cornelius and Peter is everywhere present. In a world otherwise charged with animosity and tribulation, Simon Peter willingly departs from his residence of relative peace and safety and ventures northward to a city which constitutes the quintessential reality of all that had been represented metaphorically in his vision. He did so because he had been assured by the Spirit of God, a voice with which he had vast experience and in which he had the utmost confidence. The six men of the Church who accompanied him to the home of Cornelius may have done so thinking that they were providing a measure of protection, but Peter’s indulgence of their desire to go with him was founded on his eventual need for witnesses of unquestioned integrity at this pivotal point in the history of the Church and Kingdom of God on the earth.

11.12.13—six—This is the only place where the number of Peter’s companions is specified (see 10.23).

11.13 When the servants from Cornelius’ household first arrived in Joppa, they conveyed to the senior Apostle all that their master had related to them of his vision (see 10.22). We are not told precisely when Peter came to a complete understanding of all that had been shown to him in his own vision or dream on the rooftop of Simon the tanner’s house, but clearly he had already made many connections between Cornelius’ experience and his own. The confirmation of those preliminary conclusions came at the time the Holy Ghost was poured out without measure on the members of Cornelius’ household as Peter taught them of Jesus Christ and his atoning sacrifice. In his narration to his brethren, Peter focused on the spiritual sensitivity of Cornelius rather than on his own revelations. Cornelius found favor in the eyes of God because he was willing to listen and obey the voice of the Lord to him. Peter’s contention is that that attitude is what brings men and women to salvation and exaltation. It is the willing sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit that evokes the redemption of Christ and not mere genetics (see 10.5).

11.13.23—Joppa—An ancient seaport on the Mediterranean coast of

11. And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man’s house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;
Israel. It was from this town that Jonah attempted to flee from his assignment to preach to the inhabitants of Nineveh. Its modern name is Jaffa.

11.13.27—Simon—Anti-papists, in their zeal to condemn the Catholic Church by assailing their resort to Peter as the bearer of the Keys of the Kingdom, have thrown out the baby with the bathwater. In their attempts to denigrate the Roman Church they have fallen back on the age-old tactic of *ad homonym* attacks on him who was, without question, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles during his life and the *de facto* President of the Church of Christ after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus into Heaven. That Peter was mortal and had failings can be freely admitted, but like most detractors, the shrill protestors have ended up saying more about themselves than they have the object of their assault. That Peter had moments of weakness is a given, but those things which he has been most generally derided for, he was not guilty of. Those who have berated this man will one day hang their heads in shame and beg his forgiveness for their arrogance and stupidity. Simon was a fisherman by trade who forsook all in order to join Jesus in the salvation of mankind. Jesus gave him the sobriquet, “Peter”, because of his primary role as the “Prophet, Seer, and Revelator” to the world once Jesus had departed mortal life. Tradition has it that Peter was crucified head-downward because he did not feel worthy to suffer on the cross in exactly the same fashion as did his Master. We cannot begin to imagine the nature of his lingering death.

11.13.31—Peter—in another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

11.14 The Church and Kingdom of God is a house of order, with officers and teachers appointed to carry out the will of the Lord upon the earth. The angel pointed Cornelius to the appropriate teacher that he might be taught the truth and to the appropriate officer who would have the authority necessary to make decisions that would affect his personal salvation and the salvation of his entire household.

11.14.14—saved—it should be noted that when the angel appeared to Cornelius, the operative word employed was “do” (see 10.6) while in Peter’s narrative the verb is “saved” If we accept the equation, we must conclude that there is something expected of us if we desire to be saved. In order to know what to do, a person must be taught the way. Therefore Peter will “tell” Cornelius (see 10.6 and 11.14) the “words” and “speak” to Cornelius (see 10.32), that he might know what he ought to do.

11.15 The implications of this verse are discussed at length above (see 10.44–45). As we shall see below, Peter makes no reference to the day of Pentecost, but rather to the ministry of John the Baptist. John had promised

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.
his disciples that there would come a time when the power and influence of the Holy Ghost would be poured out upon them. How could John testify that Jesus was the Son of God, the Lamb slain before the foundations of the earth were laid, if not by the power of the Holy Ghost? The Baptist had been filled with the Spirit of God while yet within his mother’s womb. The Holy Ghost imbued the baptism of Jesus of Nazareth with divine approbation. Those who were present, if they were blessed with any spiritual sensitivity at all, would have been deeply affected by the power manifested at the banks of the River Jordan.

11.16 The Day of Pentecost was one of many instances where the power and influence of the Holy Ghost was manifested unto the early disciples of Christ. From whence came Peter’s fervent testimony of the Lord if not by the power of the Spirit of God? What may we say of the experience of Peter, James, and John upon the Mount of Transfiguration? Were they not filled with the power of God in order that they might be able to partake of the rich blessings presented there? If we insist that Peter’s remarks refer only to the outward signs of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, then we slight many wonderful experiences, far more powerful in their effects upon the hearts of the disciples. Peter and his brethren in Jerusalem were concerned about the spiritual regeneration of Cornelius and his household and how that spiritual conversion would impact on the development of the Church of Christ.

11.16.13—John—The son of Zachariah who became the presiding high priest of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthoods of his day. He was called upon to baptize the Lord Jesus Christ in the Meridian of Time; hence his sobriquet. John held the keys of the priesthood until he restored them to the prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 15 May 1829.

11.17 What constituted the “gift” given to Cornelius and his household? Were they surrounded by pillars of fire? Did they speak in a multitude of Greek dialects as did the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost? What was the defining moment in the home of Cornelius that convinced Peter and the other brethren with him that the Gentiles were prepared to be members of the Church of Christ? Was it not the power of their personal testimonies which burned like fire in the hearts of all those present, Jew and Gentile alike? Could Peter deny the saving ordinances to anyone who was inspired of God in such a fashion?

11.17.9—gift—One of the gifts of the Spirit, but not necessarily the Gift of the Holy Ghost which constitutes an ordinance in the Church of Jesus Christ, one that is not performed until after a disciple has manifested faith in Christ unto repentance and has received baptism by immersion for the remission of sins at the hands of an authorized agent of the Lord Jesus Christ. Cornelius and his household were deeply affected by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost while Peter was addressing them, but they did not receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost until they had been baptized.

11.17.20–21—Jesus Christ—The author of eternal salvation, both of the body and the spirit through the power of the resurrection and his atoning sacrifice for sin.

11.18 What would be the point in giving a man a personal testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, if not to strengthen his faith sufficiently that he might forsake all of his sins and come unto the Father in the Son’s name through...
the saving ordinances of the Gospel? The other Apostles clearly understood the implications and the membership of the Church in Jerusalem who had questioned Peter’s decision concerning Cornelius’ household were satisfied at his account of the conversion of that Gentile family. There would be additional issues regarding the Gentile members of the Church which would be raised and resolved later, but for the moment, the question of Gentiles becoming members of the Church at all had been dealt with according to the mind and will of the Lord. This had been no small issue for the members of the Church who had once been scribes and Pharisees; this was a magnificent step forward for them, one that exemplified the tremendous faith they had in Christ and in the leadership of the Church.

11.19 The scattering that is spoken of here is that which effectively drove all of the disciples of Christ from Jerusalem, except for the Apostles (see 8.1). As is clearly articulated here, those who preached the Gospel of Christ at that time did so only to the Jews. Cornelius was the first Gentile to be received into the Church and Kingdom of God in that dispensation.

11.19.13—Stephen—A learned and particularly eloquent servant of God who, after the Lord himself, appears to be the first Christian martyr in the days of the Apostles (see 7.1–60).

11.19.18—Phenice—An alternate spelling for Phoenicia, a province on the Mediterranean coast north of Palestine. It has varied in size according to the taste and power of kings and emperors. In the days of the Apostles, Phoenicia reached southward to the peninsula created by Mt. Carmel, encompassing the harbor now known as Haifa. From there it stretched northward 120 miles to Arus or Arvad. The strip was seldom more than twenty miles wide, including only the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Leontes and Lebanon mountains. The two most prominent cities of Phoenicia were Tyre and Sidon.

11.19.20—Cyprus—A large island off the coast of Phoenicia. Barnabas, one of the traveling companions of Paul, was a native of that place (see 4.36.25)

11.19.22—Antioch—There are at least two ancient cities by this name. One was built on the river Orontes where the tips of the Tarsus and Lebanon mountains draw nearly together. The other was called “Antioch in Pisidia”, in reference to its geographical location in one of the provinces of Galatia. The city referred to here in this verse is undoubtedly the former.

11.19.31—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

11.20 At what point the entire Church of Christ became aware of the conversion of Cornelius and his household we are not told. We are not certain if these men from Cyprus and Cyrene had been informed of the keys of the priesthood having been turned in favor of the Gentiles. Neither are we told if those who had been taught by the missionaries had even been baptized as yet when the news of their acceptance of Christ had arrived in Jerusalem. Is this an expansion on that which Peter had already achieved or as this a simultaneous development?

11.20.4—them—That is, those who had been preaching to the Jews only.

11.20.8—Cyprus—A large island off the coast of Phoenicia. Barnabas, one of the traveling companions of Paul, was a native of that place to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

19 Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.
11.20.10—Cyrene—The principal city of Libya in northern Africa from whence came Simon, he who carried the cross of Christ (see MT-C 27,32). There had been many from Cyrene who had been present on the day of Pentecost when thousands had been brought into the Church of Christ at the hands of Peter and the other Apostles (see 2.10).

11.20.20—Grecians—There are rather tortuous arguments respecting these people, based on variant ancient manuscripts, as to whether they were Greek-speaking Jews or converts of Greek ancestry. In the context of Luke’s narrative it is of little consequence.

11.20.23–24—Lord Jesus—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

11.21 If those who had accepted Christ in Antioch were merely Hellenistic Jews, what would have been the point in notifying the Apostles in Jerusalem of the matter? Perhaps none of the missionaries engaged in that city were authorized to bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Perhaps Barnabas was sent to provide that blessing in the same way that Peter and John had been sent to Samaria to labor with the new converts baptized by Philip (see 8.14–17). If the “Grecians” who had been investigating the Church were hereditary Greeks, perhaps the missionaries were sent to Jerusalem to ask what they should do with all of the believing Gentiles. In that case, Barnabas would have been sent to evaluate the situation much in the same fashion that Peter had been sent to Caesarea.

11.22 For what reason was Barnabas sent to Antioch? Was he assigned the responsibility to oversee the growing Church in that area, a permanent priesthood leader in a place where only the itinerant ministry had been operating? Certainly, in that case, the Apostles would have been seeking a way to guide and direct the affairs of a burgeoning congregation. This reasoning would suggest that those who had believed in the preaching of the missionaries from Cyprus and Cyrene were most likely Hellenistic Jews, all of whom would have already found grace in the eyes of the Apostles because of their experience in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. Barnabas’ assignment in Antioch might have come for the same reason even if those who had been received into the Church were hereditary Greeks, if the missionaries had already received notice of Cornelius’ baptism and the decision of the Church leadership in that matter. The Church was growing and was distant from the prophets, seers, and revelators appointed to guide and direct the affairs of the Kingdom.

11.22.16—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

11.22.21—Barnabas—By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22 Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.
Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

11.22.29—Antioch—There are at least two ancient cities by this name. One was built on the river Orontes where the tips of the Tarsus and Lebanon mountains draw nearly together. The other was called “Antioch in Pisidia”, in reference to its geographical location in one of the provinces of Galatia. The city referred to here in this verse is undoubtedly the former.

11.23 On the other hand, Barnabas might have been given a mandate to determine, by the power of the Spirit, those who should be admitted into the Church through baptism. In verse 24 below, Barnabas is seen as the instrument by which “much people was added” to the Lord. Were these converts those who were to be baptized into the Church because Barnabas, like Peter, could perceive no reason why they should not be received into the Kingdom of God? Thus, the reasoning would go, those who had been taught the Gospel of Christ by the missionaries from Cyprus and Cyrene, had believed in the atonement of Jesus, and had repented of their sins, were finally baptized with the blessing of the Apostles through the authority vested in Barnabas as their special envoy. Thus, hereditary Greeks were finding salvation in spite of their ethnicity.

11.23.25—cleave—Were these folks to cleave unto the Lord through the ordinance of baptism or were they being exhorted to continue in the covenants which they had already taken upon themselves. We do not know and it really does not, in the end, make much difference.

11.24 For whatever reason Barnabas was sent to Antioch, he was admirably prepared and endowed for the tasks given to him. Being filled with the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, Barnabas would always know the minds and hearts of those around him, and would also be aware of the will of God in any matter. Being a man of faith, he would inspire the growing membership of the Church of Christ in Antioch and would provide a bright and shining light to all those who sought the truth at the hands of the missionaries or himself.

11.24.17–18—much people—Either those who had been investigating the Gospel of Christ through the auspices of the missionaries from Cyprus and Cyrene or additional souls who were attracted to the Church and Kingdom of God through the personal ministry of Barnabas.

11.25 Saul’s life would have been forfeit had he returned to Jerusalem or to Damascus. In Tarsus, however, being a Roman citizen of that city, his life could not easily be taken if at all. Antioch was another of those Roman communities wherein a Roman citizen would have been difficult to slay. According to historians, only Rome and Alexandria were more important than Antioch to the empire.

11.25.3—Barnabas—By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:
his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

11.25.5—Tarsus—The principle city of the province of Cilicia, noted for culture, commerce, and education. Because of its political choices during the civil wars of Roman, Augustus made it a “free city”. No doubt that it was this gesture that allowed Saul to become a Roman citizen by birth.

11.25.9—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

11.26 One might wonder at the rationale behind Barnabas’ move to bring Saul to Antioch, until it is remembered that Ananias had prophesied in Damascus that Saul would one day bear the name of Christ to the Gentiles, as well as kings and the children of Israel. At what point did Saul lose the antipathy he would have had toward the Gentiles as a Pharisee? We do not know. But by the time he arrived in Antioch with his friend, his ability to bring Jew and Gentile into the Church and Kingdom of God was almost immeasurable. That Saul’s ministry among the people of the city of Antioch had the approbation of the Apostles in Jerusalem there can be no doubt. That assistance from the former Pharisee may have been requested by Barnabas before he left Jerusalem to take up his new assignment. Certainly a man of great faith, filled with the Holy Ghost, would be inspired to do all that which would bring prosperity to that part of the vineyard where he was called to labor.

11.26.11—Antioch—There are at least two ancient cities by this name. One was built on the river Orontes where the tips of the Tarsus and Lebanon mountains draw nearly together. The other was called “Antioch in Pisidia”, in reference to its geographical location in one of the provinces of Galatia. The city referred to here in this verse is undoubtedly the former.

11.26.36—Christians—One might ask the question as to which language was being used when that title was placed upon the disciples of Christ. Was “Christian” first uttered in Greek, or some dialect thereof? Was it first uttered in Syriac and then later translated into Greek? In any event, the English word “Christian” was certainly not used, that language yet lacking several centuries of development at that time. Had there been other peoples in other dispensations, who worshipped the “Anointed One” in their own languages? Of course there were. Could they have been called by a name which might easily be translated from their language into English as “Christian”? We know that to be the case. During the meridian of time, however, it was at Antioch that those both within and without the Church referred to the disciples of Christ by that sobriquet.

11.27 The brethren who were sent from Jerusalem to Antioch came with purpose; they were not milling about the province. Peter and the other Apostles had been given revelations which impinged upon the welfare of the entire Church, just as Joseph of Egypt had been forewarned of the famine which was to overtake the world after the seven years of plenty. The Brethren were then preparing against that eventuality.

11.27.6—prophets—Men of God, endued with the power of the priesthood, filled with the Holy Ghost, who bore fervent testimony of the atonement of Jesus Christ and of his resurrection from the dead.

11.27.8—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name

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

27 And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.
literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

11.27.10—Antioch—There are at least two ancient cities by this name. One was built on the river Orontes where the tips of the Taurus and Lebanon mountains draw nearly together. The other was called “Antioch in Pisidia”, in reference to its geographical location in one of the provinces of Galatia. The city referred to here in this verse is undoubtedly the former.

11.28 Although there were four major famines in various parts of the Roman Empire during Claudius’ reign, the great famine spoken of here is said to have taken place in the fourth year of Claudius’ reign as emperor. Given what we assume about the chronology, this would have been approximately AD 45, although it may have transpired a year or two earlier (see 12.1.4).

We do not know precisely when the prophecy would have been given, but certainly in time for the disciples in Antioch to prepare against it sufficiently to provide not only for themselves but for their brethren in the land of Judea.

11.28.9—Agabus—We know little or nothing of this inspired man, save for his connection with the Church at Antioch prior to the famine, and his later prophecy regarding Paul the Apostle as the latter was wending his way towards Jerusalem just prior to his Journey to Rome (see 21.10–12).

11.28.20—dearth—The Greek word which is here translated as “dearth” derives from roots which mean “fail, absent, destitution, scarcity”. The English word “dearth” derives from Germanic roots which mean “costly, highness of price” (see 7.11.5).

11.28.33–34—Claudius Caesar—The fourth Roman emperor who ruled Rome for thirteen years. If historians be accurate, that reign would have commenced in AD 41. He was murdered by his fourth wife, the mother of Nero, in AD 54.

11.29 The same spirit of brotherly love which inspired men and women in the earliest days of the Church of Christ to provide for those around them who were in want (see 4.32–37) continued to move the hearts of the converts of the Church in Antioch to provide as best they could for their brethren in Jerusalem and environs. In every age, in every dispensation when the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been taught in its fullness, this spirit of charity has abounded. The spirit of compassion is one of the gifts of the motivated by the Holy Ghost. It is by this spirit that the city of Enoch and other Zion societies have been established, knitting the hearts and minds of the saints of God in unity, that they cannot bear to see others suffer when they themselves have plenty and to spare.

11.29.20—Judaea—In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the province of Judea stretched from Malatha on the south to the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the River Jordan on the east, comprising approximately 5,000 square miles.

11.30 The food and goods were undoubtedly primarily given in kind. That is to say, food and clothing were given rather than just money. All of these good would have come from their personal households, a true gift of them-
selves. It might very well be expected that they would have given of the best that they possessed rather than any off-scourings which might have been easily dismissed by all. Barnabas and Saul, they who were serving as the priesthood leaders of Antioch, were given the responsibility of transporting all of the donations the nearly four hundred miles distance from Antioch to Jerusalem.

11.30.10—elders—That is, the presiding authorities throughout Judea who had the responsibility to provide for the material needs of the saints in Israel.

11.30.15—Barnabas—By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

11.30.17—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

Chapter 12

1. Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

2. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.
Church of Christ in the Meridian of Time. He was of a volatile personality in his youth, particularly when those who he loved were threatened or insulted. For that reason he was given the sobriquet, "Boanerges", in that he was one of the "Sons of Thunder". Some have suggested that he was the author of the Epistle of James, but the evidence is not certain. Because of some confusion with at least two other Apostles named James, we are not exactly certain the nature of his martyrdom, except for what is suggested by Luke here.

12.2.8—John—Frequently referred to as the "Beloved". He is the author of the Gospel of John, the three small Epistles of John, and the book of Revelation, all in the New Testament. There are other manuscripts which have been prophetically alluded to but have not, as yet, seen the light of day. The desire of his heart was to remain upon the earth as the Savior's emissary until Jesus returned in glory. Jesus granted his wish and thus became the faithful guardian ordained to stand as a witness of the apostasy and darkness that descended upon the world. He, with Peter and James, would be instrumental in the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood in this last dispensation, by which the Church and Kingdom of God was once more established upon the earth. The account of his labors during the intervening millennia will make fascinating reading for the faithful.

12.2.11—sword—There were four methods of execution administered by the Jews: stoning, burning, beheading, and strangling. Agrippa chose the third as he did away with the son of Zebedee.

12.3 The Herodian kings ruled their realms by public opinion, a common practice among the uninspired. The lust for fortune, fame, and power consumed the kings of Palestine to the point that they were willing to commit any barbaric act in order to strengthen their hold on the people. Agrippa was cautious in his dealings with the Jews and the Romans. Two of his uncles, Archelaus and Antipas had been banished to the nethermost parts of the Roman Empire because they had repeatedly irritated their subjects, particularly the Sadducees and elders of Israel.

12.3.8—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

12.3.14—Peter—James may have been taken into custody while Peter was visiting with the members of the Church in Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea and executed shortly after Peter returned to report on his experience with Cornelius. Having dispatched the first counselor in the Presidency of the Church of Christ, Agrippa thought to do away with the President as well.

12.3.21–22—unleavened bread—The Passover, probably in AD 44, although there is some uncertainty associated with the chronology of this era.

12.4 The arrest and incarceration of Peter was accompanied by a considerable guard. No doubt there were many reasons given for this, but the truth of the matter was that Agrippa was familiar with the story of Peter and John when they had been taken by the Temple guards (see 5.17–24). The two Apostles had miraculously escaped their captors with the aid of an angel sent from the presence of God. It is unlikely that Herod believed any of the
reports associated with that episode, but he was determined that a similar embarrassment would not transpire on his watch.

12.4.17—*quaternions*—The Greek word which is here translated as "quaternions" is a direct translation of the Roman name for a squad of four men. Peter had sixteen men guarding him.

12.4.25—*Easter*—This is the only occurrence of this word in the King James translation of the Bible. The Greek word is a transliteration of the Hebrew word for the Passover. The English word “Easter” derives from West Germanic sources referring to a pagan spring celebration having to do with the dawn. “Easter” as a traditional Christian celebration had not yet been invented.

12.5 Herod Agrippa wished to do with Peter what Pilate had done with Jesus of Nazareth: presenting him to the people that he might somehow curry their favor. He was exultant on the heels of the action taken against James the brother of John. The news of Peter’s arrest must have spread quickly and the various congregations throughout the region offered up their petitions to God the Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, that Peter’s life might be spared. Because they, as disciples of Christ, were filled with the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, they prayed in faith for that which was already in the mind and will of God concerning Peter.

12.5.1—*Peter*—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a sure”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

12.6 Herod Agrippa waited until after the Passover celebrations were over and then thought to bring Peter before the inhabitants of Jerusalem that he might be condemned and beheaded as James had been. The night before Peter was to make his appearance in Herod’s court, he was miraculously liberated by an angel. Peter may have been restrained by a pair of chains, one for his hands and another for his feet. If the records of antiquity are informative in this matter, however, Peter was probably “handcuffed” to two of his guards. Modern scholars have suggested that the left arm of Peter was chained to the right arm of one guard and his right to the left arm of the other guard. No doubt any disturbance of the chains or of the manacles would have easily awakened the soldiers. The two men chained to Peter would have been half of one “quaternion”; the other two soldiers were apparently those who stood just outside his cell door. Escape under normal circumstances was virtually impossible which was what Herod Agrippa was counting on.

12.6.3—*Herod*—Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great and the brother of the infamous Herodias. At the death of his uncle Philip about AD 34, Agrippa became the king of the territories north of Galilee and Decapolis once ruled by Lysanias and Philip. When Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great and the erstwhile husband of Herodias, was banished to Gaul in AD 39, Agrippa was given his territories as well: Galilee and Perea. Both of these kingdoms came under the authority of the emperor Caligula. When Claudius became

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.
Emperor of Rome in AD 41, Agrippa received both Samaria and Judea to govern. Thus by the time he died, most likely in AD 44, Agrippa held sway over almost all that Herod the Great had once ruled. 

12.6.12—Peter—in another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

12.7 As is typical of divine messengers, the presence of the angel was accompanied by a brilliant light. One could quibble about why it was that the light did not awaken the guards. One might just as well debate why it was that some at a glorious event hear and understand a voice and others do not. There are many instances where the manifestestations of the power of God are confined to the one for whom the vision or miracle is intended. Other prophets, seers, and revelators have had glorious experiences in the spirit while their companions appeared to be perceptive of all that was taking place around them in the world of men, but were yet oblivious to that which was edifying the man of God.

12.7.20—smote—The Greek word which is here translated as “smote” means to “knock”; the sentiment covers a spectrum of possibilities from a gentle tap to a fatal blow. The meaning here is obvious. The fact that the angel actually touched Peter sufficiently to wake him implies that the messenger was either resurrected being or an ancient prophet who had been translated. We cannot tell from the narrative.

12.7.21—Peter—in another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

12.8 Liberated from his manacles, Peter is commanded to leave the cell and make his way outside of the prison. He is instructed to take all of his personal belongings with him as well, inasmuch as he would not be returning. Peter had apparently taken off his cloak and the sash which gathered his tunic together that he might sleep more comfortably. His footwear had also been removed. As to his sleeping accommodations we may only speculate. Whatever amenities he enjoyed or suffered while incarcerated were shared by those who were chained to him. Peter willingly followed the angel’s directions even though he still could not tell whether his experience was an open vision or a reality. This observation should give us pause when attempting to describe the nature of visions and dreams sent from God. The prophet or Apostle may have some questions regarding the interpretation of such an

7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.
experience, but there is nothing hazy or indefinite about the divine manifestation.

12.9 Even though Peter did not know whether he was in the body or in the spirit, he was obedient to the voice of the angel that God had sent to him. Peter had experienced open visions and dreams before, with the Lord Jesus and on his own. He recognized them for what they were, even though he might not understand the implications. There was no doubt that Peter believed that the Lord could release him from the jail; that had happened before. The Apostle was simply willing to allow the experience to play out completely that he might understand precisely what the Lord was trying to teach him. This is an example of sublime humility.

12.9—*wist*—The third person single preterit form of the Old English verb *witan* meaning "to know".

12.10 Scholars have long speculated as to where Peter was kept in prison. Most have settled on the Fortress Antonia, a Roman citadel placed outside the north wall of the Temple complex. The Fortress was built by Herod the Great about 35 BC and named after Marc Anthony, Herod’s friend and patron. It was an extensive rebuild of the earlier Hasmonean Baris or Barah tower which was placed near the Temple as a defense and a protection. The unresolved issues in Luke’s account of the escape have to do with what is being described as Peter makes his way to the street. Where were the first and second “wards”? Were they inside the Antonia itself or was Luke referring to gates within various wall sections of the city of Jerusalem? It seems reasonable to assume that if Peter were constantly guarded by sixteen men, four “quaternions” at the same time, rather than on a rotation of some kind (see 12.4), the first “quaternion” would have been comprised of the two soldiers shackled on either side of him in the cell and the two men outside the door of the cell. The other three squads would have been located at the three doors through which Peter passed to get to the street; i.e. the two “wards” and the “iron gate”.

12.10—*ward*—The Greek word which is here translated as “ward” derives from roots which mean “guarding, isolation, watch, preserve, obey, avoid”. The English words “guard” and “ward” are both borrowed from Norman French at different periods of time which enjoyed a variety of spelling conventions.

12.15—*iron gate*—Either a gate in the outer wall of the fortress Antonia or of the city of Jerusalem itself.

12.33—*out*—The iron gate apparently had been locked. The angel provided the means by which Peter could leave the building. In another ancient manuscript, the words “went down the seven steps” are added at this point. If legitimate, the phrase might be far more indicative of the main exit of the Fortress rather than the gates to the city.

12.11 Peter had been on tenterhooks contemplating the nature and meaning of what he thought was a dream. But with the angel’s departure and the night air in his face, the Apostle realized what had happened to him. Combined with the obvious joy he experienced at being liberated from the prison was the course of action that he should follow after having escaped from the murderous hands of Herod and the Jews. At the outset it may have occurred to Peter that his time had come. Agrippa and the elders of the Jews were determined to put him to death as they had the son of Zebedee. Interestingly enough, the execution method would have undoubtedly been beheading, a  

9 And he went out, and followed him; and *wist* not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, *Now* I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.
Jewish technique, and not crucifixion, which was exclusively a Roman punishment. If the Savior’s pronouncement regarding how Peter would eventually die had been well known, the faith of Peter and that of the membership of the Church might have been strengthened with hope for escape at that time (see JN-C 21.18–19). On many occasions he had expressed his desire to join the Savior in death, but Jesus had repeatedly told him that there was a work for him to perform which required his mortal experience to continue. Ten years had passed since Jesus had declared that which he expected Peter to do in his own defense. Wherein it was possible for him to preserve his life, the Apostle was counseled to do it.

12.11.3—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

12.11.32—Herod—Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great and the brother of the infamous Herodias. At the death of his uncle Philip about AD 34, Agrippa became the king of the territories north of Galilee and Decapolis once ruled by Lysanias and Philip. When Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great and the erstwhile husband of Herodias, was banished to Gaul in AD 39, Agrippa was given his territories as well: Galilee and Perea. Both of these kingdoms came under the authority of the emperor Caligula. When Claudius became Emperor of Rome in AD 41, Agrippa received both Samaria and Judea to govern. Thus by the time he died, most likely in AD 44, Agrippa held sway over almost all that Herod the Great had once ruled.

12.11.43—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

12.12 We are not privy to where the house of Mary was. If certain scholars be correct, it would have been outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem. Others place the home elsewhere within the walls.

12.12.14—Mary—A disciple of Jesus Christ living in Jerusalem who was the sister of Barnabas, the same who was Paul’s friend and traveling companion during the first missionary journey. Some scholars have suggested that it was she who owned the house wherein the upper room was located. There is nothing but tradition to support that notion.

12.12.18—John—This is the author of the Gospel of Mark and the traveling companion of Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey to Cyprus and Pamphylia.

12.12.22—Mark—It is by his Latin name that we are most familiar with Barnabas’ nephew. He is never called “John Mark” in the New Testament even though many scholars use that name to distinguish him from other men named “John”. 12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.
12.13 Notice that the angel is not providing immediate access to the house of Mary as he had in Peter’s escape from prison.

12.13.3—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

12.13.7—door—We are not entirely certain as to what it meant here, even though many have speculated about it. Is this a small aperture in a larger passageway, like those in the city gates of Jerusalem through which a single traveler could pass after nightfall? It is merely an eye-level covered hole through which one within might look upon the face of an unexpected visitor? It would appear that it was more of the latter rather than of the former, given the rest of the narrative.

12.13.17—Rhoda—Was she a house servant or kin to Mary? Only tradition is certain.

12.14 Apparently Rhoda was one who was well-acquainted with the Apostle’s voice, one who knew him socially and perhaps was herself a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Her delight at his appearance is clear as well; so overwhelmed was she that she forgot to open the gate to the house that Peter might be admitted within. Instead she ran back into the house to tell everyone who it was that was knocking on the door. Many modern writers find amusement in this exchange between Peter and Rhoda, seemingly delighted at the venerable Apostle having to cool his heels outside the house while the air-headed maid and the incredulous disciples display their respective foibles before the world. To what end did Luke relate this story? Did he find it amusing? Has Luke succumbed to anecdotes?

12.14.5—Peter’s—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

12.15 The other disciples in the house thought that Rhoda’s deep desire for Peter to be freed from the bonds into which he had been placed was making her delusional. They all wished him to be at liberty, but they were familiar with Herod’s tactics. They had, after all, witnessed the arrest and execution of the Apostle James. The young woman insisted, however, that Peter, by some means unknown, was standing outside the house in the street.

12.15.8—mad—The Greek word which is here translated as “mad” derives from roots which mean “long for, craving”.

12.15.24—angel—That is to say, the disciples were now convinced that
Peter had been executed and his immortal spirit was there. Note that the Apostles had thought much the same thing when Jesus first appeared to them in the upper room (see LK 21.36–40).

12.16 From what can be discerned from the text as given, Peter did not enter into Mary’s house, but merely asked the disciples to advise James and the other Apostles that he was free and where they would be able to find him (see 12.17).

12.16.2—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

12.16.11—door—This word is a translation without a source in Greek, both here and in verse 13, added to clarify what the translators thought was a difficult passage. It is likely, given the context, that Peter talked to them through the “door” but they did not open the “gate”.

12.16.17—astonished—The Greek word which is here translated as “astonished” derives from roots which mean to “put out of one’s wits, insane, amaze, be beside one’s self, bewitch, wonder”.

12.17 Peter knew that his life was in jeopardy, and the fact that the Lord had sent a messenger to rescue him out of the hands of Herod Agrippa was a blessing that Peter could not afford to squander.

12.17.10–12—hold their peace—Peter had no desire to have the joyful disciples attract the attention of the neighbors or the constabulary. The less those around Mary’s house knew about Peter’s appearance at the home, the better it would be for all those who dwelt within.

12.17.34—James—No doubt this is James Alpheus, or James the Less as he is sometimes called, and not the son of Zebedee who was executed at the beginning of this chapter (see 12.2). Some scholars have suggested that this may well have been James the brother of Jesus of Nazareth, but there is no way to discern that possibility. We do not know exactly when the son of Mary and Joseph was baptized, much less ordained to the presidency of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Traditional Christianity, however, has almost universally concluded that this James was the brother of Jesus.

12.17.38—brethren—Most commentators conclude that the rest of the Quorum of the Twelve is implied.

12.17.45–46—another place—The Romans and the Jews would have known Peter’s usual residence in Jerusalem. He apparently had a place Jerusalem where he could stay without drawing undue attention to himself.

12.18 Imagine the consternation! Sixteen men, two of whom were shackled to the prisoner, cannot explain how Peter escaped from the most secure citadel in Jerusalem. How do they account for the manacles still attached to their own arms and their captive’s arms nowhere to be seen? What of the two guards outside the cell? What of the eight additional men at two of the 16 But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.
checkpoints within the fort? What of the iron gate, bolted and locked and well-attended? How in the world does one explain this development to a king whose volatile nature is only equaled by that of his predecessors?

12.18.20—Peter—In another place, in a significantly superior manuscript, Simon Barjona’s name is changed to Peter, “a stone”, which Jesus clearly states is to be understood as “a seer”. Simon’s future role as the presiding authority of the Church of Jesus Christ is anticipated in the name change and at the same time an encouragement to Peter that he must needs be the kind of man who perceives the hearts and minds of his fellows that he might strengthen and edify them. He also must be sensitive to the promptings of the Spirit of God that his eyes might be open to the mind and will of God, that he might serve as a witness to that which the Lord God has proposed for the children of men and the saints of God.

12.19 I expect that we ought not be overly concerned about the fate of the jailers. The wicked receive their comeuppance from the wicked. If the truth be known, those four quaternions had treated Peter with great contempt and derision. No innocent blood was shed by Herod Agrippa on this occasion. Having dispatched the guards, Herod fled his great disappointment in the city of Jerusalem and ensconced himself in his royal compound in the city of Caesarea. As for his determination to arrest and execute the Apostle Peter we hear nothing more. By the end of the present chapter Herod Agrippa will have died an ignominious death. Peter, on the other hand, will continue to minister in behalf of the disciples of Christ. In chapter 15 of Acts he will be a principal actor in a decision affecting the Greeks and Romans who have joined the Church in Antioch. After that, we hear no more of him in Luke’s narrative. There is scriptural evidence that suggests that he may have spent time in Corinth, together with Antioch and Rome. Strong ancient tradition testifies that Peter suffered martyrdom in Rome during the Christian purges conducted by the emperor Nero about AD 67 or 68. We have every reason to believe that he was crucified, as Jesus prophesied. Another longstanding and acceptable tradition is that John Mark, the traveling companion of Paul and Barnabas, served as Peter’s amanuensis in the last years of the Apostle’s life, thus providing Mark’s account of the Savior’s life with apostolic credentials.

12.19.3—Herod—Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great and the brother of the infamous Herodias. At the death of his uncle Philip about AD 34, Agrippa became the king of the territories north of Galilee and Decapolis once ruled by Lysanias and Philip. When Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great and the erstwhile husband of Herodias, was banished to Gaul in AD 39, Agrippa was given his territories as well: Galilee and Perea. Both of these kingdoms came under the authority of the emperor Caligula. When Claudius became Emperor of Rome in AD 41, Agrippa received both Samaria and Judea to govern. Thus by the time he died, most likely in AD 44, Agrippa held sway over almost all that Herod the Great had once ruled.

12.19.30—Judea—In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the province of Judea stretched from Malatha on the south to the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the River Jordan on the east, comprising approximately 5,000 square miles.

12.19.32—Caesarea—A seaport on the Mediterranean about 70 miles northwest of Jerusalem, built by Herod the Great in 22 BC in honor of Caesar Augustus. It was, for all intents and purposes, a Roman city.
with all of the amenities of what that empire provided. It served as the Roman capital of Palestine for more than five hundred years. Before Herod’s great labor was performed there, Caesarea was known as “Strato’s Tower”, a Phoenician seaport named after a Sidonian king, Straton, the Greek form of the name, Abdastart.

12.20 There exists no historical account as to why Herod might have found fault with the inhabitants of these Phoenician cities. Agrippa did not have direct rule over that part of the country, but clearly he expected some concession from them which had not been forthcoming. It may have had something to do with the famine which had affected that part of the world. That appears to be part of the context in which Luke relates the death of the king. If Herod had been extorting them by not providing them with supplies during the great famine, it would be easy to understand how they would have buckled to his wishes.

12.20.2—Herod—Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great and the brother of the infamous Herodias. At the death of his uncle Philip about AD 34, Agrippa became the king of the territories north of Galilee and Decapolis once ruled by Lysanias and Philip. When Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great and the erstwhile husband of Herodias, was banished to Gaul in AD 39, Agrippa was given his territories as well: Galilee and Perea. Both of these kingdoms came under the authority of the emperor Caligula. When Claudius became Emperor of Rome in AD 41, Agrippa received both Samaria and Judea to govern. Thus by the time he died, most likely in AD 44, Agrippa held sway over almost all that Herod the Great had once ruled.

12.20.9—Tyre—A city of Phoenicia located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea north of Palestine. It was a great city of commerce, perhaps the greatest in the ancient world after Babylon and Rome. It served as a lightning rod for many of the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament. Because of its strategic and economic value, it was overrun by almost every ancient major military power.

12.20.11—Sidon—Another Phoenician city located approximately 20 miles to the north of Tyre. More often spelled “Zidon”. At one time, Sidon served as the capital of Phoenicia and as such was the target of many invasions and conquests in ancient times.

12.20.23—Blastus—Nothing is known of this man except that which is related in this verse of the New Testament.

12.20.26—chamberlain—The Greek phrase which is here translated as “chamberlain” literally means “he who was over the bedchamber”. Other scholars have made him out to have been the “treasurer” of King Agrippa. In any event, Blastus must have had considerable influence over Herod.

12.21 In book 19, chapter 8, section 2 of Flavius Josephus’ Antiquities of the Jews, the historian describes in great detail the circumstances of this appearance before the people. Ostensibly, Herod was presiding over a festival dedicated to the Emperor Claudius, a sign of loyalty to Rome coupled with prayers for the health of the Roman sovereign. On the second day of the celebration Herod dressed himself in a garment of made completely of silver which in the morning sun made him look rather spectacular, filling those in the audience with awe and adoration. However rhetorically gratifying Herod’s discourse may have been at the time, nothing remains neither of content nor style.

12.21.6—Herod—Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great

20 And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king’s chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king’s country.

21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.
and the brother of the infamous Herodias. At the death of his uncle Philip about AD 34, Agrippa became the king of the territories north of Galilee and Decapolis once ruled by Lysanias and Philip. When Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great and the erstwhile husband of Herodias, was banished to Gaul in AD 39, Agrippa was given his territories as well: Galilee and Perea. Both of these kingdoms came under the authority of the emperor Caligula. When Claudius became Emperor of Rome in AD 41, Agrippa received both Samaria and Judea to govern. Thus by the time he died, most likely in AD 44, Agrippa held sway over almost all that Herod the Great had once ruled.

12.22 Josephus records with stunning clarity and detail much of that which Luke conveys here in his narrative. At some point, Herod should have silenced the crowd in their ebullience inasmuch as Claudius, for the honor of whom the celebration was being held, was the sole ruler in the Roman Empire who could legally be called a god. That he did not reveals the degree of arrogance of which he was possessed.

12.23 In the Second Book of the Maccabees, chapter 9, we may find the account of the death of Antiochus, a vicious tyrant who sought to destroy the Jews of his day as Agrippa had sought to destroy the Christians of his. The nature of the disease which destroyed him in the flesh is quite similar to that which Herod suffered: the distress in the bowels and effusion of maggots. In both Maccabees and Josephus, the tyrants recant their pride and admit that they went too far in their self-congratulation. Whatever credence we may place upon those extrabiblical histories, Luke’s account is no doubt an accurate narration of the death of Herod Agrippa. The king was a murderer and a blasphemer for which he paid the ultimate price in the flesh and no doubt continues in his misery in the world of spirits, stripped of his finery, wealth, and power. Josephus states that the onset of Herod’s final illness took place at the moment that he spied an owl sitting above him on a rope. Luke states that Herod’s affliction came upon him as a judgment from the Lord God of Israel.

12.23.4—angel—Whether by the word spoken from the mouth of God or by one of His servants, it is the same.

12.24 For all of the persecution of the elders of the Jews, the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and priests, driving the saints out of the city of Jerusalem, the Church of Jesus Christ prospered, adding converts by the hundreds and then thousands. For all of the threatenings of the potentates of the earth, the nations and their works would fall into ruin and oblivion, save as examples of the folly of man in his efforts to destroy God and His people.

12.25 Because of the prophecy of Agabus, the membership of the Church had gathered together food and clothing for the saints at Jerusalem and vicinity to offset the devastation caused by the predicted famine. Paul and Barnabas had been tasked by the assignment of carrying all of these goods to Judea (see 11.27–30). We are not told whether or not the two were involved with distribution to the poor as well, but we might assume that was the case. They were in Jerusalem perhaps when James’ life was taken and apparently when Peter was taken into custody and miraculously liberated by the angel. No doubt Barnabas and Saul would have heard the Apostle’s narration of his experience prior to leaving for Antioch. Their assignment completed, Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch to resume their duties there. As to why the two priesthood bearers took John Mark with them, we may only speculate,
but clearly Barnabas had great confidence in his nephew’s faith and talents.

12.25.2—Barnabas—By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

12.25.4—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

12.25.7—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

12.25.18—John—This is the author of the Gospel of Mark and the traveling companion of Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey to Cyprus and Pamphylia.

12.25.22—Mark—It is by his Latin name that we are most familiar with Barnabas’ nephew. He is never called “John Mark” in the New Testament even though many scholars use that name to distinguish him from other men named “John”.

Chapter 13

1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

13.1 Barnabas and Saul had long been recognized as significant priesthood leadership in the city of Antioch. We are not certain as to the role which Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen played in the administration of the Church. That they were numbered among the saints as prophets and teachers would indicate that they were men of great testimony of Jesus as the Christ and were held in high esteem for their knowledge of the Gospel of salvation.

13.1.10—Antioch—There are at least two ancient cities by this name. One was built on the river Orontes where the tips of the Tarsus and Lebanon mountains draw nearly together. The other was called “Antioch in Pisidia”, in reference to its geographical location in one of the provinces of Galatia. The city referred to here in this verse is undoubtedly the former.

13.1.12—prophets—The existence of prophets in the primitive Church of Christ is so clearly a scriptural fact as to leave no doubt in the minds and hearts of any who hold the writings of the New Testament sacred. Any assertions to the contrary are founded in abject ignorance.

13.1.14—teachers—Teaching is an activity that only produces positive results when inspired by the power of the Holy Ghost.

13.1.16—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.
13.1.18—Sim<lb>Simon</lb>—Little is known of this devout member of the Church of Christ. Much has been made of the variant spelling of his name in Greek, but none of the arguments are particularly compelling.

13.1.22—Niger—Scholars have long since pointed out that the sobriquet used here is of Latin derivation rather than Greek. Few have addressed the reason as to why. The primary conclusion drawn from the name is that Simon must have had a dark complexion for a Jew.

13.1.24—Lucius—In an attempt to make the persona of the New Testament as neat and concise as possible, many scholars have tried to equate Lucius with the kinsman mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans. No one has successfully argued how a native of Cyrene came to be related to Paul, a man of Tarsus. Neither has anyone proposed how it was that this same Lucius became a resident of Rome. Other erstwhile students of the scriptures have suggested that Lucius was ordained bishop of Cerchea, a port suburb of Corinth. All this assertion does, however, is to muddy already unclear waters.

13.1.26—Cyrene—A Greek city of northern Africa about midway between Carthage and Alexandria. Simon, the man who carried the cross of Jesus also hailed from that city (see MT-C 27.32).

13.1.28—Manaen—Longstanding historical tradition suggests that Manaen was the son of Herod Antipas’ wet-nurse and was therefore Herod’s “foster-brother”. Some imaginative scholars have suggested that it was this same Manaen who was the source for Luke’s insights into the mind of Antipas that appear in the Gospel of Luke.

13.1.35—Herod—Antipas, the son of Herod the Great who inherited one of the four divisions of the Herodian Kingdom.

13.1.37—tetrarch—One of “four” rulers. The kingdom of Herod the Great had been divided between three of Herod’s sons and Lysanias (see LK-C 3.1)

13.1.39—Saul—Clearly this is Saul of Tarsus, the man who would become Paul the Apostle.

13.2 We are not certain as to exactly when the brethren were meeting together, but it was likely a gathering wherein they partook of the emblems of the Sacrament, the bread and wine representing the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian Jews typically worshipped in their own meetings on Sunday. The fast spoken of here may have been in conjunction with the possibility that their meeting was taking place before any of the men had eaten their morning or noon meal. We do not know if this were a public service in behalf of all of the members of the Church at Antioch or whether it was an administrative council. It seems likely, however, that it was of the latter category. Contrary to popular belief, Paul and Barnabas are not being ordained as Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ at this point. That sort of call would come as a direct result of a gathering of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. This is undoubtedly a local mission call for the geographical area for which the five men had responsibility.

13.2.13—Separate—Modern-day phrasing would be, in comparable circumstances, “Set apart…”

13.2.15—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4:36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Acts 13:2
AF 159
EM 3 1300
Acts 13:2–3
FPM 34
JC 714
Acts 13:2–4
AF 170
his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

13.2.17—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

13.3 The ancient saints believed that a man must be called by God, through His authorized servants, and set apart by the laying on of hands for the tasks assigned. Saul and Barnabas had been singled out by the voice of the Spirit of God to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Cyprus and other nearby provinces. Having been called and sustained in their additional responsibilities, the two missionaries would embark on that which has been dubbed the “First Missionary Journey of Paul”. Barnabas and Saul would enjoy the power and influence of the Holy Ghost in all that they did on that special errand.

13.4 Not only was the calling to serve as full-time missionaries designated by the voice of God by means of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so also was their itinerary.

13.4.12—Seleucia—The city of Antioch was located on the banks of the river Orontes where it rushed through the pass between the extremities of the Tarsus and Lebanon mountains. Sixteen miles below Antioch, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, at the mouth of the Orontes, Seleucus built the port city which bears his name. It is the northernmost harbor of ancient Syria.

13.4.19—Cyprus—The island off the coast of Phoenicia from whence Barnabas hailed.

13.5 Although by this time many Gentiles, both Roman and Greek, had joined the Church of Jesus Christ, the practice of the missionaries of that time was to approach first the Jews, instructing them in their synagogues regarding the principles and ordinances of the Gospel. Once the children of the covenant had either accepted or rejected their teachings, the missionaries then turned to those not of the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

13.5.6—Salamis—The ancient capital of the island of Cyprus, later named Constantia, and finally Salina. It is located on the southeastern end of Cyprus.

13.5.15—synagogues—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

13.5.18—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

13.5.23—John—That is to say, John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas and the author of the Gospel of Mark. John apparently was called upon to arrange for their temporal needs as they traveled from place to place.

13.6 The reading of this verse would imply that Barnabas, John Mark, and Paul began at Salamis and preached their way from east to west until they arrived at the governor’s seat at Paphos. Of Elymas we know nothing save that which Luke has preserved in his narrative. It is likely, however, that he

3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Acts 13:3
MD 276
EM 2 814

4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Acts 13:16
MD 2 82
MD 747
was more of a rascal than was Simon of Samaria (see 8.9–24).

13.6.10—Paphos—A city located on the southwest extremity of the island of Cyprus approximately 100 miles from Salamis. Paphos served as the capital of Cyprus during Roman occupation because Salamis was politically aliened with the province of Cilicia.

13.6.15—sorcerer—The Greek word which is here translated as “sorcerer” is derived from roots which mean “practice magic, Oriental scientist, magician” (see 8.9.16).

13.6.17–18—false prophet—At the very least, Elymas was one who pretended to reveal the future as a fortune-teller. It is also possible, perhaps probable, that Barjesus was preaching some form of apostate Christianity for gain.

13.6.20—Jew—Elymas had apparently prostituted his native religion and may have been an early convert to Christianity who had forsaken his covenants in order that he might prosper financially.

13.6.24—Barjesus—This familiar patronymic and the common given name ought not to lead anyone to believe that Elymas had any intimate relationship to the Savior.

We are not told what peaked Sergius Paulus’ curiosity about the teachings of Barnabas and Saul, save that he was one who was intellectually active. Perhaps his awareness that the two missionaries had been progressively making their way from Salamis to Paphos over several weeks time may have been a sufficient catalyst to invite them into his home.

13.7.5—deputy—The Greek word which is here translated as “deputy” derives from roots which mean “instead of the highest”. This word equates to the Roman “proconsul”. Proconsuls were generally appointed by the Senate as administrators for Roman provinces. Imperial administrators appointed by the Caesars were called “propretors”.

13.7.9–10—Sergius Paulus—This is the only mention of the proconsul in biblical literature, although some historians assert that his history carried him back to Rome where by AD 47 or so he was one of the curators of the banks and channel of the Tiber River. Other connections have been asserted but based upon dubious evidence.

13.7.12—prudent—The Greek word which is here translated as “prudent” derives from roots which mean “mentally put together, sagacious, comprehend, act piously”.

13.7.17—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

13.7.19—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

The sorcerer’s opposition to Barnabas and Saul was understandable but ill advised. Elymas had corrupted the religion of his forefathers, mixing it with various esoteric philosophies which he had picked up in his travels. So deft had he become at this theological alchemy that he had intrigued the Roman governor. It is clear that Elymas was benefiting socially and economically because of Sergius Paulus’ patronage. The sorcerer correctly perceived

Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.
the threat that the two missionaries posed to his situation. Charlatans always quake at the emissaries of truth.

13.8.2—Elymas—Most historical linguists have concluded that the name of the sorcerer is derived from Semitic Arabic meaning “wise man, learned man, doctor” and therefore probably self-imposed. Elymas is obviously not a translation of Bar-jeus as some have supposed.

13.8.4—sorcerer—The Greek word which is here translated as “sorcerer” is derived from roots which mean “practice magic, Oriental scientist, magician” (see 8.9.16).

13.8.19—deputy—The Greek word which is here translated as “deputy” derives from roots which mean “instead of the highest”. This word equates to the Roman “proconsul”. Proconsuls were generally appointed by the Senate as administrators for Roman provinces. Imperial administrators appointed by the Caesars were called “propretors”.

13.9 However one may feel about the severity of Paul’s rebuke of Elymas, Luke has made it perfectly clear that his words and actions came by divine mandate. Therefore, the chastisement was adapted specifically to the needs of the false prophet that he might be given a final opportunity to repent of his wickedness.

13.9.2—Saul—This is the last time in Luke’s narrative that the missionary will be referred to as “Saul”, his Hebrew name. Henceforth he will be called “Paul”, his Latin name. The only exception to this rule is when Paul is recounting his conversion wherein the Lord Jesus Christ called him by his Jewish name.

13.9.7—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

13.10 The rebuke of Elymas was poignant, pungent, and deserved. He was a man who had inveigled himself into the upper crust of Roman society of the island of Cyprus. Had he been allowed to continue in his wickedness he would have led many of the honest in heart to perversion and destruction. Like Korithor and others of his ilk, Elymas is dismissed without argument.

13.10.7—subtilty—The Greek word which is here translated as “subtilty” derives from roots which mean “entrap, delude, beguile, allure, decoy, trick, bait, wile, deceit”. It is the same word used to describe the elders of the Jews as they sought to take Jesus’ life (see MT-C 26.4.9).

13.10.10—mischief—The Greek word which is here translated as “mischief” derives from roots which mean “reckless, malignity, easy-going behavior, crime, lewdness”.

13.10.12—child—This could be read so as to make Elymas a “son of perdition”, and he may have been, especially if he had once been a true prophet of God, one that had been graced by the Spirit of God with a testimony of Jesus Christ as the Son of God.

13.10.17—enemy—The enemies of God and his servants are “natural” men, carnal, sensual, and devilish. We are not told of Elymas’ vices, but they must have been many and intense.

13.10.26—pervert—The implication of this phrasing is that Elymas knew precisely what he was doing. He was not a mere dupe.

13.10.28—right ways—That is to say, the “straight ways” of the Lord. When John the Baptist came into the wilderness of Judea, his hue and cry was to make the path of the Lord straight. He was a true prophet. Elymas was clearly not a true prophet or his conduct would have been considerably different.

9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?
13.11 The knowingly rebellious have been dealt with in a variety of ways. Some, like Korihor, have been struck deaf and dumb. Deprived of their rhetorical devices they are left bare, having no other way to influence those around them. Others, like Shemem, were severely incapacitated physically so that they could no longer pursue their goals to destroy the children of God. Paul had been struck blind by the vision which he experienced on the road to Damascus and after a short season was granted his sight and a forgiveness of his sins against the disciples of Christ. The Spirit of God spoke this doom through Paul to Elymas, but the missionary knew that it was possible, if the sorcerer so chose, for him to be redeemed and set on a proper course of conduct. We do not know of his subsequent history. The affliction which came upon Elymas was certainly physical, but there probably were emotional and social side effects as well. The erstwhile sorcerer apparently had some difficulty finding anyone who would guide him about from place to place.

13.11.31—mist—The Greek word which is here translated as “mist” derives from roots which mean “dimness of sight, cataract”.

13.11.34—darkness—The Greek word which is here translated as “darkness” derives from roots which mean “shadiness, obscurity, shadow, error, adumbration”.

13.12 Most traditional commentators assert that it is the miracle performed on Elymas that converts the Roman proconsul to Christianity, yet a close reading of the text reveals that it is the subsequent teachings of Paul and Barnabas that bring Sergius Paulus to the realization of the truth.

13.12.3—deputy—The Greek word which is here translated as "deputy" derives from roots which mean “instead of the highest”. This word equates to the Roman "proconsul". Proconsuls were generally appointed by the Senate as administrators for Roman provinces. Imperial administrators appointed by the Caesars were called "proprietors".

13.12.12—astonished—The Greek word translated here as "astonished" literally means to "flatten out". Perhaps a more direct transliteration would have been to say the governor was "floored" or better yet, "fell to the earth" he was so overcome by the doctrine. It is tempting to suggest that the English word "astonished" derives from roots that would refer to having been struck with a rock. Although the effect may be similar, the root actually refers to have been "thunder-struck" or in the extreme, "struck by lightning". Whatever the derivation, Sergius Paulus experienced an "epiphany", that sudden and undeniable awareness that something startlingly wonderful has just happened, a wonder that he actually understood. The awareness is so powerful that some people slump to the earth; others undoubtedly are caused to think of nothing else but what had been spoken, essentially the effect of having been overwhelmed by a thunderous noise.

13.13 Many scholars have wondered as to why Paul and Barnabas chose to sail to this part of the world after their stay in Cyprus. Cyprus was the native country of Barnabas and that fact lends credence to the proposition that the missionaries would go there first for familial considerations. Some authorities have suggested that maybe the two went to Pamphylia at the behest of Sergius Paulus inasmuch as legend has it that the Roman proconsul had family in that region. This, of course, is mere speculation based on very little evidence. It is far more likely that they were commanded by the Spirit to make their way through a land that had been heavily represented by pilgrims to Jerusalem during the day of Pentecost on which thousands had joined the Church because of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and the powerful

11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Acts 13:12
DNTC 3 217
EM 1 393

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

Acts 13:13
DHC 1 (43)
Acts 13:13–15
DNTC 2 215
teachings of Peter and the other Apostles (see 2.1–11).

13.13.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

13.13.9—Paphos—A city located on the southwest extremity of the island of Cyprus approximately 100 miles from Salamis. Paphos served as the capital of Cyprus during Roman occupation because Salamis was politically aliened with the province of Cilicia.

13.13.13—Perga—A city of some historical prominence located on the banks of the Cestius River approximately seven and one-half miles from the Mediterranean coast. It is interesting that the brethren did not leave their ship at Atalia on the coast, as if their intent was to go as far inland as they could before disembarking. The account of their stop at Perga seems a bit truncated as well, as if nothing of any great import happened during their stay. Luke rushes on to the episodes that took place in Pisidia.

13.13.15—Pamphylia—A coastal province nestled between Lycia, Pisidia, and Cilicia, north and west of the island of Cyprus.

13.13.17—John—We are not privy as to why John Mark returned to Jerusalem as the missionary company reached Pamphylia. Whatever the reason, Paul was hesitant about embarking with him on that which would be called the Second Missionary Journey (see 15.36–40).

14 But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

13.14 It was the practice of the early Christian missionaries to enter into the Jewish synagogues and preach first to the Jews in any given region. The fact that the earliest missionaries were themselves Jews, the matter was easily facilitated, whereas Gentile members of the Church of Christ would have been quickly shunned.

13.14.6—Perga—A city of some historical prominence located on the banks of the Cestius River approximately seven and one-half miles from the Mediterranean coast. It is interesting that the brethren did not leave their ship at Atalia on the coast, as if their intent was to go as far inland as they could before disembarking. The account of their stop at Perga seems a bit truncated as well, as if nothing of any great import happened during their stay. Luke rushes on to the episodes that took place in Pisidia.

13.14.10—Antioch—Obviously a city of the same name as that of the principal city in Syria. From time to time, the town was also called Caesarea, which did not clarify its distinctiveness in the world of nomenclature. Some historians have tallied at least twelve cities in the ancient world bearing that name.

13.14.12—Pisidia—A region of country that was sometimes merged administratively with Phrygia and formed part of the province of Galatia.

13.14.17—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

13.14.20—sabbath—That is to say, the Jewish Sabbath which on our calendars would be Saturday rather than Sunday.

13.15 Paul and Barnabas did not insinuate themselves into the synagogue,
but merely made their presence known by sitting down in the midst of the Congregation of Israel as was their privilege. They did not demand an audience, but were graciously given an opportunity to speak once the required reading had been accomplished.

13.15.6—law—This is in specific reference to the five books of Moses, from Genesis to Deuteronomy. Those familiar with the traditions of the Jews at the time of Paul and Barnabas assert that the entire five books were divided into readable sections which were attended to each Sabbath Day. In a year’s time, all five books would have been read aloud to all present. This would have amounted to approximately four or five chapters a week

13.15.9—prophets—There were designated sections of the rest of the Old Testament, although not all of the text was read. Ruth, the Chronicles through Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Daniel, Joel, Jonah, and Nahum through Haggai were not publicly read. Selections from Joshua, Judges, the books of Samuel and Kings, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi were cited aloud.

13.15.14—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

13.15.29—exhortation—The Greek word which is here translated as “exhortation” derives from roots which mean to “call near, invite, invoke, imploration, consolation, beseech, comfort, entreat, pray”. Paul and Barnabas were prepared to fulfill the measure of the word for their fellow Jews.

13.16 Most biblical scholars have concluded that Paul is addressing first those who were literal descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob, “men of Israel” and, secondly, those who were converts to Judaism from among the Gentiles. Given the state of the missionary effort of the Jews in this period of time, however, it is far more likely that he was addressing the two aspects of human existence: the physical and the spiritual. As Jesus had pointed out on countless occasions, mere genetic association with the prophets and patriarchs of old does not guarantee salvation or exaltation. It is those that reverence the Lord God with all of their heart, might, mind, and strength who are prepared to enter into His presence and find happiness. Paul hoped that these men were not only of the covenant in body, but in the spirit as well. If so, his message would not fall on deaf ears. That there were Gentiles present in the synagogue, behind the middle wall of partition, may be assumed (see 13.42)

13.16.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

13.16.6—beckoning—According to anthropologists, the gesture was made by extending the three middle fingers of the right hand while the tips of the little finger and the thumb were joined, apparently much like the Scout Sign devised for the Boy Scouts.

13.16.13—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.
13.17 Stephan had begun his discourse to the elders of the Jews by referring to the Abraham's exodus from Chaldea. Paul begins with the bondage of the House of Israel in Egypt. One might easily speculate as to the intended effect of each approach upon the respective audiences.

13.17.7—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posternity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

13.17.10—fathers—Certainly in reference to the twelve tribes who dwelt in Egypt in the days of Moses, but they were not the first to be chosen. In fact, it was due to a divine covenant between the Lord God and the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that produced the exodus.

13.17.12—exalted—The Greek word which is here translated as "exalted" derives from roots which mean "elevation, altitude, sky, dignity". Not only did the House of Israel partake of an unparalleled victory over the Egyptians in terms of their liberty, but as they departed into the wilderness they carried with them the wealth of Egypt as well.

13.17.25—Egypt—A land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

13.17.29–30—high arm—In reference both to the shield arm being raised to fend off an aggressive blow and to the sword arm being raised to destroy a pressing enemy.

13.18 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And about the time for forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness. (JST, Acts 13:18)

For forty years the children of Israel managed to exhibit a plethora of "bad manners", a spiritual rudeness by which they should have been rejected as a people, by all accounts, but were not. There are variant ancient manuscripts which strongly suggest that the passage should read that the Lord God "nourished and fed them" or "bore them about in his arms as a tender nurse does her child" in spite of their tantrums.

13.18.11—manners—The Greek word which is here translated as "manners" derives from roots which mean "habits, deportment, character, mode, style, turn".

13.18.14—wilderness—The southern reaches of the wilderness of Sin wherein lay Horeb and Sinai. Their travels would also take them into the wilderness south and east of the Dead Sea.

13.19 Although we often point to Joshua, the son of Nun, as the actor responsible for the conquest of Canaan, yet as Paul declared, it was the Lord God of Israel who accomplished the task. Needless to say the seven nations were warned and forewarned repeatedly for at least forty years to forsake their wickedness. The servants of God who called upon the inhabitants of the land of Canaan to fear the Lord and live were utterly rejected and abused. By the time the House of Israel stood at the walls of Jericho, the people were fully ripe in iniquity.

13.19.6–7—seven nations—Rabbinical tradition holds that these were the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgases, the Amorites, the Hivites, the Peresites, and the Jebusites.


17 The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

Acts 13:18

JST

19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.
13.20 This passage of scripture has given historians and theologians fits as they have attempted to reconcile what appears to be a tremendous gaff on the part of the Apostle Paul. The reading given here in the King James version suggests that the period of time between the death of Joshua and the birth of Samuel was approximately 450 years, when in fact the most that can be wrung out of the Jewish annals is 272 years. The erudite arguments which attempt to reconcile the difference are entertaining, if not altogether satisfactory. The most elegant solution, and therefore the simplest, is to suggest that Paul is speaking of the period of time between the birth of Isaac and the birth of Samuel; that is to say, from the point that one could legitimately say that God had chosen the “fathers” (Abraham and Isaac; see 13.17.10) until the son of Hannah and Elkanah entered into the world of men. While clever, this resolution still may not have hit the center of the truth. That Paul knew what he was talking about there can be no doubt; but that the scribes and editors since his day have maintained the integrity of the text of Acts is another matter altogether.

13.20.8—judge—The deliverers raised up unto the House of Israel between the ministries of Joshua and Samuel.

13.20.19—Samuel—The firstborn son of Elkanah and Hannah, most likely of the tribe of Ephraim. His mother dedicated him unto the Lord in a Nazarite vow. He would serve as the prophet of the Lord at the time the children of Israel chose to be governed by kings rather than the Lord God of their fathers. Samuel anointed both Saul and David to be kings in Israel. According to our proposed chronology, Samuel was born in the year of Adam 2733; that is to say, in the 252nd year of the reign of the judges. He died in 2835 or in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of king Saul, at the age of 102.

13.20.21—prophet—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility.

13.21 The desire for a king in order to be like unto all of the other nations was a grim foreboding of that which the children of Israel were inviting into their society. Israel was to be a people set apart, a nation who had their God as their King. Moses had pointed them toward the Celestial Kingdom, the Kingdom of God. With the demand for a temporal king they turned from their eternal destiny so that they might again embrace the world as they had done in Egypt. As the Lord God said to Samuel, “They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them”.

13.21.12—Saul—A giant of a man, head and shoulders taller than any man in Israel. He was physically strong and extraordinarily handsome. Saul was the picture of regality. He was the epitome of celestial glory. It is interesting that Saul of Tarsus was also of the tribe of Benjamin and no less of a problem for the children of the covenant.

13.21.16—Cis—A Benjamite of the family of Matri. The name is elsewhere spelled “Kish”.

13.21.23—Benjamin—The youngest of all of the children of Jacob, the brother of Joseph who was sold into Egypt. The tribe of Benjamin was not held in high esteem prior to the selection of Saul as King.

13.21.28–29—forty years—A period of time reckoned from Samuel’s anointing of Saul as King of Israel until Saul’s death.

13.22 When the children of Israel had first come out of Egypt they were given an opportunity to conquer the land of Canaan but were dissuaded by

20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

21 And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto him David
the stature of the people of Hebron. In essence they had rejected their belief in the God of Heaven, and for their pains they suffered in the wilderness for forty years until another generation was prepared to do the Lord’s will. During the time of Samuel, they rejected the Lord God again, preferring an earthly king instead of a heavenly one. For another forty years they would suffer the reign of Saul who, within the first year of his kingship, demonstrated that he was indeed a man of the world, prone to excesses, particularly in his estimation of himself. Periodically he was prostrate with madness, as he feared those closest to him, expecting at any moment to have his kingdom torn from him by a usurper. All of Saul’s frequent flights of fancy the children of Israel endured. For forty years they were on tenterhooks wondering whether they had fallen from God’s favor altogether. The choice of David must have come as a blessed relief to a people who had been under the heel of a tyrant for four decades.

13.22.12—David—The second king of United Israel and successor of king Saul. David was the youngest of eight sons born to Jesse, although only seven are ever named in the scriptural account.

13.22.24—said—if Paul is directly quoting a text, that passage is no longer extant in the scriptures. Elements of Paul’s wording can be found throughout the Old Testament, however.

13.22.32—Jesse—The son of Obed and the grandson of Ruth and Boaz. Jesse was the father of eight sons, the youngest being David, he who would serve as one of the kings of united Israel.

13.23 The direct lineage from King David to Jesus of Nazareth has long since been documented (see MT-C I.1—17 and LK-C 3.23—32).

13.23.10—promise—Although we may easily point to the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah as the source of the promise, Paul undoubtedly was remembering that which had been said to Judah by his dying father that “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be”.

13.23.12—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

13.23.16—Jesus—The literal meaning of the name “Joshua” in Hebrew is “Savior” The Messiah, the Anointed One, was to be a Savior for the House of Israel like unto Moses.

13.24 John the Baptist, holding the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood, preached the preparatory Gospel; faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance from all rebellion against the will of God, and baptism by immersion for the remission of those sins. John was the herald of a greater law, a promise of fullness of all that which had been incomplete through the transgressions of men since the beginning of time. Through Jesus Christ would come the realization of all that which had been prophesied by all the holy prophets. The atonement of the Savior would bring redemption from death and hell, the establishment of immortality and eternal life in the lives of all men, even as many as would chose to follow the Messiah with broken hearts and contrite spirits, the perfect sacrifice.

13.24.2—John—The son of Zachariah who became the presiding high priest of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthoods of his day. He was called upon to baptize the Lord Jesus Christ in the Meridian of Time; hence his sobriquet. John held the keys of the priesthood until he to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.
restored them to the prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 15 May 1829.

13.24.18—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

13.25 John the Baptist had been foreordained to serve as the mortal herald for the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew precisely who he was and what he represented. There was never any doubt in his mind as to the path he was to travel during his lifetime, even though there have been those who have asserted otherwise. In the Gospel accounts, John does not ask this question, but it is asked of him (see JN-C 1.19). Luke testifies in his narrative of the life of Jesus that the people wondered in their hearts if the Baptist were the promised Messiah (see LK-C 3.15). The Baptist informs them that he is the voice of one crying in the wilderness, preparing the way before the King Emmanuel. In the inspired translation of Matthew the significance of John’s testimony is made clear.

I indeed baptize you with water, upon your repentance; and when he of whom I bear record cometh, who is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear, (or whose place I am not able to fill,) as I said, I indeed baptize you before he cometh, that when he cometh he may baptize you with the Holy Ghost and fire. (JST, Matthew 3:38)

13.25.3—John—The son of Zachariah who became the presiding high priest of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthoods of his day. He was called upon to baptize the Lord Jesus Christ in the Meridian of Time; hence his sobriquet. John held the keys of the priesthood until he restored them to the prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 15 May 1829.

13.26 Again, most biblical scholars wish to have Paul here make a sharp distinction between those who are literal descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and those who were converts to Judaism from among the Gentiles (see 13.16). If this be the case, at what point did Paul realize the futility of making such a distinction? At what point did Paul consider the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was no longer in place? In his letters his position is unequivocally in favor of there being, in the Lord, none of the racially motivated prejudices which textual critics attribute to him here. It is likely that he is making, once again, a distinction between those who were children of Abraham in their bodies versus those who were of Israel in their spiritual lives. Those among the literal seed of Abraham who were prepared to hearken to the voice of the spirit were those for whom Paul and Barnabas had a word of salvation. That there were some interested Gentile present is almost certain (see 13.42), but that is not the thrust of Paul’s distinction.

13.26.9—Abraham—The undisputed “Father of the Faithful”. Modern biblical scholars are generally kind to Abraham as are most theologians in the sister religious of Judaism. The spiritual stature of Abraham is, for the most part, immeasurable by man. Abraham is one of the Lord God’s noblemen, whose faith and confidence in the divine word are equaled or excelled by few who have come into mortality upon this earth. Removing the Lord Jesus Christ from the list of candidates, however, would probably render our estimation of Abraham all but absolute. Abraham was one of three sons born to Terah during

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.
a millennium of poverty and famine. Through Abraham’s ministrations the promises made to the ancient fathers were preserved and re-established in earnest. In one of the most tender of moments recorded in secular or ecclesiastical history, the Lord God of Heaven instructed Abraham in the nature of the greatest gift that a loving God may bestow upon his creation when he asked for the sacrificed life of his son Isaac.

13.27 The irony was that the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees all professed a deep and abiding comprehension of the writings of the Old Testament. But for all of their profession, they did not accept the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets when Jesus appeared among them. They understood the letter of the scriptures but they refused to honor the spirit of the Law and the Prophets. This had been a deliberate act of rebellion on their part. Here were men who were literal descendants of the covenant people whose lives had become so befouled with the lusts of this fallen world that they could not bring themselves to accept the Son of God. The miracles and teachings of Jesus were of no import to the elders of the Jews because they had already determined to pursue their course of life regardless of the light and truth of the Gospel and the power of the priesthood manifested among them. In their deliberate ignorance, what truths that they once possessed began to hemorrhage way from their self-inflicted wounds administered by their abject wickedness. Had they read the scriptures with faith coupled with a determination to keep the commandments of God, they would have perceived in both John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth the fulfillment of those same prophecies with which they were outwardly familiar.

13.27.6—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

13.27.21—prophets—There were designated sections of the rest of the Old Testament, although not all of the text was read. Ruth, the Chronicles through Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Daniel, Joel, Jonah, and Nahum through Haggai were not publicly read. Selections from Joshua, Judges, the books of Samuel and Kings, Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi were cited aloud.

13.28 All inflammatory excesses aside, the elders of the Jews knew that they had not proven their case against Jesus. He was guilty of blasphemy only if he was not the Messiah, the Son of the living God. He was, of course, just exactly that; they could not prove that he was not. Their protestations to the Romans about Jesus’ conduct had no basis in fact, a truth which Pontius Pilate clearly perceived. The crucifixion of the Savior came as the direct result of political maneuvering on the part of the chief priests and elders of the Jews.

13.28.14—Pilate—With the death of Herod the Great, his kingdom was divided into four parts called tetrarchies. Herod’s son Archelaus ruled Judaea for approximately ten years, after which he was deposed. His kingdom was thereafter ruled by a series of Roman procurators or governors. According to our extant histories of the time, Pontius Pilate was appointed as the sixth governor of Judea in the twelfth year

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.
of the reign of Tiberius, or about AD 26. Pilate lost his position in Palestine about the time of the death of Tiberius.

13.29 Much of the detail surrounding the final days in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ had been foretold in some detail by the prophets of God. We have but fragments of all that had been available to the Jews in the days of Jesus’ mortal ministry. As each hour passed during the final week of the Savior’s life, the external evidence of his Messiahship compounded continually. The perfidy of the Jews became clearer as well, together with their role in the persecution of the Son of God, as the prophecies regarding their participation crystallized into reality before their eyes. Still they would not relent until Jesus had been ignominiously crucified and committed to his tomb.

13.30 The outward proof that validated Jesus’ claim to be the Christ, the Son of God, was the fact that he came forth from the tomb, never to lay down his body again. That outward token sealed the truth of the atoning sacrifice by which men would be redeemed from death and hell as he had promised with the covenant of the Gospel.

13.31 The members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles were witnesses of Jesus’ victory over death, as were the women who had come to the tomb the morning of the resurrection. The disciples on the road to Emmaus, the hundreds of disciples in Galilee, plus countless others provided sufficient external assurance that any man ought to at least entertain the possibility that the most sublime moment in human history had indeed taken place. A personal witness of the truth would not be forthcoming as a result of genetic right; men and women would not come to a knowledge of Jesus as the Christ because their ancestors knew for themselves. The witness would come as they accepted the principles of righteousness and conformed their lives to those same principles. It was a spiritual conversion that Paul and Barnabas preached, one that was not dependent upon one’s ancestry.

13.31.15—Galilee—At the time Jesus and his disciples were teaching the principles of salvation to the inhabitants of this province. Galilee stretched from the Plains of Esdraelon on the south to Cadasa on the north; from the western bank of the Jordan to the border with Phoenicia, a district approximately sixty by thirty miles. It contained within its boundaries much of the land inherited by the tribes of Issachar, Naphtali, Zebulun, and Asher.

13.31.17—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

13.32 The promise of a Redeemer, a Savior who would provide the means whereby the children of God might return to His presence, was first given to Adam and Eve. Every subsequent prophet, seer, revealer since the beginning of time has testified of the coming of Christ, most with extraordinary detail as to his life and ministry. For more than four thousand years had the promise been extended. In the meridian of time, the servants of God could speak with assurance that the initial promise given to mankind had been realized. This is the Good News, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

Acts 13:29–31
CR86-A 19

30 But God raised him from the dead:

Acts 13:30–37
MD 163

31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

Acts 13:32–37
MA 17
means for salvation were firmly in place through faith in the Lord Jesus, repentance from all wrong doing, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. These simple principles and ordinances would open the path for all of the benefits of the Atoning sacrifice.

13.33 The context of this citation from Psalms is an intriguing one.

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him. (Psalm 2:1–12)

In conjunction with the issue raised above about Paul’s audience (see 13.16 and 13.26), it would seem a little bit harsh on the missionaries’ part to emphasize the crushing of the Gentiles in the presence of those who were still, in the eyes of the genetic Jews, an inferior people.

13.33.16—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

13.33.25—second—Several ancient manuscripts read “first” Psalm instead of the “second”. The issue is satisfactorily resolved if we merely consider that the various editors of the New Testament may have had different versions of the Old Testament in from of them at the time they were making their emendations. In many editions of the Psalms, Psalm 1 and Psalm 2 are compiled into one hymn. Therefore, a reader might justifiably state that Paul’s citation came from either of those two numbers depending on the edition of the Psalms one had at hand. In this fashion many confusing aspects of the scriptures have been inserted into the text. We ought not to become exercised about any of them, but remember that the translation of the word of God through time is often fraught with complications such as these. Some are easier to resolve than others.

13.33.34—begotten—Some scholars have entangled themselves in great polemics as to whether this word has reference to the birth of Jesus Christ or to his resurrection. In the context of Paul address to the Jews in Antioch, however, he is clearly making reference to the resurrection. One may argue that the power over death came as the result of Jesus’ conception by the Father, but that assertion needlessly complicates the discussion. At the heart of the whole issue is that because of Jesus’ atoning sacrifice and his victory over the physical death he has fulfilled all of the requirements placed upon the Firstborn in time
and in all eternity. With his resurrection from the death, Jesus became, indeed, the Son of God.

13.34 The citation given by Paul here is from the fifty-fifth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.(Isaiah 55:1–5)

What precisely were the “mercies” that were extended to David, notwithstanding the great wickedness that he had committed in relation to Uriah and Bathsheba? The answer is, in part, related in the sixteenth Psalm.

I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Psalm 16:8–11)

The “sure mercies” was the promise to David that even though he had committed a sin which would relegate him to spirit prison for a long time, the king would not spend eternity there as a banished spirit with no hope of redemption. The permanent reunion of his body and spirit would reclaim David from hell. If any spirit, even of the most righteous, were to remain unredeemed in the spirit world, that soul would one day become as corrupt as Lucifer himself; a devil, and an angel to the devil. The resurrection from the dead “saves” men from that fate, if they have not become sons of perdition.

13.34.29—sure—The Greek word which is here translated as “sure” derives from roots which mean “convince, pacify, conciliate, rely, assent, trustworthy”. The Hebrew word which is translated as “sure” in the prophecy of Isaiah is derived from roots which mean “build up, support, render firm or faithful, permanent, be true, to go to the right hand”.

13.34.30—mercies—The Greek word which is here translated as “mercies” derives from roots which mean “divine right, intrinsic right, holy, predetermined”. The Hebrew word which is translated as “mercies” in the book of Isaiah derives from roots which mean “kindness, piety, reproof, beauty”.

13.34.32—David—The second king of United Israel and successor of king Saul. David was the youngest of eight sons born to Jesse, although only seven are ever named in the scriptural account.
13.35 That portion of the sixteenth Psalm wherein this passage appears is cited above in 13.34. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead took place within forty hours of his expiration on the cross. He died about three o’clock in the afternoon on Friday, lay in the tomb until early in the morning on Sunday. From six o’clock Friday evening to six o’clock Sunday morning would have been thirty-six hours. How quickly after his death Jesus was interred we do not know, but it would certainly have been before sunset on Friday. Therefore Jesus’ body did not decompose sufficiently to have been viewed as corrupted. But aside from that technicality, the promise to David was that Jesus would be raised from the dead in a glorious fashion, and in a manner that would guarantee his own resurrection and that of all mankind. This is what constituted the “sure mercies” of David the King of Israel.

13.36 Paul anticipated the likely objection to his interpretation of the passages in Isaiah and Psalms. Did not these prophecies apply directly to David rather than to any other person? Paul’s line of thinking is flawless. The passages could not refer solely to David, even if someone in a generous state of mind considered him to be the “Holy One” of God. The title could not apply because everyone knew that David had lived to a ripe old age and then passed into history. His own physical body was given a proper burial and, in the process of time, decomposed into its component parts. In other words, David saw corruption in the flesh; he therefore could not possibly be the “Holy One”. The question was, if not David, then who? Paul’s response is unswerving; the only one who has, in the history of mankind, qualified under the terms of the scriptures to be the Holy One of God, is Jesus of Nazareth.

13.36.2—David—The second king of United Israel and successor of king Saul. David was the youngest of eight sons born to Jesse, although only seven are ever named in the scriptural account.

13.37 Paul drives home his argument. No man in the four thousand years since Adam and Eve has died and come forth in a resurrection, a permanent rejoicing of the spirit and the body in a perfect assemblage. Jesus is the firstborn in this venue as he was in the premortal existence.

13.38 The sign of the resurrection from the dead was to be the outward token that the redemption from hell was made possible as well. If Jesus had the power to come forth from the tomb, then his atoning sacrifice for personal sin had transpired as well. It was then possible for a man to depart from this life without having to pass through the grueling distress of spirit prison. A man might exercise faith, change the course of his life through heartfelt repentance, and call upon the salvation of the soul through the blood of Christ shed in his behalf by means of the covenantal ordinances placed to facilitate salvation and exaltation. The Jews in Antioch were subjects for salvation through the word of faith preached by Paul and Barnabas that very day,

13.39 Adam was taught in the very beginning of this world that through immersion in water we keep the commandment to repent and be baptized, by the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ we may be sanctified if we will but accept the shedding of his blood as applicable to our personal transgression against the law of God, and by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost we might have a legal and lawful claim upon the salvation of God, having been sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. The Law of Moses

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was a preparatory Gospel, one that dealt with faith, repentance, and baptism. The ministry of the Holy Ghost was not part of that covenant and the Aaronic Priesthood not permitted to bestow the Gift of the Holy Ghost. John the Baptist’s ministry was the personification of that lesser Gospel. For that reason he testified that there was one greater than himself who would bring the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, even the Lamb of God. If the power and influence of the Holy Ghost represents that power of justification that Paul is speaking of here, which it undoubtedly does, then it was impossible that the Law of Moses could ever justify anyone.

13.39.23—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

13.40 The citation that Paul uses here is taken from the prophecy of Habakkuk. In the prophet’s day, he spoke of the desolating scourge that would descend upon Israel as the Babylonians lay the city of Jerusalem waste and carried the Jews into captivity in the sixth century before the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a facile task to point to the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple by the Romans in AD 70 as the fulfillment of Paul’s application of the prophet’s words. The problem with this broad interpretation is the fact that Paul is standing in a synagogue in Antioch of Pisidia attempting to convince local Jewry to believe in Christ. Jerusalem and its destruction is more than 500 miles away and twenty years in the future.

13.40.14—prophets—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility.

13.41 Paul’s quote comes from the first chapter of Habakkuk.

Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. (Habakkuk 1:5)

The quote that appears in the book of Acts is a direct translation from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament made by the Jews 300 years before the birth of Christ. We might expend marvelous amounts of time and space attempting to reconcile the apparent differences between the two versions and not arrive any closer to the truth. Suffice it to say that Paul was warning the Jews at Antioch that their fate would be no less onerous than that of the Jews at the time of the Babylonia Captivity if they failed to hearken to the testimony of the servants of God. A few of the words used in the citation are interesting, however, and will bear a little investigation.

13.41.3—despisers—Rather clever arguments can be made regarding the difference between the words “despisers” and “heathens” in the Hebrew language. The difference would be explained simply as a misreading of a single character, a “daleth” for a “vau”. Be that as it may, the Jews in Paul’s time would have been familiar with both readings, being fluent in both Greek and Hebrew. Therefore, they would have understood the reading of the Hebrew “ye among the heathens” as an apt description of themselves. They would also have comprehended the Septuagint and Paul’s assertion that they were potentially “despisers”
if they would not listen to the spirit of truth. To any Gentiles who may have been in the synagogue an application might have been made as well, although they would have had to have known the Hebrew version for the quotation to have had the maximum effect.

13.41.7—perish—The Greek word which is here translated as “perish” may also be translated as “disappear, hide yourselves; render unapparent, consume, becloud, disappear, destroy”, as several prominent linguists have suggested. The English word “phantom” derives from the same roots.

13.42 We are not certain if these Gentiles were already converts to Judaism or not. Some may have been, but probably not all. One wonders, however, if any of those Jews who had been present on the day of Pentecost and baptized into the Church of Christ were from the city of Antioch. If they had been, what might have been their effect upon the Jews of their acquaintance? What might have been their effect upon the Gentiles in Antioch? If our historians be correct, more than ten years had passed since that glorious public outpouring of the spirit of God in the Temple at Jerusalem. Whether from the power of Paul and Barnabas’ personal testimonies of Jesus as the Christ or from the long-term labors of resident Christians of Antioch, the whole city was excited about hearing further that which the missionaries had to say.

13.42.4—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

13.42.10—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

13.42.12—Gentiles—These were Greek and Roman converts to Judaism who sought to know more about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

13.43 How wonderful it must have been for those who knew of Christ and had yet maintained their association with traditional Judaism to hear Paul and Barnabas speak of the Lord Jesus Christ in such a fashion. Their faith had been strong for many years, but once again it was confirmed by the preaching of articulate emissaries sent by God to edify and strengthen them. Which of them would not tarry afterwards to enjoy their company?

13.43.4—congregation—That is, all those who had gathered in the synagogue, Jews, Gentiles, and Christians to hear the two missionaries speak.

13.43.11—Jews—It is clear that not all of the Jews were opposed to that which Paul and Barnabas had presented to them. Some scholars wish to believe that the Jews as a body had rejected the testimony of the missionaries. It may very well be that those who followed Paul and Barnabas were disciples of Christ who had been converted to Christianity as a result of the labors of the Apostles many years before.

13.43.13–14—religious proselytes—It is clear that there were Gentiles who had accepted the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a result of the activities of the converted Jews. It is probably safe to assume that in order to become Christians, these Gentiles had been expected to become converts to Judaism first. This mistaken notion would be clarified by the

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath. Acts 13:42–49

DNTC 2 26, 101, 163, 188, 202, 290

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.
13.44 The fields were white and ready to harvest as a result of the labors of those who had returned from Jerusalem filled with the zeal of the Gospel of Christ. No doubt most of the people in Antioch had heard of the doctrine which promised salvation and exaltation to the faithful, that doctrine which fulfilled the Law of Moses and introduced the possibility that all men might be saved through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Those who had been in attendance at the synagogue when Paul and Barnabas first preached, particularly the Christian disciples, were anxious to share with their family, friends, and neighbors the opportunity to be fully cognizant of the blessings which could be afforded them.

13.45 We are not privy as to how actively the Jews of Antioch had attempted to bring the Gentiles of that city into a formal relationship with Judaism. If they were typical of most Jews in the days of the Apostles, little was being done. The Christian disciples who still assembled themselves with the orthodox Jews in the synagogue were no doubt tolerated as were the mild influx of Gentiles who responded to the teachings of Jesus. The response of the entire city to the preaching of Paul and Barnabas, however, distressed the orthodox. Again, the objection to Christian principles became rooted in the political and social structure of the community.

13.45.4—Jews—Not the Christian Jews, but those who were still tenaciously hanging on to traditional Judaism.

13.45.12—envy—The Greek word which is here translated as "envy" derives from roots that mean "hot, glow, fervid, heat, zeal, ardor, jealousy, malice".

13.45.22—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

13.46 From whence came the boldness of Paul and Barnabas? These are not men who have a political or social agenda. They are not laboring in the world for financial gain. They had gained from their own experience, both material and spiritual, that their course of life was acceptable before God and therefore desired that all men be recipients of the blessings which they had received. The direction given from God in the dispensation of the Meridian of Time was that the covenant people, the direct descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were to have the first opportunity to receive the blessings promised to the children of men, those blessings which derived from the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The traditional Jews of Antioch were, therefore, presented with the principles of eternal life and salvation when Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Acts 13:39–41

Acts 13:44–52

PM 504

Acts 13:45

JC 522

EM 1 127
Barnabas first entered the city. The traditional Jews, upon witnessing the missionaries' success among the Gentiles and the great number of Christian Jews who supported them, perceived that their power base was wasting away. They were no longer at the head of the parade and were irritated at the "usurers". Like the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' day, the elders of the Jews in Antioch deliberately attempted to destroy the influence of Paul and Barnabas by simply shouting them down, by saying anything that would discredit the missionaries in the eyes of the people. There was no quarter given; they did not hesitate to denounce any truth that favored the missionaries' arguments. By so doing, they were condemned by their own mouths disregarding even the principles of truth as contained in the Law of Moses. Having cut themselves off from salvation, the traditional Jews left the pale of redemption to the Gentiles, whom Paul and Barnabas then embraced.

13.46.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

13.46.4—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul's experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

13.46.43—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as "Gentiles" means "foreigners" or "strangers", and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as "Gentiles" carries with it the notion of "massing" like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

13.47 Whether envious of the success of the two missionaries or of the clear invitation and response of the Gentiles, the traditional Jews would suffer because of the religious and ethnic bigotry. Paul quotes from the writings of the prophet Isaiah to drive home his point that the Jews are in the wrong with regard to the salvation of the Gentiles.

Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name.

And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God. And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. (Isaiah 49:1–6)
The prophet Simeon in the Temple at Jerusalem, blessed the infant Jesus with similar words (see LK-C 2:32). Paul could apply the scripture to himself, as a servant of Christ, in conjunction with the blessing that he had received from the Lord through Ananias (see 9:15).

13.47.19—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

13.48 There is a far superior translation of this verse.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as believed were ordained unto eternal life. (JST, Acts 13:48)

What is clearly articulated in this inspired translation is that there is no predestination of salvation which anticipates the conversion of a soul to Christianity. What is certain, however, is that one's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the key for salvation and exaltation, that by obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel, the faithful disciple may hear the voice of God promising salvation unto him.

13.49 Although Paul and Barnabas directed the promulgation of the doctrine of Christ, the laborers in the field had increased to considerably more than two. The Christian Jews were empowered to carry the word of salvation to all of Antioch and into all the regions round about. They did so with great enthusiasm and success. Needless to say there were a great number of those who had been intellectually and spiritually vanquished who sought for other means to destroy their adversaries.

13.50 We are not told the rationale used by the traditional Jews in order to incite the civil authorities against the two missionaries. One wonders whether it was based in theology or some other vanity by which these women were able to bring sufficient pressure to bear so that Paul and Barnabas felt obliged to leave the city. Some scholars have suggested that these women were spouses of civil authorities, Jewesses who were held in high esteem in social and political circles. They may have thought, as a result of the vehemence of the elders of the Jews, that they were serving God in their persecution of the Paul and Barnabas, just as Saul of Tarsus had felt that he was doing the work of the Lord God of Israel as he haled the disciples of Jesus off to prison and sometimes to their deaths.

13.50.3—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

13.50.22—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

13.50.24—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

Acts 13:50–52
DNTP 2 215, 311, 409, 457, 490
the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

13.50.31—coasts—The Greek word which is here translated as “coasts” derives from roots which suggest “section, allotment, division, share, territory”. There is another word which is translated as “coasts” but refers to the “boundary-line or frontier” between provinces or cities. The primary meanings of “coasts” in English refer to this boundary or territorial aspect of land. It is the secondary meanings that refer to the boundary between land and water. Clearly in American English, the primary usage of the term seems archaic at best.

13.51 A serious consequence for a community having rejected the servants of God. The Jewish notion regarding the dust of any particular land had to do whether that land was polluted or not. Vile, persistent, wickedness could bring a curse upon the place where a people dwelt. Hence, the valley of Shum became a great wasteland after the people of Canaan destroyed the people who once lived there. The land from which Cain grew his sustenance would no longer produce for him after he had spilled the life blood of Abel upon it. The wickedness of the cities of the plain became so great that only the cleansing fire from heaven would suffice. Jewish orthodoxy thought much in this vein about the land and city of Samaria such that they would make the wide detour to the eastern side of the River Jordan rather than pass through that “defiled” land and be polluted by its dust (see MT-C 10.14 for lengthy discussion of the instructions given to the Apostles regarding this ordinance).

13.51.15—Iconium—The capital city of the region of Lycaonia in the province of Galatia. It lies on the great inland commercial route from Tarsus to Ephesus.

13.52 The elders of the Jews thought to squelch the progress of Christianity among the Gentiles of Antioch by driving Paul and Barnabas from the city. What they could not know, however, is that the same spirit which filled the two missionaries in their labors, that made them impervious to all falsehood, was that spirit which rested upon every baptized member of the Church of Christ in their community. There is no “head” to cut off the Kingdom of God whereby it might be destroyed. The wicked of the world have never grasped the significance of a people led by God Himself.

14.1 Paul and Barnabas, having been compelled to depart from Antioch, made their way to Iconium to continue their ministry among the Jews. Some scholars have suggested that Paul’s declaration in the previous chapter, “we turn to the Gentiles” (see 13.46), marked a complete shift in the missionaries’ orientation toward the work. This presumption is, as can be seen here, a bit premature. Paul and Barnabas follow the same procedure as they had in previous cities. They went first to the Jews, in their synagogues, giving them the opportunity to accept the principles of eternal life before moving on to any others that might have an interest. Again, we have every reason to suppose that many of the inhabitants of this region of country had been prepared for the coming of the two missionaries by those who had been in

51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

Chapter 14

1 And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

Acts 13:51
MD 831

Acts 13:52
AF 170

Acts 14:1–4
DN TC 2 457
Acts 14:1–7
DN TC 2 215, 311, 409, 490
Acts 14:1–8
DN TC 2 132
attendance at the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon the disciples of Jesus during the first Pentecost following the resurrection. The willingness of the Greeks to accept the message of salvation as readily as they do testifies to the proactive nature of the labor those early converts to Christianity had affected among their friends and neighbors.

14.1.7—Iconium—The capital city of the region of Lycaonia in the province of Galatia It lies on the great inland commercial route from Tarsus to Ephesus.

14.1.15—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

14.1.18—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

14.1.34—Greeks—Probably speaking of the Greek converts to Judaism, but those of the general populace may have hearkened to the voices of Paul and Barnabas as well.

14.2 The unbelieving Jews in Antioch had opposed Paul and Barnabas because they were envious of the missionaries’ success among the members of their congregation and among those who were beyond the pale of Judaism in their estimation. The motive for stirring up the public officials and others against the disciples of Christ apparently was the same in Iconium. Again, the political machinations were brought to bear when it became apparent that no one among the unbelieving Jews was equipped to deal with men filled with knowledge and the power of the Holy Ghost.

14.2.4—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

14.2.8—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

14.2.13—evil affected—The Greek word which is here translated as “evil affected” derives from roots which mean to “injure, exasperate”.

14.3 Paul and Barnabas pursued their course of action without hesitation. They did not quail at the opposition that the unbelieving Jews managed to muster against them for they knew they were on the Lord’s errand. They quietly blessed the people who were in their charge by the power of the holy priesthood of God.

14.3.1—Long time—We are not privy as to what Luke would have considered a long time, but clearly the time spent in Iconium was longer than that they had spent at Antioch.

14.3.6—Speaking boldly—The effect was to bear a powerful witness of the atonement of Jesus Christ which in turn produced sufficient faith
in the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of Iconium that the disciples were able to perform great miracles in their behalf, most of which were undoubtedly in conjunction with the physical health and well-being of the faithful.

14.4 It is intriguing to witness how easily previously illuminated men can turn to conduct unbecoming a religiously educated soul. The Jews who opposed the missionaries knew that their opposition was not consistent with their core values as a covenant people, but the loss of personal power, wealth, and prestige was more than these men could bear. They would fight against God so that they might maintain their social and political standing among their fellow men.

14.4.14—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

14.4.19—apostles—This is the first instance of the evangelist Luke referring to Paul and Barnabas as Apostles. Some biblical scholars have suggested that the title as it is used here is more in reference to their roles as missionaries rather than an indication of their having been ordained and set apart in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Paul and Barnabas may have been numbered among those whom we today refer to as “Seventies”, special witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ but belonging to another Quorum. Almost all agree, however, that if Paul and Barnabas were not ordained Apostles during their first missionary journey together, then they would be blessed with that priesthood calling in short order.

14.5 Aggression against the saints of God seems to be the last resort of failed religiousists. No doubt some of those engaged in the attempted murders of Paul and Barnabas thought that they were doing God a service by executing them. But if the truth be known, most of the antagonism was generated by injured pride.

14.5.6—assault—The Greek word which is here translated as “assault” derives from roots which mean “violent impulse, onset”.

14.5.11—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

14.5.16—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

14.5.23—despitely—The Greek word which is here translated as “despitefully” derives from roots which mean “insolence, overbearing, insult, injury, abuse, exercise violence”. These same roots are the source for the English word “hubris”.

4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.

5 And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,
14.6 When it became clear that the agitators would not be satisfied until they had taken the lives of the two missionaries, Paul and Barnabas thought it best to find another place of residence for a time. The prophets of God have frequently been under command to preserve their lives as an alternative to a martyr’s death.

14.6.3—WARE—The Greek word which is here translated as “ware” derives from roots which mean “see completely, understand, be conscious of, informed of”. The English word “ware” is an archaic form of “aware”, related closely to words like “wary”.

14.6.9—Lystra—A small community located about 30 miles south of Iconium. It is the traditional home town of Timothy, a fellow laborer in the mission field with Paul.

14.6.11—Derbe—A town historically located on the commercial route between Tarsus and Lystra whose present location is in some dispute. Tradition has it located some 30 miles south and east of Lystra. Also the home of Gaius, one of Paul’s later traveling companions (see 20.4).

14.6.14—Lycaonia—A region of southern Galatia which was mainly comprised of a high desert plain, treeless and without much fresh water.

14.7 No doubt their missionary practice did not change in these two cities. Without question they would have begun their ministry among the Jews, teaching in the synagogue to all those who would hearken to their words. At some point, the Greeks and other Gentiles would have been invited to partake of the blessings of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

14.7.6—Gospel—That is to say, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repentance from sin, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.

14.8 We do not know whether this impotent man was a Jew or a Gentile. Luke is not particularly forthcoming and perhaps in the end it is unimportant. That he was a man who had faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and in Paul and Barnabas there can be no doubt, otherwise the man would not have been healed. From whence came his faith? It would be reasonable to assume that this man, like so many others in the region, had been taught regarding the life and ministry of the Savior by those who had returned many years before from the glorious display of spiritual power that had taken place on the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of the Lord. When the two missionaries began their teaching, the poor man resonated in the spirit and knew that his affliction could be alleviated by the power of the priesthood which they bore. In faith he was similar to the man born blind (see JN-C 9); in condition he may be equated with the crippled man seated the gates of the Temple at Jerusalem whom Peter and John raised up from his lifelong affliction (see 3.1–11).

14.8.8—Lystra—A small community located about 30 miles south of Iconium. It is the traditional home town of Timothy, a fellow laborer in the mission field with Paul.

14.9 Paul and the impotent man had not met before this encounter at Lystra, yet the missionary was fully aware of his spiritual circumstances. Like the young man born blind and the impotent man at the Temple, the man crippled in his feet from birth desired to do more with his life than to merely petition alms from passersby. Had he as yet received baptism? Perhaps, if his affliction had not precluded that ordinance. If he had become a member of the Church of Christ he would have had in his heart a desire to bless the lives of those around him. His handicap would have been a tremendous obstacle

6 They were aware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother’s womb, who never had walked:

9 The same heard Paul speak:

Acts 14:8–18  
DNCTC 2 353

Acts 14:9  
AF 226  
JC 319

Acts 14:9–11  
AF 234
to fulfilling that worthy desire. His healing, therefore, would not have been the product of selfishness.

14.9—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

14.10 In several ancient manuscripts the phrase “I say unto thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ…” is added. Textual scholars debate the validity of the addition, but who can with a straight face gainsay the appropriateness of the emendation? Can anyone doubt that Paul would have said something very much like the preamble given in these variant manuscripts? Would it not be more proper to say that the texts which govern our current translations are flawed because of the omission rather than the reverse? Sound judgment overrules tradition in almost every circumstance.

14.11 The citizens of the town who were not as yet personally acquainted with Paul or Barnabas or the doctrines which they taught, naturally reverted to their traditions in order to explain what had transpired to the crippled man, an invalid whom they had known his entire life. Their misguided ebullience distressed the missionaries.

14.11.7—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

14.11.18—speech—Luke’s comment provides the fodder for lengthy discussion as to what might have been the nature of the Lycaonian language. Whether an odd dialect of Greek or a strange mixture of Syriac and Persian we cannot, at this time, be certain. That Paul, however, comprehended the meaning of their exclamations is clear.

14.11.18—Lycaonia—The geographical and topographical isolation of the region may have contributed to the strangeness of the speech patterns of the people of Lystra (see 14.6.14).

14.11.20—gods—As the next verse demonstrates, the Lystrans had the Greek gods Jupiter and Mercury in mind.

14.12 Much speculation about the physiognomy of Barnabas and Paul has been generated by this episode. Barnabas is supposed to have been a large, dignified man exuding nobility and majesty because that is how the Gentiles typically portrayed the chief deity of their pantheon. Paul is therefore traditionally described as a light and active young man rhetorically gifted as was the Messenger of the gods. The degree to which we might rely upon these assessments may be determined by comparing the above characterizations with a description of Paul from an unimpeachable source.

He is about five feet high; very dark hair; dark complexion; dark skin; large Roman nose; sharp face; small black eyes, penetrating as eternity; round shoulders; a whining voice, except when elevated, and then it almost resembled the roaring of a lion. He was a good orator, active and diligent, always employing himself in doing good to his fellow man. (TPJS, 180)

The characterizations given in the narrative attributed to the inhabitants of Lystra may have no more relationship to the persons of Paul and Barnabas other than that Paul was the primary speaker of the two. Ancient legends of Lycaonia assert that Zeus and Hermes visited that region and they were recognized and reverenced by no one save for an old couple. That whimsical tale may have been what motivated the people of Lystra to be attentive to the two men who had worked such a wonderful sign in their midst.

10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.
14.12.4—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

14.12.5—Jupiter—The Greek word actually written in the text of Acts is “Zeus”, the chief god of the Greek pantheon. “Jupiter” is the Latin counterpart from the Roman pantheon. When and where the Roman god was inserted into the translation is anyone’s guess.

14.12.7—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

14.12.8—Mercurius—The Greek word actually written in the text of Acts is “Hermes”, the chief god of the Greek pantheon. “Mercurius” is the Latin counterpart from the Roman pantheon. When and where the Roman god was inserted into the translation is anyone’s guess.

14.13 The plan for making the the “gods” welcome to their city was to give a feast in their honor. Hence, the oxen draped with flowers were brought to the gates for sacrifice. Archeologists and other antiquarians testify that there remains yet at Lystra a statue of Zeus sitting in a consular chair with the symbols of his authority in his hands, crowned with the winged cap and caduceus of Hermes. Whether this likeness dates from the time of Paul and Barnabas is uncertain.

14.13.5—Jupiter—In addition to the information given above in 4.12.5, the patron deity of Lystra was apparently “Jupiter Propulaius” or “Jupiter Custos”, loosely translated as “Jupiter the Guardian”. Typically, an image of the patron god was placed at the entrances to the city, which is clearly the meaning of the phrase “before their city”.

14.13.14—garlands—Some anthropologists suggest that this aspect of the sacrifice may have had more to with the influence of the Persians than of the Romans or Greeks.

14.14 There is a superior translation for this verse.

14.14.4—apostles—This is the second instance of the evangelist Luke referring to Paul and Barnabas as Apostles. Some biblical scholars
have suggested that the title as it is used here is more in reference to their roles as missionaries rather than an indication of their having been ordained and set apart in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Paul and Barnabas may have been numbered among those whom we today refer to as “Seventies”, especial witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ but belonging to another Quorum. Almost all agree, however, that if Paul and Barnabas were not ordained Apostles during their first missionary journey together, then they would be blessed with that priesthood calling in short order.

14.14.5—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

14.14.7—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

14.15 Paul’s argument to the people of Lystra was simple. How could they bring themselves to believe that the missionaries expected to be worshipped when all that they had been teaching the inhabitants of the region that they should forsake such excess? The residents of the city had been stunned by the healing of the man crippled since birth and whatever intellectual notions they might have had about Judaism or Christianity was quickly discarded as they turned to that which they had known best throughout their lives: the paganism of their forefathers. Paul and Barnabas could not allow this travesty to proceed even though it meant alienating many of the most devout souls in the community.

14.15.15—passions—The Greek word which is translated here as “passions” derives from roots which mean “similar, similarly affected, experience, sensation, impression”. This is not a reference to lewdness or excess, as some have suggested, but rather that Paul and his companions were mortal, human beings like unto the inhabitants of Lystra.

14.15.28—vanities—The Greek word which is here translated as “vanities” derives from roots which mean “empty, profitless, worthless, idol”.

14.15.18–19—living God—As opposed to those pagan gods whose images were completely devoid of life and power.

14.16 From the days of Adam, God the Father did not necessarily punish apostates with proactive distress. Most of the time, unless they had ripened in such abject wickedness that the earth could bear no more, the backsliders suffered the natural consequences of their own choices. Some people take some comfort and assure themselves of their position because the God of Heaven has not yet smitten them for their aberrant conduct. Generally there is no need. Their personal misery would be forthcoming in any event.

14.16.7—nations—No doubt a direct reference to the Gentiles, rather than to the covenant people.

14.17 Paul’s teaching to those who desired to offer sacrifice in behalf of the two missionaries is similar to the teachings of Jesus himself while giving the
discourse we commonly refer to as the Sermon on the Mount. In referring to
how we ought to treat those around ourselves, Jesus commanded that we
should be like our Heavenly Father who “maketh his sun to rise on the evil
and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust” (see MT-C
5.4). The necessary question in all of this is why should He do so? In
context, it is clear that Jesus is testifying that the Father loves all of His
children, whether they be of the covenant or not. Therefore, in all of His
dealings with us, His children, He provides the very best in the expectation
that we will begin to wonder why it is that we have so much joy and
happiness in this life. Our hearts filled with gratitude, we can then be taught
the truth of the matter. As a side note, Lucifer’s attempt at frustrating the
Father’s plan involves in creating as much unhappiness in the world as is
possible, through sin, anger, jealousy, contention, and the like, in order to
produce doubts in our minds and hearts that there is a supreme benevolence.
Satan has been somewhat effective in his attempts. We are often reduced to
self-pity and, in that state, we begin to lose faith that there is an eternal
affection of concern for mankind.

14.18 The great risk in Paul’s actions was that the people who wished to
worship the missionaries would be embarrassed and in their embarrassment
would be susceptible to irritation and anger. That risk was such that the
people of Lystra were nearly persuaded to take the life of Paul and Barnabas
once they received sympathetic sentiments from those who were prepared to
slander the two men. How much time elapsed from the stymied festival until
the antagonists arrived from Iconium and Antioch we do not know, but it is
likely relatively short. The disciples had apparently little time to teach the
truth sufficiently well to completely persuade the inhabitants of Lystra to
follow a better way.

14.19 As one scholar put it, these are men filled with implacable malice. It
was not sufficient for them to merely drive Paul and Barnabas from their
coasts; they must needs destroy the two missionaries by any means possible.
We are not told the means that were used to stir up the inhabitants of Lystra,
but we might assume that these recalcitrant Jews took advantage of every ill
feeling that may have existed in the hearts of the people. Certainly the priest
of Jupiter and those associated with him would have been profoundly embar
rassed by their own enthusiasm and foolishness. Not because of their devo
tion, but that they had been mistaken about their guests. It would not have
taken much for the Jews to have suggested the possibility that Paul and
Barnabas had staged this episode so that the embarrassment could have taken
place, that the “healing” of the crippled man was hardly more than a clever
ruse in order to enslave the minds and hearts of the people. Any lie would
do, so long as it was effective. Not everyone would be persuaded by these
sorts of arguments, but there were a sufficient number of the willing and a
certain number of the gullible that drove the mob to attempt murder.

14.19.6—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to
Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been
home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced
to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In
this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of
the people.

14.19.8—Antioch—Obviously a city of the same name as that of the
principal city in Syria, but one located in the region of Pisidia. From
time to time, the town was also called Caesarea, which did not clarify
its distinctiveness in the world of nomenclature. Some historians have

good, and gave us rain from
heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling
our hearts with food and gladness.

18 And with these sayings scarce
restrained they the people, that
they had not done sacrifice unto
them.

19 And there came thither certain
Jews from Antioch and Iconium,
who persuaded the people, and,
having stoned Paul, drew him out
of the city, supposing he had been
dead.

Acts 14:18
JC 522

Acts 14:19–28
DNTC 2 271
DNTC 2 443

259
tallied at least twelve cities in the ancient world bearing that name.

14.19.10—Iconium—The capital city of the region of Lycaonia in the province of Galatia. It lies on the great inland commercial route from Tarsus to Ephesus.

14.19.18—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

14.20 The gathered assassins did not leave off their stoning until they were assured that Paul was dead. When the villains departed, certainly Barnabas and others of the membership of the Church administered to their friend in order to restore him to life and well-being. They would have anointed him by the authority which they possessed, laid their hands upon his head, and blessed him by the power of the holy Melchizedek priesthood, doing what Jesus would have done had he been there. Paul’s own faith, coupled with the faith of his friends and associates, brought about the restoration of his life. Paul would later mention this episode in which he nearly lost his life in his second letter to the Corinthians (see 2 Co-C 11.25).

14.20.4—disciples—Certainly Barnabas would have been at Paul’s side, but there would have been many others who would have already received the teachings and covenants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ many years before.

14.20.24—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

14.20.26—Derbe—A town historically located on the commercial route between Tarsus and Lystra whose present location is in some dispute. Tradition has it located some 30 miles south and east of Lystra. Also the home of Gaius, one of Paul’s later traveling companions (see 20.4).

14.21 Apparently the inhabitants of Derbe were not as easily aroused against the preaching of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not told whether or not the Jews from Antioch and Iconium ventured to Derbe to cause an uproar, but it does not seem to be the case. Committing unlawful murder may have quelled their enthusiasm somewhat for a time. It is interesting that the disciples will be able to return to all of the cities that they visited before without provoking another attack upon their persons. One cannot imagine that the two missionaries moderated their message, for they were ever faithful in their proclamation of the truth, unflinching in their witness of the Son of God, and fearless in the face of opposition. One wonders at the return and the motivation behind it. It would have been a simple task to make their way from Derbe to Tarsus, Paul’s home town, and from thence return to Antioch in Syria. No doubt that had been their original plan; a circuit route that took the two missionaries first to the home of Barnabas and from thence to those regions familiar to Paul. Retracing their steps back to Perga and Attalia must have been a product of divine intervention, the Spirit of God whispering to them the way that they should go in any given moment.

14.21.7—gospel—That is to say, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, repen-
tance from sin, baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.

14.21.19—Lystra—A small community located about 30 miles south of Iconium. It is the traditional home town of Timothy, a fellow laborer in the mission field with Paul.

14.21.22—Iconium—The capital city of the region of Lycaonia in the province of Galatia. It lies on the great inland commercial route from Tarsus to Ephesus.

14.21.24—Antioch—Obviously a city of the same name as that of the principal city in Syria, but one located in the region of Pisidia. From time to time, the town was also called Caesarea, which did not clarify its distinctiveness in the world of nomenclature. Some historians have tallied at least twelve cities in the ancient world bearing that name.

14.22 No doubt the rebellious Jews throughout Galatia must have rejoiced in their apparent triumph over Paul and Barnabas, and thus the doctrine of the Church of Jesus Christ as well. One might easily imagine the manner in which the membership of the Church in each of those towns and villages were taunted and mocked because of their faith. The Jews would not have been shy in regaling those around them with the details of their assault upon the leadership of the disciples of Christ. The antagonists must have thought themselves rid of the intruders and that eventually Christianity would simply die of attrition. What to their wonder, then, when Paul and Barnabas appeared among them again, presenting the same message, proclaiming the same call to repentance. The disciples of Christ would have rejoiced almost beyond expression, particularly in those places where the rumors of Paul’s death still ran rampant. The belligerents must have fumed in frustration. The fundamental message of the missionaries as they refreshed the faith of the members of the Church was that in a fallen world, like unto the one in which we live, Satan will have some power of the hearts of men. That influence will invariably be directed at those who would bring peace and prosperity to the children of men. One of the effects of such determined opposition was to be the strengthening of the children of God to focus their attention of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness rather than to take comfort in the vanities of the world.

14.23 This is as succinct a description of missionary work in any dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The principles of truth are taught; the faithful rejoice in their repentance and received the saving ordinances. The faithful are appointed to direct the affairs of the Kingdom of God in the absence of the honored missionary. The lay membership of the Church then become responsible for each other in advancing the cause of righteousness and unity. This is precisely what Jesus himself did as part of his mortal ministry.

14.23.5—ordained—The Greek word which is here translated as “ordained” derives from roots which mean “stretch, hand-reacher, voter, select, appoint”. That there were men who were called and appointed by God through officers in the Kingdom who held the keys of the priesthood of God there can be no doubt. Paul and Barnabas laid their hands upon the heads of many throughout Galatia in order that the work of God might continue in their absence. This was to be a lay ministry among the people. In important part of the use of this particular word is that those selected and ordained officers of the Church were sustained by the membership of each congregation.

22 Conferring the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Acts 14:22
AF 479
DNTC 2 134, 429
MD 809

Acts 14:23
AF 195, 197, 214
DNTC 2 114
MD 215
EM 2 448
through a formal act of common consent.

14.23.7—elders—A bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood may hold the office of an Elder, a Seventy, a High Priest, a Patriarch, or an Apostle in the Church of Christ. The proper title for such a priesthood bearer, aside from his position in the Church and Kingdom of God, is “Elder”.

14.24 In addition to their labors among the faithful in Antioch, Paul and Barnabas took the principles of salvation into all of the neighboring towns and villages throughout the region of Pisidia, doing all in their power to see to it that the inhabitants thereof might have the opportunity to receive the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

14.21.7—Pisidia—A region of country that was sometimes merged administratively with Phrygia and formed part of the province of Galatia.

14.24.11—Pamphylia—In the region of Pamphylia, located due south of Pisidia, is located the great port cities of Perga and Attalia. Also see 2.10.3.

14.25 In Luke’s account of this missionary journey, he says nothing of any previous preaching of the word in the city of Perga, but that Paul and Barnabas simply disembarked from their ship at that point along the river Cestius and went to Antioch in Pisidia to continue their ministry. We do not know whether their return to Perga was intended to strengthen disciples as well as to teach the principles to those who would willingly hear them, but in the end it is merely a matter of timing than of substance.

14.25.9—Perga—A city of some historical prominence located on the banks of the Cestius River approximately seven and one-half miles from the Mediterranean coast. It is interesting that the brethren did not leave their ship at Atalia on the coast, as if their intent was to go as far inland as they could before disembarking. The account of their stop at Perga seems a bit truncated as well, as if nothing of any great import happened during their stay.

14.25.14—Attalia—An ancient port on the Mediterranean coast built by Attalus Philadephus, the king of Pergamos during the second century BC.

14.26 We do not know how long the First Missionary Journey took. Some scholars have suggested a year, others have proposed as much as two years. We frankly do not know. The labors of Paul and Barnabas, however, were not cursory or desultory. The disciples mourned for the sins of the world, for the ignorance and poverty which invariably accompanies wickedness. For that reason they were diligent in affording the opportunity to present the covenants of Jesus Christ to all who would hearken to their voices.

14.26.5—Antioch—This is, of course, Antioch in Syria, the place where they had departed when Paul and Barnabas began the first missionary journey.

14.27 There had been many missionary reports prior to this time and there have been a multitude since. Every man who has been honored by God with His priesthood will have to make an accounting of that which they have done with His authority. From time to time, those who hold the keys of the Kingdom expect an accounting of all that which the Spirit has prompted them to delegate to their fellow servants. In this case, Paul and Barnabas gathered the membership of the Church at Antioch to hear their narrative regarding

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.
the many months that they had been absent. It was a time of great rejoicing for the disciples of Christ. As the saints in Galatia had been strengthened and confirmed in their faith as Paul and Barnabas passed among them, so also were the members of the Church confirmed and strengthened by the report of their missionaries.

14.27.23—be—This would be God the Father, of course, the grammatical subject of this sentence.

14.27.32—Gentile—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

14.28 Some scholars have proposed as many as seven years elapsed between the end of the First Missionary Journey and the Second (see 15.30). While these chronologies are cleverly devised, yet we are really ignorant as to the timing of much of that which transpires in the New Testament. There are hints from time to time which seem to give us some confidence in our calculations, but in the end the whole matter is quite tenuous.

15.1 At the heart of the problems generated by these well meaning members of the Church had to do with their perception of the relationship between the Law of Moses and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christianity appeared to be an extension of Judaism, a perfection of the same which embraced all that was commanded by the Law. The notion that spiritual expectations of the Gospel of Christ would somehow satisfy the temporal demands of the carnal law had not yet occurred to many of the members of the Church. That one could become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ without first becoming a practicing Jew was all but inconceivable to the more conservative adherents of Christianity. Even if one accepted the fact that the law of the Gospel was a higher law than that of Moses, the practice of circumcision had not begun with the great Lawgiver, but dated back to at least the time of Abraham. Needless to say, speculation regarding the practice of circumcision in conjunction with the gentile converts to the Church had run rampant and apparently unchecked until this confrontation in Antioch.

15.1.8—Judaea—In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the province of Judea stretched from Malatha on the south to the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the River Jordan on the east, comprising approximately 5,000 square miles.

15.1.17—circumcised—The Hebrew word which is used to represent “circumcised” derives from roots which mean to “cut short, curtail, blunt, destroy” particularly regarding the prepuce. The Greek word derives from roots which mean to “cut around with a single stroke”. Circumcision was given to Abraham and his posterity as a sign of their place as a covenant people.

15.1.22—Mose—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

Chapter 15

1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

Acts 15
DHC 1 (42)
DNTC 2 138, 461
MD 144
Acts 15:1–35
DNTC 2 71, 101, 110, 147, 184, 188, 227, 254, 257, 301, 415, 464, 470, 478, 501, 540
15.2 The experiences of Paul and Barnabas during their missionary travels had convinced them that the Gentiles were as susceptible to the principles of salvation as were the Jews and in many cases the Gentiles were far more spiritually sensitive than those who naturally pertained to the covenant people. Although the ritual of circumcision was not necessarily an anti-Christian act, yet in the minds of the disciples, that singular performance opened the door for an insistence that the entire weight and measure of the Law of Moses should be observed by all Christians regardless of their ethnic background. Paul and Barnabas felt that by allowing this outward marker of Judaism to be enforced upon the Gentile converts to Christianity, the conservative factions of the Church would undoubtedly make more demands upon the Gentiles which would not be in harmony with the spiritual orientation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For all of its historicity, circumcision was an ancient token that had been superseded by others signs and tokens which accompanied the dispensation of the Meridian of Time, just as the Lord’s Day had replaced the seventh-day Sabbath that had been observed since the days of Adam and Eve. That Jesus had made it plain to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles that circumcision was not longer required of the members of the Church is certain; that fact was also clearly articulated to the Nephites when the Savior appeared to them after his resurrection from the dead. The real problem confronting the leadership of the Church of Christ was not what should be done to initiate Gentiles into the Kingdom of God, but rather how to keep the dissension between those with differing religious and ethnic backgrounds from destroying the Church internally. The decision to lay the question before the presiding council of the Church could not have been improved upon.

15.2.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

15.2.5—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

15.2.29—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

15.2.32—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.
15.2.34—elders—A bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood may hold the office of an Elder, a Seventy, a High Priest, a Patriarch, or an Apostle in the Church of Christ. The proper title for such a priesthood bearer, aside from his position in the Church and Kingdom of God, is “Elder”.

15.3 Many scholars have pointed to the narrative contained in the second chapter of Paul’s epistle to the Galatians as a recounting of the foray Paul and Barnabas described here in Acts. If this be the case, then this council held in Jerusalem to settle the matter of circumcision among the Gentile converts to the Church took place nearly twenty years after Paul’s conversion to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Additionally, we are informed that Titus, a Greek convert, went with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, a convert who, by the way, was not required to submit to circumcision. Thirdly, in his letter to the Galatians, Paul clearly states that the whole proceeding was the product of revelation, both personal and ecclesiastical.

15.3.7—by the church—The implication of the phrasing is that the travelers were housed and fed by the members of the Church of Christ as they progressively made their way from Antioch to Jerusalem.

15.3.13—Phœnix—A variant spelling for the name of the province of Phoenicia, the coastal region which is now called Lebanon.

15.3.15—Samaria—As the disciples passed from one Christian community to another on their journey southward, Paul and Barnabas took the opportunity to rehearse their missionary experiences that took place on the island of Cyprus and the province of Galatia.

15.3.21—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

15.4 At the heart of Paul and Barnabas’ argument against Christian circumcision was that God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ had demonstrated time and again their willingness to bless the Gentile converts with the very same blessings rendered to the Jewish members of the Church notwithstanding the fact that they had not taken upon themselves the outward token given to the covenant peoples of earlier dispensations. The most effective procedure then was to recount the events associated with their experiences in Galatia and Syria while promulgating the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

15.4.7—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

15.4.13—Church—As the membership of the Church of Christ had provided for the temporal necessities of the disciples as they traveled from Antioch to Jerusalem, so also in the city proper the saints sought to provide for Paul and Barnabas and their companions with board and room.

15.4.17—apostles—The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, the presiding...
council of the Church of Christ.

15.4.19—elder—Other priesthood leaders who held various keys of responsibility for the Kingdom of God on the earth.

15.5 The philosophy of the Pharisees had come into existence as a result of the Babylonian Captivity that took place during the sixth century before the birth of Jesus Christ. The strict interpretation of the Law of Moses and the necessity to observe the Law with exactness developed from the assumption that their afflictions had derived from disobedience and a cavalier approach to the commandments of God. While there was truth to their conclusion, the Pharisees insisted on a “super obedience”, an observance of the Law of Moses which was not prescribed in the scriptures. These requirements are often referred to as the “hedge” around the Law, which if obeyed would insure that the Law itself would not be broken by any of the House of Israel.

With the coming of Jesus Christ as the mortal Messiah, and more especially with the death and resurrection of the Savior, many of the Pharisees perceived the fulfillment of prophecy in the life and teachings of Jesus. As might be expected, when they joined the Church of Christ at the hands of the Apostles, the Pharisees brought with them their conservative approach to things theological. The abandonment of circumcision as a token of one’s fealty to the Lord God of Israel would have seemed unthinkable to most of these men.

15.5.5—certain—These men are either the members of the Church who had accompanied Paul and Barnabas from Antioch or those in Jerusalem who held the same views (see 15.1).

15.5.11—Pharisees—An extremely orthodox Jewish sect that believed that only a rigorous adherence to the Law of Moses would save the children of Israel. Their demands, however, went far beyond the constraints of the Law, to the point that almost every man was unconditionally condemned by their philosophy. Their attention was so focused on the minutia of their own reasoning that they were unable to comprehend the simplicity of what was demanded by the Gospel of Christ. Had they been able to forsake momentarily the pride and vanity which they felt over their elaborate readings of Moses, they might have seen the purpose for which the Law had been given was to point them directly at the mortal Messiah through his messenger John the Baptist. The Pharisees believed in a future state beyond mortality and were convinced of a literal resurrection from the dead, much in the same fashion as the disciples of Christ. They accepted the notion of angelic ministers and of the living spirit housed within the body of every man. They also believed in the free will of man operating in conjunction with the providence of God.

15.5.20—circumcise—The Hebrew word which is used to represent “circumcise” derives from roots which mean to “cut short, curtail, blunt, destroy” particularly regarding the prepuce. The Greek word derives from roots which mean to “cut around with a single stroke”. Circumcision was given to Abraham and his posterity as a sign of their place as a covenant people.

15.5.31—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

15.6 That Peter knew precisely what should be done in this matter there can
be no doubt. His conviction that the Gospel of Jesus Christ would be taken to the Gentiles, that they would respond in the affirmative to all that would be taught them, and that the blessings of eternity would distill upon them as they lived the principles of salvation and exaltation had been clearly manifested to him on several occasions, not the least of which was his encounter with Cornelius (see 10.34–48). Most, if not all, of the Apostles were aware of the great blessings which were to be poured out upon those who were not genetic descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For them, the issue was not "if" but "when". Because there were many members of the Church of Christ who held conservative views like those of the Pharisees, the leadership of the Church correctly perceived the matter of the gathering of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God as a somewhat delicate issue. It would be a slow and somewhat painful process.

15.6.3—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified "I send a message". In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

15.6.5—elders—A bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood may hold the office of an Elder, a Seventy, a High Priest, a Patriarch, or an Apostle in the Church of Christ. The proper title for such a priesthood bearer, aside from his position in the Church and Kingdom of God, is “Elder”.

15.7 The argument which had begun in Antioch between those representing the Pharisees’ point of view and the Gentile disciples erupted again in the presence of the presiding council of the Church. The fracsas was such that Paul and Barnabas were interrupted in their testimony as to what God had done by their hands. Peter, as the President of the Church of Christ, called the meeting to order, reminding those gathered of his own experiences with Cornelius and his family some years before.

15.7.8–10—Peter rose up—In another ancient manuscript of great authority, the words “inspired by the Spirit” follow this phrase. As the Prophet, Seer, and Revelator of that period of time of the history of the Church of Christ, Peter is not speaking his own mind only, but that which the Father would have him say.

15.7.23–25—good while ago—At least ten years before when Peter and Cornelius first met. Peter may also be referring to the commission of Christ given shortly after his resurrection from the dead by which the Gospel was to be taken to every creature under heaven (see MK-C 16.15–18).

15.7.28—choice—that is to say, that God the Father had chosen Peter from among the Apostles to facilitate Cornelius’ entrance into the Church and Kingdom of God.

15.7.33—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts came together for to consider of this matter.

7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.
and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

15.7.35–36—my mouth—Because of Paul’s later comment to the Galatians regarding Peter and himself, many students of the scriptures have concluded that Peter’s primary responsibility in the Church was with the Jews while Paul’s resided with the Gentiles, perceiving a significant dichotomy between the ministries of the two men. This is an unfortunate conclusion which tends to dismiss or diminish the great contributions of the senior Apostle among those not of the House of Israel.

15.8 Paul and Barnabas were attempting to bear their testimonies regarding the labors which they had performed in Antioch and Galatia when they had been interrupted. Peter had long before given his witness as to how the Spirit had fallen upon Cornelius and his family. Peter’s point here is that in both cases, the primary and most compelling evidence that could be entered into the record is that God Himself had confirmed their experiences and observations by blessing the Gentiles with those very same blessings which had been poured out upon the disciples which Jesus had invited into the Kingdom of God on the earth during his mortal ministry.

15.9 If God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ no longer distinguished between the faithful among the descendants of Abraham and the faithful among the Gentiles, who with a clear conscience could insist that there be a stratification within the Church of Christ like that which existed in the synagogues of the Jews? One of the signal differences between the Law and the Gospel was that in the latter there would be neither bond nor free, male nor female, Jew nor Gentile, but all one in Christ Jesus, united, purified, and sanctified by faith in the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

15.10 Had there been any revelation given by which the disciples were to understand that the Gentiles ought to be circumcised before they could become members of the Church of Christ? In the absence of such revelation, should the body of Christ presume that all previous covenants should be imposed upon the Gentiles? It is interesting here that Peter correctly perceives the burden that would be placed upon the new members of the Church were this proscription to be allowed to continue. Circumcision was not the “burden” which could not be borne. Most circumcisions took place on the eighth day of mortality. Peter is referring to the whole weight and measure of the Law of Moses which the Pharisees would certainly demand that the Gentile converts to the Church should observe as well. By drawing the Christian covenant line outside the pale of circumcision, Peter clearly indicated that the conservative faction within the Church would have no basis for introducing the complete Law of Moses among the Gentiles.

15.10.4—tempt—The Greek word which is here translated as “tempt” derives from roots which mean “pierce, test, endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline”. In other words, why would anyone want to irritate the Father when He has already made His will known regarding the matter?

15.11 Peter appeals directly to the faith of the Jewish membership of the Church. Why had any of them accepted the covenant of Christ in the first place? Had they not sensed, logically and spiritually, that their observance of the Law of Moses was insufficient for salvation and exaltation in the Kingdom of God? If the Law given to Moses was insufficient and the Gospel of Jesus Christ was sufficient, why would they have needed to be circumcised? The answer is, they would not have needed the fleshly observance of the Law of Moses to bear witness of Christ and His kingdom.

8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

Acts 15:8–9
TSWK 609

9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

Acts 15:9
AF 117
FPM 298
MD 612
EM 4 1625

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

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

Acts 15:11
CR98-A 76
Christ was able to bring men and women back into the presence of God, then what need did the Gentiles have to observe a lesser and incomplete covenant? Peter assures his brethren that their attachment to the Law of Moses was now only a cultural one and not the means by which they hoped for salvation. If they wished to live their lives as Jews because they felt comfortable doing so, they were free to continue without censure. They were not free, however, to make other members of the Church uncomfortable by imposing their cultural mores upon them.

15.11.11—12—Jesus Christ—The author of eternal salvation, both of the body and the spirit through the power of the resurrection and his atoning sacrifice for sin.

15.12 Peter’s observations, filled with the Spirit of truth and righteousness, were compelling. The members of the Church who pertained also to the sect of the Pharisees were receptive to both the logic and the inspiration of Peter’s words. Peter, as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ, prepared them through faith, to hearken to the words of Paul and Barnabas. The two disciples related in some detail all that had transpired as they had performed their missionary labors in Syria, and from thence to Cyprus and Galatia. The opposition of the Jews in those places must have pained the saints in Jerusalem as they saw their own malignant attitudes magnified and carried to their bitter ends: persecution, revilement, and attempted homicide. Paul and Barnabas were able to testify clearly that the power of God had manifested itself among the Jews and Gentiles alike, and that there had been no distinction made with regard to the richness of the blessings poured out upon both segments of the societies they had taught. Obedience to the Gospel of Christ was to be considered first and foremost.

15.12.11—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

15.12.13—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

15.12.24—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

15.13 Many arguments have been proffered as to why James is given leave to speak to his subject at this point, most of which have little basis in fact. James was one of twelve men who jointly held the keys of the Kingdom of God. They were met in council to determine the course of the Church of Christ among the Gentiles. No doubt others of the Apostles addressed the subject as well. Peter’s address to the leadership of the Church set forth the voice of the Lord on the matter, insofar as the applicability of the Law of Moses was concerned. James presented the general proposal which had already been agreed to by the members of the Quorum of the Twelve for the

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

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

Acts 15:13–21  
JC 224
sustaining vote of the other priesthood bearers of the Church gathered in Jerusalem. As part of his presentation, James directed the attention of his audience to the scriptures that the saints might understand that their executive decision was consistent with the voice of the Lord in ages past.

15.13.8—James—Not the brother of John the Beloved; he had been murdered by Agrippa sometime before (see 12.2). Some writers have suggested that this was James, the brother of Jesus of Nazareth who joined the Church after the resurrection of the Savior and later was called to serve as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. There is a distinct possibility, however, that this spokesman was James Alphaeus, another one of the original Apostles chosen by Jesus during his mortal ministry.

15.14 James bears his testimony regarding the witness of Peter. The blessings that devolved upon Cornelius and his family were known to the Twelve and many of the other leaders of the Church. The centurion must have continued as a faithful member of the Church of Christ and a great benefit to the saints.

15.14.1—Simon—The Semitic form of the Greek name “Simon”, itself a transliteration from Hebrew. Volumes have been written as to why James chose to use this explicitly Hebrew name rather than “Peter” or “Simon”. Most of the arguments are mere piffle and reflect deep and abiding religious bigotry among the parties involved.

15.14.12—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

15.15 James testifies that Peter’s experiences and those of Paul and Barnabas were consistent with longstanding prophesies regarding the eventual salvation of the Gentiles. Although James could have cited many passages of scripture to prove his point, he chose the words of the prophet Amos. We ought not to be distracted by the fact that Luke’s scriptural quote comes from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

15.15.9—prophets—The noun is in the plural notwithstanding the fact that James only cites Amos.

15.16 James’ quotation begins with the eleventh verse of the ninth chapter of the book of Amos. To set the passage in its historical context, however, it seems helpful to quote the three preceding verses as well.

Behold, the eyes of the Lord GOD are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD. For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us. In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: (Amos 9:8–11)
Amos prophesied seven and a half centuries before the birth of Christ, a century and a half before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonian. Obviously, the prophet was aware that the city of Jerusalem and the Temple of Solomon would be destroyed and then later rebuilt.

15.16.13—David—The second king of United Israel and successor of king Saul. David was the youngest of eight sons born to Jesse, although only seven are ever named in the scriptural account.

15.17 The scattering of the House of Israel was not just to serve as a punishment for a recalcitrant people, but as the means by which all of the sons and daughters of God might find redemption and salvation. James cites only verse 12, but the remainder of the chapter is quoted below as well.

That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God. (Amos 9:12–15)

15.17.14—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

15.18 James shares his witness that he knows that the God of Heaven is not oblivious to the welfare of mankind and has provided the means whereby all of His children might have an opportunity to live in accordance with the truth. The implication of the Apostle’s testimony is that provisions had been made in every dispensation to bless and edify the children of men, and even the most onerous of afflictions were calculated to bring peace and harmony into the lives of the faithful.

15.19 Circumcision was not to be a principle governing the membership of the Church of Christ. For those Jewish members of the Church who wished to continue in the practice, they were undoubtedly free to do so in order to not incur the wrath or distain of their orthodox neighbors and family. But the Gentiles were under no such obligation. There were notable exceptions to this general rule, particularly when the sensibilities of orthodox Jews who also bore sway politically were concerned.

15.19.3—sentence—The Greek word which is here translated as “sentence” derives from roots which mean “decide, distinguish, try, condemn, punish”. One might argue the merits of the word itself in the context, but it is clear that the imposition of circumcision on the Gentile converts to the Church of Christ was not favorably viewed.

15.19.7—trouble—The Greek word which is here translated as “trouble” derives from roots which mean “harass further, annoy”

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

Acts 15:18
AF 43, 50, 191
MD 425
EM 2 521
15.19.14—Gentile—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

15.20 Sexual immorality was common fare among many of the Gentile nations, so culturally prevalent that the Apostles felt the necessity to emphasize the principle of chastity. This lack of propriety came in part because of the licentious festivals celebrated in the temples of the heathen. Hence, the Gentiles were commanded to forego any associations that might compromise their covenants to the Lord God. Paul would later teach the Corinthians that the animals offered up in sacrifice to the Greek or Roman gods were not in and of themselves corrupted; roasted meat is just roasted meat in those cases. It was the Bacchanalian liberties which they would have to witness in order to obtain those free meals that would destroy them if they persisted in going up to the temples. Hence, the prohibition here. The later question had to do with the leftovers which were typically sold in the shambles at the market place that the saints in Corinth were concerned about. Could they be eaten or not? The answer was yes, but still Paul cautioned them that their liberty in doing so might cause another member of the Church to fall into apostasy. Eating blood and animals which had been strangled rather than slaughtered were prohibitions of the Mosaic Law and it seems odd that any such proscription would be forthcoming from a body that had just concluded that ritualistic obedience to the lesser Law was not a part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The next verse, however, clarifies why James thought it might be proper to have the Gentiles be somewhat circumspect in their diet.

15.21 The membership of the Church of Jesus Christ was now comprised of both Jews and Gentiles alike. Whether a Gentile convert to the Church was circumcised or not, was not self-evident. However, what a man had for dinner, especially when the saints had come together for social gatherings was quite public. The deep seated dietary biases of the Jewish members of the Church were such that the liberties of the Gentiles in their eating habits might very well prove to be so divisive that the various congregations of the Church might be destroyed. It would be far easier for a Gentile convert to give up certain kinds of food than it would be for a Jew to witness their consumption. For the sake of unity, then, James gave his opinion as to how possible cultural issues might be easily resolved.

15.21.2—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

15.21.18—synagogues—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

15.22 Once the decision had been made as to what should be done regarding
the requirements incumbent upon the Gentile Christians to observe, the leadership of the Church thought it best to promulgate that official declaration by sending forth representatives from the Twelve Apostles and other general authorities to the various congregations of the Church throughout the world. The first such location where these policies needed special care was in the cosmopolitan city of Antioch in Syria. Both Judas and Silas were men whose fervency and testimony were unquestioned by all who came into their presence.

15.22.5—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

15.22.7—elders—A bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood may hold the office of an Elder, a Seventy, a High Priest, a Patriarch, or an Apostle in the Church of Christ. The proper title for such a priesthood bearer, aside from his position in the Church and Kingdom of God, is “Elder”.

15.22.21—Antioch—This is, of course, Antioch in Syria, the place where they had departed when Paul and Barnabas began the first missionary journey.

15.22.23—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

15.22.25—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

15.22.27—Judas—The proper name of one of the emissaries sent by the Church leadership in Jerusalem to help the saints in Antioch and environs to understanding the declaration of the same regarding the status of the Gentiles who had joined the Church.

15.22.29—Barsabas—We know little or nothing of Judas Barsabas aside from this particular assignment given to him by the leadership of the Church at this critical time. He must have been a man held in high esteem. It is likely that Joseph Barsabas, he who was one of two men considered to replace Judas Iscariot in the Quorum of the Twelve, was this man’s brother (see 1.23–26).

15.22.31—Silas—A future traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of “Silvanus”. In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

15.23 As has been the case from time immemorial, when those who preside and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

23 And they wrote letters by them
in the Church and Kingdom of God have received revelations which impinge upon the conduct of the saints of God, those revelations have been committed to writing and kept in a book of remembrance, thus preserving the word of God so long as men were willing to receive it, from generation to generation. The letter to the members of the Church in Antioch was far more than a policy statement of the Apostles and prophets of the Lord. It was a pronouncement of timely doctrine which the Church must obey if they were to receive the blessings of heaven.

15.23.5—6—by them—that is, "written by their own hand". Some translations interpret the phrase as meaning that the letters were "sent in the hands" of Paul and the others. The issue is of a small moment, but the former is more likely than the latter.

15.23.11—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term "apostles" derives originally signified "I send a message". In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertained to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

15.23.13—elders—A bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood may hold the office of an Elder, a Seventy, a High Priest, a Patriarch, or an Apostle in the Church of Christ. The proper title for such a priesthood bearer, aside from his position in the Church and Kingdom of God, is "Elder".

15.23.20—brethren—The salutation of the letter was a harbinger of the contents. The Gentiles were sons of God as were the Jews and there would be no distinction made between the ethnic factions of the Church as there had been in the synagogues.

15.23.25—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as "Gentiles" means "foreigners" or "strangers", and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as "Gentiles" carries with it the notion of "massing" like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

15.23.27—Antioch—This is, of course, Antioch in Syria, the place where they had departed when Paul and Barnabas began the first missionary journey.

15.23.29—Syria and Cilicia—This decision was to have a far greater application than just the city in which the question had been raised.

15.24 There is a superior translation for this verse.

Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain men which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law; to whom we gave no such commandment; (JST; Acts 15:24)

Although the principles involved would have wider application than to just the members of the Church at Antioch, the Apostles addressed specifically those who had originated the question about the Gentiles members of the
Church, who had sent the delegation to Jerusalem to resolve the contention which the teachings of the men from Judea had initiated. From thenceforth there could be no misunderstanding as to whom the true principles were directed and why they were sent at all. Forever more, no man could trouble the saints in Antioch in the same way.

15.24.7—certain—That is, there had been those who had come from Jerusalem claiming to have authority to command the Gentiles members of the Church to be circumcised (see 15.1).

15.24.18—subverting—The Greek word which is here translated as “subverting” derives from roots which mean “reversal, pack up, upset”.

15.24.25—circumcised—The Hebrew word which is used to represent “circumcised” derives from roots which mean to “cut short, curtail, blunt, destroy” particularly regarding the prepuce. The Greek word derives from roots which mean to “cut around with a single stroke”. Circumcision was given to Abraham and his posterity as a sign of their place as a covenant people.

15.24.29—law—Meaning, of course, the Law of Moses.

15.24.32—we—That is to say, the Apostles and other presiding authorities of the Church had not sent the men; they had taught without inspiration, from the biases of their own hearts and minds.

15.25 The Apostles, elders, and brethren of the Church of Christ were unanimous in their sentiments. There was no division among them. When the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles is united in its declaration, the saints of the Most High may know that the mind and will of the God of Heaven has been revealed to man. This is no idle matter. Twelve men, filled with the Spirit of God, imbued with the priesthood of the Savior, declaring a singular message to the world, must be hearken to or condemnation will follow. Revelations from God have been given to mankind in a verity of ways, but within the Church of Christ there is order. Those who hold the keys of the Kingdom are entitled to speak the mind and will of God with regard to the affairs of the Church. To dismiss or ignore such pronouncements endangers the soul of the believer.

15.25.13–14—chosen men—That is to say, Judas Barsabas and Silas.

15.25.20—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

15.25.22—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

15.26 We may easily point to Luke’s account of the First Missionary Journey to find justification for the praise that the Apostles have given the two disciples. The service of Paul and Barnabas, however, had been far more extensive than the year or two that they had spent in Cyprus and Galatia. Both men had been in the service of their God for nearly twenty years. Their diligence in their tasks had incurred the wrath of the wicked in every place where they had labored, and not just in the cities of Lystra and Iconium.

15.26.13–14—Jesus Christ—The author of eternal salvation, both of the body and the spirit through the power of the resurrection and his
atonning sacrifice for sin.

15.27 Judas Barsabas and Silas had been especially chosen by the Apostles to hand carry the letter to Antioch and to add their testimonies to that of Paul and Barnabas that the council held in Jerusalem had indeed arrived at the indicated decision. There could be no calling into question the authenticity of the letter itself. Any clarification needed could be addressed by the four men in unity and faith. The intent of all this was to preserve the reputation of Paul and Barnabas from any who might, for their own unworthy purposes, attempt to impugn their report of the conference.

15.27.5—Judas—The proper name of one of the emissaries sent by the Church leadership in Jerusalem to help the saints in Antioch and environs to understanding the declaration of the same regarding the status of the Gentiles who had joined the Church. He also is know by the sobriquet “Barsabas”.

15.27.7—Silas—A future traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of “Silvanus”. In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

15.28 Can there be any who would deny that those things which please the Holy Ghost and the Lord’s gathered servants is anything other than the mind and will of God the Father and of His Son Jesus Christ?

15.28.18—burden—That is to say, circumcision would not be required of the Gentile converts to the Church of Jesus Christ. And by implication, nor would the weight and measure of the Law of Moses be imposed upon them.

15.28.21–22—necessary things—Obviously the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ are not dismissed here. That which was “necessary” had to do with those actions which would foster unity among the members of the Church, both Jew and Gentile.

15.29 Again, the members of the Church who had been accustomed to attending the heathen temples for the inexpensive or free meals were counseled to avoid the very appearance of evil. To a certain degree, one might likewise counsel the saints of God to avoid feeding themselves in gaming establishments. One probably ought not to dismiss the potential for transgression in such dens of iniquity, both ancient and modern. The proscriptions from eating that which was made from the blood of animals or from animals that had been strangled before butchering had to do with the sensitivities of the Jewish members of the Church who would, for cultural reasons rather than theological, find the practice abhorrent. It would be a small sacrifice made by the Gentile Christians in order to help strengthen the spiritual bonds between culturally diverse peoples in a single congregation. Additionally, the non-Christian Jewish community would have less inconsequential issues to assail their Christian friends and family members about in the course of daily life (see also 15.19–21).

15.29.28—well—There are ancient manuscripts which add the phrase “under the guidance of the Holy Spirit”. Whether it be a part of the original text penned by Luke or not we may not be able to say at this point, but the sentiments are certainly not offensive; quite the reverse.

15.30 The four missionaries and their entourage left Jerusalem and made their way back to Antioch in Syria from whence their quest had begun. We

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, whom also ye yourselves determined shall go up with us to Jerusalem, for to see the saints, and to be comforted by the faith of them.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when...
cannot but wonder if the disciples communicated the contents of the letter to others with whom they lodged as they traveled homeward. It would have been joyful news indeed to the Samaritans and other marginalized members of Jewish society. There may have been other representatives of the Apostles, however, who were charged with disseminating the glad tidings throughout the established Church.

15.30.3—_they_—That is, the Council that had been held to determine the matter regarding circumcision for the Gentile members of the Church.

15.30.6—_they_—That is to say, Paul, Barnabas, Judas Barsabas, Silas, and the other men who had accompanied the disciples to Jerusalem.

15.30.9—_Antioch_—This is, of course, Antioch in Syria, the place where they had departed when Paul and Barnabas began the first missionary journey.

15.31 To a people threatened with extensive adaptation to an onerous and incomprehensible observance of the Law of Moses, this letter proved to a relief to the heart and mind.

15.31.10—_consolation_—The Greek word which is here translated as "consolation" derives from roots which mean "imploration, hortation, solace, call near, invite, invoke, beseech, pray, be of good comfort". Jesus is the sum and substance of every covenant that has been extended from God to mankind. Ultimately, the covenant implied is the invitation to become as He is. To a world-weary people, and especially to a people who were potentially oppressed by a preparatory gospel, it seems unthinkable that anyone would not rejoice at the renewed prospects.

15.32 If the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, combined with continuous revelation from men filled with the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, constituted the "consolation" spoken of here, then Judas Barsabas and Silas were equal to the task of reassuring the members of the Church of Christ in Antioch and environs that peace and harmony would be their lot if they would but follow counsel. These two emissaries were devout men, filled with the spirit of God, divinely instructed as to how to touch the hearts of those around them, that the saints might believe in their worlds and be edified by the truth. They were prophets, men whose testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ was unshakeable, who could therefore speak without hesitation those things which had been committed to their charge. The disciples in Antioch thereby knew for themselves that the revelation given by the Apostles regarding circumcision was true.

15.32.2—_Judas_—The proper name of one of the emissaries sent by the Church leadership in Jerusalem to help the saints in Antioch and environs to understand the declaration of the same regarding the status of the Gentiles who had joined the Church. He also is known by the sobriquet "Barsabas".

15.32.4—_Silas_—A future traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of "Silvanus". In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

15.33 Their assignment concluded, Judas Barsabas and Silas were free to leave for Jerusalem. As will be seen, however, Silas decided to stay in Antioch for an extended period while Judas returned to the headquarters of the Church with the news and their relatives who had joined the Body in Antioch and environs, that peace and harmony would be their lot if they would but follow counsel. These two emissaries were devout men, filled with the spirit of God, divinely instructed as to how to touch the hearts of those around them, that the saints might believe in their worlds and be edified by the truth. They were prophets, men whose testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ was unshakeable, who could therefore speak without hesitation those things which had been committed to their charge. The disciples in Antioch thereby knew for themselves that the revelation given by the Apostles regarding circumcision was true.

15.33.1—_they_—Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

15.33.2—_Silas_—And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

Acts 15:33

MD 105
Church alone. We are not told what prompted this decision on Silas’ part save that it was well received by the membership of the Church in general and by Paul in particular.

15.33.8—space—The Greek word which is here translated as “space” derives from roots which means “a time of undetermined length, opportunity, delay”.

15.34 Some textualists and translators have dismissed this verse as inconsequential. Neither the NIV nor the New Jerusalem Bible include the verse in the main body of the text. The justification for such an elision is that these scholars have concluded that it was inserted merely to explain why it was that Silas was in Antioch when Paul and Barnabas chose their traveling companions for their second missionary journey. Many ancient manuscripts include the verse and some even go so far as to state additionally that “Judas set out by himself”. It is often difficult to comprehend the angst caused by these little variants. One wonders if modern scholarship is dealing more in sectarian politics than in the discovery of truth.

15.34.4—Silas—A future traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of “Silvanus”. In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

15.35 Paul and Barnabas were particularly concerned that the agitation caused by the dissensions among the saints regarding circumcision be completely resolved. Therefore, they continued to strengthen those around them in this and other matters until harmony was once again established among the members of the Church in Antioch. Until the problems had been completely settled, neither of them felt free to resume their missionary efforts among those whom they had brought into the Church and Kingdom of God during the First Missionary Journey on the island of Cyprus and in the province of Galatia.

15.35.1—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

15.35.4—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

15.35.7—Antioch—This is, of course, Antioch in Syria, the place where they had departed when Paul and Barnabas began the first missionary journey.

15.35.17–18—many others—We are not privy as to who these authorized priesthood bearers were, but they made great contributions to the peace and tranquility of the Church in Syria.

15.36 Although our current text at this point does not indicate that it was the case, there are ancient manuscripts which suggest that one of the primary motivations for revisiting the members of the Church in Cyprus and Galatia was to bring the glad tidings regarding the decision made at Jerusalem the previous year. These documents add the phrase, “passing on to them the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.
injunction of the elders”. Given the context it would seem reasonable to assume that the specific “injunction” was contained in the letter written to Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia by the Apostles (see 15.23). This act of promulgating the revelation on Gentile circumcision is alluded to in the fourth verse of the next chapter (see 16.4). No doubt there were hundreds, perhaps thousands of the saints would rejoice as heartily as the members of the Church in Antioch at the news.

15.36.2-3—some days—Again, we do not know how much time has transpired since the council held at Jerusalem regarding the circumcision of the Gentiles. Some scholars, however, have speculated that it was about one year.

15.36.5—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

15.36.8—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

15.37 We ought not become overwrought at the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas. The desire of Barnabas to encourage and strengthen his nephew in the ministry is not only understandable but to be expected of a concerned family member. On the other hand, Paul’s feelings are consistent with his fervent desire to be as effective in his labors as he possibly could. When John Mark absented himself from the ministry at Perga, all of the practical tasks which had been attended to by Mark fell to the two missionaries. How these things contributed directly to the adversity that Paul and Barnabas experienced in Galatia we may not say, but Paul certainly felt that he could not depend upon the young man as he had before. Anticipating Mark’s potential departure was too much of a distraction for him.

15.37.2—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

15.37.8—John—This is the author of the Gospel of Mark and the traveling companion of Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey to Cyprus and Pamphylia.

15.37.12—Mark—It is by his Latin name that we are most familiar with Barnabas’ nephew. He is never called “John Mark” in the New Testament even though many scholars use that name to distinguish him from other men named “John”.

15.38 Paul was aware of his own limitations. If he were overly concerned about the steadiness of one of his traveling companions, especially one who was supposed to bear a large portion of the practical matters of traveling itinerantly, he would not be as effective a missionary as he otherwise might

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Acts 15:37–40
DNTC 3.117

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.
have been. Barnabas had been no less affected by John Mark’s departure than Paul, but his familial attachment to Mark was such that he was willing to risk another fiasco. It is an age-old argument as to whether service in the Kingdom of God is primarily to bless the young missionary himself or the people who are the beneficiaries of his ministry. Obviously the two things are one in the end; it is the unity of mind and heart of the servant and those whom he serves which ultimately heals many wounds in both.

15.38.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

15.38.16—Pamphylia—The three missionaries had traveled upriver from the coast by ship to Perga, a major city in the region of Pamphylia. John Mark apparently took passage by ship in his return to from Perga to Jerusalem.

15.39 Although one could make a case for a perfectly mild separation between Paul and Barnabas, there was no doubt some heat involved in the final decision to go their separate ways. We ought not to think, however, that their disagreement was such that it permanently damaged their relationship. From all that can be discerned from Paul’s own hand, he and Barnabas maintained a deep affection for each other for the rest of their lives. Once John Mark had proven his worth as a worthy and constant companion to Barnabas, any negative feelings that Paul may have had towards the young man would have evaporated.

15.39.3—contention—The Greek word which is here translated as “contention” derives from roots which mean “sharpen alongside, exacerbate, excitement to good, dispute in anger”. This same root produces the English word “paroxysm”.

15.39.6—sharp—This English adjective is a particle derived from the Greek word translated above as “contention”.

15.39.19—Barnabas—The friend and traveling companion of Saul of Tarsus. A native of Cyprus. By all accounts, this is the same man who had entered into the Law of consecration and stewardship at the time the Church was flourishing in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ into Heaven (see 4.36–37). How and when Saul and Barnabas came to know one another we cannot say, but it is clear that Barnabas was privy to all of Saul’s experiences from the time of his vision on the road to Damascus and all of his experiences in preaching the Gospel to the Jews in that city.

15.39.21—Mark—It is by his Latin name that we are most familiar with Barnabas’ nephew. He is never called “John Mark” in the New Testament even though many scholars use that name to distinguish him from other men named “John”.

15.39.25—Cyprus—The island off the coast of Phoenicia from whence Barnabas hailed.

15.40 Much has been written about the decision of Paul and Barnabas to separate, each taking their own companions to their specific fields of labor. Paul and Silas left Antioch with the blessings of the saints upon them. We ought not to be led to believe that because Luke does not mention equal blessings being evoked upon Barnabas and John Mark that this pair was excoriated by the Church. Otherwise bright and intelligent men have embarrassed themselves by so asserting.

15.40.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

15.40.4—Silas—Whether or not Silas had returned to Jerusalem with

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.
Judas Barsabas after their ministry in Antioch was completed is irrelevant to the narrative here. Paul had found in Silas an able missionary, a man filled with the Spirit of God, a prophet experienced in the things of God upon he could depend without hesitancy. His subsequent travels with Paul were extensive.

15.41 Barnabas and John Mark took passage to the island of Cyprus and for Luke’s purposes disappear from the history contained in Acts. Paul and Silas travel on foot throughout all of Syria and Cilicia, no doubt relaying the communication which they had received from the Quorum of the Twelve regarding the state of the Gentiles within the Church of Christ. Having attended to their responsibilities in that region, the two missionaries moved on to the city of Derbe in the province of Galatia.

15.41.5—Syria—An expansive territory north of the land of Canaan, the capital being the city of Damascus. Syria stretched form the Mesopotamian valley to the Mediterranean Sea.

15.41.7—Cilicia—A province in the southeastern portion of that which is modern-day Turkey. It was bordered on the west by Pamphylia and Pisidia, on the north by Galatia, Cappadocia, and Kommagene. At the time of the Apostles it was frequently considered an administrative part of Syria. Tarsus, the town that Paul the Apostle called home, was the chief city of that region.

16.1 One of the major purposes for Paul’s Second Missionary Journey was to visit with the saints who had been taught and edified during Paul and Barnabas’ initial foray into Galatia. As might easily be seen by consulting a map of the area, Paul and Silas approached Derbe from the opposite direction than Paul and Barnabas had. The two companions were traveling upon the ancient road from Tarsus to Lystra through the rough terrain of the Tarsus Mountains leading from the coastal lowlands to the high Anatolian plains.

16.1.5—Derbe—A town historically located on the commercial route between Tarsus and Lystra whose present location is in some dispute. Tradition has it located some 30 miles south and east of Lystra. Also the home of Gaius, one of Paul’s later traveling companions (see 20.4).

16.1.7—Lystra—A small community located about 30 miles south of Iconium. It is the traditional home town of Timothy, a fellow laborer in the mission field with Paul.

16.1.16—Timothy—If longstanding tradition is any indication, this young man would become Paul’s constant companion and the one to whom two of Paul’s many epistles were addressed. Timothy was raised in the Jewish faith by his mother, though he was not circumcised until he had neared adulthood. His conversion to Christianity was a great blessing to his family and to the Church of Christ. Extrascipitural tradition has assigned Timothy the bishopric of Ephesus and martyrdom at the hands of the emperor of Rome. Historians are at odds as to whether of the two cities, Derbe or Lystra, was the home town of Timothy and his mother. Some ancient manuscripts assure us that Lystra is the correct community.

16.1.22—woman—If Timothy and Timothy are to be equated, which seems likely, then his mother’s name was Eunice and his grandmother was named Lois. Both of these women were converts to Christianity,
16.2 The members of the Church of Christ in Galatia had discovered Timothy’s great talent for the ministry, notwithstanding his tender years. That he had not been circumcised did not seem to hinder his service to his fellow Christians; that he had not yet attained the age of thirty, the temporal milestone for a teacher in Judaism, does not appear to have been an obstacle either. Paul immediately perceived the young man’s gifts and thought to expand his responsibilities in the ministry.

2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

16.3 Timothy was probably called into missionary service for many of the same reasons that John Mark had accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their First Missionary Journey. So long as Timothy labored among the members of the Church in Galatia there was hardly a soul who would have lifted an eyebrow at his youth or at the absence of the token of Abraham’s covenant. But once Timothy came into contact with the wider field of service, preparing both Jews and Gentiles for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, unjust criticism would have been forthcoming, if for nothing more than to thwart the work of God among the people. Paul’s earlier successes in Galatia had been hampered by bigoted men who, filled with envy and anger, had attempted to destroy Paul and his companions through intimidation and attempted murder. Apparently Timothy’s reputation was such that if he were to directly associate in any fashion with the orthodox Jewish community, his life would have been forfeit. Since the Jews reckoned lineage through the mother, Paul did not consider Timothy’s circumcision to be a violation of the directive from the Apostles. He was not a Gentile being circumcised; he was a Jew who had not been circumcised at eight days of age. On the other hand, Paul would refuse to circumcise Titus, notwithstanding his prominent role in the Church of Christ, because both of the latter’s parents were Greek.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

16.4 Paul and his companions were not rogue instructors preaching whatever their inclinations were. They perceived themselves as emissaries of the Lord Jesus Christ, guided and directed by the constituted authorities of the

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were

Acts 16:4
EM 2 448
EM 3 1050
Church. Whatever keys of the priesthood they may have held, they understood that the Lord’s house is one of order.

16.4.7—cities—Although most maps illustrating Paul’s Second Missionary Journey show only Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch as having received consolation from the missionaries, yet we should be assured that there were other locations where Paul and Silas raised their voices in testimony of Jesus Christ. This was true of the First Missionary Journey; it was true of the Second as well. We ought not to allow the brevity of Luke’s narrative to proscribe the labors of one of the greatest missionaries who ever lived.

16.4.12—decrees—The Greek word which is here translated as “decree” derives from roots which mean “law, civil or ecclesiastical”. This was no doubt in conjunction with the letters sent by the Apostles with regard to the policy of the Church to not circumcise Gentiles who chose to accept the covenant of Christ.

16.4.18—ordained—The Greek word which is here translated as “ordained” derives from roots which mean “distinguish, decide (mentally or judicially), try, condemn punish”.

16.4.21—apostles—The Greek roots from which the term “apostles” derives originally signified “I send a message”. In Greek political language, it referred to an envoy sent by a king to negotiate any affair between himself and any other power or people. In this sense, John the Baptist was the Herald sent to announce the coming of the Messiah, the King of Israel; the Apostles were sent to conduct the business of the rising Kingdom. The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles constitutes one of the leading governing bodies of the Church of Christ. From time to time, there have been ordained Apostles who have not pertain to that Quorum, but that circumstance has been somewhat infrequent in practice.

16.4.23—elders—A bearer of the Melchizedek Priesthood may hold the office of an Elder, a Seventy, a High Priest, a Patriarch, or an Apostle in the Church of Christ. The proper title for such a priesthood bearer, aside from his position in the Church and Kingdom of God, is “Elder”.

16.4.27—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

16.5 Because Paul hearkened to the voice of the Spirit of God, adhering to the directives given by the Prophets, Seers, and Revelators who had been chosen and ordained by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, success among the peoples of Galatia was inevitable. The saints, men and women who were filled with the same spirit and, together with the missionaries, were able to provide a powerful witness of the truth among both Gentiles and Jews. Thus, the honest in heart were attracted to those kindred spirits within the Church of Jesus Christ who reached out to them in love and faith.

16.6 Paul was ever mindful of his role as a servant of the Most High. He was intimately familiar with the nature of inspiration and willingly hearkened to the whisperings of the Spirit of God in his travels. That the Gospel would one day be preached in Asia Minor is a matter of historical record. Miletus, ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word
Ephesus, Sardis, Pergamum, Smyrna, and many other cities in that region would be filled with the membership of the Church of Christ. Thus, it was not a matter of “if” so much as it was a matter of “when”. Other servants of God have been curtailed in their labors simply because others had been foreordained to accomplish specific tasks that clearly would have overlapped.

Nephi and John the Beloved come immediately to mind.

16.6.7—Phrygia—A region of Asia Minor whose boundaries have shifted with the many political winds which have blown across the Anatolian highlands. Most historians place the original area between the Halys and Sakarya Rivers near the present city of Ankara. Modern biblical scholars have a tendency to place Phrygia far to the southwest of the original region, thus placing it outside the boundaries of Galatia of which Phrygia was the central part. What we may conclude from all of this is that Paul’s journeys took him far more to the north than most students of his life have supposed.

16.6.12—Galatia—A province of considerable size in the Roman Empire. To think that Paul’s travels in Galatia were limited to the southern portion of that province seems too narrow for the vision that the great missionary had of his labors. It would not be surprising to discover that Paul and Silas traveled as far north as Ancyrca, even though the modern capital of Turkey is not named in the narrative.

16.6.25—Asia—In reference to Asia Minor, but particularly to the proconsular region which would have included Ionia, Aeolia, and Lydia. Greater Asia Minor would have included Galatia, Pisidia, and other regions where Paul was permitted to freely teach.

16.7 As tempting as the idea may seem, the prohibition of the Spirit directing Paul to avoid Bithynia at this point in his ministry has nothing to do with the Catholic Church. Precisely how Paul was instructed to leave Bithynia to others or a later time, we are not told. Whether by vision, dream, the whisperings of the Holy Ghost to his mind and heart Luke does not say. To make a sharp distinction between that which any member of the Godhead might say to a prophet at any given moment is foolishness. They are one in heart and mind, being filled with the truth and light of eternity.

16.7.6—Mysia—Like many regions in Asia Minor, the boundaries of Mysia have fluctuated dramatically over the centuries. Most biblical scholars place the region adjacent to the southern shore of the Propontis, or Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles. Other historians have proposed other locations in the same general area.

16.7.12—Bithynia—A Roman province and east of Mysia which was situated on the southern shores of the Black Sea and the eastern shores of the Propontis. Within the boundaries of Bithynia is to be found the city of Nicaea (Turkish, Iznik), the site of the First Nicaean Council (AD 325) the result of which was the rather dubious Nicaean Creed regarding the nature of the Godhead. The Second Nicaean Council, held in AD 787, determined that the veneration of icons was an acceptable Christian practice.

16.7.15—Spirit—Some ancient manuscripts include the phrase “of Jesus” after this word. Some fuss has been generated by the absence and presence of the phrase, but it is all a tempest in a teapot, if considered correctly.

16.8 Apparently the region of Mysia was forbidden as well at that time as a place to promulgate the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul, Silas, and Timothy made their way directly to the port city of in Asia, in Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.
Troas. It is at this place that Paul and Luke apparently become acquainted (see 16.10.9).

16.8.4—by—Some translators have “through” here. We are left to ques-
tion whether or not Paul actually entered into the region of Mysia at all.

16.8.5—Mysia—Like many regions in Asia Minor, the boundaries of
Mysia have fluctuated dramatically over the centuries. Most biblical
scholars place the region adjacent to the southern shore of the Pro-
ponitis, or Sea of Marmara, and the Dardanelles. Other historians have
proposed other locations in the same general area.

16.8.9—Troas—The Troad is the historical name of the Biga Peninsula
located in the northwest portion of Asia Minor. The formal name of
the city of Troas has passed through several permutations. According
to the learned historians, the site was first called Siga, but was re-
named Antigonia Troas by the Greek commander of the same name
in the fourth century BC. It was later renamed Alexandria Troas in
honor of Alexander the Great. Still later, the city was renamed Colo-
nia Alexandria Augusta Troas during the reign of the Roman Emperor
of the additional name. At some point, the world concluded that
“Troas” was sufficient. Today the city is called Eski Stambul, on the
western coast of Turkey a little south of the island of Tenedos or
Bozcaada. The legendary city of Troy has been identified with ruins
located several miles to the north of Alexandria Troas.

16.9 On at least two occasions, the Spirit of the Lord cautioned Paul and his
companions about regions where they had proposed to preach the Gospel of
Christ. One wonders why the Lord provided an open vision to them where
they were to supposed to go instead. Whatever the precise motivation, Paul
quickly followed counsel.

16.9.3—vision—Certainly a personal revelation to the great missionary,
but we may only speculate regarding the details of what transpired.

16.9.6—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he
began his missionary labors.

16.9.10—man—Some have proposed that this was an open vision reveal-
ing the appearance of the physician Luke to Paul. Other assert that
Luke was from the city of Troas, rather than Macedonia and therefore
not the subject of the dream.

16.9.15—Macedonia—A Greek province of the Roman Empire, once the
center of the kingdom established by Philip, the father of Alexander
the Great. It is bounded on the northeast by the province of Thrace
and on the south by the province of Achaia. The Adriatic and Aegean
Seas lay respectively on the west and east sides of Macedonia.

16.10 We know little or nothing regarding the early life of Luke save what
tradition has supplied. According to legend, Luke was born in Antioch in
Syria and was taught the elements of the physician’s trade. Some writers have
suggested that he became a disciple of Christ before the Savior’s ascension
into heaven, but the evidence for that assertion is not substantial. Others
have proposed that he was a convert of Paul’s in Antioch or Troas, but the
evidence for either proposal is wanting. Tradition has him die a martyr
sometime during the latter quarter of the first century after Christ.

16.10.9—we—As has been pointed out countless times before, this pro-
noun marks the transition of Luke’s narrative from the third person to
the first person. That is to say, Luke as the teller of the story has
joined the companionship of Paul, Silas, and Timothy. From hence-

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in
the night: There stood a man of
Macedonia, and prayed him, say-
ing, Come over into Macedonia,
and help us.

10 And after he had seen the
vision, immediately we endeav-
oured to go into Macedonia,
assuredly gathering that the Lord
had called us for to preach the
gospel unto them.
forth, whenever Luke is engaged in any of the activities described, he will use "we", instead of "they". See also 17.1, 20.5, and 21.18.

16.10.14—Macedonia—A Greek province of the Roman Empire, once the center of the kingdom established by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It is bounded on the northeast by the province of Thrace and on the south by the province of Achaia. The Adriatic and Aegean Seas lay respectively on the west and east sides of Macedonia.

16.11 Although we are not told directly by Luke, it seems likely that the ship which carried Paul and his companions sailed directly to Samothracia and harbored for the night, completing the journey to Neapolis the next day.

16.11.4—Troas—The Troad is the historical name of the Biga Peninsula located in the northwest portion of Asia Minor. The formal name of the city of Troas has passed through several permutations. According to the learned historians, the site was first called Sigia, but was renamed Antigonia Troas by the Greek commander of the same name in the fourth century BC. It was later renamed Alexandria Troas in honor of Alexander the Great. Still later, the city was renamed Colonia Alexandria Augusta Troas during the reign of the Roman Emperor of the additional name. At some point, the world concluded that "Troas" was sufficient. Today the city is called Eski Stambul, on the western coast of Turkey a little south of the island of Tenedos or Bozcaada. The legendary city of Troy has been identified with ruins located several miles to the north of Alexandria Troas.

16.11.12—Samothracia—There are two islands named Samos in the Aegean Sea. Paul had occasion to view both of them in his travels. The first is southwest from Ephesus, due south of the island of Chios. The second is located in the northeastern corner of the Aegean, and is referred to as Thracian Samos or Samothrace, in reference to the province to which it politically belonged at the time.

16.11.18—Neapolis—A port city on the northern Aegean coast which served as the harbor for Philippi in Macedonia. Originally, the town pertainned to the province of Thrace, but by the time Paul and Silas arrived there it had been annexed by Macedonia. There is some argument regarding its exact location today, but scholarship has determined that it lies near the present town of Kavalla. A major road leading over the Symbolum, a coastal mountain ridge, connected Neapolis and Philippi.

16.12 One might ask the question as to why Paul began at Philippi rather than any other part of the vast region of Macedonia. Admittedly, if Paul were determined to traverse the entire province, starting at the northeast extremity of the region and traveling through its length made perfect sense. We are not told of any missionary labors in Samothracia or Neapolis. However, and we might easily be led to believe that Paul knew precisely the city to which he should go in order to be the most effective in the time allotted to him.

16.12.5—Philippi—The original site for this city was probably built by the Phoenicians, which they named Datus, as they exploited the gold mines in the nearby mountains. Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, reestablished the community which then took his name. It became one of the major stations on the Via Egnatia, the main road from Rome to Asia. It is situated about nine miles from the sea.

16.12.9—chief city—Great arguments have been proffered in an attempt to explain why it was that Luke called Philippi "the" chief

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;
city of that district of Macedonia. There are linguistic and historical justifications for the honor in spite of the fact that Amphipolis was the de facto capital.

16.12.18—*colony*—A free city of the Roman Empire, given that title by Augustus, but probably initially by Julius Caesar. The fate of the Empire hung on the outcome of two famous battles fought by Augustus near the city. The destruction of Brutus and Cassius forces at Philippi may have contributed to the city’s preeminence.

16.13 There is a superior, clarifying version of this verse.

And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where the people resorted for prayer to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. (*JST, Acts* 16.13)

As was Paul’s practice, he sought out the Jewish residents of the city first. Philippi had no synagogue, but they had established a place outside of the city walls where they could gather for prayer and other permitted rituals. The significance of this inspired foray to the riverside cannot be overestimated. There is no doubt that Lydia became the key for the conversion of Asia Minor.

16.13.4—*sabbath*—That is to say, the Jewish Sabbath; Saturday rather than Sunday.

16.13.13—*river*—Probably a tributary of the Gangites River, today called the Zygakte River, a potion of which is located east of the city gates.

16.13.16—*prayer*—When the Jews did not have sufficient numbers to build a synagogue in a particular place, they would built a “proseucha”, as it is called in Greek. It was like unto a large amphitheater, open to the sky and typically placed beside a river or near the seashore.

16.14 In Lydia Paul found a humble heart, notwithstanding her wealth and social position. She was sensitive to the whisperings of the Spirit of God such that when Paul and his companions taught the truth on the banks of the river, Lydia was convinced that these men were servants of God and worthy of all acceptance. She did much to promote their missionary activities in the city of Philippi. She is also undoubtedly one of the major reasons why the Church of Jesus Christ prospered so well in Asia Minor.

16.14.6—*Lydia*—The city of Thyatira was located in the region of Lydia in Asia Minor. Scholars have concluded that her name was derived from her place of birth. While the thought has some appeal, one would question the rationale behind such a practice. Quibbling over a proper name can appear unseemly. One wonders if “Lydia” were a title as much as a given name. If Paul’s hostess were the head of the guild of purple merchants from Asia Minor, she may well have been “the” Lydia, the business representative of the entire region.

16.14.10—*purple*—The dye by which extremely rare, and thus costly, purple cloth was produced from the mucus of the hypobranchial gland of marine mollusks, notably the species Murex. Scholars report that more than 12,000 shellfish were required to extract 1.5 grams of the pure dye. Historians attest that the use of purple began on the isle of Crete nearly 1600 years before the birth of Christ. Some scholars have suggested that Phoenicia actually means “the land of purple” rather than the “land of palm trees”, in their attempt to explain the source of Tryrian purple, the most famous of the purples used in the

14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.
ancient world.

16.14.15—Thyatira—A city of the Roman province of Asia Minor, about thirty miles due north of Sardis. By the time John the Beloved wrote the book of Revelation on the Island of Patmos, Thyatira had become a major Christian community.

16.14.17–18—worshipped God—Most biblical scholars have concluded that Luke uses this phrase to indicate a Gentile who has intellectually and emotionally accepted Judaism as their religious faith. It may be, however, that she was a Jewish woman who was faithful in spite of her enormous wealth and high position in Greco-Roman society.

16.14.36—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

16.15 Lydia was a well-traveled woman and one wonders how much she had already gathered into her heart and mind about the man Jesus. On the day of Pentecost, when thousands of Jewish pilgrims were brought into the Church of Christ at the hands of Peter and the other Apostles, there were those touched by the Spirit from locations with which Lydia would have been familiar, included her own country. She had been prepared for her conversion to Christianity, perhaps from a variety of sources, but when she heard the word of God taught by a man filled with the light and truth of eternity, she knew that the fullness of the Gospel had come into her life. She accepted all of the principles and ordinances of salvation which were made available to her. Apparently, those of her extended family who sojourned with her at that place, were also deeply affected by the missionaries and their teachings. Lydia was no doubt instrumental in helping them to come to a knowledge of the truth. In her deep gratitude, Lydia made her home and means available to Paul and his companions for as long as they chose to remain in Philippi.

16.15.33—constrained—The Greek word which is here translated as “constrained” derives from roots which mean “force contrary to nature, compel by entreaty”. Paul and his companions apparently had sufficient means to provide for themselves, but Lydia’s appeals were irresistible.

16.16 We are not told how or precisely why the possessed girl found herself on the same path with Paul and his companions. It may have been serendipity or the possessing spirit may have wished to discredit the missionaries by giving a “Greek” testimony of them. This ploy had been used before against the reputation of Jesus during his mortal ministry (see MK-C 1.24–25, MK-C 1.34.25, and LK-C 4.41)

16.16.10—prayer—The lingering question here is whether or not Luke is relating the elements of the story in strict chronological order. In other words, was Lydia baptized the same day that she first met Paul and his companions or did some time pass before that formal act of conversion took place? If that were the case, then all of verse 15 is somewhat parenthetical, referring to a later time. There are, of course, instances recorded in the scriptures where the ordinances are performed almost immediately after the doctrine is taught, the episode of Philip and the eunuch being a prime example (see 8.26–40)

16.16.13—damsel—The Greek word which is here translated as “damsel” derives from roots which mean “girl, female slave, servant”. The English word “damsel” is of French and Latin derivation and is a diminutive of the word in Latin which has come into English as “dame”.

16.16.17—spirit—The girl was possessed by an evil spirit, one of the host who had followed Lucifer in his attempt to overthrow the divine rule.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

Acts 16:16
AF 170
Acts 16:16–18
DHC 4 575
DNTC 2 148
MD 203, 747
TPJS 206
EM 2 545
Acts 16:16–21
DNTC 2 82, 170
of Heaven before the foundations of the earth were laid.

16.16.19—divination—An error in Strong’s concordance would have us believe that this word is #4440, a Greek word meaning “doorway, portal, vestibule” when in fact the word employed is #4436, and is in reference to Python or Apollo. The Python was worshipped at Delphi and supposedly was the spiritual source of the Oracle there. In Greek mythology, Apollo slew the serpent at Mount Parnassus and the two names merged in reference to anyone who claimed to predict the future. Legend also has it that sometimes these charlatans did not move their lips while speaking, but spoke from their “bellies”, thus giving rise to the term “ventriloquists”, literally “bowel-speakers”.

16.16 29—soothsaying—The Greek word which is here translated as “soothsaying”, derives from roots which mean “prophet, rave, inspiration, divine, utter spells; long for, craving, maniac”. The English word “soothsaying” derives from Germanic sources which mean “truth, that which exists” and is related to “soothe” meaning to “comfort”

16.17 Scholars have offered up many reasons as to why this possessed girl followed the missionaries and how her witness of them would have discredited them before the people. First of all, there were the commercial aspects of the ploy. If there were those who accepted Paul’s message of salvation because of his eloquence and the power of the Holy Ghost within him, these same Christian converts might be led to believe that seeking counsel by spiritualist means was consistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul’s rebuke and exorcism put that to an end. Christianity would stand or fall in the hearts of the children of men on its own merits. More nefarious, however, would have been the antagonism created in the hearts and minds of the Jews by the testimony of a person who under the Law of Moses should have been put to death. In the minds of the Gentiles, however, would have been created a spirit of indifference produced if Paul accepted the witness. They would have simply concluded, as they did on other occasions, that Christianity was simply part of the whole of religious experience instead of something entire separate, which it was.

16.17.4—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

16.18 The persistence of the evil spirit is not for a want of activity, an inoccupation of time. The demon was determined to undermine the efforts of the missionaries, particularly in light of the initial success that Paul had worked with the heart and mind of Lydia and her household. Every time that Paul and his companions would resort to the place of prayer by the river, the girl was waiting for his arrival and would then take up her hue and cry. Eventually, the distraction became so intense that Paul took action against the evil spirit. Paul must have known that his action against the possessed girl would inevitably cause further problems and perhaps this explains his apparent reticence in dealing with the possessed girl earlier.

16.18.8—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

16.18.24–25—Jesus Christ—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

Acts 16:17
JC 713

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.
16.19 It is interesting to note that it is only after there is a temporal loss to these men that they rise up in anger against Paul and the others. While Paul taught peaceably, the masters of the possessed girl did nothing to restrain her, but allowed the young woman to harass the missionaries daily. Their subsequent accusations against Paul ad Silas, spoke nothing of the miracle of the exorcism or of their loss of revenue, but that the missionaries were seditious against the Roman government and culture. To anyone familiar with the accusations brought against Jesus of Nazareth, this ploy ought to seem somewhat familiar. Effective tactics of the evil one do not change much with time.

16.19.4—masters—We might refer to these men as “handlers” today, insofar as her commercial “skills” were concerned. She was in fact, however, a slave who told fortunes or accomplished other “discoveries” that would have been known by the evil spirit and his cohorts.

16.19.16—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

16.19.18—Silas—A traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of “Silvanus”. In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

16.19.24—marketplace—The Greek word which is here translated as “marketplace” specifically refers to the “town square”, a place of public resort, thoroughfare, gather”. The Latin term is “forum”.

16.19.27—rulers—The Greek word which is here translated as “rulers” derives from roots which mean “first (in rank or power), chief, prince”.

16.20 The troubling of the city had actually been incited by the masters of the possessed girl once they realized that they had lost their ability to produce revenue based on her “gifts” We do not know, by the way, whatever became of the young woman once she had been set free from the spirit that troubled her.

16.20.6—magistrates—The Greek word which is here translated as “magistrates” derives from roots which mean “general, military governor, praetor, chief, praefect”. The Greeks were bringing the missionaries before the Roman military, much the same way that the chief priests had brought Jesus before Pilate, with the same talent for prevarication.

16.20.11—Jews—That is, those who could trace their linage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

16.21 Scholars have gone to great lengths to demonstrate how it was that these men could have managed to convince the Romans that Paul and Silas were introducing a new religion. For a goodly length of time, Christianity was perceived as an aspect, a sect, of Judaism. Judaism was accepted by the Romans within the boundaries of the Empire as a legitimate religion. The nuances of Judaism coupled with the sectarian divisions within the faith were, for the most part, lost on the Roman military. Pilate, for example, had great difficulty understanding exactly what it was that the Jews were proclaiming against Jesus that was worthy of capital punishment. The military governor of Philippi would have been no less astute. It is far more likely that the Greeks protesting against Paul and Silas were trafficking in local anti-Semitism more than anything else in order to get what they wanted.

19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

Acts 16:21
DNTC 2 164
16.21.16—*Romans*—The dominant power in the known world at the
time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were the
successors of the Greeks and the precursors of western civilization.
They were the consummate Gentiles of their day.

16.22 While there has been no true “troubling” of the city up to this point,
the masters of the formerly possessed girl incited the populace gathered at the
marketplace to riot sufficiently to bring about the judgment against Paul and
Silas. It is interesting that the Roman leaders simply assume that what has
been communicated to them was a reflection of the true state of affairs. For
all of the appeal to Roman law, the two missionaries were never granted an
opportunity to represent themselves. To their chagrin, the magistrates would
learn that they had abused, beaten, and falsely imprisoned two Roman citi-
zens without benefit of due process, an act that would have almost certainly
brought about the execution or imprisonment of those involved once the
facts came to light.

16.22.11—*magistrates*—The Greek word which is here translated as
“magistrates” derives from roots which mean “general, military gov-
ernor, praetor, chief, praefect”. The Greeks were bringing the mis-
sionaries before the Roman military, much the same way that the
chief priests had brought Jesus before Pilate, with the same talent for
prevarication.

16.23 In one of his letters to the Corinthians, Paul testifies that he was quite
familiar with the afflictions that the servants of Christ suffered at the hands
of the wicked. It is most likely that he is referring to this instance in Philippi
when he says that he had received “stripes above measure”. Under Jewish
law, based on the principles established by Moses, a man was to receive no
more than forty lashes for a crime. In an attempt to avoid overpunishing a
man, in case anyone lost count, the punishment was abandoned at 39 stripes.
Scourging a Roman citizen was considered an unconscionable crime against
the state.

16.24 We cannot say for certain if the punishment rendered was excessive,
given the charges against them, but Paul and Silas would have been treated
with a great deal more deference if the magistrates had known they were
Roman citizen.

16.24.11—inner prison—Needless to say, the conditions in such a
place would have been the most pestilent of the community.

16.24.20—*stocks*—The Greek word which is here translated as “stocks”
derives from roots which mean “smooth, boil, heat, vessel; timber,
stick, club, tree”. That Paul and Silas lay in the dungeon shackled
is certain, but there may have been more torture implied by Luke than
simple immobility.

16.25 One might legitimately ask the question as to whether or not the
Christians of Paul’s day had an independent hymnal; that is to say, one that
differed from those hymns sung by the Jews. The Church had been in
existence for more than thirty years and it would seem reasonable to assume
that there would have been particular Psalms that had great appeal, especially
those having to do with the Messiah. On the other hand we might easily
suppose that there were poets and psalmists within the Church of Christ who
had composed uniquely Christian hymns.

16.25.4—*Paul*—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as
he began his missionary labors.
16.25.6—Silas—A traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of “Silvanus”. In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.
16.25.9–10—sing praises—The Greek word which is here translated as “sing praises” derives from roots which mean “celebrate in song, religious ode, hymn, Psalm”. The literal translation would have been that Paul and Silas were “hymning”.
16.25.15—prisoners—The other prisoners in their cells were able to listen to the singing and perhaps even the prayers of the two missionaries. The effect of these deeply spiritual experiences apparently created within the hearts and minds of the prisoners a desire to remain with the disciples of Christ no matter where they might be ensconced.

16.26 Numerous instances of divine intervention in behalf of the servants of God are recorded in the writings of the prophets, seers, and revealers of the God of Heaven. Peter and John were arrested and jailed while in the midst of their labors and were delivered from their cell by the angel of God (see 5.17–25). Peter could not be held in chains, even when he was shackled and guarded by sixteen soldiers (see 12.3–11). We may speak too of Daniel, Alma, Amulek, Nephi, and Lehi in their trials and tribulations which brought them into prisons just as odious as the one into which Paul and Silas were cast. All were delivered safely, though in different manners according to the needs of the disciples and those who had incarcerated them. In this particular case, not just the bonds which held the two missionaries were loosened, but also those of all who had been jailed at the time. The earthquake opened every cell door so that all of the prisoners were at liberty to escape from prison, yet none chose to do so.

16.27 The earthquake no doubt was the cause of the jailer’s rude awakening. The first concern was for his charges, probably not for their personal welfare, however. It would have been nearly impossible to explain how every door in the prison had been opened by the earthquake, and thus the magistrates would have no doubt thought the jailer complicitous in the escape of the prisoners. That Paul and Silas had escaped the extremity of their bonds as a result of the quake would have been impossible to explain. Only one effect could have possibly been more incredible than the inexplicable release of every prisoner in the jail. The astonishing fact that every prisoner, notwithstanding his liberty, chose to remain within his cell and awaited for the arrival of the jailer to secure the locks on their cells, must have completely confounded the officer. If the jailer had been a rough and crude man, the mercy expressed by Paul and Silas, asserting with loud voices that he would not have to take his own life, would have been quite stunning to everyone privy to the circumstances. The great lesson to be learned here is that Paul’s concern and love for his fellowmen was his greatest asset in promulgating the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

16.28 Paul knew and understood Roman law. He anticipated exactly what would go through the mind of the jailer once he became aware of the extent of the damage to the prison. Paul’s compassion for the man, coupled with the power and influence of the Holy Ghost which was within him, prompted the missionary to prevent the man from taking his own life. It is impressive that Paul knew that his fellow prisoners had not made an attempt to leave the jail. One wonders if all of the prisoners had gathered to Paul and Silas’ cell in order to be taught and edified by the two disciples who had sung and

26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosened.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.
prayed for them during that fateful night.
16.28.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

16.29 We are not told what the other guards were about while all of these things were transpiring. When the jailer called for lights, he may have been making the request of his family members. There are frequent instances in history where the entire household of a warden lived with him in prison facilities. This seems to be the case here.

16.29.8—sprang—The Greek word which is here translated as "sprang" derives from roots which mean "leap, rush in". One might wonder how one normally gained access to the dungeon of the jail. Was there, as was the case in many prisons, a trapdoor through which a prisoner or guard must pass in order to leave the jail? Did the officer descend into the dungeon without benefit of a ladder?

16.29.12—trembling—There are two words in Greek which are translated as "trembling". The first means "cause to be, generate, come into being, be assembled". The second means "terrified". The implication here seems to be that although the jailer thought his life forfeit because of the escape of the prisoners, yet the full weight and measure of the generosity of those whom he had in his charge did not impact him until he came into the cell where everyone had gathered to hear the teachings of Paul and Silas.

16.29.17—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

16.29.19—Silas—A traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of "Silvanus". In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

16.30 We do not know how much the warden knew about the missionary labors of Paul and Silas. Had he heard smatterings of the disciples’ teachings at the riverside? Did he have associates or family members who had been favorably impressed by the teachings of Jesus Christ? That the man knew that his life had been willingly spared by the two missionaries may have been part of his desire to know more about the doctrines of the Kingdom.

16.30.4—out—Apparently, the jailor took Paul and Silas aside, perhaps just outside of the cell where he might ask the question privately.

16.30.14—saved—The real question to be raised here is of what calamity was the jailer thinking when he asked for salvation.

16.31 Had the man ever heard of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ before? It is possible, and perhaps likely, given the initial baptisms that has taken place some twenty years before in the city of Jerusalem. Thousands of Passover pilgrims had been brought into the Church at the hands of Peter and the other Apostles who, when they returned to their homes, spread the truth of the Messiah to their friends and associates. If he had never before heard the name, the mentioning of it, accompanied by the Spirit of God, must have sent a thrill through the jailer.

16.31.4—Believe—The Greek word which is here translated as "Believe" derives from roots which mean "persuasion, credence, conviction, reliance, constancy, truth, faith, entrust". This is more than just intellectual acceptance

16.31.8—Jesus Christ—All effective ordinances of any kind are per-
formed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the
destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of
the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in
behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus
himself, or through his ordained agents.

16.32 What a sight that must have been! No doubt the prisoners who had
abandoned any desire to escape from jail in order to hear the Gospel taught
by Paul and Silas were gathered nearby, but whether behind locked doors or
not we do not know. Attentive guards may have been present as well, per-
haps initially to threaten any recalcitrant prisoners, but later to hear the
principles of truth. Was there a wife who descended into the dungeon? Were
there children as well who had been awakened by all of the commotion.
Prisoners and jailers alike sat at the feet of the brethren in the midst of the
prison with no more animosity than that which existed in the den of lions
into which Daniel had been cast for his faithfulness.

16.33 The truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ touched the hearts and minds
of those of the jailer’s household. The spirit of God wrought upon them,
tempered their feelings, increased their compassion, and moved them to
tenderly address the missionaries’ medical needs. One wonders where pre-
cisely the baptisms took place. There may have been a font large enough for
immersions to be performed. That they were accomplished in the appro-
priate fashion by which the eternal covenants with Christ and his Father
might be made sure there can be no question. Paul baptized the jailer and his
family by immersion and then afterwards laid his hands upon their heads
and confirmed them members of the Church of Jesus Christ. Thus have
these ordinances been performed since the beginning of time and Paul and
Silas did not vary from the exactness require, no not one whit.

16.33.22—straightway—The word in Greek translated here as “straight-
way” means “immediately”. The English word implies an action
which does not allow for any other to take place at the time. The
baptisms took place before daylight, probably at some convenient
place within the jailer’s residence.

16.34 The jailer’s house may have been located elsewhere, outside of the jail,
but more than likely his family dwelt in the same building as the prison.
Having bound up the missionaries’ wounds, injuries which he himself may
have inflicted, the warden brought the two disciples to his own table and
prepared a feast for them. It is unlikely that they had been given anything to
eat since the time they had been taken into custody. A profound change had
taken place in the life of the jailer. Whatever aspects of the natural man that
had directed his conduct before were rapidly fading from his mind and heart.
He had found the truth and desired no more than to be a benefit to those
around him, especially those who had been shabbily treated by the citizenry
of Philippi.

16.35 There is a longstanding variant of this verse which appears in many
ancient versions of the New Testament. The verse reads as follows: “And
when it was day, the magistrates came together into the court, and remem-
bering the earthquake that had happened, they were afraid, and they sent
the serjeants, saying Let those men go.” Whether this was a product of their
superstitions or one of the effects of power of God working upon these men
as they were awakened in the night, we at present do not know. The contrast
with the conduct of the jailer, however, is poignant.
16.35.7—magistrates—The Greek word which is here translated as “magistrates” derives from roots which mean “general, military governor, praetor, chief, praefect”. The Greeks were bringing the missionaries before the Roman military, much the same way that the chief priests had brought Jesus before Pilate, with the same talent for prevarication.

16.35.10—serjeants—The Greek word which is here translated as “serjeants” derive from roots which mean “rod holder; fasces carrier, lector, constable, executioner”. The English word “serjeants” is a variant spelling of “sergeants” which derives from the same Latin source as “servant”.

16.36 The sergeants had been sent specifically to the jailer with no accompanying word of apology or explanation to be given to the two captives. The jailer, of course, immediately told the missionaries of the decision of the city magistrates, no doubt delighted that he would no longer have to participate in such compromising conduct on the part of his fellow citizens. It no doubt had occurred to the warden earlier that he had placed himself in a rather awkward position, having allowed the prisoners to have free access to the entire house, having treated them with respect and honor greater than that accorded to the disciples by the magistrates, and having been converted to that religion which had been condemned first by the masters of the possessed girl and then by the magistrates themselves. For the jailer this was an unexpected blessing indeed.

16.36.11—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

16.36.13—magistrates—The Greek word which is here translated as “magistrates” derives from roots which mean “general, military governor, praetor, chief, praefect”. The Greeks were bringing the missionaries before the Roman military, much the same way that the chief priests had brought Jesus before Pilate, with the same talent for prevarication.

16.37 Having been informed of the presence of the sergeants, Paul apparently is given leave to address them directly, that there might not be any question as to his sentiments. The manner in which he makes his protest seems to be calculated to free the warden from any recriminations from the magistrates about the liberality with which he had treated the missionaries. The situation could then easily be interpreted by the magistrates that the jailer had discovered early on that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens and had treated them with the respect that they deserved, unlike the negligent magistrates who had acted rashly in every aspect of their encounter with the disciples of Christ. The revelation that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, freemen of many generations would have first unnerved the sergeants and then the magistrates. Roman citizens had been abused and humiliated before the masses by the city fathers and nothing good could possibly come of it if it were made known. The fact that the leadership of Philippi had done these things contrary to Roman law, without due process, would subject them to the harshest punishment possible. Paul, in an effort protect any other missionaries that might come to Philippi and to open the city further for the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, suggested that the magistrates publicly exonerate Silas and him by coming to the prison in person.

16.37.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

16.37.16—Romans—The dominant power in the known world at the
time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were the successors of the Greeks and the precursors of western civilization. They were the consummate Gentiles of their day.

16.38 The magistrates had decided to let the two missionaries go because of their sentiments regarding the earthquake that had happened during the night, if our variant text be correct in substance. If they had interpreted their feelings by the light of their own superstitions, how profoundly the return message sent by Paul and Silas would have affected them. The jailer had thought his life forfeit because of the opening of all of the doors of the prison and the loosening of all of the stocks and shackles. These feelings had worked positively within him, particularly when the disciples had conducted themselves with such magnanimity towards him. The magistrates would have also feared for their lives, particularly if Paul and Silas were to press the issue. The conduct of the city fathers appears to have fallen short of the example set by the warden of their prison.

16.38.3—serjeants—The Greek word which is here translated as "serjeants" derive from roots which mean "rod holder, fasces carrier, lector, constable, executioner". The English word "serjeants" is a variant spelling of "sergeants" which derives from the same Latin source as "servant".

16.38.9—magistrates—The Greek word which is here translated as "magistrates" derives from roots which mean "general, military governor, praetor, chief, praefect". The Greeks were bringing the missionaries before the Roman military, much the same way that the chief priests had brought Jesus before Pilate, with the same talent for prevarication.

16.38.19—Romans—The dominant power in the known world at the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were the successors of the Greeks and the precursors of western civilization. They were the consummate Gentiles of their day.

16.39 As is the case in many instances, various ancient texts have emendations to the text which do not appear in the King James translation of the Bible. The additional material is as follows: "And when they were come with many of their friends to the prison, they besought them to go out, saying: We were ignorant of your circumstances, that ye were righteous men. And leading them out, they besought them, saying, Depart from this city, lest they again make an insurrection against you, and clamor against you".

Although we need not spend a great deal of time and effort giving commentary on this emendation, we should probably note that the "friends" who came with the magistrates were probably those who felt a kinship with Paul and Silas rather than the magistrates. By "righteous" they undoubtedly meant "innocent". The warning of a potential insurrection was actually more of fear which the magistrates had that they would have to deal with the mob themselves.

16.40 The two disciples had been counseled to depart from the city of Philippi by means of a veiled threat that they might be accosted again by the masters of the possessed girl whom they had healed. Paul and Silas, however, were not to be intimidated by those who sought to strike fear in the hearts of their enemies. The missionaries knew, as did the magistrates, that any effort on the part of the original accusers to bring renewed charges against Paul would be dismissed without hesitation. Inasmuch as they had been hosted by their convert Lydia when they were arrested, Paul and his companions

38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.
16.40.14—*Lydia*—The city of Thyatira was located in the region of Lydia in Asia Minor. Scholars have concluded that her name was derived from her place of birth. While the thought has some appeal, one would question the rationale behind such a practice. Quibbling over a proper name can appear unseemly. One wonders if “Lydia” were a title as much as a given name. If Paul’s hostess were the head of the guild of purple merchants from Asia Minor, she may well have been “the” Lydia, the business representative of the entire region.

17.1 Though not out of fear, Paul and Silas left Philippi in order to continue their missionary efforts in Macedonia. The cities of Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessalonica were situated on the Egnatian Way (see 16.12.5). The implication of Luke’s detailed itinerary suggests that the journey between Philippi and Thessalonica took them three days, Amphipolis and Apollonia being their rest stops. Modern scholars have concluded that Paul and Silas did not preach the Gospel of Christ there. The fact remains that we do not know whether that was the case or not. Some have argued that Paul would not preach in a town devoid of Jews. Again, it is doubtful that Paul was that discriminating.

17.1.7—*Amphipolis*—The chief administrative city of this region of Macedonia, approximately 35 miles from Philippi and three miles inland from the sea. It was built on the east side of a peninsular bend of the river Strymon, thus the river’s course provided the inspiration for the name which means “around the city”. Some scholars have suggested that “Amphipolis means “surrounded by the sea”, but there is little tangible evidence for such a definition.

17.1.9—*Apollonia*—A city of Macedonia located approximately 35 miles from Amphipolis and about 40 miles from Thessalonica.

17.1.13—*Thessalonica*—Originally named Therma, the village was rebuilt and expanded by Cassander who subsequently named the city after his wife, Thessalonica, the sister of Alexander the Great. Historians assert that Thessalonica had a population in excess of 200,000 persons when Paul and Silas visited for the first time.

17.1.17—*synagogue*—Some scholars have asserted that Thessalonica was the only city in Macedonia that had a sufficient Jewish population to have a building for worship. All other communities would have had, as was the case in Philippi, a place established along the river or near the sea where they could have private prayer (see 16.13.16).

17.1.20—*Jews*—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

17.2 On three successive Jewish Sabbath days, Paul taught the Hellenized Israelites. These would have been formal opportunities to bear witness of the truth to a congregation who would not be overly antagonistic. During the rest of the week Paul and Silas undoubtedly met privately with those who wished to know more regarding Jesus Christ and the atoning sacrifice for sin.

17.2.2—*Paul*—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he returned openly to her home that they might strengthen and bless those who had received the Gospel at their hands. No doubt the jailer and his family took the opportunity to join with the members of the Church as they gathered at the lady’s home as frequently as was possible.

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,
began his missionary labors.

17.2.5—manner—Most students of the New Testament have concluded that Paul’s manner had to do with testifying to the Jews before bearing witness to the Gentiles. However, it is far more likely that Luke is speaking of Paul’s practice of resorting to the scriptures to teach the principles of Christianity.

17.2.21—scripts—Meaning, naturally, that which is referred to today as the Old Testament, plus prophetic texts which have been lost.

17.3 Paul preaches the two-fold message: first, there is a literal resurrection from the dead for all men because of the power given to Jesus by the Father to overcome the effects of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; second, the resurrection is the outward witness of the victory over personal sin through the suffering of the Son of God beginning in the Garden of Gethsemane.

17.3.1—Opening—The Greek word which is here translated as “Opening” derives from roots which mean “open thoroughly, (firstborn birth), expound”. This is in reference to the “opening” of the scriptures to the minds of the Jews for the first time regarding Jesus as the Messiah.

17.3.3—alleging—The Greek word which is here translated as “alleging” derives from roots which mean “place alongside, present (food or truth), deposit (for safekeeping)”. Paul is presenting to the people those things which are of most worth to himself.

17.3.5—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

17.3.19—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yeshoshua” or “Oshea or ”Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

17.4 After their initial preaching at the synagogue, Paul and Silas apparently invited all who wished to hear more to resort to another place where their Greek friends could attend with them. It is clear that many of the Jews were delighted with the prospect of a “new” covenant which would help break down the social and theological barriers between themselves and their Greek friends. No doubt the pronouncement of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.
tles regarding the circumcision of Gentiles when they joined the Church of Jesus Christ had been openly taught in Thessalonica.

17.4.7—consorted—The Greek word which is here translated as "consorted" derives from roots which mean "give a common lot to, associate with".

17.4.9—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

17.4.11—Silas—A traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of "Silvanus". In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

17.4.15—devout—The Greek word which is here translated as "devout" derives from roots which mean "revere, adore, venerate, worship". Most scholars and biblical linguists have concluded that these were Greek converts to Judaism. Some translators, however, suggest that there are two classes of people that are implied here: first, the God-fearing among the Jews and, second, their Greek friends who accompanied them to hear Paul and Silas speak.

17.4.16—Greeks—Probably speaking of the Greek converts to Judaism, but those of the general populace may have hearkened to the voices of Paul and Silas as well.

17.4.23–24—chief women—Perhaps the wives of the Greek men who accompanied their Jewish friends to hear Paul. The seeming distinction is, however, that these women would have been prominent in the community in their own right and not because of those to whom they were married.

17.5 The recalcitrant Jews resorted to what seems to be a consistent practice among them. When one cannot effectively dispute the arguments of an opponent, bring obnoxious litigation against him. All else failing, whip up the natural animosity of the local populace to incapacitate him. This tactic, however, has manifested itself in almost every era in which the truth has been revealed. Satan is the father of lies and the great adversary of light and truth.

17.5.3—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

17.5.14–15—lewd fellows—The Greek words which are here translated as "lewd fellows” derive from roots which mean "hurtful, evil (in effect or influence), calamitous, diseased, culpable, derelict, mischief, malice, sinners”.

17.5.18–19—baser sort—The Greek word which is here translated as “baser sort” derive from roots which mean “relating to the market place, vulgar”. The cultural meaning of the term, however, seems to refer to common lawyers who were without principle, who would foment legal disputes for money. The Jews, because of their small numbers, would not be capable of inciting a riot, but these “wicked men of the forensic tribe”, as one writer phrased it, were happy to do so when offered sufficient monetary gain. They undoubtedly accused Paul and Silas of sedition against the Roman government as had been the ploy in Philippi.

17.5.37—Jason—We do not know precisely the relationship between the missionaries and Jason at this time. Perhaps he was no more than their

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But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

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host or landlord. Some scholars have suggested that Jason was a kinsman of Paul who would be mentioned in the Apostle’s letter to the Romans, but this assertion is without much evidence to support it.

17.6 The mob was looking for Paul and Silas at the home of Jason, but did not find them there. They apprehended Jason and, perhaps, Luke and Timothy as well. We do not know exactly to what these infamous attorneys were referring to when they accused Paul and Silas of turning the world upside down. There may have been sufficient communication between Philippi and Thessalonica to have fed the furor. It seems doubtful that the fuss in Lystra and Iconium a few years before would have been the direct source of the scandal. It is far more likely that the lawyers were either making reference to Christianity in general or to Philippi in particular. There is a distinct possibility that they were simply bundling the rumors of every antagonistic faction towards Rome and identifying Paul and Silas with them. These were unscrupulous men; they did not have to conform to logic or evidence.

17.6.9—Jason—We do not know precisely the relationship between the missionaries and Jason at this time. Perhaps he was no more than their host or landlord. Some scholars have suggested that Jason was a kinsman of Paul who would be mentioned in the Apostle’s letter to the Romans, but this assertion is without much evidence to support it.

17.6.15—rulers—The Greek word which is here translated as “rulers” derives from roots which mean “town officer, magistrate”. Scholars assure us that only here and in verse 8 can this Greek word be found in Greek literature. It does exist on monuments, however, not the least of which was engraved on a grand arch over the Egnotian Way on the west side of Thessalonica.

17.7 The accusation against Jason was that he was aiding and abetting seditionists. The accusation against Paul and Silas was that they were advocating a king instead of Caesar. This was the same kind of accusation that was leveled at Jesus of Nazareth before Pontius Pilate who dismissed the charge as baseless (see LK-C 23.1–24). That Jesus was a “king” there can be no question, but not the sort that the nations of the earth thought of when potentates were named. The early Christians deliberately used the Greek term “Christ” (the “Messiah”, the “Anointed One”) to refer to Jesus as the Son of God rather than the inflammatory “basileus” which was reserved for the emperors of Rome. This is simply another example of a deliberate twisting of the facts in order to deprive the saints of God of their civil liberties.

17.7.2—Jason—We do not know precisely the relationship between the missionaries and Jason at this time. Perhaps he was no more than their host or landlord. Some scholars have suggested that Jason was a kinsman of Paul who would be mentioned in the Apostle’s letter to the Romans, but this assertion is without much evidence to support it.

17.7.14—Caesar—Probably in reference to Claudius Caesar, the fourth Roman emperor who ruled Rome for thirteen years. If historians be accurate, that reign would have commenced in AD 41. He was murdered by his fourth wife, the mother of Nero, in AD 54.

17.7.22—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

17.8 A city in the Roman Empire, particularly one which had been overwhelm militarily, could not afford to raise even the faintest hint of rebellion,

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also:

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when
inasmuch as Roman paranoia quickly responded to any movement among the people which might smack of secession. The people of Thessalonica were primarily Greek and had felt the heavy hand of Rome before. They were easily frightened into extreme behavior.

17.8.—troubled—The Greek word which is here translated as “troubled” derives from roots which mean “stir, agitate, boil over”. The object of the lawyers was to enflame the public mind.

17.9 Jason and his brethren were released from custody once the bonds had been posted. If present, Luke and Timothy were allowed to regain their companionship with Paul and Silas.

17.9.5—security—The Greek word which is here translated as “security” derives from roots which mean “arrive, competent, ample in amount, fit in character”. Most scholars have concluded that Jason and one of the brethren posted bond. But one asks the question as to who the “other” was. We are told in verse 6 that there were “brethren”, not just one other who had been taken before the rulers. May we then suggested that the “other” was the leader of those who were fomenting the trouble, whether one of the unbelieving Jews or the attorney who had been contracted to cause the problem. It seems likely that this would have been the case, and completely consistent with Roman law.

17.9.7—Jason—We do not know precisely the relationship between the missionaries and Jason at this time. Perhaps he was no more than their host or landlord. Some scholars have suggested that Jason was a kinsman of Paul who would be mentioned in the Apostle’s letter to the Romans, but this assertion is without much evidence to support it.

17.10 The tensions between the unbelieving Jews and those who favored Paul and Silas did not abate. Therefore as to not aggravate the circumstances, the missionary company and the members of the Church at Thessalonica decided that it would be to everyone’s advantage if Paul and Silas continued their journey. They did so privily so as to avoid having their travel plans revealed to their enemies. In this, however, they would be unsuccessful.

17.10.3—brethren—Whether this was in reference to Paul and Silas’ traveling companions or other Christians who lived in Thessalonica we may not know, but it was probably the latter.

17.10.7—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

17.10.9—Silas—A traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of “Silvanus”. In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

17.10.13—Berea—A city of Macedonia approximately 50 miles to the west of Thessalonica located on the old Via Egnatia.

17.10.20—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

17.10.23—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

they heard these things.

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

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17.11 The generosity of the people of Berea lay in their willingness to invest
time and effort into satisfying themselves as to whether Paul and Silas were
telling the truth about Jesus as the Christ and the redemption of men from
the pains of death and hell. They studied the words of the prophets cited by
Paul and his companions so that they might perceive those truths in context.
They were open without prejudice. The honest in heart always seek understand-
ing, attempting to comprehend the will of God in their lives. It is for
them “The kingdom of God or nothing”.

17.11.4—noble—The Greek word which is here translated as “noble”
derives from roots which mean “well-born, high in rank, generous”.
17.11.8—Thessalonica—Originally named Therma, the village was rebuilt
and expanded by Cassander who subsequently named the city after
his wife, Thessalonica, the sister of Alexander the Great. Historians
assert that Thessalonica had a population in excess of 200,000 persons
when Paul and Silas visited for the first time.
17.11.17–19—readiness of mind—The Greek word which is here trans-
lated as “readiness of mind” derives from roots which mean “forward
in spirit, predisposed, alacrity, willing”.
17.11.23—scripts—That is to say, the sacred writings of what we now
called the Old Testament.

17.12 The citizens of Berea, both Jew and Gentile, responded favorably to all
that the missionaries had to say. What unhappiness and distress these new
converts would have came from those who traveled the fifty miles from
Thessalonica in order to overthrow the labors of Paul and Silas.

17.12.4—them—That is to say, many of the Jews of the synagogue in
Berea.
17.12.8—honourable—The Greek word which is here translated as
“honourable” derives from roots which mean “well-form, decorous, noble”.
17.12.12—Greeks—Probably speaking of the Greek converts to Judaism,
but those of the general populace may have hearkened to the voices
of Paul and Silas as well.
17.12.15—men—that is to say, Greek men who were converted to
Christianity through the preaching of Paul and Silas.

17.13 One scholar referred to the spirit of these people as “implacable
malice” and then observed that the present world is filled with those who
drink from that same bitter cup. The saints of God are abused and vilified by
those who are filled with a hatred that is unreasonable and seemingly
inexplicable. From whence comes antipathy whipped into irrational frenzy?
Is it not a satanic madness? Lucifer, in his attempt to destroy as much peace
and happiness before he is eternally banished, employs every weak-minded
dupe he can recruit to his cause. He instills fear and prejudice in the hearts of
men, bids them drink from the fountain of filthy water, and then rages in
their hearts until they become as bestial and vicious as himself. In every
dispensation there have been those who have been caught in this unseemly
snare. Without sincere repentance, they are carried away to an everlasting
doom of sorrow, unquenchable anger, and self-loathing.

17.13.4—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to
Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been
home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced
to the remnats, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.
17.13.6—Thessalonica—Originally named Therma, the village was rebuilt
and expanded by Cassander who subsequently named the city after

11 These were more noble than
those in Thessalonica, in that they
received the word with all readiness
of mind, and searched the script-
tures daily, whether those things
were so.

12 Therefore many of them
believed; also of honourable
women which were Greeks, and of
men, not a few.

13 But when the Jews of Thes-
salonica had knowledge that the
word of God was preached of Paul
at Berea, they came thither also,
and stirred up the people.
his wife, Thessalonica, the sister of Alexander the Great. Historians assert that Thessalonica had a population in excess of 200,000 persons when Paul and Silas visited for the first time.

17.13.17—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.
17.13.19—Berea—A city of Macedonia approximately 50 miles to the west of Thessalonica located on the old Via Egnatia.

17.14 Considerable discussion has been generated by this verse in attempts to determine whether Paul traveled by sea to Athens or whether he traversed the three hundred miles walking on the coastal road to that same city. There is nothing in the text to aid us in deciding the issue. It is the phrase “as it were” that creates the problem. In one interpretation the disciples would have taken Paul towards the coast, leaving Berea publicly on that road, but then escorting the missionary to Athens on foot. The argument against this interpretation is that Luke says nothing of any missionary activities along the way at any of the towns and cities as he traveled. Another interpretation is that the brethren took Paul to the coast in order to feign a return trip to Troas across the Aegean Sea, when in fact he boarded a ship bound for Athens. This theory recommends itself even less. Paul appears to have been the singular target of the persecution and his departure seems to be intended to reduce the tensions generated by the antagonists from Thessalonica. Paul was a threat because his training in the scriptures as a Pharisee made him absolutely unassailable in a public forum. Silas and Timothy remained behind in Berea for a time in order to edify and bless the newly formed Church of Christ in that city, organizing the priesthood leadership, and preparing them in all things that they might be able to carry the work forward in that region.

17.14.8—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.
17.14.18—Silas—A traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of “Silvanus”. In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.
17.14.20—Timothy—if longstanding tradition is any indication, this young man would become Paul’s constant companion and the one to whom two of Paul’s many epistles were addressed. Timothy was raised in the Jewish faith by his mother, though he was not circumcised until he had neared adulthood. His conversion to Christianity was a great blessing to his family and to the Church of Christ. Extrascip-tural tradition has assigned Timothy the bishopric of Ephesus and martyrdom at the hands of the emperor of Rome. Historians are at odds as to whither of the two cities, Derbe or Lystra, was the home town of Timothy and his mother. Some ancient manuscripts assure us that Lystra is the correct community.

17.15 We are not told how long Paul was in transit from Berea to Athens. On foot, the trip would have taken nearly two weeks. By sail, it would have been only a matter of days. Because of the terseness of Luke’s account of the trip, many scholars have concluded that the latter mode of transportation was the one taken by Paul and his companions.

17.15.5—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.
17.15.9—Athens—The capital of Attica and the preeminent Greek city of culture and learning in Paul’s day. It was named for the virgin goddess

14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.
of war, Athena, by its legendary king Erechtheus. As stunning as the history and accomplishments of the citizens of Athens had been, Paul was not intimidated in any fashion by the temporal glory exhibited in this ancient seat of Greek life.

17.15.13—commandment—The Greek word which is here translated as "commandment" derives from roots which mean “injunction, prescription, precept”. We should probably understand here that Paul was inspired by God to have Silas and Timothy join him Athens, that he had a revelation to that effect.

17.15.15—Silas—A traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of “Silvanus”. In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

17.15.17—Timotheus—If longstanding tradition is any indication, this young man would become Paul’s constant companion and the one to whom two of Paul’s many epistles were addressed. Timothy was raised in the Jewish faith by his mother, though he was not circumcised until he had neared adulthood. His conversion to Christianity was a great blessing to his family and to the Church of Christ. Extrascriptural tradition has assigned Timothy the bishopric of Ephesus and martyrdom at the hands of the emperor of Rome. Historians are at odds as to whither of the two cities, Derbe or Lystra, was the home town of Timothy and his mother. Some ancient manuscripts assure us that Lystra is the correct community.

17.15.25—speed—One would suspect that the urgency would have inspired traveling by ship as well.

17.16 Petronius, a contemporary of Paul, had one of his characters in the Satyricon declare that Athens and environs was “so full of deities that you may more frequently meet with a god than a man”. Paul, having been raised as a Roman citizen and being well-traveled, was not unacquainted with idolatry. The extent of the paganism at Athens, however, must have been stunning. One wonders whether the Jewish population had been effected in any way by the cultural intensity of Athens. Had they softened in their approach to their religion? Where they engaging in seemingly innocuous practices which might otherwise be shunned in a different venue than Athens?

17.16.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

17.16.8—Athens—The capital of Attica and the preeminent Greek city of culture and learning in Paul’s day. It was named for the virgin goddess of war, Athena, by its legendary king Erechtheus. As stunning as the history and accomplishments of the citizens of Athens had been, Paul was not intimidated in any fashion by the temporal glory exhibited in this ancient seat of Greek life.

17.16.12—stirred—The Greek word which is here translated as "stirred" derives from roots which mean "sharpen alongside, exasperate, provoke".

17.17 The structure of Luke’s narrative here would give us to understand that the missionary tactic of Paul was threefold. First, he discoursed to the Jews regarding the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the promised Messiah, that in Jesus of Nazareth were those prophecies realized. The victory over death and sin would have been part and parcel of his teachings to them. Secondly, he gave great attention to the gentiles who had been favorably impressed by Judaism. To them he no doubt taught the importance of

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.
living the Gospel of Jesus Christ without a slavish conformity to the Law of Moses. No doubt the epistle given to the Galatians saints about circumcision would be rehearsed as well. Thirdly, Paul spent time teaching those who had little or no understanding of the Lord God of Israel, teaching them of the one God who desires the salvation of all of His children.

17.17.1—Therefore—This is a conclusionary word and one that indicates that Paul disputed in the synagogue in Athens as a result of his observance that the entire city was given over to one form of idolatry or another. The Jews apparently were not immune from the contamination of the culture.

17.17.6—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

17.17.9—Jews—That is, those who could trace their linage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

17.17.18—market—The “agora” or “forum” of the city in which a great deal was exchanged in addition to commercial items. Many people gathered to the markets for intellectual stimulation as well.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

17.18 Four great schools of thought reigned in Athens at the time of Paul’s missionary adventures there. Two are mentioned in the text and are commented on below. The other two were known as the “Academics” and the “Peripatetics”. The Academics were followers of Plato and the founder of the Peripatetics was Plato’s polar philosophical opposite, Aristotle. Their prime difference had to do with the nature of existence, Plato holding that nothing upon the earth is real; only those things which are in Heaven. Aristotle held that reality is only that which can be tangibly evaluated. Modern scientific thought is fundamentally Aristotelian.

17.18.3—philosophers—The Greek word which is here translated as “philosophers” derives from roots which mean “fond of wise things”. The English word “philosopher” is a transliteration of the original Greek word.

17.18.6—Epicureans—The Greek philosopher Epicurus lived in Athens during the third and fourth centuries BC. The place where the Epicureans received their master’s teachings was called the “Garden”. His was a philosophy of practical happiness, based on pleasure and experience rather than absolute truth and reason. Needless to say, this intellectual stance soon degenerated into mere hedonism. Devoting oneself to the gratification of one’s senses cannot help but lead to excess and debauchery. Needless to say, this latter approach was far different from the original propositions espoused by Epicurus. An epicurean today is usually thought of as a man esteemed for the quality of his meals. The Epicureans held that there were no gods except in name only, and their existence had no serious effect on the government of the earth in any event.

17.18.10—Stoics—The traditional founder of the Stoics is reputed to have been Zeno, a Cypriot merchant who lived in the third century before the birth of Jesus Christ. His disciples met with him beneath a painted portico in Athens. The Greek word for “portico” is “stoa” and
hence their name. The Stoics did not deny the existence of the God but they held that everything was governed by fate. The Stoics were the secular humanists of their day, believing that a good and wise man might easily be equated with Jupiter himself. The Stoics, therefore, tended toward inordinate pride and independence.

17.18.19—babbler—The Greek word which is here translated as “babbler” derives from roots which mean “seed picker, sponger, loafer, gossip, tritler”. The essential significance of the use of this word is that those who had gathered to hear what Paul had to say considered him to be hardly more than a collector of Witticisms which he palmed off to people as his own. We would refer to such a person today as an “inveterate plagiarist”.

17.18.31–32—strange gods—The Greek word which is here translated as “gods” actually should be understood as “demons”. Paul was being accused of preaching about “foreign demons”, religious beings outside of the pale of the Roman or Greek pantheons. In Greco-Roman theology, “gods” were deities by nature; “demons” were men who had been deified. The assumption that these philosophers were making was that Jesus had begun as a man and then had been deified by the God of the Hebrews. They were clearly ignorant of Jesus having been the Lord God Jehovah prior to his mortal birth. Those who wish no corrective change to come into their lives will perform all kinds of intellectual gymnastics in order to dismiss the cry to repentance. The plurality of the word “gods” suggests that they may have initially thought of “anastasis” (the Greek word for “resurrection”) as the proper name for the goddess consort of Jesus Christ.

17.18.38—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

17.19 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And they took him and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine is, whereof thou speakest? (JST, Acts 17:19)

We cannot be certain as to whether this hearing before the Council of Areopagus was formal or informal, but given the subsequent events narrated by Luke, it would appear to be the latter.

17.19.9—Areopagus—According to Greek mythology, Ares, he who is the same as the Roman god Mars, was tried for murder at the summit of the hill. As an extension of this mythological beginning, tribunals of all kinds were held at this prominence for many centuries. The integrity of the Council of Areopagus was renown throughout the civilized world. Originally the Council met at the rocky height west of the Acropolis and south of the Agora. By the time Paul was invited to speak to the Council, as some historians aver, their judgment was confined to matters involving religion and morals, especially new religious thought or gods. Paul’s preaching of Jesus and Anastasis (see 17.18.31–32) must have peaked their curiosity.

17.20 If one considers the four major philosophical schools bearing sway in Athens at the time, Christianity is quite odd by comparison. The Epicureans, 19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine is, whereof thou speakest, is?

Acts 17:19
JST
Acts 17:19–20
CR93-O 23
Acts 17:19–20, 22–23
CR91-A 83

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we
Stoics, and Peripatetics were concerned almost exclusively with the things of this world, the outward conduct of man. Judaism, in conjunction with the Law of Moses, would have been understandable to these Athenians because of its emphasis on the ritualistic obedience of an adherent. The Academics, because of their Platonic orientation, might have comprehended some of the more subtle aspects of Christianity, but a “mortal” Messiah would have been meaningless to them. It was the dualism of Christianity, perhaps, that puzzled the philosophers the most, the mutual dependence upon the salvation of the body and the soul, the power of the resurrection hand in hand with the redemption brought about by the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

17.21 This, of course, is the model for modern academic thinking. It is the broadening of intellectual horizons, the discovery of new venues of thought, the innovative applications of theory that stir the souls of university-bound minds. It is innovation which qualifies a man or woman to be granted advanced honors and degrees. In Athens, whether a thing was true or not had no bearing on whether it should be related; the necessary quality was that it was new, that it was a novelty. Not much has changed in two thousand years. Paul would take the Corinthian Christians to task for filling their sacred assemblies with speakers who addressed them in languages with which they were unfamiliar, simply for the novelty of hearing a foreign language (see 1 CO-C 14.23–31).

17.21.4—Athenians—Citizens of Athens, the capital of Attica and the preeminent Greek city of culture and learning in Paul’s day. It was named for the virgin goddess of war, Athena, by its legendary king Erechtheus. As stunning as the history and accomplishments of the citizens of Athens had been, Paul was not intimidated in any fashion by the temporal glory exhibited in this ancient seat of Greek life. 17.21.6—strangers—The Greek word which is here translated as “strangers” derives from roots which mean “foreign, alien, novel, guest, entertainer”. Luke is referring here to those who were not native Athenians.

17.22 Paul’s sermon will touch upon the two most important relationships that a man can know: the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. 17.22.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors. 17.22.8–9—Mars’ hill—The literal translation of “Areopagus”. 17.22.15—Athens—The capital of Attica and the preeminent Greek city of culture and learning in Paul’s day. It was named for the virgin goddess of war, Athena, by its legendary king Erechtheus. As stunning as the history and accomplishments of the citizens of Athens had been, Paul was not intimidated in any fashion by the temporal glory exhibited in this ancient seat of Greek life. 17.22.25—superstitious—The Greek word which is here translated as “superstitious” derives from roots which mean “more religious”. The word is a composite which literally means “in dread of demons”. In using this particular word, Paul has reversed the application of “manmade” deities to apply to their own pantheon. Christ is not a “demon” in the Greek sense; he is a god by nature (see 17.218.31–32). Paul will bring this idea full circle when he testifies to the Greeks that we are the sons and daughters of God as well, divine by nature because of our premortal association with Him.

17.23 Verbal battles have raged for centuries regarding Paul’s observance that would know therefore what these things mean.

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

23 For as I passed by, and beheld
there was, indeed, an altar dedicated to the Unknown God. Both sides of the
argument have been presented *ad nauseam* and do not need rehearsing here.
Suffice it to say that if Paul referred to a nonexistent altar in a public forum
he would have been ridiculed without measure. The suggestion that Paul
may have been half-jesting when he referred to the altar, that there were so
many altars to so many different gods that no one could retain them all in
memory, has some merit but may not be in keeping with Paul’s ministerial
personality. Some scholars have suggested that the “Unknown God” was a
direct reference to Jehovah, whose form had only been seen by the prophets
of Israel and whose name was not to be pronounced. It is far more likely,
however, notwithstanding the absence of any tangible or historical proof,
that there was such an altar with the specific inscription which Paul
attributes to it. The power of Paul’s argument lies in his testimony that the
Athenians and the Christians already had something in common; they wor-
shipped the same God, albeit the former did so ignorantly. This approach is
similar to the methodology of the sons of Mosiah as they taught the Gospel
to Lamoni and his father.

17.24 The Epicureans held that the creation of the earth was a felicitous
happenstance, a serendipitous concourse of atoms. The Stoics were more
pantheistic in their views, that all creation was infused by godly power, a
kind of divine animism. The Academicians considered the tangible world to be
a fraud at best and having no connection with the reality which dwelt in
heaven. The Peripatetics viewed the earth as a singular observable object and
cared not for divine intervention of any kind, unless that intervention could
be measured and weighed. Paul’s exquisite synthesis of the four views in his
sermon either would offend or intrigue those who sat before him. Again, the
singular idea before the Greeks on Mar’s hill was that earth and heaven were
not “either-or” concepts, but “and” realities, dualism rather than monism.

17.25 If God were a being solely of the earth, as the Olympian gods seemed
to be, then erecting buildings in His honor would make some sense. If God
were a being solely of the Heavens, then nothing done here on the earth
could possibly impress Him. The making of temples and the fashioning of
statutes as objects of public worship would not add one whit to His honor
and glory in any event. All of creation, the Heavens and the earth, were
already perfectly glorious and there was nothing that men could manually do
that would enhance the stature of what He had accomplished. Mosiah used a
similar argument in his final address to the people of Zarahemla. All life,
thought, and power to act in free will are gifts from God. Paul assures the
Athenians that God is intimately involved with the affairs of men because of
His divine responsibility for them.

17.26 When, where, and to whom we are born, the circumstances over
which we have no apparent control, have been established by a wise and
loving Father in Heaven. It is our lot to take of the gifts which have been
provided to us at the time of our entrance into mortality and utilize them in
a fashion that would bring us back into the presence of God, fully prepared
to receive the blessings of eternity. Every man has had or will have that
opportunity to grow from grace to grace until he achieves perfection. That
there have been many who have refused or squandered that opportunity is a
matter of record. 17.26–5—6—*one blood*—Although the world distinguishes between the
apparent ethnicities of the peoples of the earth, Paul declared that we
are all derived from the same ancestor. Certainly Noah and Adam

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<th>your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.</th>
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might be pointed to as grand progenitors, but Paul’s concept is more lofty still.

17.26.25–27—times before appointed—Prior to the creation of the earth, all men who have ever dwelt upon this earth and all who will ever dwell here were called together into a Grand Council and were organized into the dispensations temporally and into families and nations geographically. While not predestination in its Calvinistic sense, there was order and orchestration provided to allow every spirit child of our Heavenly Father have the best opportunity to succeed, to return back his or her Celestial home endowed with glory and eternal lives. This orchestration was absolutely perfect in every aspect. The failure to return with honor, however, would be a product of each individual’s personal rebellion.

17.26.30–33—bounds of their habitation—Agency, while providing each individual with the power to determine the sort of person he or she wished to be, was severely limited in its scope with regard to the rest of humanity. Nations might rise up, individuals might come to prominence and power, but the ability to constrain another nation or another individual against their will is circumscribed in large measure.

17.27 There is a superior translation of this verse.

That they should seek the Lord, if they are willing to find him, for he is not far from every one of us; (JST, Acts 17:27)

As the poet said, “The world is with us too much and too soon”. We have within us a natural drive to worship of the God who created the earth and all who dwell therein, yet we are often distracted from that worship of the Creator by our worship of the Creation. We find excessive joy in self-gratification of the senses, in the adulation of our fellowmen, in the power and opportunities afforded by what the world considers wealth and fame. Our physical addiction to the things of the world hinders our sensitivity to the things of the spiritual realm. God, for His own wise purposes, has chosen to deal with us on a spiritual level. He is perceivable once we put away our physical obsessions. It is in our willing choice to seek God in spite of the beckoning pleasures of this life that will bring the revelation of Himself to us, His children.

17.27.8—haply—The English word “haply” means “chance, luck, or accident”, clearly a poor choice of words given the nature of the context. The inspired version is far more consistent with the tone and meaning of Paul’s sermon.

17.27.11—feel—The Greek word which is here translated as “feel” derives from roots which mean “rub, touch, twitch, twang, handling, manipulate, verify by contact”. Some linguists have suggested that the word implies “groping” as if the searchers were blindfolded or totally blind. Again, the inspired version diminishes the “handicap” aspect of the sermon. Paul is not in the business of insulting the uninformed. Bearding the lion in his own den is ill-advised in any dispensation.

17.28 Men and women, uninformed of the fullness of truth, often perceive profound elements of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by means of the Spirit of God. This is particularly true of those who have been categorized as “devotional” poets and writers. Modern scholars have suggested that there may be two quotes included in this verse, the first eleven words and the last six.

17.28.18—poets—Several Greek poets are credited with the citations,
including Epimenides, Aratus and Cleanthius. The writings of Aratus are favored by modern scholars as the main source of Paul’s quote about the fatherhood of God because this poet was a native of Soli, a Cilician city near Tarsus, the hometown of Paul. The presumption is that Paul, as a result, would have been familiar with his writings even though he lived three centuries before Paul’s missionary labors. While the proposition may be a winsome and neat suggestion, Paul may have been far better read then the proponents of this theory assume. Epimenides lived six hundred years before Christ on the isle of Crete; Cleanthius hailed from the city of Troas in Asia Minor and was a contemporary of Aratus.

17.29 Our worship of God is not accomplished in things that we make of the materials of the planet, but rather in the things that we do. It is our obedience to His commandments that develops all of the divine attributes which we possess in embryonic form. One day, if we are faithful, we will increase in knowledge and wisdom until we have grown into His maturity and are able to rejoice in our ability to do as He does in all things.

17.29.7—offspring—Mankind is of divine origin. Every soul born into this world came from a divine source long before the foundations of the earth were laid. Our spirits were not spontaneously created, but they were engendered by loving Celestial parents who desire nothing but good for their children. That we have a divine Mother in Heaven there can be no question; that Heavenly Father has been reticent to tell us much concerning her is a matter of record.

17.29.17—Godhead—The Godhead, the presiding council by which all things have come into existence and are maintained, is comprised of God the Eternal Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, three separate and distinct individuals whose unity of purpose is unparalleled in human experience.

17.30 Unto whom much is given, much is expected. We are held accountable for those truths which are revealed unto us by the voice of God or His servants. God the Father does not punish His children rigorously when they do not know that they are in error. Apostasy brings enough sorrow into the lives of men without undue lashings for truths which have been lost. God brings His children along line upon line and precept upon precept in an orderly fashion so that they might assimilate those truths into their lives without excessive anxiety. Abject punishment is reserved for the blatant sinner who knows precisely what he is doing contrary to the will of God. During the dispensation of the Meridian of Time, the known world was given an opportunity to receive the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From that point on, all of the Athenians who knew and comprehended that which Paul was teaching would be held accountable.

17.30.8—winked—The Greek word which is here translated as "winked" derives from roots which mean "overlook, not punish". The English word "wink" derives from Germanic sources which mean to "stagger, totter, flicker". The literal mean "overlook" seems more indicative of the conduct of God in this matter.

17.31 There is a superior translation for this verse.

Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by him whom he hath ordained; and he hath given assurance of this unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.
dead. (JST, Acts 17:31)

The principles of faith in Jesus Christ and repentance from sin are declared unto those who are capable of conforming their lives to righteousness. The Athenians were now in that category. Men will be held accountable for their actions, the deeds done in their mortal bodies. Many foolish and vicious acts have been committed in ignorance and in awareness of the truth. The conscious agency of men will either deliver or condemn them before the judgment bar of the Son of God. The Savior has been given power to redeem men from death and hell, or to leave them to walter in their misery until they are prepared to partake of his grace. Through the priesthood of God given to Jesus, the will of God can be accomplished in each individual life. The outward token of that power and of the atoning sacrifice which makes deliverance from the consequences of sin possible, was manifested in the literal resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the tomb. The irony here is that Paul is testifying of divine judgment in the archetypal place of divine judgment in the minds of the Greeks.

17.31.6—day—The precise day is not known in which the final judgment will take place. It is true, however, that there are accountings made on a regular basis. One might say that every time we exercise our agency, either for good or for ill, a judgment of sorts is made. At the time our mortal sojourn is over, a seminal judgment as to where we will await the resurrection takes place. Having been raised from the dead, the nature of our physical bodies will reveal a great deal about our own attitudes and potential in the eternities. The final judgment will be, in effect, the summation of all of these, and from that decision there can be and will be no appeal.

17.31.10—he—Meaning God the Eternal Father. All good accomplished in time and eternity is a product of the love of God.

17.31.18–19—that man—Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, the Son of God.

17.31.23—ordained—Anyone possessed of the authority of God has had hands laid upon his head for the gift of that power.

17.31.28—assurance—The Greek word which is here translated as "assurance" derives from roots which mean "persuasion, credence, conviction, reliance, constancy, truth". One scholar’s reading of this word suggests "indubitable proof". Paul’s personal experience, coupled with that of the other Apostles, would constitute that kind of assurance.

17.32 The Epicureans did not believe in the eternity of the spirit or even of its existence. The Academics thought the body of no more value than a shadow. The Peripatetics, being of Aristotle’s mind, would have had some interest in the extension of mortal life, this world being the only tangible reality in time or eternity. The Stoics did not believe in the resurrection of the body but not for the same reason as the Epicureans. Some scholars have divided the crowd gathered at Mar’s hill into two factions along party lines, the Epicureans rejecting Paul’s teachings out of hand and the Stoics as those who would entertain more of his teachings. It was probably not that neat. When Jesus taught the Jews, there were those of the Sadducees, Pharisees, scribes, publicans, priests, Levites, Zealots, Herodians and the other factions of Jewish politics and philosophy who repented of their sins and accepted the principles of righteousness in spite of their training or cultural background. Paul’s message would attract the honest in heart regardless of their philosophical associations.

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said. We will hear thee again of this matter.

Acts 17:32
AF 388
CR93-O 23
17.33 Paul left Mars’ hill untrammelled, giving us to understand that if he had been brought there for judgment, he had been acquitted. It would appear, however, that the setting had been more informal than not, arising from curiosity rather than a desire to render judgment.

17.33.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

17.34 Several commentators have concluded that Paul’s attempt to teach the Epicurians and the Stoics was a miserable failure. How they are able to draw this conclusion, given Luke narrative, escapes logic. There were converts to the Church of Christ from the number who attended Paul’s discourse, some of them of great prominence and influence. One may question the missionary’s success because of the absence of any subsequent letters to Athens. This, of course, is a ludicrous argument given the condition of the manuscripts that have produced the New Testament. There can be no question that there was far more written by the Apostles and prophets of God in Paul’s day than has been preserved. We have but a small fraction of that which had been generated before the priesthood of God and the Church proper went into the wilderness of apostasy.

17.34.13—Dionysius—Conjecture regarding this early convert to Christianity has run amuck for centuries. That he was the first Bishop of Athens and a martyr is within the realm of possibility but without foundation in historical fact. Letters attributed to him have long since proven to be frauds perpetrated during the sixth century AD.

17.34.15—Areopagite—Most learned men speaking to this issue have concluded that Dionysius was an “archon”, one of the judges assigned to the Council of Areopagus. Some have gone so far as to submit that he was the president of that Council. There is little evidence to support the propositions, save for the title itself.

17.34.20—Damaris—John Chrysostom, a Catholic writer during the third and fourth centuries after Christ asserted that Damaris was the wife of Dionysius. There is nothing to justify that assertion. However, it would be easier to accept that early Christian Father’s pronouncement than the host of other speculations that have sprung up around her name. We simply do not know any more about her save that which Luke has preserved.

18.1 We are not informed as to how long Paul and his companions remained in Athens. Some scholars have assumed that their labors in that city were not productive and thus their stay was brief. There is nothing in the narrative that would lead us to suppose that that was the case. Paul’s effectiveness among the Greek philosophers was substantial, many having accepted the Gospel of Jesus Christ at his hands, together with the ordinances of salvation. The honest in heart, regardless of their social, economic, or educational background, will receive the truth and abide in its light. The sophistry of men bears little resemblance to the glory of God, and the children of God respond accordingly.

18.1.4—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

18.1.7—Athens—The capital of Attica and the preeminent Greek city of culture and learning in Paul’s day. It was named for the virgin goddess of war, Athena, by its legendary king Erechtheus. As stunning as the history and accomplishments of the citizens of Athens had been, Paul

33 So Paul departed from among them.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Chapter 18

1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth:
was not intimidated in any fashion by the temporal glory exhibited in this ancient seat of Greek life.

18.1.11—Corinth—The southwestern portion of Greece is almost an island, called the Peloponnesus, surrounded by the waters of the Aegean and Ionian Seas. The connection with the mainland of Greece is by way of the Corinthian isthmus at the northeastern point of the Peloponnesus. The city of Corinth is situated on the western end of the connection and was served by two ports on the north and south, Lecheum and Cenchrea. Luke does not tell us whether Paul walked the nearly fifty miles from Athens to Corinth or booked passage from the seaport of Athens, Piraeus, to Cenchrea. Like Athens, Corinth was noted for its cultural history. Its commercial importance was only exceeded by its devotion to lasciviousness.

18.2 Of the personal relationship between Paul and Aquila we are told little. Their association, however, was filled with mutual affection.

18.2.5—Jew—That is, one of those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

18.2.7—Aquila—The history of Aquila and his wife is somewhat clouded. Some scholars have suggested that the tentmaker and his wife were converted to Christianity at the time of the Pentecostal labors of Peter and the Apostles in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of Christ into heaven. Others have speculated that their introduction to the Gospel of Jesus Christ took place after they became acquainted with Paul. In any event, the working friendship between Paul and Aquila continued for many years. If biblical historians be correct, Aquila was at Philippi with Paul when the first letter to the Corinthians was written, and in Rome when the epistle to the Church there was sent. Just before Paul’s execution by Nero, Aquila and his wife were apparently living in Ephesus with Timothy.

18.2.10—Pontus—As with Bithynia and Mysia (see 16.7), the precise historical location of the region of Pontus is somewhat in flux. In part this is due to the political changes that have taken place in Asia Minor over the centuries. Traditionally it is located on the southern shore of the Black Sea (see also 2.9.17).

18.2.14—Italy—The nation that constitutes the heartland of the Roman empire.

18.2.18—Priscilla—An affectationate form of the name Prisca.

18.2.21—Claudius—The emperor of Rome from AD 41 to 54 (see also 11.28.33–34). Scholars are at odds as to when this decree was issued and the motivation for it. All have made reference to a comment made by Seutonius, a Roman historian, who states in his life of Claudiu that the Jews were expelled because of attempted insurrections made by one “Chrestus”. Needless to say, there has been abundant disagreement as to whether or not this was a reference to Jesus Christ and his followers. The extant arguments both for and against this assertion are seriously flawed.

18.2.29—Rome—The capital city of the Roman empire. A citizen of Rome was granted great political independence from all other governmental entities. Both Paul and Silas enjoyed this independence.

18.3 In the Jewish tradition, all young men, regardless of their social or economic background were apprenticed to a trade that they might have a means

2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome;) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and...
of making a practical living were their circumstances to require it. Jesus was taught the elements of carpentry, Peter and many others of the Apostles were acquainted with the fisherman’s trade.

18.3.21—tentmakers—The Greek word which is here translated “tentmakers” derives from roots which mean “manufacturer of tents, cloth, hut, habilitation”. As is the case in matters such as these, there has been considerable discussion as to exactly what Paul and Aquila produced. Without appearing too flippant, perhaps what we should conclude is that they made “tents”, and let it go at that. Whatever the precise product, the labor would have been useful and honest.

18.4 Although there may have been a considerable number of Jews already living in Corinth, the expulsion of the Jews from Rome by Claudius undoubtedly swelled their ranks with the likes of Aquila and Priscilla. Paul would have preached to a full house every Jewish Sabbath. He would have testified of the coming of the Messiah and the fulfillment of prophecy in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul’s capacity for reasoned thought was only exceeded by the power of the Holy Spirit which inspired and directed his discourses at any given time. Therefore he was as effective in his calling as any man in the service of God has ever been.

18.4.3—reasoned—The Greek word which is here translated as “reasoned” derives from roots which mean “say thoroughly, discuss in argument or exhortation”.

18.4.6—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

18.4.10—persuaded—The Greek word which is here translated as “persuaded” derives from roots which mean “convince, pacify, conciliate, assent, rely”. One must ask the question as to what it was that Paul had achieved in his reasoning with the people at the synagogue. It would appear that Paul initially convinced the Jews and the Greeks in their minds that Jesus was the Christ. It is clear that conversion also involves a convincing of the heart (see 18.5.12)

18.4.12—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

18.4.15—Greeks—Probably speaking of the Greek converts to Judaism, but those of the general populace may have hearkened to the voice of Paul as well.

18.5 When Paul had first arrived in Athens, he had sent word that Silas and Timothy, who had remained in Berea, should join him in Athens as soon as possible (see 17.15). Although Luke does not mention their immediate obedience to Paul’s request, yet it appears from other writings that Silas and Timothy joined Paul in Athens and then were sent back to Thessalonica to comfort and strengthen the membership of the Church which they had established there. Additionally, traditional scholarship suggests that Paul wrote his two epistles to the Thessalonians while he still labored among the Athenians. This would imply that Paul’s labors in Athens were of a considerably longer period of time than is usually ascribed to them. Luke’s announce-

4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.  

5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.
ment here regarding the arrival of Paul’s two companions would have us believe that they were just arriving from Berea, when in fact they were returning from their mission to Thessalonica.

18.5.3—Silas—A traveling companion of Paul on his Second Missionary Journey and subsequent travels. He, like Paul, was a Roman citizen (see 16.37). His name here is a contraction of “Silvanus”. In his many epistles, Paul will use the longer name in reference to his friend.

18.5.5—Timothy—If longstanding tradition is any indication, this young man would become Paul’s constant companion and the one to whom two of Paul’s many epistles were addressed. Timothy was raised in the Jewish faith by his mother, though he was not circumcised until he had neared adulthood. His conversion to Christianity was a great blessing to his family and to the Church of Christ. Exscriptural tradition has assigned Timothy the bishopric of Ephesus and martyrdom at the hands of the emperor of Rome. Historians are at odds as to whither of the two cities, Derbe or Lystra, was the home town of Timothy and his mother. Some ancient manuscripts assure us that Lystra is the correct community.

18.5.9—Macedonia—A Greek province of the Roman Empire, once the center of the kingdom established by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It is bounded on the northeast by the province of Thrace and on the south by the province of Achaia. The Adriatic and Aegean Seas lay respectively on the west and east sides of Macedonia.

18.5.10—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

18.5.12—presed—The Greek word which is here translated as “pressed” derives from roots which mean “hold together, compressed, arrest, compel, perplex, afflict, preoccupy”. Whereas Paul apparently had been intellectually convincing the multitudes every Sabbath day that Jesus was the promised Messiah, he now bore a fervent testimony that the things which he had been teaching them were true. One wonders why he waited for the spiritual aspect of his preaching to unfold. He undoubtedly hesitated until he had two witnesses at his side. Silas and Timothy were his companions in the ministry and would have confirmed Paul’s teachings with their own testimonies. Under the Law of Moses Paul could teach alone, but he could not testify alone, for there must be two or three witnesses to establish every matter.

18.5.20—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

18.5.22—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

18.5.24—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and
priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

18.6 There comes a point when a people put themselves beyond the pale of temporal and eternal salvation. The Corinthian Jews who opposed Paul and his teaching regarding the coming of Jesus Christ had done exactly that.

18.6.4–5—opposed themselves—The Greek word which is here translated as “opposed themselves” derives from roots which mean “instead, contrast, requital, substitution, correspondence, arrange, assign, dispose; range oneself against”. There was not merely a spontaneous outcry against Paul’s teachings, but a systematic opposition, almost warlike in its conception.

18.6.7—blasphemed—The Jews had long since been convinced of Paul’s intellectual discourse regarding Jesus as the Messiah and had no significant rejoinder. Their refusal to accept his witness now is an irrational one, causing them to reject aspects of their own religion in order to reject Christianity.

18.6.11—raiment—The Jews of Corinth who opposed Paul and his testimony of Jesus Christ had become as the dust of the earth, they had perished with regard to those things of eternal import and were dead every whit. In some respects this action was like unto the ordinance of washing one’s feet after having been utterly rejected by the inhabitants of a home or city (see MT-C 10.14.20–26). Jacob, the brother of Nephi, used a similar metaphor in his preaching to the Nephites (see 2 NE-C 9.44 and JA-C 2.2).

18.6.17—blood—A catastrophic declaration indeed, similar to the one which the Jews in Jerusalem took upon themselves when they petitioned Pontius Pilate to crucify Jesus of Nazareth in spite of his innocence (see MT-C 27.24–25). Paul is essentially testifying that they will be held accountable for their own sins because they could no longer evoke the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ to redeem them from their wickedness.

18.6.33—Gentiles—This is not to say that Paul never again taught any Jews, for this certainly was not the case. What he is does is to wash his hands of the Corinthian Jews who utterly rejected his testimony and that of his companions.

18.7 As is universally the case, Paul fears little or nothing that his fellow men can perpetrate against him. One would think that one so opposed by a body of suborned religionists would find a place of residence at a distance from their headquarters. Not all of the Jews and certainly not the most prominent felt any animosity towards the missionaries.

18.7.13—Justus—In several ancient manuscripts the name given here is “Titus Justus” or “Titius Justus”. There is considerable argument as to whether he is the same man as the “Titus” who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem during one of his journeys and the recipient of the epistle that bears this name. Some scholars assert that “Justus” was added to

6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man’s house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.
distinguish him from the more famous “Titus”; others affirm that “Justus” is a sobriquet like unto “Peter” in conjunction with Simon the Apostle. There is little evidence for either position.

18.7.20–21—joined hard—The Greek word which is here translated as “joined hard” derives from roots which mean “border together, adjoin”. The implication is that the two buildings shared the same foundation or at least had one wall in common.

18.7.23—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

18.8 Paul enjoyed as much success among the Corinthians as any place he taught the Gospel of Christ. The conversion of Crispus must have removed many hesitant sentiments among the rest of the Jewish community who were honest in heart. Those who opposed Paul in his ministry were those who were so hidebound in their religious convictions that they could not admit to any liberality on their part, notwithstanding Paul’s forceful and compelling reasons for accepting salvation in the name of Jesus Christ. No doubt Paul revealed the decision of the Apostles in Jerusalem regarding circumcision among the Gentiles. The conservatism of many of the Jews would have bristled at that pronouncement.

18.8.2—Crispus—One of the few baptized at the hands of Paul personally. The rest of the Corinthians who received the saving ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus accepted them at the hands of Silas, Timothy, and others ordained to perform them.

18.8.4–5—chief ruler—This was a position of considerable importance in the Jewish community, as a pastor or a priest would be in a traditional Christian community. Whether Crispus remained the chief ruler of the synagogue after his conversion would be determined by the number of other Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

18.8.8—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

18.8.21—Corinthians—Both Jew and Gentile alike. Some ancient texts add the phrase “believing God through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”.

18.9 Although Paul cared little for his personal safety, yet he did have a mighty calling to preach the principles of salvation while he dwelt upon the earth. He had a duty to preserve himself for the sake of those who had yet to hear him speak. For that reason he had been persuaded to depart from Thessalonica and Berea for a season. Paul must have considered the possibility that he might have to leave Corinth as well in order that the purposes of God might be fulfilled in him in another place. The Lord in His infinite kindness revealed to Paul that there was much work left to accomplish in Corinth, a labor that only he could perform.

18.9.6—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he

8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

Acts 18:9–10

AF 234

AF 227
18.9.12—vision—The personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ would have been an irrefutable evidence of the truthfulness of the message that was being communicated to Paul.

18.10 In the cities of Galatia Paul’s life had frequently been in jeopardy, and in one community he nearly had his life taken from him (see 14.19). Rough treatment of the missionaries had continued in Macedonia with insurrections and incarceration. In Achaia, Paul’s ministry proved to be a little less violent physically, at least for a time. When some of the Jews in Corinth became visibly hostile, Paul undoubtedly felt that for the safety of the saints it might be prudent to take his preaching elsewhere for a time. The Lord’s promise was, however, that his ministry was to continue among the Corinthians in spite of the various attempts that would be made on his life. His life would be spared much like the lives of the sons of Mosiah during their fourteen-year ministry among the Lamanites.

18.11 Many scholars have suggested that it was during this eighteen-month period that Paul wrote his two letters to the Thessalonians and his letter to the Galatians. There is evidence, however, that the letters to the Thessalonians were written in Athens and the letter to the Galatians was written in Rome. That Paul may very well have written additional epistles to the membership of the Church in Macedonia and Asia Minor during his stay in Corinth is more than likely. The absence of the letters from our present canon is disturbing, but not devastating. We should look forward to that day when all things will be restored. Perhaps we should not expect that great blessing until we have perused that which we have with greater dedication.

18.12 One might legitimately suggest that the wording of this verse implies that Paul’s ministry in Corinth occurred during the administration of more than one proconsul. That is to say, Luke specifies Gallio in order to disambiguate the confusion that might have occurred in his readers’ mind had he merely stated that Paul was brought before the “deputy”. Many scholars have asserted that Gallio served hardly more than a year as proconsul of Achaia, but they have not ventured to declare how, precisely, Paul’s presence in Corinth overlapped with Gallio’s.

18.12.3—Gallio—Junius Annaeus Gallio was born Lucius Annaeus Novatus but took upon himself the name of his adopted father, Junius Gallio. He was the elder brother of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the great Roman philosopher. He served as proconsul of Achaia from AD 51 to 53. He became consul in AD 55. He may have died at the hands of the Emperor Nero about the time his brother Seneca was executed in AD 65. Other scholars suggest that he committed suicide. The effect was the same in any event.

18.12.6—deputy—The Greek word which is here translated as “deputy” derives from roots which mean “instead of the highest”. This word equates to the Roman “proconsul”. Proconsuls were generally appointed by the Senate as administrators for Roman provinces. Imperial administrators appointed by the Caesars were called “proprætors”. Gallio held the same office in Achaia as Sergius Paulus held in Cyprus (see 13.7).

18.12.8—Achaia—Achaia and Macedonia together constituted ancient Greece. Achaia was the Roman province which governed the southern third of Greece, including the Peloponnesus. Thus the two greatest cities of Greek culture, Athens and Corinth, came under the juris-

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. Acts 18:12

12 And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat, Acts 18:12–23

JC 587
MM 4 181
DNTC 2 184

18.12.10—Jews—This, of course, did not include Crispus or any of the many Jews of the synagogue who had been received into the Church and Kingdom of God through the teaching of Paul and his companions.

18.12.17—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

18.13 The accusation brought against Paul was not that he preached against the Law of Moses, because that would have not impressed Gallio to any degree whatsoever. The Jews raised a political issue similar to that which had been raised in Philippi by the owners of the girl who had been healed by Paul (see 16.19–21). A similar tactic was used against Paul and his companions in Thessalonica (see 17.5–8). In all of these instances, the Jews testified that Paul was teaching a religion not authorized by Roman law. Paul could have easily demonstrated that his cause was just, but Gallio had already perceived the perfidy of the Jews.

18.14 Gallio was not oblivious to the machinations and the jealousy of the Jews any more than Sergius Paulus had been when the missionaries had come before him in the city of Paphos. Gallio was not about to become embroiled in a polemic which should have been confined to their own community. The proconsul was far more successful in dealing with the intricacies of Judaism and Christianity than was his counterpart in Jerusalem when Jesus of Nazareth stood condemned by the Jews before the Roman judgment seat.

18.14.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

18.14.11—Gallio—Junius Annaeus Gallio was born Lucius Annaeus Novatus but took upon himself the name of his adopted father, Junius Gallio. He was the elder brother of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the great Roman philosopher. He served as proconsul of Achaia from AD 51 to 53. He became consol in AD 55. He may have died at the hands of the Emperor Nero about the time his brother Seneca was executed in AD 65. Other scholars suggest that he committed suicide. The effect was the same in any event.

18.14.15—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

18.14.22—wrong—The Greek word which is here translated as “wrong” derives from roots which mean “unjust, injure, iniquity”. In this case a wrong done to an individual, particularly a citizen of the Roman Empire.

18.14.24–25—wicked lewdness—The two Greek words which are translated here as “wicked lewdness” derive from roots which mean “evil, hurtful, mischief, malice, guilt” and “reckless, easy-going behavior” respectively. This phrase is understood as having to do more with society and the state than the individual.

18.15 Gallio knew that no one of his subjects had received damage from Paul, nor had the safety and security of the Roman governance of Achaia been jeopardized in any fashion. The proconsul knew that he was dealing

13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of
with simple religious bigotry. Pontius Pilate had drawn the same conclusion at the time of Jesus’ hearing. Pilate’s response was to literally wash his hands of the matter. Gallio would not even waste his time with their concerns because it was not part of his venue. But the Jews in Corinth, like the Jews in Jerusalem, desired the blood of their adversary and wanted the Roman officers to do their dirty work for them.

18.15.8—words—The Greek word which is here translated as “words” derives from roots which mean “saying, thought, motive, computation, expression”. Semantic litigation was not part of the purview of the Roman Empire.

18.15.10—names—The Greek word which is here translated as “names” derives from roots which mean “authority, character, identity”. The Roman government was not going to be party to determining the identity of the Jewish Messiah or whether Jehovah had taken upon himself a tabernacle of clay.

18.15.14—law—Meaning, of course, the Law of Moses.

18.16 The accusations against Paul were summarily dismissed by Gallio. Whether he then had to physically remove the Jews from his chambers is another matter altogether which cannot be confirmed or denied according to evidence.

18.16.3—drive—The Greek word which is here translated as “drive” derives from roots which mean “dismiss”. The English word “drive” is an archaic preterit form of the verb “to drive”.

18.17 If we simply look at the text as it is presented here, we would have to conclude that the beating of Sosthenes came as the result of his willful attack upon a Roman citizen, an act which if left unpunished would have brought down the ire of Romans everywhere. Whether or not this “Sosthenes” was later converted to the Church of Jesus Christ is unknown. Gallio concluded that the whole affair was much ado about nothing.

18.17.4—Greeks—Some ancient manuscripts states that the “Jews” were the ones who beat the ruler of the synagogue presumably because of his failure to successfully deprive Paul of his life at the hands of the Romans. Other scholars suggest that Sosthenes was beaten by the Greeks as a retribution for having brought trumped up charges against a Roman citizen and wasting the proconsul’s time. Still others attempt to equate the ruler of the synagogue with a “Sosthenes” identified by Paul as a companion in his ministry at the time that he wrote one of his letters to the Corinthians, an identification which has done much to muddy the waters further.

18.17.6—Sosthenes—There has been an exhausting amount of speculation written about this man and the motivations behind the beating which he received at the hands of the Greek (or the Jews). Some writers have attempted, without much success, to equate him with Crispus, suggesting that “Sosthenes” was another name for the chief ruler of the synagogue. This, of course, would suggest an obtuseness in Luke’s writing which is not demonstrated elsewhere.

18.17.12—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

such matters.

16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

17 Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.
18.17.21—*Gallio*—Junius Annaeus Gallio was born Lucius Annaeus Novatus but took upon himself the name of his adopted father, Junius Gallio. He was the elder brother of Lucius Annaeus Seneca, the great Roman philosopher. He served as proconsul of Achaia from AD 51 to 53. He became consul in AD 55. He may have died at the hands of the Emperor Nero about the time his brother Seneca was executed in AD 65. Other scholars suggest that he committed suicide. The effect was the same in any event.

18.18 Luke does not inform us what constituted a “good while”, but scholars have ventured to guess about two years. The essential aspect of Paul's residence in Corinth after the insurrection is that the Jews left him alone, notwithstanding their hostility. Part of the answer to this turn of events is that Paul was a Roman citizen and as such his person was sacred unless he violated Roman law. The beheading of Sosthenes was fair warning to any other antagonists that persecution would not be tolerated, especially by those who were currently out of favor with Caesar (see 18.2).

18.18.2—*Paul*—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

18.18.23—*Syria*—This perhaps was a general reference to the region of Syria rather than specifically to Seleucia and Antioch from whence Paul began his Second Missionary Journey. Paul left Corinth, sailed to Ephesus, and eventually made his way to Antioch by way of Caesarea and Jerusalem. Paul knew what his ultimate objective was when he departed Cenchrea even though it took him a little time to accomplish it.

18.18.27—*Priscilla*—An affectionate form of the name Prisca.

18.18.29—*Aquila*—The history of Aquila and his wife is somewhat clouded. Some scholars have suggested that the tentmaker and his wife were converted to Christianity at the time of the Pentecostal labors of Peter and the Apostles in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of Christ into heaven. Others have speculated that their introduction to the Gospel of Jesus Christ took place after they became acquainted with Paul. In any event, the working friendship between Paul and Aquila continued for many years. If biblical historians be correct, Aquila was at Philippi with Paul when the first letter to the Corinthians was written, and in Rome when the epistle to the Church there was sent. Just before Paul's execution by Nero, Aquila and his wife were apparently living in Ephesus with Timothy.

18.18.31—*shorn*—There is some discussion regarding whether it was Paul or Aquila who had shaved his head. The grammar will allow for either one. The argument has raged for centuries, sixteen centuries at least, each party propagating their opinions. Notwithstanding the tension between the two views, a third group has suggested that both of the men shaved their heads, apparently oblivious to the intellectual meat grinder that the issue has become. The English word “shorn” is an archaic preterit form of the verb “to shave”.

18.18.35—*Cenchrea*—The southeastern port of Corinth which provided easy access to the Aegean Sea.

18.18.40—*vow*—Most scholars think that this was the mark of a Nazirite vow, though they are not of one accord as to when the shaving of the head took place, at the beginning or at the end of the time allotted. The Nazirite vow is described in the sixth chapter of Numbers. The vow may be for any length of time, but the most renowned Nazirites like Samuel, Samson, and John the Baptist were Nazirites their entire
lives. The term is derived from the Hebrew word "nazir" meaning "consecrated" or "separated". The inexplicable variant spelling "Nazarite" frequently appears in traditional scholarship and has led to some confusion with "Nazarene" which is a reference to the town of Nazareth rather than the vow described in the Torah.

18.19 As it will be seen later, the Ephesians were not oblivious to the events surrounding the coming of the Messiah. Paul would find many disciples of John the Baptist, or at least those who claimed to be disciples of the Baptist, who were unaware of the promise of the Holy Ghost. They were undoubtedly others in the city who had received the fullness of the Gospel of Christ at the hands of the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. His reception by the Jews at the synagogue must have seemed promising given the treatment that he had received in Macedonia and Achaia.

18.19.2—he—The antecedent of this pronoun is Paul.
18.19.5—Ephesus—The capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

18.19.8—them—The antecedents of this pronoun are Aquila and his wife.
18.19.16—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean "I bring together." Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

18.20 Had Paul been allowed to come to Ephesus during the earlier part of his Second Journey, he might never have been persuaded to leave the city. His success was dramatic there, the Jews and Greeks alike finding his teaching compelling. Admittedly there would be some conflict with some of the commercial entities in the town, but these were minor in comparison to the great good which he accomplished during his sojourn there.

18.21 One might ask as to why Paul would desire to attend the Passover given his commitment to Christianity and the fulfillment of the Law of Moses. Simply put, Paul had learned for himself that preaching the Gospel in the world is facilitated by having people who are already acquainted with the principles of salvation. The devout Hellenistic Jews who attended Passover were particularly susceptible to listening to the truth. Paul saw this as a great missionary opportunity and not as a moment of Mosaic worship.

18.21.13—feast—Many modern translations eliminate this entire clause

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.
regarding what must have been a reference to the Passover. The argument is that many respectable manuscripts are wanting this passage. It is likely, however, that the verse should stand as it is in the King James version.

18.21.17—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

18.21.32—Ephesus—The capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

18.22 Although most maps depicting Paul’s travels show a nonstop voyage from Ephesus to Caesarea in Palestine, it is likely that there were intermediary stops along the southern coast of Asia Minor and probably at the island of Cyprus as well. Luke does not tell us of his experiences as he taught the Gospel of Christ during the Passover Feast.

18.22.7—Caesarea—A seaport on the Mediterranean about 70 miles northwest of Jerusalem, built by Herod the Great in 22 BC in honor of Caesar Augustus. It was, for all intents and purposes a Roman cities with all of the amenities of that that empire provided. It served as the Roman capital of Palestine for more than five hundred years. Before Herod’s great labor was performed there, Caesarea was known as “Strato’s Tower”, a Phoenician seaport named after a Sidonian king, Straton, the Greek form of the name, Abdastart.

18.22.10—up—That is to say, up to Jerusalem.

18.22.14—church—That is to say, the leadership of the Church, the Apostles and prophets who guided and directed the affairs of the Church of Jesus Christ. Paul had been given an assignment before the beginning of the Second Missionary Journey which had involved the letter written by the Apostles regarding the circumcision of the Gentiles who accepted membership in the Church and Kingdom of God. He no doubt gave his report on the matter.

18.22.19—Antioch—Paul’s home base on the Syrian coast, his place of residence when he was not on the errands of the Lord.

18.23 It might be expected that Barnabas and John Mark had already returned from their missionary travels to Cyprus. No doubt they were as successful as Paul even though Luke does not take the opportunity to inform us regarding their experiences. How long Paul rested in Antioch, we do not know. Undoubtedly, however, he would have soon returned to full strength and would have done all in his power to edify his family and friends in Antioch. Paul’s devotion to the work of the ministry is more than admirable. Those who had received the Gospel of Jesus Christ at his hands were 22 And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

23 And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.
scattered throughout the eastern half of the Roman Empire and he must have felt some urgency in discovering for himself how all those converts fared.

18.23.18—Galatia—Paul’s ministry in Galatia was far more extensive than is usually illustrated on biblical maps.
18.23.20—Phrygia—At no time does Luke tell us which towns in particular in this region Paul established the Church (see 2.10.1 and 16.6).
18.23.22—order—The Greek word which is here translated as “order” derives from roots which mean “thereafter, consecutively, subsequent”. Paul was nothing, if not methodical in his labors. This constitutes his third and fourth visits to many of these places.

18.24 Apollos was a sincere man, and to the degree that he had been taught, he was an effective and persuasive minister.
18.24 6—Apollos—We must conclude that this man was an extraordinarily Hellenized Jew, given his name, Greek in form and pagan in reference.
18.24.9—Alexandria—The second most prominent city in the Roman Empire located on the western edge of the Nile delta in Egypt (see 6.9.19). Many from this community were converted on the day of Pentecost, although we do not know when and where Apollos received his instruction in the preparatory Gospel.
18.24.20—Ephesus—The capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

18.25 One wonders why Apollos, having had the experience of receiving the testimony of John the Baptist, had not moved on to the fullness of the Gospel of Christ. Some of John’s disciples were reticent to accept Jesus as the Christ until they had heard that witness with their own ears from their master. Apollos had accepted the principles of faith in the coming Messiah, repentance from sin, and baptism by immersion according to the teaching of John, but those instructions must have been fragmentary, otherwise he would have known about Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ and the bestowal of the Gift of the Holy Ghost which should have eventually accompanied his own baptism. When Priscilla and Aquila pointed out how the rest of the picture should be, he immediately recognized the truth of the matter.
18.25.4—instructed—Apparently at the hands of John the Baptist himself or one of John’s disciples. Apollos was not teaching false doctrine, only incomplete doctrine.
18.25.21—diligently—The Greek word which is here translated as “diligently” derives from roots which mean “exactly, perfectly, circumspectly, accurately”.
18.25.32—John—The son of Zachariah who became the presiding high priest of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthoods of his day. He was called upon to baptize the Lord Jesus Christ in the Meridian of Time;

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.
25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.
hence his sobriquet. John held the keys of the priesthood until he restored them to the prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 15 May 1829.

18.26 Paul had already begun to teach the fullness of the Gospel of Christ to the Jews of Ephesus toward the end of his Second Missionary Journey (see 18.19–21). Apollos’ words would have been similar, this itinerant minister having a great facility with the scriptures and a charismatic personality. Aquila and Priscilla, observing how close to the truth Apollos was, took him aside and helped him to clarify many of the loose ends which he had as yet not resolved for himself. Not only was the man eloquent and learned, he was extraordinarily humble as well.

18.26.6—boldly—The Greek word which is here translated as “boldly” derives from roots which mean “frank in utterance, confident in spirit and demeanor”. Apollos’ talents as a teacher were compelling.

18.26.9—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

18.26.12—Aquila—The history of Aquila and his wife is somewhat clouded. Some scholars have suggested that the tentmaker and his wife were converted to Christianity at the time of the Pentecostal labors of Peter and the Apostles in Jerusalem shortly after the ascension of Christ into heaven. Others have speculated that their introduction to the Gospel of Jesus Christ took place after they became acquainted with Paul. In any event, the working friendship between Paul and Aquila continued for many years. If biblical historians be correct, Aquila was at Philippi with Paul when the first letter to the Corinthians was written, and in Rome when the epistle to the Church there was sent. Just before Paul’s execution by Nero, Aquila and his wife were apparently living in Ephesus with Timothy.


18.26.23—exounded—The Greek word which is here translated as “exounded” derives from roots which mean “expose, declare”. Those men and women who seek for the truth with open hearts are willing to accept that truth from whatever source

18.27 We are not told from whence Apollos came immediately before his visit to Ephesus, but it is quite likely he was teaching in all of the urban areas where he might expect a large number of Hellenized Jews to teach. Having come in contact with Aquila and Priscilla, Apollos undoubtedly received the truths which they had given him and then received the other ordinances which he was lacking. He undoubtedly was baptized as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ even though he may have been previously baptized for the remission of sins by John the Baptist himself. He would have been confirmed a member of the Church and given sufficient priesthood by which he could then effectively represent the Savior in his continuing ministry. Apollos determined to go to southern Greece and spent a goodly period of time in Corinth where his personality and teachings favorably impressed all those who came in contact with him. He bore with him into that land letters of introduction indicating that Apollos had been duly authorized to represent the Church in that part of the vineyard. His acquaintance with the

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

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scripts made Apollos a great benefit to the fledgling members of the Church in Corinth and environs.

18.27.9—Achaia—Achaia and Macedonia together constituted ancient Greece. Achaia was the Roman province which governed the southern third of Greece, including the Peloponnesus. Thus the two greatest cities of Greek culture, Athens and Corinth, came under the jurisdiction of Gallio.

18.27.29–31—believed through grace—In reference to the members of the Church who had accepted the Gospel of Christ at the hands of Paul and to Apollos who had received the fullness of the Gospel through Aquila and Priscilla. One believes in Jesus as the Christ because of his gift, the atoning sacrifice for sin, and because of the blessings attendant to the influence of the Holy Ghost, a gift that can only come from God the Father.

18.28 One can only imagine the effect of a second witness, as powerful and direct as was Paul. Apollos’ teachings were astonishing to the Jews throughout all of Achaia and he delivered these wherever he could obtain an audience. He no doubt was given leave in the synagogues and places of public prayer to present the principles of eternal life. If he had any opposition we are told nothing of it. It may be that he, like Paul, was a Roman citizen and public insurrection on the part of the Jews would have been a serious error in judgment on their part. Those who “opposed themselves” could only watch in horror as the finest minds and the most devout among them accepted the Gospel of Jesus Christ and entered into the requisite covenants which attended their faith.

18.28.6—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

18.28.15—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

18.28.17—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendency to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.
19.1 Paul had set out on his Third Missionary Journey from Antioch in Syria and wended his way throughout all of Galatia and Phrygia (see 18.23). We do not know exactly how much time he had invested in this excursion, but at some point he felt that he should go to Jerusalem again, but was impressed by the spirit of the Lord to do otherwise. In several ancient manuscripts of this chapter begin as follows: "But when Paul was desirous, according to his own counsel, to go to Jerusalem, the Spirit commanded him to return unto Asia: then passing through the upper parts, he came to Ephesus.

19.1.8—**Apollos**—We must conclude that this man was an extraordinarily Hellenized Jew, given his name, Greek in form and pagan in reference.

19.1.11—**Corinth**—The southwestern portion of Greece is almost an island, called the Peloponnesus, surrounded by the waters of the Aegean and Ionian Seas. The connection with the mainland of Greece is by way of the Corinthian isthmus at the northeastern point of the Peloponnesus. The city of Corinth is situated on the western end of the connection and was served by two ports on the north and south, Lecheum and Cenchrea. Like Athens, Corinth was noted for its cultural history. Its commercial importance was only exceeded by its devotion to lasciviousness.

19.1.12—**Paul**—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

19.1.17–18—**upper coasts**—Most maps depicting Paul’s Third Missionary Journey do not reflect this aspect of his travels. Paul undoubtedly surveyed all of Galatia and Phrygia, north to south, east to west. We do not know whether or not he spent any time in Bithynia or Pontus in his circuit of eastern Asia Minor, but if the citation taken from the ancient manuscripts be correct, he did not bypass the many cities and villages in the northern portion of the Roman province before traveling south to Ephesus. The Greek word which is here translated as “upper” derives from roots which mean “superior, more remote, more conspicuous, former”. There has been some discussion as to what Luke had in mind in describing Paul’s path as such.

19.1.21—**Ephesus**—The capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

19.1.25—**disciples**—The Greek word which is here translated as “disciple” derives from roots which mean “learner, pupil, investigator”. These were not men who had already accepted Jesus as the Christ, but were intent on learning about the truth at the hands of Paul and the other Christians at Ephesus.

19.2 The scholars are at odds as to who these self-proclaimed disciples of John were and who was responsible for baptizing them, but it is clear that...
they had not been taught directly by the Baptist himself or they would have been aware that there was more to be anticipated in their discipleship. These men were apparently aware of John’s role in preparing the way before the Messiah. At some point they had apparently associated themselves with the saints at Ephesus and were investigating the Church as the end of the previous verse indicates. There were deficiencies in their understanding, however, which Paul quickly discerned. While they may have accepted John as a prophet of God, they knew nothing of the power and influence of the Holy Ghost. How could anyone be associated with the Baptist and not know of the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost? It was virtually impossible for that to be the case. Modern revelation has provided us with an understanding as to what probably happened. John the Baptist’s popularity was such that when he was executed by Herod there were many men, without authority, who thought to fill the vacuum. While preaching a portion of the preparatory Gospel, these sectarian Jews left much of the truth unrehearsed because they were, for the most part, ignorant of the ministerial purpose of the Lord’s forerunner.

19.3 Paul’s follow-up question is rather straightforward: “Why were you baptized then? What was the point?” The men replied, “Because John called everyone to repentance, to conform their lives to the path of righteousness, and then accept baptism for the remission of sins.” These were worthy and sincere goals, but having done all this, the men still fell short of salvation. John had taught that there would be another who followed after him who would bring the fullness of truth, the Messiah who would provide light and life to an infinite degree beyond that which the Baptist was able to perform.

19.3.16—John’s—The son of Zachariah who became the presiding high priest of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthoods of his day. He was called upon to baptize the Lord Jesus Christ in the Meridian of Time; hence his sobriquet. John held the keys of the priesthood until he restored them to the prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 15 May 1829.

19.4 How much had these men learned about the Savior in their association with men and women like Aquila and Priscilla? Certainly they would have born testimony of their convictions, that Jesus of Nazareth was the very Christ and that through his atoning sacrifice and his resurrection from the dead the victory over hell and the grave had been made complete. Certainly the members of the Church, filled with the Spirit of God, had deeply affected these disciples of John the Baptist so that when Paul came among them they were humble and receptive to the truth that he would present to them. Paul’s testimony would provide the intellectual connecting link between John and Jesus. It seems unlikely that Aquila or any others among the members of the Church at Ephesus had ever heard the voice of John the Baptist. There is a distinct possibility that Saul of Tarsus had. Without question there would have been many among the Pharisees whom Paul knew personally who had stood on the banks of the River Jordan and had heard the Baptist testify of the coming Christ. Paul could bear a personal testimony of John’s teaching far more powerfully than the sectarian Jew who had baptized these disciples.

19.4.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

19.4.4—John—The son of Zachariah who became the presiding high priest of the Aaronic and Levitical priesthoods of his day. He was called upon to baptize the Lord Jesus Christ in the Meridian of Time;

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.

4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
hence his sobriquet. John held the keys of the priesthood until he restored them to the prophet Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on 15 May 1829.

19.4.30–31—Christ Jesus—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

19.5 Paul’s argument was compelling, his testimony convincing. Realizing that they had received ordinances of salvation from someone who was unauthorized to perform them, the men submitted to the authority which had been bestowed upon Paul by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were baptized in the same fashion as all men and women who have received the truth into their lives. They were immersed in water, baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, receiving unto themselves the name of Christ, by which they would be known in time and in eternity. By that same token, they established themselves in the Church and Kingdom of God on the earth, as fellow citizens with the saints in all times and in all places.

19.5.13–14—Lord Jesus—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

19.6 As had been promised by John the Baptist and Paul, once the disciples had accepted a viable baptism at the hands of those who had been commissioned to preach the principles of eternal life, they were formally confirmed as members of the Church of Jesus Christ and had bestowed upon them the Gift of the Holy Ghost. They were then prepared to serve their fellow men.

19.6.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

19.6.20—tongues—Most traditional scholars have concluded that the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, manifested as speaking in foreign tongues, served as a token for the membership of the Church that heartened back to the day of Pentecost and the conversion of Cornelius and his family. As compelling an argument as that may seem, as scintillating to the senses, it is far more likely that Luke is testifying to his readers that these men, having once been appropriately prepared, were sent into the ministry throughout all of Asia Minor where the gift of tongues would be a necessary means by which the Gospel could be taught to all.

19.6.22—prophesied—That is to say, these twelve men, through the teaching of Paul and the influence of the witness of the Holy Ghost, knew beyond any question that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Redeemer of all mankind

19.7 That is to say, there were twelve men, not that they were twelve years of age. Luke’s detail in this matter is interesting, but given the nature of their first assignment, to carry the Gospel into the neighboring communities in Asia Minor, it is significant that Luke perceived a numerical reflection of the presiding Quorum of the Church.
19.8 Paul’s ministry in Ephesus follows the pattern he had utilized since the beginning of his missionary work. He taught the Jews of any community first, and then afterwards extending the teachings to those among the Gentiles who were willing to receive him. Some ill-informed students of the life of Paul have suggested that he left off teaching the Jews after his negative experience in Corinth (see 18.1–6), but clearly this is not the case.

19.8.6—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

19.8.14–15—three months—Some scholars have been effusive over the length of time spent by Paul in the synagogue of Ephesus, but these same scholars have often truncated the time spent by Paul in any region or town simply because of a want of narrative. Luke is discriminating rather than meticulous in terms of Paul’s comprehensive labors.

19.8.16—disputing—The Greek word which is here translated as “disputing” derives from roots which mean “say thoroughly, discuss, argument, exhortation, reason with”.

19.8.18—persuading—The Greek word which is here translated as “persuading” derives from roots which mean “convince, pacify, conciliate, assent to evidence or authority, rely on inward certainty”.

19.9 When the synagogue was no longer available to Paul and the other Christian disciples, the missionaries obtained an oratory where they could teach without disruption. Some ancient manuscripts state that Paul’s time each day was from the “fifth to the tenth hour”; that is to say, from about 11:00 AM to about 4:00 PM.

19.9.3—divers—The Greek word which is here translated as “divers” derives from roots which mean “some, any, certain”. The English word “divers” derives from Latin sources which mean “different in kind or species, more than one but indefinite in number”.

19.9.13–14—that way—The Greek word which is here translated as “way” derives from roots which mean “road, progress, mode, means” and is in reference to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ by which men return to the Celestial Kingdom of God.

19.9.18—he—That is to say, Paul the apostle.

19.9.21—them—That is to say, the gathering at the synagogue who were publicly denouncing Paul.

19.9.33—Tyrannus—Much has been written regarding this fellow, most of which is founded in speculation rather than fact.

19.10 Paul’s success in Ephesus and environs was enormous. We are not certain if Paul spent five hours a day for two years in the oratory of Tyrannus, and we probably ought to conclude that from time to time Paul ventured out into the surrounding towns. This labor laid the foundation for the tremendous body of the Church in Asia Minor which was still in harmony, for the most part, by the time John the Beloved addressed his Revelation to the seven cities of Asia.

19.10.2—this—Either in reference to the time and place of Paul’s teaching at the oratory, or in reference to the types of experiences related by Luke in the first nine verses of the chapter. The latter seems to most
likely, given Paul's penchant for taking the Gospel to the people.

19.10.17—Asia—In reference to Asia Minor, but particularly to the pro-
consular region which would have included Ionia, Aeolia, and Lydia.
Greater Asia Minor would have included Galatia, Pisidia, and other
regions where Paul was permitted to freely teach.

19.10.23–24—Lord Jesus—All effective ordinances of any kind are per-
formed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the
destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of
the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in
behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus
himself, or through his ordained agents.

19.10.26—Jesus—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to
Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been
home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced
to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

19.10.28—Greeks—Probably speaking of the Greek converts to Judaism,
but those of the general populace may have hearkened to the voice of
Paul as well.

19.11 Miracles, of their own nature, are not ordinary events experienced by
men. That is what constitutes their miraculousness. Miracles, in the sense
meant in the scriptures, generally have to do with the effects brought about
by exercising the priesthood of God, whether administering to the physical
or spiritual wants of a faithful disciple. The effect of the adjective "special"
suggests something about the manner by which the effects were achieved
rather than the effects themselves. Verse 12 articulates the extraordinary
means by which men and women were healed. Normally an afflicted person
would be anointed and then given an inspired blessing by which the purpose
of the anointing is articulated, together with the promises associated with the
blessing.

19.11.4—special—The Greek phrase which is here translated as "special"
derives from roots which mean "no, negative; accept near, admit,
delight in; make ready, bring to pass, affect, light upon, attain, secure, usual". Combined, these words imply "extraordinary".

19.11.10—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as
he began his missionary labors.

19.12 In every ordinance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ there are outward
tokens devised whereby the faith of an individual believer might be focused.
Baptism involves physical immersion in the water, the bestowal of the Gift of
the Holy Ghost involves the imposition of hands, as does also the admin-
istration to the sick. The use of "handkerchiefs" and "aprons" as part of the
process constitutes the "special" aspects of the miraculous blessings which
God performed in behalf of the afflicted. Should we suppose that the
personal agents sent by Paul bearing these instruments did not perform the
offices of administration as well? That would be an unfortunate conclusion.
The saints of former days had great confidence in Paul and the priesthood
power which he had received from the Apostles. The personal effects which
were sent by him to the afflicted would reassure those administered to that
Paul's associates were men of like caliber. Regarding any inherent or special
qualities that those articles of clothing may have had, having come from
Paul's person, we should probably reserve judgment.

19.12.11—handkerchiefs—The Greek word which is here translated as
"handkerchiefs" derives from roots which refer to the Roman
"sudarium (sweat cloth)" and the "napkin" placed over the face of a

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handker-
chiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil
spirits went out of them.
19.13 Although many have made sport of the notion that there are spiritual forces among us who are malevolent in their designs upon mankind, yet let no one doubt that such beings do and will continue to exist until they are banished with their master into their destined, gloryless abode. To a man or woman filled with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the spirits of the unborn can have little or no lasting effect.

19.13.5—vagabond—The Greek word which is here translated as “vagabond” derives from roots which mean “come all around, stroll, vacillate, veer”. The English word “vagabond” derives from Old French roots which mean to “wander, move about, without fixed home”. The words “vagary” and “vague” derive from the same roots.

19.13.6—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

19.13.7—exorcists—The Greek word which is here translated as “exorcists” derives from roots which mean “exact an oath, conjure, one that binds by an oath or spell”. These men were presumptuous, arrogant, and without divine authority.

19.13.17–18—evil spirits—The evil spirits were those who in the pre-mortal existence accepted the leadership of Lucifer and were cast out of Heaven instead of obtaining physical bodies as the rest of mankind has done.

19.13.23–24—Lord Jesus—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents. The Jews mentioned here had no such authority.

19.13.32—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

19.14 Whenever the power of God is manifested before men, the great adversary of the children of God takes it upon himself to produce forgeries and frauds in order to dissuade the children of men from believing the servants of the Most High. He can generally recruit to his cause men and women who lust after the popularity of the world, coupled with fame and fortune. Thus, Satan has his dupes who perpetrate his charades. These men, together with the other “vagabonds”, were employed as exorcists for monetary gain. Their ilk have not passed away with time.

19.14.8—Sceva—Little is known of this man. His notoriety has come as a result of the conduct of his sons.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.
19.14.10—*Jew*—That is, one of those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. Luke considered this man to be a Jew, associated with the nation, rather than his relationship to the tribe of Levi.

19.14.12—*chief*—Many scholars have concluded that this word should have been preserved and translated as “certain” rather than “chief”.

19.14.15—*priests*—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The “chief priests” designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of “chief priests” to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former. Clearly these men were devoid of the authority of the Melchizedek priesthood by which such exorcisms are possible.

19.15 Jesus was well known to those spirits who followed Lucifer in the grand rebellion in Heaven before the earth was framed. He was the Firstborn, the chosen Messiah, the Redeemer by whom the plan of happiness would be instituted among the children of God as they took upon themselves mortal bodies in the fallen world. Jehovah and Michael were in the forefront of the opposition against Satan and his entourage, and through their offices the devil and those who were of his party were denied further access to God the Father and his spirit children. In their diabolical frenzy, however, these evil spirits have used every means at their disposal to destroy the confidence of their brothers and sisters in their Father and in His chosen Son. From among the faithful, many were selected to serve the children of men upon the earth. To this end they were foreordained. The spirits of the Rebellion know these men as well, for they were valiant in their opposition against those who would have denied all men their moral agency. The sons of Sceva had neither part nor portion in those eternal affairs and were abused for their impertinence when they attempted to usurp divine authority.

19.15.8—*Jesus*—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

19.15.12—*Paul*—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.
edify their brethren they have been blessed. But when they have stepped beyond the pale, when they have presumed too much, the power and authority of God, they have entered in upon a road which ultimately leads to self-deception and destruction.

19.17 We are not told who witnessed this monumental failure on the part of the seven sons of Sceva, but clearly the fiasco soon became public knowledge. After two years of instruction, the city of Ephesus was quite familiar with the teachings and miracles of Paul and to have the presumptuous Jews dealt with in such a summary way must have enhanced Paul’s reputation even more. Needless to say, Paul would have correctly attributed all that had happened to the grace of God and all the blessings which had come to the Church had been given and received in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

19.17.8—*Jews*—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve *sons* of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

19.17.10—*Greeks*—Probably speaking of the Greek converts to Judaism, but those of the general populace may have hearkened to the voice of Paul as well.

19.17.14—*Ephesus*—The capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

19.17.16—*fear*—The Greek word here translated as “fear” is the source for the English word “phobia” and means essentially that in the original tongue. The Greek word also means, however, to be “in awe of, revere, reverence”, allowing for the notion of conviction rather than simple astonishment.

19.17.26–27—*Lord Jesus*—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

19.18 How may we know when a man is prepared to receive the saving ordinances of the Church and Kingdom of God? Calling upon God in the name of the son, pleading for forgiveness, properly acknowledging his faults, follies, and sins, and consequently forsaking all further contact with the former wickedness constitute signs and tokens that the man is desirous to live by every word that proceeds froth from the mouth of God.

19.18.7—*confessed*—Sometimes the confession required is solely to those whom the sinner has offended directly; that is to say, to God Himself and to those who have received injury. In other circumstances, a general confession to the Church and Kingdom of God may be required. Hence, the role of the common judges in Israel who have the keys of the priesthood by which they may adequately represent the body of
the Church in the repentance process.

19.18.9—shewed—An archaic form of the preterit tense of the verb “to show”.

19 Much has been written regarding the contents of these scrolls that were committed to the fires. Of course we can look at other ancient documents that appear to be in the same vein, but our estimations can only be speculative at best. In a day when one bristles at the thought of censorship, the destruction of these literary pieces may be disturbing to some. But these works spoken of were destroyed by their owners as an act of contrition in much the same way a man addicted to pornography might destroy those publications which had brought wrack and ruin into his life and into the life of his family. The prophet Alma, in counseling with his son Helaman, commanded him to especially protect that section of the records of the Jaredites which contained explicit material regarding the machinations of Cain and Lucifer. Those sections of the twenty-four plates of Ether’s history were not translated as a result of this abiding concern. The word of God is revealed unto man for his benefit, and preserved for his edification and exaltation. The revelations of the evil one, though written down in some fashion, have no value whatsoever in the salvation of mankind.

19.19.3—them—that is, many of the new converts to the Church and Kingdom of God, who had exercised faith in Christ, had repented of their sins, and had received the ordinance of baptism coupled with the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

19.19.7–8—curious arts—Historians of Greek society confirm our suspicion that the “curious arts” were those that dealt with witchcraft, sorcery, spiritualism, exorcism, divination, and magic.

19.19.33—silver—The Greek word which is here translated as “silver” was used in the scriptures to represent the “shekel” and the “drachma”. We may assume that since these events took place in the Greek city of Ephesus, the “drachma” was what was intended. Other manuscripts substitute “denarii”. Some scholars suggest that amount should be figured in “sesterii”. While interesting in a mild way, the only significance in all of this is that the considered value of all of the scrolls destroyed was enormous, implying a large body of men and women who forsook the occult and joined themselves to the Church of Jesus Christ. For those who are idly curious, the sum would have been approximately $10,000.00 in today’s dollars.

19.20 The preaching of Paul, the miracles wrought by the power of the priesthood invested in him, the failure of the pretenders to duplicate Paul’s labors among the Ephesians, and the faith exhibited by the recent converts to the Church clearly demonstrated the efficacy of the truth in the minds and hearts of honest men and women.

19.20.1—So—that is to say, “in this fashion” did the growth of the Church of Christ take place.

19.21 Paul’s missionary labors were, in the beginning, confined to a particular circuit. The First Journey took him to Cyprus and the provinces of Galatia, Pamphylia and Pisidia. During the first half of his Second Journey, Paul revisited all of those places where he had first preached the Gospel save for Cyprus, which he left to his friend and companion Barnabus. The second half of the Second Journey took him to Macedonia and Achaia, together with a brief stop in Ephesus. The Third Journey rehearsed his movements in eastern Asia Minor, Paul preaching throughout all of Galatia and Phrygia.

20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

21 After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.
before coming into Ephesus and environs. The second half of the Third Missionary Journey was to be another circuit through Greece, a trip to Jerusalem and from thence to Rome. We may suppose correctly that by this time Paul knew precisely what the Lord had in mind for him to do in the ensuing months, including the rather rough treatment that he would suffer at the hands of the Jews and Romans.

19.21.6—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

19.21.8–10—in the spirit—that is, his itinerary was inspired, a product of divine revelation.

19.21.16—Macedonia—A Greek province of the Roman Empire, once the center of the kingdom established by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It is bounded on the northeast by the province of Thrace and on the south by the province of Achaia. The Adriatic and Aegean Seas lay respectively on the west and east sides of Macedonia.

19.21.18—Achaia—Achaia and Macedonia together constituted ancient Greece. Achaia was the Roman province which governed the southern third of Greece, including the Peloponnesus. Thus the two greatest cities of Greek culture, Athens and Corinth, came under the jurisdiction of Gallio.

19.21.22—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

19.21.33—Rome—The capital city of the Roman empire. A citizen of Rome was granted great political independence from all other governmental entities. Both Paul and Silas enjoyed this independence.

19.22 The practice of sending men two by two before the arrival of a prominent teacher is time-honored, and one utilized by Jesus himself on several occasions.

19.22.5—Macedonia—A Greek province of the Roman Empire, once the center of the kingdom established by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It is bounded on the northeast by the province of Thrace and on the south by the province of Achaia. The Adriatic and Aegean Seas lay respectively on the west and east sides of Macedonia.

19.22.13—Timotheus—One of Paul’s converts and traveling companions through many of his missionary journeys. See also 16.1.16.

19.22.15—Erastus—Tradition suggests that this is the same man who is mentioned in Paul’s second letter to Timothy. Some scholars have lumped this Erastus with the “Erastus” who was an early Christian convert in Corinth who was also the treasurer of that city. There is little evidence, save tradition, to support that assertion.

19.22.21—Asia—Meaning the Roman province of Asia Minor where Paul was then focusing the weight of his ministry, but he dwelt and taught primarily in Ephesus.

19.23 The tumult that was created in Ephesus, as will be seen, was ostensibly founded on the greed of Demetrius and his fellows. It the truth be known, however, we would find that Demetrius’ antagonism ran far deeper than just the slight loss of revenue.

19.23.11–12—that way—that is to say, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus: but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. Acts 19:23

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Christ whereby men are brought back into the presence of God.

19.24 Demetrius’ arguments against Paul will not prove to be logical, inasmuch as most of the silversmith trade was not with the residents of Ephesus itself. If one assumes, however, that Paul’s missionary activities ranged far and wide from the city proper, it is conceivable that the demand for models of the temple might have dropped off.

19.24.6—Demetrius—Some scholars and enthusiastic historians have suggested that this same Demetrius later converted to Christianity and was held in esteem by John the Beloved in his third epistle. Although possible, it seems unlikely that the two are the same man.

19.24.8—silversmith—The Greek word which is here translated as “silversmith” derives from roots which mean “beater or worker of silver”.

19.24.12—shrines—Historians testify that travelers who came to visit the temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, would purchase replicas of the building to carry with them as they traveled and as a object of worship when they could not be in Ephesus on a regular basis.

19.24.14—Diana—The Roman name of the hunter-goddess of the Roman pantheon which has been generally equated with the Greek goddess Artemis. Most cultural anthropologists, however, suggest that Artemis of Ephesus was more like unto Cybele or Astarte than the Roman huntress, the former two being fertility goddesses of Asia Minor.

19.25 Inasmuch as every other insurrection raised against Paul has had at its root a malignant desire to squelch the truth being taught by the missionaries, we probably ought to assume that Demetrius was motivated by a personal peak not directly associated with his craft. His argument against Paul preys on the fears of the other silversmiths, blaming any loss of revenue on the successful labors of the Christian missionaries rather than on any natural fluctuations in the economy at the time. This sort of subterfuge has been manifested by the wicked in every generation since the world began and we ought not to suppose that the wicked in Ephesus were any different in Paul’s day. Demetrius’ intent is to whip up the frenzy of the guild that the influence and person of Paul might be completely destroyed.

19.26 Paul’s success throughout all of the province of Asia Minor and in other regions as well had been substantive, but not universal. Demetrius here is dealing in hyperbole, purposefully exaggerating the evidence and the circumstances to accomplish his own designs. That Paul had been throughout all of the province and other places in his extended ministry there can be no doubt. That he had been the means of extending the Christian faith among people who had been led to believe in Jesus through the ministry of the Apostles in Jerusalem is also evident. There had been many hundreds, perhaps thousands of Jews and Gentiles who had been directly influenced by the events that had taken place during the day of Pentecost. His greatest successes, however, had been among the Jews and the sympathetic Gentiles who probably would not have been interested in the expensive shrines of Diana in any event. The proscription and condemnation of idolatry was just as much a Jewish concept as it was a Christian one. He had had nominal success among the pagans, it is true, but Demetrius has no inclination to weaken his case by presenting the truth of the matter. He merely desires to incite his fellows to riot, which he achieves admirably.

19.26.10—Ephesus—The capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor.

24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:
Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

19.26.15—Asia—Meaning the Roman province of Asia Minor where Paul was then focusing the weight of his ministry, but he dwelt and taught primarily in Ephesus.

19.26.17—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

19.27 Demetrius played on the patriotism of the Ephesians, resorting to the history of the temple in order to stir the mob further. This was to be interpreted as insult upon injury, inasmuch as he had already asserted that they were being damaged financially.

19.27.25—Diana—The Roman name of the hunter-goddess of the Roman pantheon which has been generally equated with the Greek goddess Artemis. Most cultural anthropologists, however, suggest that Artemis of Ephesus was more like unto Cybele or Astarte than the Roman huntress, the former two being fertility goddesses of Asia Minor.

19.27.34—destroyed—The Temple to Artemis or Diana was the pride of Ephesus as might easily be imagined. Construction began about 550 BC purportedly by Croesus of Lydia and required more than a century to complete. Some scholars report that it was another 100 years before the edifice reached the pinnacle of its glory, including all of its appointments. As tradition has it, the temple was burned on 21 July 356 BC by one Herostratus in order that his name might be known in all the world for having destroyed one of the great wonders. Hence, “herostratic” fame, fame at any cost. Serendipitously, that same night Alexander the Great was born. The temple was restored in 323 BC, but burned again by the Goths in AD 262. In AD 391 the feigned fears of Demetrius were finally realized as the emperor Theodosius I closed all of the pagan temples in his realm. In AD 401 the complete destruction of the building was accomplished by a mob. The stones of this wonder of the ancient world were used in the construction of other buildings.

19.27.37—Asia—Meaning the Roman province of Asia Minor where Paul was then focusing the weight of his ministry, but he dwelt and taught primarily in Ephesus.

19.28 Demetrius’ rantings were effective and it was not long before he had whipped the mob into a rage, capable of hardly more than spirited chants and mindless violence.

19.28.16—Great—Artemis of Ephesus was conceived to be a composite of all of the maternal and fecund qualities of the goddesses of eastern Europe and the Middle East. Her statues were replete with symbolism that attempted to place her far above any other Artemis or any other Diana. As “Diana”, she would have been included with the twelve “Dii Maiores”, the “great gods” of the Greco-Roman pantheon.

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.
19.28.18—*Diana*—The Roman name of the hunter-goddess of the Roman pantheon which has been generally equated with the Greek goddess Artemis. Most cultural anthropologists, however, suggest that Artemis of Ephesus was more like unto Cybele or Astarte than the Roman huntress, the former two being fertility goddesses of Asia Minor.

19.28.21—Ephesians—The residents of the capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

19.29 It was undoubtedly fortunate that the mob did not at that time have access to Paul’s person; his life certainly would not have been spared.

19.29.12—*Gaius*—We have encountered the name “Gaius” before in our discussion of the city of Derbe (see 14.6.11). Derbe, of course, is a city of Galatia in Asia Minor rather than in Macedonia. Unless some adequate explanation is forthcoming, we may assume that the companion of Aristarchus is another man of the same name. Even so, the problem is not completely resolved inasmuch as one of Paul’s companions in the following chapter (see 20.4) is Gaius of Derbe. Perhaps for Luke, the fact that he says here that Gaius and Aristarchus were men of Macedonia and that Gaius of Derbe later accompanied Paul was a sufficient clarification. However, we do not have to go far before we can encounter theories that conjoin the two men into one. There are myriads, but one will suffice: “Gaius’ family hailed from Derbe, but he himself was born in Macedonia.” While clever, the argument is neither compelling nor elegant. There are at least four different individuals named “Gaius” in the New Testament, all of which have been abused by “conjoining” theories of one sort or another without evidence and very little tradition to support them. Gaius or Caius was a common name in that day.

19.29.14—*Aristarchus*—A personage of less controversy than Gaius who traveled with Paul throughout his Third Missionary Journey. Eastern Orthodox tradition credits him with being the bishop of Apamea, a city of ancient Syria.

19.29.17—*Macedonia*—A Greek province of the Roman Empire, once the center of the kingdom established by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It is bounded on the northeast by the province of Thrace and on the south by the province of Achaia. The Adriatic and Aegean Seas lay respectively on the west and east sides of Macedonia.

19.29.18—*Paul’s*—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

19.29.29—*theatre*—The Great Theatre of Ephesus is situated just to the west of Mount Pion in the central part of the ruins of Ephesus. It would have served as an open-air site for large gatherings of any kind. The temple of Artemis stood on a prominence north and west of the Theatre.

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.
19.30 Paul feared nothing for his life, but he was concerned for the well-being of his traveling companions. Paul would have willingly sacrificed his own life in order to preserve the lives of Gaius and Aristarchus. The members of the Church in Ephesus knew their countrymen only too well and notwithstanding the urgency to placate the ire of the mob in order to save the lives of Paul’s friends, the disciples knew that the lives of all three would be taken once the artisans had the missionaries in their clutches.

19.30.3—Paul—the Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

19.31 Paul taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ with great power and conviction, but he did not reject the friendship of those whose circumstances did not allow them to follow in his footsteps as disciples of Jesus. Some scholars have portrayed Paul as a hard-shelled, unrelenting, inflexible disciple of Christ who had no patience with the wicked or the pagans. This clearly is not the case. He was a loving disciple who exemplified his Master in word and deed.

19.31.5–7—chief of Asia—This phrase is a literal translation of "Asiarches", in reference to the "Asiarchs" or "Asiarchon", members of a council entrusted with the celebration of the games and of the formal worship of the Roman emperor. These were rich, powerful, and influential men who undoubtedly were involved in the attempt to rescue Gaius and Aristarchus from the mob in the Theatre.

19.32 What had begun with Demetrius’ personal vendetta against Paul and the other Christians in the city, expanded to include the guild of the silversmiths, who in a state of unreasonable agitation, incited a riot in the city. Their cries in support of Ephesian Diana, attracted the attention and enthusiasm of a vast congregation of citizens who knew nothing of the original matter. The rush into the theatre by the silversmiths drew many hundreds more of the inhabitants with them. Once ensconced in the amphitheater, the ardor of the gathering began to cool and natural curiosity as to what the fuss was about came to the forefront of most of the people’s minds. That the worship of Diana was threatened must have been clear, but how and by whom was apparently not clear. Was it the Jews? The Christians? Paul? Gaius? Aristarchus? What had any or all of these done in order to cause such a commotion?

19.33 This desperate attempt on the part of the Jews to disassociate themselves from Paul and the disciples of Christ would be but one of a series of failures to distance themselves from the Messiah and his servants.

19.33.2—they—we cannot be absolutely certain who “they” were, but it seems likely that the leadership of the mob might have been involved, given the context.

19.33.4—Alexander—a Jew of Ephesus who apparently was recognized as an able speaker, independent of his heritage. Demetrius may have perceived him initially as an ally until someone pointed out that Alexander himself belonged to a religion that prohibited the worship of idols. As is frequently the case, traditional scholarship has attempted to lump this Alexander with several others to be found in the text of the New Testament, with little or no justification for so doing.

19.33.10—Jews—the members of the synagogue feared that the same brush which was going to tar Paul would be used against them as well. As would be done on many occasions, the Jews wished to distance themselves from the Christians, a body that from all outward appear-

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.
ances to a gentile, was simply a sect within the general religious system of Judaism.

19.33.24—25—\textit{his defence}—Had Alexander been given the opportunity to speak, he undoubtedly would have condemned Paul and his companions as the troublemakers, by pointing out that the Greeks, Romans, and Jews had lived together in relative peace and harmony for some time.

19.34 This sort of petulance is visible today in a wide variety of venues, wherein unbridled devotion to an idea, a symbol, an association, a team, a community or nation, can result in fierce remonstrations and violence when the “honor” of the object of affection is tainted in any way. Whether sports, politics, or religion, the effects are quite often precisely the same. There is a figurative closing of the mind and heart, a literal stopping of the ears and eyes, and an attempt to drown out any view or attachment that differs from their own. There is little or nothing of truth involved, but much of opinion and passion. The silversmith Demetrius knew how to work his audience and revealed in the great stir that he had caused. Lucifer also operates in this fashion, stirring emotions, slandering his opposition, blinding and deafening any who will hearken to him initially, that he might lead them carefully down to hell on the backs of their own heated emotions.

19.34.9—\textit{Jew}—That is, one of those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

19.34.24—\textit{Diana}—The Roman name of the hunter-goddess of the Roman pantheon which has been generally equated with the Greek goddess Artemis. Most cultural anthropologists, however, suggest that Artemis of Ephesus was more like unto Cybele or Astarte than the Roman huntress, the former two being fertility goddesses of Asia Minor.

19.34.27—\textit{Ephesians}—The residents of the capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

19.35 The townclerk’s arguments are simple and direct. The reality was that little had occurred in the city that would justify the tumult which had been raised by Demetrius.

19.35.4—\textit{townclerk}—The Greek word which is here translated as “townclerk” derives from roots which mean “writer, scribe, secretary”. Historians and other scholars have proposed, understandably, that this man was a person of enormous prominence, easily recognized by everyone in the theatre. Some have concluded, because of various ancient documents, that he may have been a magistrate, perhaps the chief magistrate of Ephesus. Others have used the words “mayor” and “sovereign” as equitable titles. Others have suggested that this man

34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?
was specifically the secretary of the city who published the decisions of the civic assembly and was the mediator between the local Greek officials and the Roman authorities.

19.35.6—appeased—The Greek word which is here translated as “appeased” derives from roots which mean “put down, quell, quiet”. The town clerk had calmed the mob; he had not given them what they wanted.

19.35.14—Ephesus—The capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

19.35.36—Diana—The Roman name of the hunter-goddess of the Roman pantheon which has been generally equated with the Greek goddess Artemis. Most cultural anthropologists, however, suggest that Artemis of Ephesus was more like unto Cybele or Astarte than the Roman huntress, the former two being fertility goddesses of Asia Minor.

19.35.40—image—There are numerous theories as to what was exactly meant here. Some scholars suggest that the material from which the original image of Artemis had been made was extraterrestrial in origin, a meteorite. Others merely state that the features of Diana had been revealed to the ancient priests by the father of the gods that they might accurately fashion her image. Little is gained by either view.

19.35.45—Jupiter—The Roman name of the Greek god Zeus. The Lystrans took Barnabas to be the incarnation of Jupiter at the time the man crippled from birth was healed by Paul and him during their First Missionary Journey (see 14.11–13).

19.36 The crowd had been chanting for hours, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians”. The town clerk simply stated that everyone knew that, and no one had ever said anything to the contrary. Their honor had not been tainted by an abuse of their goddess or of their loyalty to that goddess. By raising the tumult they were expressing a fear that some mortal or group of mortals could actually destroy their devotion to Artemis. He might well have made reference to the fact that the temple had been burned at one time several hundred years before, but the Ephesians, true to their faith, had rebuilt that which had been lost. Any attempt to destroy the temple would be harshly dealt with by the Roman government, and any attempt to bring disrepute on the Ephesians for a lack of enthusiasm was ridiculous.

19.37 Paul and his companions had never been disrespectful of the traditions of the Greek pagans. He simply taught the truth in a polite and clear manner, in order to persuade the Ephesians that Jesus was the Christ. Diversity was allowed in the Roman empire and the act of proselyting was not prohibited.

19.37.11–13—robbers of churches—The Greek word which is here translated as “robbers of churches” derives from roots which mean “temple-despoiler, plunderers of sacred places”. Was there any

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.
evidence that Paul or any of the disciples of Christ had ever stolen anything from the temple of Artemis or any other sacred place? Nero, however, would do precisely that during his rampage as emperor of Rome. The great wealth of Ephesus and of Asia Minor would be summarily stripped away.

19.38 It is likely that Demetrius and his cohorts knew that Paul was a Roman citizen, and there can be no question that the town clerk knew. For Demetrius to bring a false accusation against Paul and his companions would have meant death to the silversmith. This was a less than veiled warning that pursuing this course of action would be personally unhealthy for any resident of Ephesus. It is interesting that the town clerk knows precisely what initiated the riot.

19.38.3—Demetrius—Some scholars and enthusiastic historians have suggested that this same Demetrius later converted to Christianity and was held in esteem by John the Beloved in his third epistle. Although possible, it seems unlikely that the two are the same man.

19.38.25—deputies—The Greek word which is here translated as “deputies” derives from roots which mean “instead of the highest”. This word equates to the Roman “proconsul” (see 13.7.5).

19.38.28—implead—The Greek word which is here translated as “implead” derives from roots which mean “call in, bring to account, charge, incriminate, call in question”. The English word “implead” is currently a legal term which means to prosecute at the law in court. It is likely, however, that the archaic meaning, which is far more general, was intended by the translators of the King James version.

19.39 If Paul and his companions did pose a threat to the city or its inhabitants there was a legal forum for those issues as well. The town clerk, by this tack, has made it perfectly clear that the assembly in the theatre at that very hour was not one of the legally constituted gatherings authorized by the Roman government.

19.39.16–17—lawful assembly—These civil gatherings, according to historians, were held three time a month.

19.40 The raising of a riot was punishable by death under Roman law. The town clerk was being quite candid in his remarks. It is intriguing that he is using the first person plural pronoun here. We ought not think that the town clerk is in fearful fear of his own life, for he could easily point to Demetrius as the perpetrator of the tumult. He is simply stating that it was in the best interests of all the inhabitants of Ephesus, including himself, that this matter be dropped immediately. Did the Roman officers in Ephesus know of the goings on? Of course they did, and were no doubt standing by to exercise their prerogatives if necessary. This fact could not possibly have been lost on the crowd gathered at the theatre. If they persisted in this violation of the law, they would witness the very thing that they had accused Paul and his companions: the destruction of all that they held dear.

19.41 Notice that no one, not even the hotspur Demetrius, raised one word of opposition to the dismissal, either as a result of the clarity of the town clerk’s discourse or the nature of his authority.

19.41.10—assembly—The Greek word which is here translated as “assembly” derives from roots which mean “calling out, popular meeting, congregation, synagogue, church”. It is from these roots that our English word “ecclesiastical” derives.

38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day’s uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.
20.1 Paul had long before determined to work his way through Macedonia and Achaia and had sent Timothy and Erastus before him to make preparations (see 19.21–22). It seems unlikely, then, that Paul’s departure from Ephesus was precipitous or demanded by the turn of events with Demetrius and his colleagues. Paul was unnerved by nothing that the world could array against him. It is wonderful to observe Paul’s tenderness towards those to whom he had introduced the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His was not a mechanized ministry, but one filled with love and compassion towards all men. He was the Lord’s servant and his only desire was to do the will of him who rescued his soul from the spirit of antagonism and hatred. Paul’s demeanor was far different, a polar opposite, from that of the man from Tarsus that fought against the Church and Kingdom of God.

20.1.7—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

20.1.22—Macedonia—A Greek province of the Roman Empire, once the center of the kingdom established by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It is bounded on the northeast by the province of Thrace and on the south by the province of Achaia. The Adriatic and Aegean Seas lay respectively on the west and east sides of Macedonia.

20.2 Paul desired to meet again with those faithful souls who had accepted the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ at his hands. His journeys throughout Macedonia may have consumed a considerable amount of time as he strengthened their faith. His labors among the friends and neighbors of the disciples would have been extensive, as well as his ministry among the peoples of the surrounding villages

20.2.7—8—those parts—Undoubtedly in reference to the Macedonia, but Paul probably did not confine himself to the three or four cities that he had visited during his first visit there. Paul continually sought opportunities to extend the scope of his mission.

20.2.18—Greece—This is the only place where this name is used in the New Testament. The Greek word is “Hellas”. The most frequent reference to the region is either “Macedonia” or “Achaia”. Between Macedonia and Achaia was the province of Epirus. At what geographical point in his travels Paul left Macedonia and entered into “Greece” we cannot say with preciseness.

20.3 Paul’s life was constantly in jeopardy; to him this was but a small annoyance. He was not reckless, but he was determined to endure whatever was necessary in order that the work of God might go forward. He would do little to preserve his own life, and that is probably the reason that the Lord had to be as direct as He was with Paul in order to get him out of harm’s way.

20.3.2—there—Scholars speculate as to where Paul spent these three months. Some suggest Corinth; other recommend Athens. It may be, however, that Luke is merely referring to his ministry in that part of the country rather than at any one city.

20.3.9—Jews—Without much evidence to support their claims, many scholars have suggested that the liers in wait were seeking to rob Paul of the money that he was to carry to Jerusalem to relieve the suffering of the membership of the Church there. That he would accomplish such a mission of mercy there can be no doubt. That the “Jews” sought Paul’s life merely because he was a walking vault seems

Chapter 20

1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.
unlikely. Paul’s antagonists were far more malignant in their opposition to the Christian missionaries.

20.3.21—Syria—An expansive territory north of the land of Canaan, the capital being the city of Damascus. Syria stretched from the Mesopotamian valley to the Mediterranean Sea.

20.3.23—purposed—Several ancient manuscripts testify that Paul’s decision to return through Macedonia rather than to set sail to Syria from Greece was dictated by the Spirit of God. The decision was inspired by God rather than by any fear of the machinations of the Jews who wished him dead.

20.3.27—Macedonia—A Greek province of the Roman Empire, once the center of the kingdom established by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It is bounded on the northeast by the province of Thrace and on the south by the province of Achaia. The Adriatic and Aegean Seas lay respectively on the west and east sides of Macedonia.

20.4 Paul’s missionary companions were servants of great worth to the Christian ministry, of whose lives and personal characteristics we know but little.

20.4.6—Asia—That is, to the province of Asia Minor which lay opposite Macedonia across the Aegean Sea.

20.4.7—Sopater—Some scholars have equated Sopater with Sosipater, a kinsman of Paul who is mentioned in the epistle to the Romans. Many ancient texts also identify Sopater as the son of Pyrrhus, whoever that worthy soul may have been.

20.4.9—Berea—A city of Macedonia where Paul achieved much success during his Second Missionary Journey (see 17.10–12)

20.4.13—Thessalonians—Inhabitants of the city of Thessalonica. The community was originally named Therma, but the village was rebuilt and expanded by Cassander who subsequently named the city after his wife, Thessalonica, the sister of Alexander the Great. Historians assert that Thessalonica had a population in excess of 200,000 persons when Paul and Silas visited for the first time.

20.4.14—Aristarchus—Earlier identified as a man of the province Macedonia (see 19.29.14) here more specifically as a citizen of the city of Thessalonica.

20.4.16—Secundus—Nothing more is known of this disciple except that which tradition insists on providing.

20.4.18—Gaius—A common name in Greco-Roman culture. We probably ought not to conflate the several men in the New Testament who bear this name (see 19.29.12).

20.4.20—Derbe—A town historically located on the commercial route between Tarsus and Lystra whose present location is in some dispute. Tradition has it located some 30 miles south and east of Lystra. Also the home of Gaius, one of Paul’s later traveling companions.

20.4.22—Timothy—Timothy may have hailed from the city of Lystra, as many ancient manuscripts testify (see 16.1.16). Lystra was located in the province of Galatia.

20.4.26—Tychicus—A traveling companion who is mentioned frequently in Paul’s various letters. In other ancient manuscripts he is more closely identified with the city of Ephesus rather than just the general province of Asia Minor.

20.4.28—Trophimus—An Ephesian, and therefore a resident of Asia Minor, who accompanied Paul on many of his missionary forays.

4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.
20.5 Why these seven men preceded Paul and Luke to Troas we may only speculate. We ought not to suppose that Paul was deferring to the Jewish celebration of Passover, however.

20.5.8—Troas—The Troad is the historical name of the Biga Peninsula located in the northwest portion of Asia Minor. The formal name of the city of Troas has passed through several permutations. According to the learned historians, the site was first called Sigia, but was renamed Antigonia Troas by the Greek commander of the same name in the fourth century BC. It was later renamed Alexandria Troas in honor of Alexander the Great. Still later, the city was renamed Colonia Alexandria Augusta Troas during the reign of the Roman Emperor of the additional name. At some point, the world concluded that “Troas” was sufficient. Today the city is called Eski Stambul, on the western coast of Turkey a little south of the island of Tenedos or Bozcaada. The legendary city of Troy has been identified with ruins located several miles to the north of Alexandria Troas.

20.6 One wonders at Luke’s motivation for giving such great detail in certain parts of his narration and little or none in other places. It may have been that Luke did not do well aboard ship and the time involved in any voyage was of considerable importance to him.

20.6.2—we—This is the first time since the middle of the 16th chapter of Acts that Luke has used the first person plural pronoun in conjunction with his travel arrangements, compelling many scholars to conclude that Luke had not been in Paul’s company since their first labors in Philippi (see 16.10–16). While clearly serving as a marker for Luke’s presence at any given point in the narrative, the absence of the pronoun does not necessarily indicate that Luke was elsewhere.

20.6.6—Philippi—Sailing away from Philippi is virtually impossible (see 16.12.5); sailing from its port city, Neapolis, which is actually on the coast instead of nine miles inland is far more practical.

20.6.11–12—unleavened bread—A seven-day period in conjunction with the Passover Feast during which no faithful Israelite ate “raised” bread, that is bread containing any yeast or other leavening agent. On the Jewish calendar, the abstinence would have taken place between the 14th and 21st of the month of Abib or Nisan, the first month of the sacred year. This period of time correlates to March and April in current calendars, depending on the date of the new moon in any given year.

20.6.18—Troas—The Troad is the historical name of the Biga Peninsula located in the northwest portion of Asia Minor. The formal name of the city of Troas has passed through several permutations. According to the learned historians, the site was first called Sigia, but was renamed Antigonia Troas by the Greek commander of the same name in the fourth century BC. It was later renamed Alexandria Troas in honor of Alexander the Great. Still later, the city was renamed Colonia Alexandria Augusta Troas during the reign of the Roman Emperor of the additional name. At some point, the world concluded that “Troas” was sufficient. Today the city is called Eski Stambul, on the western coast of Turkey a little south of the island of Tenedos or Bozcaada. The legendary city of Troy has been identified with ruins located several miles to the north of Alexandria Troas.

20.6.20–21—five days—A careful reading of the text suggest that the westward journey from Troas to Neapolis took only two days (see 16.11–12) while the eastward journey from Neapolis to Troas took
five days. We are not certain what caused the apparent difference, whether contrary winds, layovers, or a completely different route.

20.6.25–26—seven days—No explanation is given as to why Paul chose to wait seven days in Troas when he had expressed a deep desire to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost. A few commentators have suggested that the company had landed in Troas on a Monday and wished to worship with the Christian saints the following Sunday. That there were disciples of Christ in that city there can be no doubt, which would imply that Paul’s first stop at the city was far more productive than Luke’s narrative would give us reason to believe.

20.7 This story is frequently told with some humor, pointing to Paul’s long-windedness as being the cause of Eutychus’ death. Perhaps it would be best if we left the humor to Paul. The meeting may have begun at sundown, particularly if the members of the Church were primarily of Jewish extraction. Depending on the other activities held during Paul’s visit, his discourse could have been four or five hours long. Notwithstanding modern snickers to the contrary, no one present would have complained or would have been exasperated at the length of Paul’s oration.

20.7.4–5—first day—That is to say, Sunday, the Christian Sabbath, held in commemoration of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

20.7.15–16—break bread—There can be no argument levied against the fact that the administration of the Sacrament is what is being described here. There is some historical indications, however, that the members of the Church came together to partake of a common meal together at the same time as their devotions, perhaps in memory of the Last Supper celebrated by Jesus and his Apostles. Whether that is the case here we do not know. Paul had some rather strong counsel against these common meals, however, and it would seem odd that he would allow one in this instance.

20.7.17—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

20.7.25—morrow—The very next day.

20.8 Paul was speaking to the saints in the evening and the lights were lit, many of them. We are not privy as to the nature of the fuel the lamps employed, but olive oil is likely. The fumes from the lamps, drifting out of the window where Eutychus was sitting may very well have overwhelmed him, rather than having been overcome by Paul’s somniferous tones.

20.8.4–5—many lights—One wonders at why Luke would mention this particular detail. When we consider that these lights would have been open flames rather than incandescent bulbs, we may suspect that Luke is providing us with the evidence as to why the young man fell asleep.

20.8.8–9—upper chamber—Since we do not know precisely where the disciples met for worship in Troas, it is difficult for us to imagine exactly what this room would have been like. The only detail we can be sure of is that Eutychus was sitting in a third story window.

20.9 It is curious that most commentators on this episode chose to focus on Paul’s rhetorical liabilities rather than on the facts as Luke presents them. This does not speak well of most religious orators. A man filled with the Holy Ghost, having the words of eternal life upon his lips, may hold the attention of all those who are blessed with the same gifts for long periods of time without complaint or criticism. For the power of God unto salvation enlivens the spirit child of God that is housed in a tabernacle of clay. While

7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, Paul departed on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

Acts 20:7
AF 178, 454
AGQ 2 62, 63
DNTC 3 440
JC 690
PM 396
EM 3 1241, 1243, 1423
CR96-A 13
Acts 20:7–12
DNTC 1 256
EM 3 1192

Acts 20:9–12
MD 185
the flesh may be weak at times, the spirit of a righteous man is always ready to be edified.

20.9.6—window—Certainly not a glazed window, but an appropriate opening for allowing air and light to traverse into the upper reaches of the building. That the window was designed primarily for venting the interior of the room rather than for sitting is clear in Luke’s narrative.

20.9.12—Eutychus—We know little or nothing regarding this man except for his unfortunate accident and the miraculous manner in which he was brought back to life.

20.9.21—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

20.9.23–24—long preaching—The long preaching was not necessarily the cause of the young man’s weariness. Eutychus had undoubtedly been overcome by the fumes from the lights and because of the long meeting and the delight which the saints were taking in Paul’s oratory, no one’s attention was drawn to the man’s precarious position in the window, particularly once he began to slump outward.

20.9.35–36—third loft—The Greek word which is here translated as “third loft” derives from roots which mean “third roof, third story”. We cannot know at this point what the exterior of the building looked like, but there may have been a small sloping apron beneath the window where Eutychus was sitting. Having fallen out of the window in slumber, he would have slid down the short incline and then dropped the three stories to the ground, thus literally falling from the third “roof”.

20.10 We ought not to be overwrought by the manner in which Paul administered to the young man. We may find precedence in the lives of both Elijah and Elisha as they respectively returned to life the sons of the women of Zarephath and Shunem. Luke does not make it clearly whether or not Eutychus was administered to in typical priesthood fashion, with the anointing of oil and a formal blessing, but we may surmise that that would have been part of the overall process. Paul’s primary concern was to restore the young man to life and then other issues could easily be addressed afterwards.

20.10.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

20.10.6–8—fell on him—That is to say, “stretched himself out upon him” as had the ancient prophets.

20.11 Once the young man’s condition had been stabilized, Paul and the rest of the company went back to the upper chamber where they enjoyed a light repast, after which Paul conversed with the members of the Church, for perhaps as long as six hours on this occasion. Paul’s willingness to dedicate many hours on these two occasions, and if the truth were known, on many such occasions during this period in his ministry, was undoubtedly triggered by his foreknowledge that it would be a very long time before he would be at liberty to return to these cities wherein he had enjoyed so much success. The saints, too, may have sensed that they were not going to have Paul in their midst for a very long time to come.

20.11.15—talked—The Greek word which is here translated as “talked” derives from roots which mean “to be in company with, converse, commune, companionship, association together”. Many scholars have concluded that this period of time was more conversational rather than the formal discourse that he delivered before midnight.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.
20.12 The members of the Church were keeping vigil over Eutychus for the rest of the night. We are not told whether or not the fellow was in a coma, but it seems likely that he was. Paul apparently kept vigil with them as an assurance that he was willing to abide among them until the boy was obviously completely recovered. Paul undoubtedly knew that all was going to be well, but the disciples may not have shared his optimism, having seen the condition that the young man was in after his fall. It was for their sakes that he remained and not for any hesitancy on his part.

20.13 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And he went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul; for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot. (JST, Acts 20:13)

Why Paul chose to walk the twenty miles across the peninsula from Troas to Assos is a bit of a mystery, unless he was the one who was experiencing some difficult with sea travel (see 20.6). The ship would have traveled forty miles between the two cities. The rest of his company did travel by the boat and were apparently waiting for him when he arrived in the city. The walk between the two cities would have consumed the better part of a day.

20.13.2— we—Following our pronominal rule of thumb, Luke would have been aboard ship as well.

20.13.10—Assos—A seaport on the opposite side of the Troad peninsula from Troas. Other than Paul’s brief visit recorded here, Assos was the site of the marriage of Aristotle in 348 BC to the princess Pythia.

20.13.16—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.


20.14.8—Assos—A seaport on the opposite side of the Troad peninsula from Troas. Other than Paul’s brief visit recorded here, Assos was the site of the marriage of Aristotle in 348 BC to the princess Pythia.

20.14.16—Mitylene—An ancient seaport situated on the southeast side of the island of Lesbos or Lesbos, itself lying just south of the Troad peninsula of Asia Minor. Probably the most infamous of Mitylene’s residents was Sappho, a sixth century BC Greek lyric poetess whose reputed proclivities have rendered the island’s name into more of an epitaph than mere nominal identification.

20.15 The value of this itinerary is its illustration of the tedium involved in traversing the ancient world, even while traveling by sea.

20.15.10–11—over against—The meaning of this word seems to be “opposite” which may imply that Paul’s vessel passed through the five mile wide strait between Chios and the mainland of Asia Minor. Needless to say there are differing views.

20.15.12—Chios—A large island approximately five miles off the west coast of Asia Minor and about 12 miles from the city of Smyrna. Some biblical scholars state that Paul stopped here on his journey; others assure us that he did not.

20.15.20—Samos—A large island slightly southeast of Chios in the Aegean Sea. Probably the most famous of the citizens of Samos was the sixth century BC philosopher/mathematician Pythagoras.

20.15.24—Trogyllium—A promontory of Asia Minor in the region of Caria. It is also the name of a nearby island. Notwithstanding all of
the interest generated by the difference between the two, it should suffice to say that Paul’s company paused somewhere nearby.

20.15.31—Miletus—A small ancient seaport whose harbor was eventually filled in by the river Meander. The Greek philosopher Thales was born in Miletus, and has come to be known as one of the seven sages of Greek culture and the father of Greek science.

20.16 The company had sailed from Neapolis during the Passover Feast. The day of Pentecost would take place some fifty days later. Five days were spent navigating from Neapolis to Troas. Seven more days they tarried in Troas during which time Eutychus’ death and restoration took place. By the time Paul had reached Assos on foot, they were two weeks into their voyage to Jerusalem. Another week was consumed as they sailed down the western coast of Asia Minor to Miletus. The remainder of the trip was nearly six hundred miles if they sailed directly across the Mediterranean Sea. Since they had only covered three hundred miles or so, averaging about one hundred miles a week, if Paul were to reach Jerusalem in time for the day of Pentecost he could not afford to spend time in any given place. Stopping in Ephesus could have delayed him in any number of ways, not the least of which was his great personal love for the many converts to Christianity who had accepted the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ at his hands. Having the saints gather from Ephesus to Miletus was an agreeable compromise.

20.16.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

20.16.8—Ephesus—The capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

20.16.17—Asia—That is, to the province of Asia Minor which lay opposite Macedonia across the Aegean Sea.

20.16.30—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

20.16.34—Pentecost—The Greek word “Pentecost” is comprised of two parts. The first five letters is indicative of the number “five”; the second part of the word is indicative of the decimal marker. Therefore, “Pentecost” is literally translated as “Fifty” in reference to the fiftieth day after the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. The reader ought to be aware that “fifty” is the product of “seven sevens plus one”.

20.17 Miletus was approximately 35 miles south of Ephesus. Sending word between those two cities would have taken at least a day, and the gatherings of the priesthood leadership from that place may have taken as much as

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

Acts 20:17

AF 214

EM 3 1050
20.17.3—Miletus—A small ancient seaport whose harbor was eventually filled in by the river Meander. The Greek philosopher Thales was born in Miletus, and has come to be known as one of the seven sages of Greek culture and the father of Greek science.

20.17.7—Ephesus—The capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

20.17.11—elders—The Greek word which is here translated as “elders” derives from roots which mean “elderly, older, senior”. It is also for the source for the English words “presbyter” and “Presbyterian”. These are ordained officers holding the higher or Melchizedek Priesthood. We are not privy as to their specific callings in the Church, but no doubt they were constituted the leadership for the Church of Christ in that area, probably ordained by Paul himself.

20.18 Paul’s first recorded visit to Ephesus took place during his Second Missionary Journey after spending considerable time in Athens and Corinth (see 18.19). His stop there was brief, but he promised to return. He did so during his Third Missionary Journey after having preached throughout all of Galatia and Phrygia (see 18.23 and 19.1). On this occasion Luke states that he dwelt in Ephesus for at least two years before moving on to Macedonia (see 19.10). The question then arises as to whether Paul actually labored longer in Asia Minor than the two years in the school of Tyrannus or if he was counting the three years from his first brief visit. In verse 31 of the current chapter, Paul refers to having spent three continuous years laboring with them. It seems reasonable to assume that this was during his Third Missionary Journey.

20.18.16–17—first day—Probably in reference to the beginning of his stint in Ephesus during the Third Missionary Journey rather than the forays into the province of Asia Minor during his Second Missionary Journey.

20.18.22—Asia—That is, to the province of Asia Minor which lay opposite Macedonia across the Aegean Sea.

20.18.30—you—Some ancient manuscripts add “for three years, and even more”. Some scholars find this too long of a period of time to be a legitimate gloss. Some scholars are far too rigid in their established chronologies.

20.18.33—seasons—The Greek word which is here translated as “seasons” derives from roots which mean “a space of time, opportunity, occasion”. Paul was always prepared to edify those around him regardless of the circumstances.

20.19 Paul’s missionary experiences removed the rough edges of his personality, perfecting his already prodigious mind, and softening his adamant heart.

20.19.6–8—humility of mind—Paul was an intellectual giant, self-aware,

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:
but his service to the God of heaven was such that his mental capacity could be no more than a tool for doing good to his fellow man. In his early life he had made several impetuous decisions based on his own understanding of the world. His persecution of the Christian saints resulted from his imperfect grasp on the principles of eternity. Having learned to submit himself to the Lord God of Israel relegated his intellectual prowess to a subservient place as well. Pride in his abilities was unthinkable.

20.19.11—12—many tears—Anyone who has labored for the souls of the children of men, who has embarked on that glorious task to aid the Lord Jesus Christ in establishing immortality and eternal life in the hearts and minds of the saints of God, knows precisely the sentiment that Paul is expressing here. No one may be compelled, and for all of the love and concern we may have for others, each man is blessed with his own moral agency by which he chooses to live or die, be joyous or miserable, move forward into light or retreat into darkness. Those who tenderly watch the choices of those whom they love are frequently beset with tears; sometimes they are tears of joy and gratitude, at other times they are tears of sorrow and disappointment.

20.19.14—temptations—The Greek word which is here translated as "temptations" derives from roots which mean “putting to proof, experience, adversity”. Every man who comes into the world is to be tested in some fashion, exposed to certain kinds of experiences which are specifically designed to perfect and polish him as a child of God. No one is exempt, not even those who have proven their willingness to serve God at all costs.

20.19.25—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

20.20 In his instructions to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Jesus commanded them to teach openly the principles of salvation, to bless the faithful wherever they might be found, to be generous in all that they did, for thus it had been in his relationship with them: “Freely ye have received, freely give” (see MT-C 10.8). Not only had Paul presented logical and compelling discourses, he had demonstrated in his daily walk the manner in which those teachings might be applied in one’s life. This he had done openly in the school of Tyrannus, lectures to which any and all of them could attend with their friends and neighbors. He had also personalized his teaching when necessary, in small intimate gatherings. He had consistently presented the Gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed in every setting, that he might be a true witness of Christ.

20.21 There is a superior translation for this verse.

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (JST, Acts 20:21)

When Paul first arrived in Ephesus he had taken the opportunity to preach first to the Jews for as long as they would receive him. According to Luke’s account, his preaching in the synagogue continued for the space of three
months, after which he retired to the school of Tyannas to continuing his teaching with all those who would hearken to him. His ministry to the Greeks came as the new converts to the Church of Christ reached out to their friends and neighbors. The principles taught were the same, regardless of the ethnic or cultural background of his audience. One must exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, upon whom the salvation and exaltation of all men depended. One must also strive to be more like the Son, that is to say, be persistent in living by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God, the eternal Father. As part of the repentance process, the disciple must accept the ordinances of the Gospel, baptism and laying on of hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and any other requirements which would prove to be essential to his or her progress toward perfection.

20.21.5—Jesus—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. 20.21.10—Greeks—Probably speaking of the Greek converts to Judaism, but those of the general populace may have hearkened to the voice of Paul as well. 20.21.16—toward—in the best manuscript that we have of this verse, "toward" is replaced by the phrase "in the name of".

20.21.19–20—Jesus Christ—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

20.22 One of the reasons Paul did not stop in the city of Ephesus and chose to meet with the elders of the Church in Miletus was because of the compelling necessity to return immediately to Jerusalem. His haste was exacerbated by the fact that he had less than four weeks to be in Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost.

20.22.9—spirit—The point of controversy in this verse is whether Paul traveled to Jerusalem because of his own will, his own desires, or if he were being compelled to make his appearance in the Holy City because of the urgings of the Holy Ghost. The answer should be obvious, given who we are dealing with here. Paul had learned to perfectly obedient in all things, notwithstanding his own predilections.

20.22.11—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, "flowing peace" or "established in peace". The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, "established in peace" is by definition, the City of the great King.

20.22.12–13—not knowing—that is to say, Paul did not know the specific details as to what was going to happen, but in general he had been forewarned that he was to enter into a more rigorous experience in his missionary labors than he had before.

20.23 The Holy Ghost had testified to Paul that no matter what he chose to do, he would eventually be taken bodily and imprisoned, which would end his missionary labors for a time. If, however, he wished to contribute to the building up of the Kingdom of God on the earth, to be the servant that he

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.
wished to be, then he should be in Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost. In this sense, that Paul desired to be of continuing service, his compulsion to move toward his destiny became paramount to him. In this sense his was "bound in the spirit". Thus, as he traveled from place to place during the latter part of his Third Missionary Journey, Paul put aside his desires to stay among the people he loved in order to serve the God to whom he owed all allegiance.

20.24 Paul would not be moved to the right hand or to the left in his commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. His life was not his own; he had been purchased by the atoning blood of the Savior whose expiation had made it possible to be forgiven of all those atrocities which he had committed against the saints of God before his conversion to the truth. Whether he lived or died was of no serious import to him so long as by so doing he enjoyed the approbation of the Father and the Son. He wished to finish the labor that the Lord had placed before him, that his calling might be fully magnified. His mortal and eternal happiness derived from his awareness that he had observed to do all that God had put before him.

20.24.4-5—*these things*—That is to say, all of the trials and tribulations which lay before him of which the Holy Ghost had given him some forewarning.

20.24.34-35—*Lord Jesus*—All effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

20.24.42—*grace*—The grace of God is His Gift; that is to say, His Only Begotten Son who was sent into the world that all mankind might be redeemed, even as many as will. There can be no greater news, no more positive message than that the salvation of God has been offered to the sons of men that they might be holy.

20.25 Paul is not predicting his eminent death here, for some time would pass before he would be executed at the command of Nero the Roman emperor. After his first imprisonment in Rome, he would have leave to visit all of those places wherein he had taught the principles of truth and light to those who would listen. Whether he came again to Ephesus or Miletus is a matter of speculation, but that he would not see those who were before him at this Priesthood meeting we may believe without question, for this was a matter of revelation to him by the power and influence of the Holy Ghost. This must have been as difficult a moment for Paul as any that he had experienced in his life up to that point. These were men who had received the Gospel at his hands and had been commissioned to carry forth the work of the ministry in his absence. It is conceivable that many, if not all of these same men, would perish as martyrs for the cause of Christ before Paul could return to them.

20.26 The messengers of God have placed upon them an immutable charge that they should clearly and without equivocation testify to the people of the consequences of sin and the manner by which every man, woman, and child may receive a remission of their sins and walk in righteousness before God. Those ministers who fail to do so will be held accountable for the sins of those who would have repented had their ministry been in accordance with the will of God. Jacob and Joseph, the brothers of Nephi, felt this responsibility deeply and therefore taught with all diligence, laboring with

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.
their might to teach their people the principles of eternal life as they were led by the spirit. Paul and all others who have faithfully fulfilled their callings, have consciences void of offense towards God and towards all men.

20.27 Paul had been unrelenting in his ministry, to bring the fulness of the Gospel of Christ to both Jew and Gentile alike.

20.27.5—shunned—The Greek word which is here translated as "shunned" derives from roots which mean "withhold under, out of sight, cower, shrink, conceal, reserve"

20.28 This is grave counsel indeed. The seeds of apostasy were already planted and only by faithful diligence could these pernicious ideas and practices be rooted out of the hearts and minds of the membership of the Church. The converts to Christianity had come from various cultural milieus, representing thousands of misconceptions regarding the nature of mortal life and manner in which a person should make his way upon the earth. In the lives of some men and women there were proclivities and habits which had been engendered by the world in which they had been raised. As the Church grew, these aberrations would become more apparent. The Priesthood leadership of the Church would have to be constantly vigilant to prevent a corruption of the saints by the philosophies of men and the attendant deviancies which led to the destruction of the soul. This would be true among the members of the various congregation for which they all had charge, but also they themselves would be tempted by the adversary to partake of those things which had been strictly prohibited by the spirit of God. They could not afford to be slack in any fashion, least the wickedness of the world consume them all.

20.29 As the Lord himself suggested in one of his parables, the gospel net brings into the Church a whole panoply of fish which, once they have been hauled in, have to be separated into good and bad (see MT-C 13.47–50). The implication is that not everyone who is baptized into the Church and Kingdom of God will be prepared to live the principles of the Gospel for the rest of their lives. Like the tares in a similar parable, they have to be separated from the wheat lest any of the children of the Kingdom be poisoned (see MT-C 13.24–30). Jesus warned the disciples about "false prophets", those who would pretend to have testimonies of the Son of God and yet have associated themselves with the Church for the sole purpose of taking advantage of the innocent (see MT-C 7.15–20).

20.29.8—departing—Some scholars have suggested that Paul is referring specifically here to his own death, but we may readily and rightly conclude that Paul's caution to the Priesthood leadership of Asia Minor was to be understood and observed immediately. They no doubt would return to the city of Ephesus and find the very things about which Paul was speaking at that hour.

20.30 In the previous verse, Paul spoke of those who would henceforth receive the covenants of salvation through baptism of water, that among them would be charlatans which they should watch for. Here they were to be careful with those who already belonged to the Church who would, for their own purposes, seek to lead the members of the Church away from the true Church. Although one would hope that it was not the case, Paul may be suggesting that there were men in that very room, if they were not very careful, who might find themselves guilty of speaking and doing perverse things and thereby damaging the body of Christ, those who had been

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.
purchased by his blood in the atoning sacrifice. The rise of Gnosticism, for example, would not wait until the death of the Apostles to raise its ugly head.

20.31 Paul had been dealing with false prophets, raving wolves, tares, and had fish his entire ministry. The attempted destruction of the Church from the outside, the plotting of both Jews and Greeks, was for the most part ineffective. He knew from experience that the most destructive forces occurred when evil was allowed to continue within the Church unabated. He had set the example before them during the three years that He had spent among them. They had been able to observe his manner of dealing with apostates and spiritual degenerates. It had not been an easy matter for him. Some of those with whom he had to deal were individuals for whom he had great attachment, for whom he had great affection. Severing them from fellowship was extremely difficult for him, but he did so for the sake of the Kingdom of God on the earth. Yet he did not yield the keys of the priesthood capriciously or precipitously, but labored with all in transgression in the hope that they might repent and walk uprightly before God and men.

20.32 Paul’s ministry among these saints of Ephesus was drawing to a close. He knew of the tribulations which lay before them, and that he would be to some degree helpless to benefit the membership of the Church directly. Therefore, he saw no other recourse than to prayerfully put them in the keeping of the Father and the Son. 

20.32.5—commend—The Greek word which is here translated as “commend” derives from roots which mean “place along side, present, deposit, in trust, for protection, commit into the keeping of”.

20.32.12–15—word of his grace—The promise and hope of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, the redemption from both death and hell.

20.32.25—inheritance—For those who have honored the covenants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there is a promise given that they would be heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus. The inheritance is eternal life, to live and be as the Father is forever, to have been purged from every stain, sanctified in every way.

20.33 It was patently clear to all those who listened to him that Paul had never taken advantage of the members of the Church in any way, even though he could have had claim upon their support as he served in the ministry fulltime. He desired that no one bring his service into question by implying that he taught and ministered for the sake of financial gain.

20.34 The raving wolves and the false prophets would seek to enrich themselves at the expense of the membership of the Church devouring the means of the saints to satisfy their own gluttonous habits and lusts. During the three years that Paul taught in Ephesus, he worked with Aquila and Priscilla as a tentmaker, providing for his own food and lodging rather than to be a burden upon the tender saints, and to set an example before all men that there was nothing to be gained by being a servant of Christ save for the approbation of a just and loving God. Paul’s labors also helped to defray the costs of maintaining his entourage, his traveling companions who helped him teach and bless the people as they went from place to place. Whereas on other occasions Paul might have accepted the largesse of the faithful, for these three years he did no such thing.

20.35 Paul set the perfect example before his converts, particularly those who

31. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have shewed you all things,
would take his place as the leadership of the Church in Asia Minor. Those who were weak in the faith were to be blessed and strengthened rather than burdened with the temporal cares of the ministry. The saints should never have to feel that they bore the sole responsibility to provide for those who were their ministers. Other great and good men have felt as Paul. Even the great King Benjamin would not take advantage of his people by demanding taxes such that he would not have to work for his living. For that act alone, the Nephites loved their ruler. Can anyone doubt that the peoples of Asia Minor loved their priesthood leader, hearkening to his voice as he worked to bring them to salvation? No doubt there were men in the room at Miletus who would have liked to have been loved as Paul was. Paul, knowing their hearts, told them precisely what they should do in order to earn that love.

20.35.21—words—Recorded nowhere in the Gospels, but preserved by Luke and Paul in this instance. One wonders at the vast body of clear and poignant doctrine that has been lost to a fallen world because of the carelessness or perversity of men.

20.35.24–25—Lord Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

20.36 Although a fervent prayer may offered while standing reverently or while seated in the company of others, yet the finest scriptural examples we have of particularly effective prayers have taken place as all those concerned incline themselves on their knees, with bowed heads and closed eyes. We may not understand all that may be said of the effectiveness of such a posture, save that experience commends the practice to us. Paul had apparently learned that principle himself, notwithstanding his upbringing and the formal practice of the Jews in offering prayer. As might be expected, there are notable sacred exceptions to the foregoing.

20.37 These are men who loved one another with the pure love of Christ. They were filled with compassion toward one another, delighted in each other’s company. They enjoyed a unity which only the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Christ can bring. The separation of such a comrade from the whole, particularly one of the caliber of Paul, caused sorrow for the separation. It was not the fear of death that troubled them, neither were they overly concerned at the tasks which he had placed before them. It was their immediate tenderness for one another that would be lost with Paul’s permanent departure. Such are the bonds of Christ.

20.37.9—Paul’s—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

20.38 One may have a deep and abiding conviction of the power of the atonement and of Christ’s victory over death and still be susceptible to the feelings of the heart. One may be filled with the spirit of God, be the beneficiary of countless revelations from the Father and the Son and still feel the profound sense of loss at the passing of a loved one. It is not the effects of death, the paling of the body and the dissolution of the tabernacle of clay that grieves the saint. It is the loss of fellowship, the mutual kindness which made the experience here upon the earth passable and perhaps even enjoyable. Nothing of the material world retains its charm over time; all the earth decays into ruin with the passing of years. What grows, what develops, what sustains and edifies, are the countless positive associations which we make

how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him,

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.
with one another as we sojourned here for a mere lifetime. To the degree that we establish Zion in our own hearts and in the hearts of those around us, to that same degree do we insure our eternal happiness in the Celestial Kingdom.

21.1 The distance traveled in this verse was approximately 175 miles by ship, taking at least two days.
21.1.12—them—That is to say, the priesthood leadership from Ephesus and environs who had gathered at Paul’s request to Miletus.
21.1.23—Coos—An oblong island in the southeastern part of the Aegean Sea lying just off the Carian coast of Asia Minor. It is approximately 50 miles south of Miletus. Its most famous native son was the Greek physician Hippocrates.
21.1.29—Rhodes—A large island off the southwestern coast of Asia Minor and the site for the gigantic Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The Colossus was a 106-foot brass statue of Apollo built in the first part of the third century BC. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 224 BC.
21.1.34—Patara—The chief seaport of the province of Lycia in southern Asia Minor, the harbor being at the mouth of the Xanthos River.

21.2 We are not certain why Paul chose to change ships at this point, except that it sped him along to his destination. From the text of the Luke’s narrative, it would appear that Paul and his entourage had remained on the same boat since embarking at Neapolis in Macedonia. The captain of the ship must have been extraordinarily accommodating to the missionaries, inasmuch as he waited for Paul at Assos while the Apostles walked across the Troad. He must have waited four or five days at Miletus while the leadership of Ephesus was gathered and Paul had an opportunity to give them his final instructions before going on to Jerusalem. It may have been that the ship’s commercial route ended at Patara or continued eastward along the coasts of Pamphylia and Cilicia. If Paul were to arrive in Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost, as he was determined to do, he may have felt relieved to find a ship that was sailing directly from Patara to Tyre.
21.2.8—Phoenicia—A variant spelling for the region of Phoenicia, a major coastal trading center for Syria.

21.3 The new ship was undoubtedly of a sturdier construction than the original boat taken inasmuch as the craft was prepared to navigate the entire distance from Patara to Tyre without stopping. The voyage was in excess of 400 miles across the open sea.
21.3.5—discovered—The Greek word which is here translated as “discovered” derives from roots which mean “show, appear, have pointed out”. As the ship traveled to the southeast, the island appeared to rise out of the sea.
21.3.6—Cyprus—A large island located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, and the home of Barnabas, Paul’s companion during the First Missionary Journey.
21.3.12–13—left hand—that is to say, they sailed south of the island proper on a direct course for Tyre. They could have stopped at Paphos where Paul and Barnabas had been entertained by the Roman governor Sergius Paulus (see 13.6–13), but chose to sail directly to Phoenicia.

Chapter 21

1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.
21.3.17—Syria—An expansive territory north of the land of Canaan, the capital being the city of Damascus. Syria stretched from the Mesopotamian valley to the Mediterranean Sea.

21.3.21—Tyre—A city of Phoenicia located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea north of Palestine. It was a great city of commerce, perhaps the greatest in the ancient world after Babylon and Rome. It served as a lightning rod for many of the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament. Because of its strategic and economic value, it was overrun by almost every ancient major military power.

21.4 The faithful members of the Church in Tyre were sufficiently inspired to know that Paul would pass through great tribulation if he went to Jerusalem and therefore were opposed to the idea. It was a natural reaction to the revelation. Paul knew, however, that in order to accomplish all that the Lord had given him to do, that he must suffer great things (see 9.16). Therefore, even though Paul knew that his friends were inspired, he knew that his revelation was far more comprehensive.

21.4.7–8—seven days—If our calculations have been correct, the trip from Neapolis to Tyre had taken 29 days. His stay with the disciples would have brought the total to 36 days, leaving him only two weeks to make the rest of the trip to Jerusalem.

21.4.12—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.4.15—Spirit—There seems to be a conflict between what the disciples were experiencing and that which Paul had revealed to him. Paul, however, had received personal revelation in conjunction with his ministry, that he was to appear in Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost (see 20.16 and 20.22–23). The Lord had further revealed to him that he would be taken and imprisoned for his pains. The disciples only understood a part of the whole.

21.4.23—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

21.5 We are not told precisely where Paul and his traveling companions stayed during the seven days they were in Tyre, but it would seem reasonable to assume that they were housed and fed by the membership of the Church. When it came time to board ship again to further their journey toward Jerusalem, the entire Christian congregation of Tyre came to where the ship lay to bid them all farewell. Wherever the ship lay waiting for Paul and his companions, it is clear that the gathering found a private place where they could bow down before God and join together in fervent prayer. No doubt the disciples prayed for Paul’s safe journey and deliverance from wicked men who were determined to abuse him. Likewise, Paul must have prayed for their physical safety and that they would remain faithful to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which they had a long time before received at the hands of the servants of God.

21.5.23–25—wives and children—Some scholars have wondered whether these wives and children were those of Paul and his companions. Although that in not impossible, the reference is probably to the wives and children of the disciples at Tyre.
21.5.29–32—out of the city—This, perhaps, is no more than an observation that the harbor of Tyre was not in the central part of the city. It is just as reasonable to suggest, however, that the craft by which Paul made his way to Ptolemais was small enough to be beached on the shore.

21.6 The nature of an affectionate farewell eludes many western observers. There is great tenderness expressed here in Luke’s narration of the imminent separation of Paul’s entourage and the disciples at Tyre. But there are comparable modern expressions of deep and abiding affection extant between the servants of God and those whom they serve, transpiring almost on an hourly basis throughout the world.

21.6.7—leave—The Greek word which is here translated as “leave” derives from roots which mean “union, enfold in the arms, salute, welcome”. Some scholars have suggested that the Jewish and Christian custom on this kind of occasion would have been a “kiss of peace”.

21.7 Paul apparently wished to visit with the members of the Church who lived along his route to Jerusalem. He undoubtedly had many friends among them, and perhaps there were those who had received the Gospel at his hands when he first came into the Kingdom of God.

21.7.5—finished—There are many scholars who have concluded that Paul’s sea voyage ended in Ptolemais and that he traveled by foot to Caesarea rather than by boat. This view is not held unanimously.

21.7.9—Tyre—A city of Phoenicia located on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea north of Palestine. It was a great city of commerce, perhaps the greatest in the ancient world after Babylon and Rome. It served as a lightning rod for many of the prophecies recorded in the Old Testament. Because of its strategic and economic value, it was overrun by almost every ancient major military power.

21.7.13—Ptolemais—An ancient city on the northern side of the bay formed by Mount Carmel on Mediterranean coast of Israel. It has been known by many names, but is generally referred to as Acco or Acre today. The modern city of Haifa lies to the south of Old Acco.

21.8 There is considerable discussion as to whether Paul took ship from Ptolemais to Caesarea (as most biblical maps assert) or whether he walked the 35 miles or so. Paul was not adverse to traveling on foot and sometimes preferred the experience (see 20.13).

21.8.5—we—That is to say, Luke and probably Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timotheus, Tychicus and Trophimus who had accompanied him to Miletus (see 20.4).

21.8.9—Paul’s—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.8.15—Caesarea—A large seaport on the coast of Palestine (see 8.40.20). This was the home of not only Philip and his family, but also of Cornelius and his household (see 10.1).

21.8.23—Philip—One of the assistants to the Twelve in Jerusalem and a missionary in Samaria and Gaza.

21.8.25—evangelist—Some scholars have conflated the various callings that Philip had during his life and have, as is almost inevitable in these cases, confused the early nomenclature of the Church of Christ. In his first assignment in the Church Philip took care of the temporal needs of the widows of Jerusalem, a task fitted for those who bore the keys
of the Aaronic Priesthood. Philip also had proselyting responsibilities later in conjunction with his ministry in Samaria (see 8.5–15) and with the Ethiopian eunuch (see 8.26–40). In this sense, Philip might very well be considered an evangelist. Modern revelation assures us that an “evangelist” ought to be understood as one who serves as a patriarch.

21.8.31—seven—This is in reference to the seven disciples who were chosen and ordained to aid the Apostles in watching over the widows in Jerusalem (see 6.1–6)

21.9 A prophet of God is one who knows by the Spirit, through personal revelation, that Jesus is the Christ. This witness is not limited by gender in any way. These four unmarried daughters of Philip had been raised in the Church and Kingdom of God and were not one whit behind their father as witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether they constituted the first sister missionaries in the dispensation of the Meridian of Time we cannot know, but they were undoubtedly effective in whatever calling they had received or Luke would not have mentioned them in his account.

21.10 The trip from Tyre to Ptolemais was 35 miles or so by ship, maybe a day’s journey. The stay at Ptolemais involved two more days. If they traveled by foot from Ptolemais to Caesarea, another two days would have been used up (see 21.4–8). Before they left Tyre, Paul only had fourteen days in order to reach Jerusalem by the day of Pentecost. Therefore, before Paul spent “many days” at the home of Philip in Caesarea, there were only nine days left until Pentecost.

21.10.12—Judaea—Caesarea was administratively part of the Roman province of Judaea, but geographically pertained more to Samaria.

21.10.14—prophesy—Those who argue that the spirit of prophecy ended with the Old Testament have to deal directly with men like Agabus and the four daughters of Philip.

21.11 How may we reconcile the seeming disparity between the inspired membership of the Church and Paul’s claim that he was “bound in the Spirit” to go to Jerusalem? We may safely conclude that both were privy to the workings of the Spirit in their lives. Paul was a beloved priesthood leader known throughout Greece, Asia Minor and Syria. He had been instrumental in preventing famine among the membership of the Church in Judea by gathering foodstuffs for the suffering saints there, a famine predicted by Agabus himself. Because of their righteousness, their spiritual sensitivity, Agabus and others knew that their friend was headed into danger and as a result feared for his life. Paul, being a deeply spiritual man, was not oblivious to those same whisperings of the Spirit. The difference between them was that Paul did not fear for his own life. His commitment to the Kingdom of God was such that he was willing to do whatever the Lord wished of him, in spite of the perils. Agabus and the others were well-meaning and full of love.
for their friend, interpreting their revelations in part according to their personal desires for Paul. This does not mean that they were not inspired; in simply means that they were human.

21.11.10—Paul’s—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.11.11—girdle—A sash that was used to gather the voluminous material of the robe at the waist.

21.11.14—his—in the context of the narrative, it is clear that Agabus used the sash to restrain himself rather than to tie Paul’s hands and feet.

21.11.24–25—Holy Ghost—This is another instance where the membership and the leadership of the Church were privy to Paul’s circumstances (see 21.4). Paul, of course, knew for himself what was to transpire to him in Jerusalem and was determined to push forward in faith to that which the Lord wanted him to do.

21.11.29—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

21.11.31—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

21.11.48—Gentiles—that is to say, the Romans. Because he was a citizen of Rome, Paul would be entitled to appeal to Caesar, thus opening up a new field of missionary labor for him.

21.12 One cannot help but recall the strenuous pleadings of Peter and the other Apostles when Jesus announced that he must go to Jerusalem to be delivered first unto the Jews and then into the hands of the Romans that he might be crucified. Peter’s counsel against this course of action became so strident, that Jesus needed to reorient the senior Apostle to the will of God in an abrupt but clear manner (see MT-C 16.21–23). The remonstrations against Paul’s decision to go up to the Holy City became increasingly intense the nearer he came to his destination. He knew what he was supposed to do, he had been instructed clearly by the Lord God of Israel as to what his course of action should be. Paul had, for the most part, held his peace as the members of the Church expressed their sentiments, but when his own traveling companions began to question the spirit of revelation which was within him, it was almost more than he could bear.

21.12.21—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

21.13 Apparently the remonstrations against Paul’s willingness to submit himself to imprisonment and death became quite emotional. From Paul’s
point of view, it was an understandable but unnecessary expression of sentiment. His friends acted as if Paul was oblivious to the implications of his actions. He was not; he knew exactly what he was doing. If they thought that he pushed forward in his track unaware of the inevitable, they were mistaken. Paul, at this point, bears his soul to his companions. He had been commanded of the Lord to make this journey to Jerusalem, he was bound in the spirit to do so. He willingly accepted obedience, even though he knew that that course of action might very well bring his mortal sojourn to a painful end. Paul was no masochist, he did not seek martyrdom. He understood the implications of his actions but did not wish to dwell obsessively on what lay ahead of him. The protestations of his friends disturbed him on several levels, but he was steadfast in his willingness to do whatsoever the Father and the Son required of him, even if he must do so without the support of those whom he loved best.

21.13.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.13.28—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

21.13.34–35—Lord Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

21.14 In all these matters, Paul was free to do as he wished; every man has his own moral agency by which he is to wend his way through life. No doubt Paul still had his moral agency when the Lord asked him to submit himself into the hands of the Jews and the Romans that a greater work might be accomplished among the Gentiles. God would not compel him, but He would ask. Paul willingness to submit to the will of God made him steadfast even in the face of emotional opposition. The disciples of Jesus knew that Paul was entitled to his choice and had been determined to protect him from his own zeal.

21.15 One wonders in the chronology of Paul’s travels if he were meaning to arrive in Jerusalem on the exact day of Pentecost.

21.15.3–4—those days—The “many days” during which Paul and his companions remained in Caesarea with the family of Philip.

21.15.9—carriages—The Greek word which is here translated as “carriages” derives from roots which mean “pack up one’s baggage”. The English word reflects this in its construction: “that which is carried”.

21.15.14—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

21.16 Some scholars have suggested that Mnason’s home was in the city of

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16 There went with us also
Jerusalem and that he had fortuitously been in Caesarea when Paul and his companions arrived at the house of Philip. Since Paul was determined to complete his journey, Mnason offered his home as a place of refuge. If Mnason’s dwelling place were in Jerusalem, then he would have been exposing himself to rough treatment at the hands of the Jews and Romans when the prophecies regarding the missionary’s future were fulfilled. This would have been an extraordinary act of faith and charity on his part in that case. Other ancient texts, however, indicate that Mnason’s home was about half-way between Caesarea and Jerusalem, making it a lodging place in the middle of the two-day trip to Jerusalem. In deciding the issue, we ought to consider Paul’s willingness to allow a disciple to put his life in jeopardy for his sake.

21.16.11—Caesarea—A large seaport on the coast of Palestine (see Acts 8.40). This was the home of not only Philip and his family, but also of Cornelius and his household (see 10.1).

21.16.17—Mnason—Considerable speculation has been written about this disciple without much compelling evidence. That he was a Cypriot, there can be no doubt; that he was a close friend of Barnabas or one of his converts is mere conjecture.

21.16.17—Cyprus—A large island located in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, and the home of Barnabas, Paul’s companion during the First Missionary Journey.

21.16.21—old disciple—One of the vagaries of both English and Greek is that we cannot determine if Mnason were an early convert to Christianity or merely an old man. He may have been both.

21.17 We do not know precisely how much time had passed between the time that Paul and Barnabas had visited with the Twelve Apostles on the matter of Gentile circumcision (see Acts 15.1–5), but most scholars assert that it was in excess of eight years. He visited with the Apostles at the end of the Second Missionary Journey (see 18.21–23), but nothing of the content of any discussions that may have taken place is mentioned by Luke. Although some scholars suggest that there was only a year between that visit and the one recorded here, it is clear from the text that it must have been considerably more than that (see 19.10). Paul was a valuable asset to the Kingdom of God on the earth and, by this time, probably a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles himself.

21.17.7—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

21.17.9—brethren—We do not know how many members of the Church of Christ actually lived in Jerusalem at this time, but the leadership of the Church still held their councils there.

21.18 We cannot say where Peter and John are at this point. Perhaps had they been at this council, the discussion would have gone somewhat differently.

21.18.5—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.18.11—James—Certainly not the brother of John the Beloved, for he had been killed earlier by Herod (see 12.1–3). James Alpheaus, or certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. Acts 21:17–26

18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. Acts 21:18

JC 224
EM 2 448

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James the Less as he is sometimes called, may have been the presiding officer at Jerusalem at the time of Paul’s visit. Some scholars have asserted that James the brother of Jesus is the person referred to here, but there is no evidence that that was the case. Scholars have great difficulty distinguishing between James Alphaeus and James the son of Mary and, as a result, have declared them to be the same man. This is an unfortunate conclusion. Whoever this James might have been, he is undoubtedly the same who took a leading role in the first council considering the circumcision of Gentiles (see 15.13.8).

21.18.15—eiders—Probably not in reference to the entire Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, but to those who presided in the various congregations throughout Judea and environs. Many of these men were undoubtedly in attendance at the rather tumultuous meeting held in Jerusalem several years before (see 15.6).

21.19 Paul’s labors among the Gentiles had been disturbing to the more orthodox Jewish members of the Church. It had been their hue and cry that had caused the necessity for the first Jerusalem council to be held (see 15.1–5). Once the decision had been made to not require circumcisions of converts, Paul had been proactive in his teaching of both Jews and Gentiles. No doubt Paul carried with him at all times, the letters written by the first council that specifically articulated what was acceptable behavior for the members of the Church and what was not. His missionary efforts were extraordinarily successful, especially among those Gentiles who had been hesitant about converting to Judaism because of the rigor of the Mosaic Law.

21.19.17—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

21.20 Those who had been in attendance at the first council, knowing full well the importance and inspiration of their decision to cultivate the faithfulness of the Gentiles, were genuinely delighted at Paul’s report. There were others, however, who were having some difficulty dealing with their relationship with the orthodox members of the Church who had accepted Christianity after the council’s decision. Apparently the leadership of the Church in Judea had not been as proactive as Paul in promulgating the contents of the letter to the saints. It is clear from the testimony of some of the elders in Jerusalem that many of the Pharisees had submitted themselves to baptism in the Church of Christ, but without knowing about the letter regarding circumcision. The elders of the Church feared that their converts would leave the Kingdom in disgust if they were to discover that what Paul was teaching had been the voice of the Church for a decade or more. They were faced with a dilemma that they had created themselves by neglecting to teach those around them what seemed to be a matter which did not pertain to the saints in Palestine.

21.20.21—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

21.20.33—law—That is to say, the Law of Moses.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

Acts 21:20–26
DNTC 2 353

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21.21 The accusations being made against Paul regarding his teachings to the Jews were patently false. Paul had said nothing about the Jews forsaking the Law of Moses or that they ought to desist from circumcising their children. He had testified, however, that observance of the Law, although not destructive, did not contribute to salvation either. His teaching on circumcision was simple; whether one was circumcised or not had no bearing on individual salvation. Needless to say, there would have been many among the members of the Church at Jerusalem who would have had great difficulty perceiving the nuances, particularly if they were already biased against Paul. Paul’s most forceful teachings based on the letter had been the complete reformation of any and all demands being made on the Gentile converts to Christianity, other than those specifically articulated by the Twelve. No doubt there were many orthodox saints who had then compounded extrapolations of Paul’s teachings to produce these accusations that were leveled at him here. If anyone were to ask Paul directly if a Jew would lose his salvation by not observing the Law of Moses or by failing to circumcise their children, he would have replied in the negative. This would have been intolerable to the Pharisees who pertained to the Church of Christ.

21.21.12—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

21.21.17—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

21.21.20—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

21.21.27—circumcise—The Hebrew word which is used to represent “circumcise” derives from roots which mean to “cut short, curtail, blunt, destroy” particularly regarding the prepuce. The Greek word derives from roots which mean to “cut around with a single stroke”. Circumcision was given to Abraham and his posterity as a sign of their place as a covenant people.

21.22 “What are we going to do when these ultraorthodox members of the Church want to hear from you?” Evidently the elders thought that there would be a tumult of some kind, inasmuch as the Pharisees were already expressing rancor over the rumors as to what Paul was teaching. Could Paul be trusted to give “politically correct” responses to their concerns? It is clear that the elders were not all that confident. The problem was real, but it was not of Paul’s making. It had been the fault of the local leadership in Jerusalem who had, for whatever reason, allowed the new members of the Church who pertained to the Pharisee sect to think that they could continue being ultraorthodox because the Church of Christ was ultraorthodox in every way.

21.23 The local leadership of the Church was faced with serious threats to their congregations, division and contention. Whether or not it was a pro-

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs. 22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come. 23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which Acts 21:23–26 MM 1 262
duct of their negligence had become irrelevant. Their solution seemed to be workable. If Paul could be seen joining a ritual that reflected an aspect of the Law of Moses, the accusations against him would be mentally dismissed by most of the faithful Jews. What the act would indicate was that Paul did not view adherence to the Law of Moses as being destructive. Whether or not it had any positive value was another issue altogether, but not one that would be addressed by anyone.

21.24 Notwithstanding the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Temple and the sacrifices thereof were still being offered in accordance with a Law that had been given to the House of Israel by prophecy and revelation. There was a period of transition that was taking place between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. We ought not to overly concern ourselves with such momentary overlaps between the two systems. With the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, the practical aspects of the Law of Moses as a representation of the sacrifice of the Son of God came to an end. In the meantime, Jewish members of the Church could apparently follow what they perceived as some of the cultural aspects of their previous religion.

21.24.4—purify—That is, ritualistically cleanse yourself that you may attend to the sacrifices required by the Law of Moses.

21.24.11—charges—The elders of the Church were asking Paul if he would not help bear the costs associated with the sacrifices. The expenses could have included eight lambs, four rams in addition to the oil and flour required.

21.24.17—shave—Most scholars have concluded that these four Christian disciples had taken upon themselves a Nazirite vow, which typically concluded with the shaving of the head. There is in association with this the assertion that Paul himself had taken such a vow earlier in his missionary labors (see, however, 18.18.31 and 18.18.40)

21.24.23—know—With their own eyes the Jewish members of the Church would see Paul apparently adhering to the Law of Moses.

21.24.45—law—That is to say, the Law of Moses.

21.25 There is a superior translation for this verse.

As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication. (JST; Acts 21:25)

The elders had no intention of overturning the contents of the letter that had been written many years before It would be interesting to discover as to whether or not they then made the letter available to the general membership of the Church in Judea and environs. The fact that they are now reiterating the original counsel would seem to indicate that they understood their responsibility at this point and would rectify the problem that they had caused by neglecting to teach the principles openly. For Paul, this course of action apparently would be acceptable, for it would help resolve the delicate circumstances of his Judean brethren in the priesthood and it would guarantee that the Church as a whole would then embrace the divine principles which Paul had been teaching for nearly a decade. The institution of revealed principles into the practical lives of the saints of God generally takes some time. One would hope that obedience would be forthcoming immediately, but that is usually not the case. Conversion to truth is more of a process than a singular event. For a detailed discussion on the elements contained in this

have a vow on them;

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

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25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

Acts 21:25
JST
EM 3 1123
reiteration, see 15.19–29.

21.25.4—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

21.25.34—strangled—A far superior translation of this passage adds the word “things” before this word.

21.26 Most of the commentary associated with this passage is based on the assumption that Paul and the four men with him were performing Mosaic rites which had to do with the vow of a Nazirite. That certainly is the simplest approach to the narrative, but we cannot be absolutely certain that that was the case. There are other, more appealing possibilities. For example, the ritualistic cleansing of a leper, once having been physically cured of that disease, also involved shaving the hair of the head and that of the rest of his body. The social consequences of leprosy were catastrophic to the individual in Jewish society. Before any person who had once been diagnosed with leprosy could re-enter a community, he would have to be declared clean by the priest and then offer the appropriate sacrifices. In this case, Paul fully understanding the cultural and social consequences of not attending to these matters, could have easily acceded to the request to assist these men in their quest for reintegration. So therefore, these four Christian men, former lepers, wishing to be brought back into a proper association with their friends and family, would have to do so according to the Law of Moses so long as they lived in Palestine. There were many other social aspects of the Law of Moses which a Jewish Christian could not easily avoid, regardless of how he or she might view the Law and the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

21.26.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.27 In the process of this cleansing and purification ritual, Paul and his companions would have been on the temple grounds on a daily basis. Gathered in Jerusalem, perhaps as part of the celebration of Passover and the Feast of Weeks, were many men who hailed from those parts of Asia Minor where Paul had been particularly successful in his missionary labors. Depending on Luke’s understanding of “Asia” in his day, Paul’s antagonists could have been from as far afield as Galatia, from the cities of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, places where he had received rough treatment at the hands of the local Jews (see 13.45–52 and 14.1–7). It is more likely, however, that these vociferous Jews were from Ephesus where the sons of Sceva had been deeply embarrassed by their inability to duplicate the miracles which Paul had performed (see 19.13–20). Also the debacle with Demetrius and the silversmiths had made life for the Jewish community somewhat difficult (see 19.23–40). As is typical of those who cannot refute the arguments of the righteous, these intellectually and morally bankrupt men determined to inflame the Jews in Jerusalem by any means possible.

21.27.10—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,
21.27.14—Asia—that is, to the province of Asia Minor which lay opposite Macedonia across the Aegean Sea.

21.28 There had been many within the Church of Christ, notably those who had been from the sect of the Pharisees, who had deep reservations about Paul’s acceptance of the Gentiles. Most of their concerns had come as the result of ignorance. It would seem reasonable to assume that when the Asiatic Jews came to Jerusalem for the Passover and other festivities, that they complained bitterly about their inability to quell Paul’s missionary labors among the covenant people and their proselytes. The Pharisees who also pertained to the Church of Christ would naturally have been troubled by the reports and this may have been part of the problem raised by the elders when Paul first arrived among them. Both Stephen and Jesus, however, were accused of these same things when they were brought before the people to be executed.

21.28.5—IIsrael—in reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

21.28.19—people—This first accusation leveled by the Asiatic Jews was that Paul had incited the Romans and Greeks against the Jews in every city where he had preached the Gospel of Christ. The irony was that it was the Jews who had rejected and incited the Gentiles against Paul. When the Roman and Greeks discovered the truth of the matter, they despised the people who brought the false accusations against a freeborn Roman citizen

21.28.22—Law—This accusation was a half-truth. Paul did not preach against the Law of Moses, but neither did he preach for it. The atonement of Jesus Christ had “fulfilled” the Law and though it had been divinely mandated, its usefulness for bringing mankind to salvation had always been limited. The eternal principles which provided the superstructure for the Law were still in place in the Gospel of Christ.

21.28.24—this place—Speaking specifically of the Temple. Paul’s teachings would not have been against the sacrifices offered by Israel for again they had been divinely mandated. Paul would have taught that the purpose for which the sacrifices had been made had been fulfilled by the sacrifice of the Only Begotten Son of the Father. The sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit would have been at the heart of Paul’s teaching.

21.28.29—Greeks—Keeping company with a Greek was sufficient to bring an orthodox Jew into disrepute. There was no question that several of Paul’s traveling companions were not adherents of Judaism. Since Trophimus was apparently known by some of the men who brought accusations against Paul, Luke mentions him by name.

21.29 The punishment for any uncircumcised man entering into the courts of the Temple reserved for the covenant people was death. There was an inscription to that effect on the wall that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of Israel. Paul would not have endangered his friend’s life in such a foolhardy fashion. Paul was not the icon of civil disobedience that many modern protesters have made him out to be.

21.29.11—Trophimus—Mentioned as a traveling companion when Paul returned from Macedonia to Asia Minor during his Third Missionary Journey (see 20.4). We must assume, therefore, that Trophimus had

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)
accompanied Paul during the entire voyage from Troas to Jerusalem. Trophimus was clearly one of those to whom the decision of the council of Jerusalem applied directly. He was a Greek who had become a member of the Church of Christ without first becoming a circumcised Jew.

21.29.13—Ephe-sian—A resident of the capital of the Roman province of Asia Minor. Paul may have been inclined to labor in Ephesus during an earlier period in the Second Missionary Journey but was inspired by God to make haste to Macedonia, bypassing the whole region for a later time. Paul would spend two or three years of his life preaching the Gospel of Christ here during the Third Missionary Journey. Ephesus would be one of the cities of Asia Minor to whom John the Beloved would address his book of Revelation. Ephesus was noted for its worship of Diana or Artemis, the most beautiful and elaborate building in the city having been dedicated to her honor. The Temple of Diana has been declared one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

21.29.18—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.30 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they took, and drew him out of the temple; and forthwith the doors were shut. (JST, Acts 21:30)

How easily the hearts and minds of men are inflamed to administer “justice” without consideration for the truth.

21.30.15—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.30.22—temple—There has been some discussion as to what is meant here. Was Paul completely removed from the Temple Mount itself, or merely from the Court of Israel? Given the logistics involved in the tradition interpretation of this episode, it would seem that Paul was dragged from the Court of Israel into the Court of the Gentiles.

21.30.26—doors—Again, scholars are at odds as to which of the gates were closed and why. Some have suggested that Paul was completely ejected from the Temple grounds and the gates barred against any further incursion. Others have suggested that the gates from the porticos into the Court of the Gentiles were closed so that Paul could be summarily dealt with without interference from his friends. There are problems with both points of view.

21.31 Taking Paul’s life in the Court of Israel apparently was not an option, but as some scholars have suggested, depriving him of his mortality in the Court of the Gentiles would have been appropriate and convenient. If, as these learned men suggest, the gates to the Court of the Gentiles were closed so that they could more easily dispatch the Apostle, how then were the chief captain and his men able to rescue him? It seems far more likely that Paul had been taken to one of the four porticos which surrounded the confines of the Temple and it was there that Claudius Lysias took him into custody.

21.31.13–14—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

21.31.20—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the lin-

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.
guistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

21.32 The garrison of Jerusalem was quartered in the Fortress Antonia, a Herodian edifice built just to the north of the Temple mount. From all that can be discerned historically and archeologically, the Fortress had access to the temple porticos by means of two flights of paved stairs. We are not told how many individuals were directly involved with the beating of Paul, but Claudius Lysias took at least 200 armed men to quell the riot.

21.32.6—centurions—There were at least two centurions, perhaps more, that were commanded by the chief captain to accompany him to the Temple porticos. These lesser officers had the responsibility to direct the affairs of a hundred men each.

21.32.9—down—Clearly the stairs from the Fortress sloped down to the porticos of the Temple.

21.32.24—beating—An inappropriate punishment for the supposed crime committed, but we are dealing with an inflamed mob here and not a body deliberating justice, law, and honor.

21.32.26—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.33 The chief priests would later testify through their spokesman, Tertullus, that the rescue of Paul came only with great violence on the part of the Claudius Lysias and his soldiers (see 24.7). There was no doubt some exaggeration employed on their part to make the priests seem more sympathetic; such has been the practice of villains caught in the act of committing some felony, to deflect attention away from themselves and towards law enforcement. The fact of the matter was that the Jews having been caught redhanded nearly beating a Roman citizen to death quailed at the first sign of Roman authority. The telling feature of all of this commotion would be that there would be no consensus between the men who had been discovered assaulting Paul

21.33.3—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

21.33.17—two chains—Most commentators have concluded that Paul was shackled at the wrists between two soldiers, one on the right and another on the left (see 12.6).

21.34 In almost every instance when the servants of God have been haled before military or civil authorities, the accusers are so determined to convict their nemesis that they will blurt out whatever comes to their minds in order to make their case. These sorts of accusations have a tendency to be idiosyncratic and seldom agree in substance with one another. When Jesus stood before the high priest in his palace, the false witnesses who were brought to testify against the Son of God were so diverse in the things which they said that the elders of the people were embarrassed to have heard them. Even after colluding with one another, the chief priests and scribes were hard pressed to make a consistent accusation against Jesus, especially when any of their protestations against the Son of God was refuted by Pilate.

21.34.30—castle—That is, the Fortress Antonia. The Greek word which

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.
is here translated as “castle” derives from roots which mean “throwing in beside, juxtaposition, battle-array, encampment, barracks”.

21.35 The mob of Jews at the Temple was determined to have their man, to destroy Paul in the flesh. When it became clear that Claudius Lysias was going to carry his prisoner into neutral territory, they became even more inflamed.

21.35.7—stairs—That is, one of the two flights of stairs that led from the Fortress Antonia to the Temple precincts.

21.35.20—violence—The chief priest would charge the Romans with the violence which they themselves had committed against Paul and those who rescued him.

21.36 It would be interesting to know just how many people in the mob actually knew the details of what had happened in the Temple. Most were probably only faintly aware that Paul was accused of doing something abominable, something worthy of death. This was a case of many being caught up in the madness of a few.

21.36.10–12—Away with him—This is a phrase which is almost always interpreted as meaning “Put this man to death”.

21.37 The confusion had been so great that the Roman officer had no real understanding as to the nature of the accusations against his prisoner. As will be seen, the chief captain had concluded that Paul was an insurrectionist of some kind. Apparently, the original founders of the mob had no compunction of fabricating any lie whatsoever, even misidentity, to accomplish their aims. Paul would take advantage of the relative calm that existed in the midst of his escort.

21.37.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.37.10—castle—That is, the Fortress Antonia. The Greek word which is here translated as “castle” derives from roots which mean “throwing in beside, juxtaposition, battle-array, encampment, barracks”.

21.37.12—said—Paul undoubtedly spoke to the captain in flawless Greek, which he would have learned as a child in Tarsus and perfected during his many years as a missionary. There is no other explanation for the Claudius Lysias’ response.

21.37.15–16—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

21.37.27—Greek—The ambassadorial language of the Roman Empire.

21.38 Historians, ancient and modern, have concluded that the events alluded to by the chief captain actually took place at the time Felix was governor of Judea. Flavius Josephus writes of an Egyptian Jew who rose up against the Romans, undoubtedly claiming to be a Messiah, gathered in excess of 30,000 armed men in order to storm the city of Jerusalem. The rebellion was quelled by the governor using both infantry and cavalry and over 600 of the opposition was killed or captured. The leader of the erstwhile liberators, the Egyptian, was neither killed nor heard from again. Although there are the inevitable quibbles concerning the details of Josephus’ account, yet the narrative is essentially the same. Luke states that there were 4,000 who went out into the desert, but we do not know if this was before or after the confrontation with the Romans on the Mount of Olives. In any event, the reconciliation between the two stories is easily accomplished.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and ledest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?
21.38.5—*Egyptian*—An inhabitant of the land naturally watered by the Nile River, the delta region of the same being luxuriant as one could hope for in terms of animal and vegetable life.

21.38.24—*murderers*—The Greek word which is here translated as “murderers” derives from roots which mean “dagger-man, free-booter, fanatic”. When transliterated as “Sicarii”, the reference is clearly to the “sica”, a curved knife used by assassins.

21.39 Paul was, no matter what the various elements of the mob may have said, a Jew, one who had every right to be within the confines of the Temple. Additionally, he was a Roman citizen and therefore had to be granted the very boon for which he was asking; that is, to address the people who had gathered to beat him to death. Only Rome and Athens were held in higher esteem than Tarsus, and Paul’s name-dropping could have no other effect than what it did under the circumstances.

21.39.2—*Paul*—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.39.11—*Jew*—That is, one of those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. Paul genetically pertained to the tribe of Benjamin, however.

21.39.13—*Tarsus*—The principle city of the province of Cilicia, noted for culture, commerce, and education. Because of its political choices during the civil wars of Roman, Augustus made it a “free city”. No doubt that it was this gesture that allowed Saul to become a Roman citizen by birth.

21.39.17—*Cilicia*—A province in the southeastern portion of that which is modern-day Turkey. It was bordered on the west by Pamphylia and Pisidia, on the north by Galatia, Cappadocia, and Commagene. At the time of the Apostles it was frequently considered an administrative part of Syria. Tarsus, the town that Paul the Apostle called home, was the chief city of that region.

21.39.22—*mean*—The Greek word which is here translated as “mean” derives from roots which mean “unmarked, ignoble”. Paul is the master of the understatement here. The English word “mean” derives from ancient Indo-European roots which mean “common”. In fact, the word “common” derives from those same roots.

21.40 Paul would have the opportunity to bear his testimony regarding his early life as a Pharisee and of his persecution of the Christians. However, when he mentioned his divine commission to take the principles of salvation to the Gentiles, the mob rose up once again. This, together with his being a Roman citizen, must certainly have softened Paul’s treatment at the hands of the Romans. That, perhaps, may have been the whole point of the discourse on the stairs.

21.40.6—*licence*—That is to say, the chief captain gave Paul permission to address the people.

21.40.7—*Paul*—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

21.40.13—*beckoned*—It is intriguing that this mob who had been at the point of taking Paul’s life would respond to whatever sign that the Apostle would make with his hand in order to get their attention and to have them be quiet. It may be, that as a Pharisee, there were certain signals made by the masters of the sect that would be respected under

| 39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city; and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. |
| 40 And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying. |
any circumstances.

21.40.34—Hebrew—This was probably classical Hebrew rather than Aramaic. The crowd gathered at the foot of the stairs would have been from many nations, not just Palestine. There are ancient documents, however, that state that Paul spoke in their own “dialect”. The *lingua franca* of scattered Jewry was either classical Hebrew or Greek

### Chapter 22

1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith.)

3 I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.
is modern-day Turkey. It was bordered on the west by Pamphylia and Pisidia, on the north by Galatia, Cappadocia, and Commagene. At the time of the Apostles it was frequently considered an administrative part of Syria. Tarsus, the town that Paul the Apostle called home, was the chief city of that region.

22.3.25—feet—The disciples of the great ancient rabbis actually stood in the presence of their masters. Paul means by his phrasing here that he was not only one of the Gamalielian school of thinking, but he had been taught personally by him.

22.3.27—Gamaliel—The grandson of Hillel, who was himself one of the greatest authorities in the Jewish Mishna (see also 5.34.12).

22.3.33–34—perfect manner—The most exacting sect of Judaism was that of the Pharisees (see 26.5). These interpreters of the Law of Moses had been active in their endeavors for more than 600 years.

22.3.43—zealous—Paul had been as prepared to violently remove the scourge of heresy from the earth as the men before him had been prepared to take his life.

22.4 Paul is recounting in the first person his history which Luke had narrated in the third person earlier in the book of Acts (see 8.3 and 9.2). Paul is both candid and remorseful about his extreme conduct toward the Church of Christ. It is doubtful that Paul ever dealt a death blow to any person in his life, but there were those whom he imprisoned who later died from the treatment that they received there. He considered himself responsible and grieved.

22.4.3—persecuted—The Greek word which is here translated as “persecuted” derives from roots which mean “flee, pursue, press forward”.

22.4.4–5—this way—Paul’s terminology for referring to the doctrine of Christianity.

22.5 It may have been that the history of Saul of Tarsus had been somewhat broadcast about, particularly if any of the Sanhedrin were aware that Paul was planning on returning to the city of Jerusalem that season. They would have branded him an apostate, of course, and one of the blackest hue.

22.5.4–5—high priest—Given the history of the Jews and Luke’s approach to terminology, the high priest referred to here was probably Joseph Caiaphas (see 9.1.18–19). By the time of Paul’s defense before the mob at the Temple, however, Joseph Caiaphas was probably dead and in any event was certainly not the high priest during that year. Therefore, Paul was either referring to the current high priest who may have had knowledge of the events twenty-five years before, or Paul actually had in his possession, the very letters which Caiaphas had provided him as he was preparing to go to Damascus.

22.5.13–16—estate of the elders—Probably in reference to the Great Sanhedrin, the governing body of Judaism at the time.

22.5.22—letters—The documents of authority that were to enable Saul to arrest the Christians in Damascus for heresy. It is likely that Paul still had these in his possession.

22.5.29—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

22.5.38—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

Acts 22:4
DNTC 2 89
GD 434
JC 713, 719
Acts 22:4–11
CR81-O 93

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.
literally derives from roots which mean together, "flowing peace" or "established in peace". The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, "established in peace" is by definition, the City of the great King.

22.6 Paul’s account varies somewhat from that which the King James version attributes to Luke’s third-person narrative. Fortunately, the finest manuscript that we have of this volume, clearly rectifies any seeming contradictions between the two (see 9.3–9). Paul undoubtedly told the dramatic story of his conversion to Christianity on many occasions and before different congregations and individuals. As is the case with all those who have divine truths to share, each account would be adapted to the needs and capacity of the audience. Certain details would be emphasized on one occasion and relegated to asides on others. These variants do not make the overall story untrue; they demonstrate that the narrator is particularly sensitive to the hearts and minds of those to whom he is bearing his testimony and by the Spirit is adapting his story that it might have the fullest impact on the souls of those who would know the truth. This, of course, does not excuse mistranslations, scribal errors, and the interpolations of men together with their marginalia.

22.6.17—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

22.6.19—noon—This detail regarding the time of day does not appear in Luke’s original account (see 9.3–4).

22.7 Paul does not elaborate rhetorically upon his experience with the Savior. He simply tells his story in plain and unvarnished words. All those who have simple truths to tell, seldom if ever burden their audiences with clever turns of phrase which detract from the witness they are attempting to bear. Paul wishes to focus his attention on the Lord God and the correction which he received at His hands. We are not informed as to the tone of voice with which Jesus spoke these six words, but the power of the Spirit of God caused them to be irrevocably engraved upon Paul’s mind and heart. Paul fell to the earth for the same reason that all of the children of God will prostrate themselves before divinity when they are held accountable for their deeds done in the body. See also 9.4.

22.7.14—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

22.8 In Luke’s earlier account, the Lord is quoted as simply referring to his given name, “Jesus”. Here Paul is more specific about which specific “Jesus” is meant. Paul undoubtedly adds this detail for the benefit of the crowd at the foot of the stairs at the Temple at Jerusalem. In Paul’s private interview with the Savior, there was no need to specify; which “Jesus of Nazareth” was understood. In Luke’s earlier account, Jesus goes on to say, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks”. That observation would have undoubtedly been lost on the mob listening to Paul at the Temple. Again, Paul is adapting his narration in a fashion which will best affect the crowd. See also 9.5.

22.8.15—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself
means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

22.8.17—Nazareth—Located due west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee, in the highlands above the Plain of Esdraelon. The adopted home of both Joseph and Mary, inasmuch as their royal lineage assigned them to the city of Bethlehem, a fact that is reflected in the account of the Savior’s birth in the second chapter of Luke. Jesus, though not born in Nazareth, was a resident there for most of his life. (See also MT-C 2.23.10)

22.9 The King James translation of Acts 9:7 states that the men traveling with Paul heard a voice, but saw no one. Here Paul’s testimony seems to be in direct contradiction to Luke’s account. In the very best manuscript that we possess of the book of Acts, Luke’s narrative reveals that Paul’s account here is the accurate one. We will not enter into the polemic as to whether Paul actually saw the person of the Lord Jesus Christ at the time of his conversion. The absence of that testimony in the inspired version of Luke’s account should lead us to believe that he did not see (9.7). His personal witness of the resurrected Son of God would come later, as will be seen below.

22.10 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed of thee to do. (JST, Acts 22:10)

Paul did not mention the fact that he was trembling and filled with astonishment when he asked what it was that he should do next as Luke does in his earlier account (see 9.6). Again, this would have been lost on the body of men who stood before them, they having never had a spiritual moment in their lives. There are other details which have been added to Paul’s account here which were undoubtedly intended to remove any ambiguity from the minds of those who were listening to him. Again, as subtle as these differences are, they demonstrate clearly that Paul considered the minds and hearts of those who were in attendance when he taught, and gave his remarks in such a way as would best benefit them. Paul’s testimony was given that the men at the Temple might know that he had done nothing contrary to the will of the Lord God of Israel and that, if given enough time, he could adequately explain how it was that the fullness of the truth was to come to all the nations of the earth through the ministry of the covenant people.

22.10.19—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

22.11 We do not know exactly the nature of the blindness that Paul experienced. Luke states that there was something like scales that covered his eyes that fell off when Paul received his blessing under the hands of Ananias. Here in his account to the men at the Temple, Paul simply states that his eyesight was affected by the pillar of light that had descended upon him as he neared Damascus, without going into any of the apparent side effects. In Luke’s earlier account, the evangelist spent some time relating the exchange between Ananias and the Lord, but here Paul merely states that Ananias was the instrument by which his sight was restored to him. Again, Paul chooses

| Acts 22:9 | DNTC 290 |
| Acts 22:10 | JST |
| Acts 22:11 | FPM 90 |
to tell those aspects of his history that seem pertinent and valuable to his audience (see 9.8). Paul chooses to say nothing of his three day fast to the men at the Temple (see 9.9).

22.11.27—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

22.12 Luke states that Ananias was a devout disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul says of him that he was devout according to the Law of Moses as well, perhaps implying that Ananias at one point had been a Pharisee himself. Ananias had been a pillar in the Jewish community notwithstanding his belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the Son of God and Redeemer of mankind (see 9.10–16).

22.12.3—Ananias—As is the case with most biblical characters, there is a vast amount of sectarian tradition regarding Ananias, not only among Christians but among Muslims as well. That he was a good man there can be no doubt, but the fact remains that he is only mentioned in conjunction with the healing of Paul’s sight.

22.12.10—Law—In reference to the Law of Moses.

22.12.14—report—The Greek word which is here translated as “report” derives from roots which mean “witness, testify, evidence”. Interestingly enough, these same roots provide English with the noun “martyr”.

22.12.18—Judah—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest fraction being that of the tribe of Judah.

22.13 Luke’s account of the exchange between Paul and Ananias is far more elaborate than that given by Paul here (see 9.17–18). One might easily ask the question as to how many of those standing at the foot of the stairs leading from the Temple to Fortress Antonia had witnessed such a thing, the restoration of a blind man’s sight. Had any of them participated in a blessing whereby a blind man was given his sight? Implied in Paul’s narrative is the notion that Ananias had been enabled to do such a miracle because he was a man devoted to the Law of Moses. So far, Paul’s account has emphasized devout Jews strengthening and blessing other devout Jews in the name of another devout Jew. Any accusations about Paul being a Greek or that he had allowed Greeks to come into the inner portions of the Temple are becoming logically unlikely.

22.13.11—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

22.14 In Luke’s earlier account, there is no mention of Ananias and Paul spending much time together after the latter’s sight had been restored, but Paul here clearly states that this devout Jew shared many things with him, certainly the circumstances which brought the priesthood bearer to the house of Judas wherein Paul was staying.

22.14.15—know—Paul would come to know the will of God regarding himself through personal revelation and the inspiration of those administrators of the Gospel who presided over him in the Church and Kingdom of God.

22.14.19—see—The inspired version of Acts 9:7 should give us some

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

Acts 22:2–16
DHC 2 258

Acts 22:14
MD 322

Acts 22:14–16
DS 2 332
pause regarding the timing of Paul’s first visual contact with the resurrected Christ. In Acts 22:18–19 we discover that any lack Paul may have had in that area had long since been satisfied.

22.14.21–22—Just One—Peter speaks of Jesus as the “Holy One and Just” to the crowd at the Temple after the healing of the man lame from birth (see 3.14). Stephen had used this phrase in his discourse before the high priest (see 7.51–53). Paul had without question been in attendance at the latter occasion if not at the former. Paul knew the result of the testimony of Stephen, that his life was forfeit at the hands of those who had listened to him. Notwithstanding the vivid memory of that execution by stoning, Paul did not hesitate in any way to word his testimony in a similar fashion.

22.14.25—hear—Paul, without question, hear the voice of Jesus Christ speaking to him while he was enveloped in the pillar of light outside of the city of Damascus.

22.15 Jesus Christ had told Ananias that Paul would one day bear his name before the Gentiles and Kings, and the children of Israel (see 9.15). Here Paul testifies that after Ananias had cured him of his blindness, the prophet had shared with him some, if not all, of the instructions which he had received from the Lord. Paul does not blurt out the full weight and measure of the nature of his calling at this point, but does prepare his audience somewhat by saying that he had been chosen to witness unto all men the things which he had learned from God.

22.16 According to the account given by Luke in an earlier chapter of Acts, when Ananias blessed Paul to receive his sight, he specifically told him that he was being healed in part that he might be prepared to receive and be filled with the Holy Ghost (see 9.17). In Christian doctrine, the Gift of the Holy Ghost follows faith in Jesus Christ, repentance from sin, and baptism by immersion. It is only through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ that remission of sins is made possible. Prayful attendance to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel, entering into the covenants of salvation, is that which brings a release from all sorrow and grief associated with willful rebellion against the laws of God.

22.16.4—tarriest—The Greek word which is here translated as “tarriest” derives from roots which mean "expectation, intend, about to be, purpose, duty, necessity, probability, possibility, hesitation". The English word “tarriest” is the archaic second-person singular form of the Middle English verb “tarien”, meaning to “delay, hesitate”.

22.17 There has been considerable discussion regarding the timing of this open vision to Paul. Some scholars suggest that his experience in the Temple took place at the same time that Barnabas took the convert to visit with the Apostles as recorded in Acts 9:26–30. Other scholars point to the time many years later when Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to report their conduct during the First Missionary Journey. This would have been the same council which determined the duties required of a Gentile convert to Christianity (see 15.1–35). Both arguments have their appeal.

22.17.13—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city,
“established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

22.17.25—trance—The Greek word which is here translated as “trance” derives from roots which mean “displacement of the mind, bewilderment, amazement, astonishment”. These same roots produce the English word “ecstasy”. It is the same word which Luke uses to describe the vision of Peter as he waited for his midday meal at the home of Simon the tanner (see 10.9–18).

22.18 The Lord is quite clear that for all of Paul’s powers of persuasion, the leadership of the Jews in Jerusalem were so corrupt that they were beyond redemption. The fact that Paul had been rescued from his religious bigotry was not necessarily an indication that the elders of the people could be delivered as well. If the vision of the Savior took place early in the ministry of Paul, then the hostility of the Jews would have been quite warm indeed. Only months would have passed since the condemnation of Jesus of Nazareth, his abuse and crucifixion. The death of the evangelist Stephen would have been in the forefront of the mind of every man who had been present at his defense and then later when he was murdered by the hand of the mob. These were not men who could be easily appeased. If this event took place after the First Missionary Journey then we may clearly perceive the profundity of the wickedness of the Jews of that day, their unrelenting opposition to Jesus as the Christ.

22.18.15—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

22.19 If we assume that the trance came while Paul was visiting with the Apostles for the first time, his response to the Lord when told that he ought to depart from Jerusalem becomes quite poignant. Paul’s point would have been that he still had a reputation as a Christian-baiter and as such his life would not really be in danger from his former friends in the Sanhedrin. He thought that he would be in a position to help persuade his associates among the leadership of the Jews to see the error of their ways. The Lord makes it quite clear that while Paul was possessed of great rhetorical gifts by which he might persuade multitudes, the leadership of the Jews at that time were beyond the pale.

22.19.14—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

22.20 Paul had held the clothing of those who had picked up the stones with which they took the life of Stephen (see 7.58). Would he not therefore be an appropriate messenger to the elders of the Jews since he had been one of their number? Could he not speak peace to their souls, that if he had been forgiven, would it not be possible for them to receive a forgiveness as well? This is an argument which Paul will use throughout his ministry. As he writes to his friend Timothy: “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all

Acts 22:19
MM 1 200
JC 719

Acts 22:20
DNTC 3 484
MD 470

Acts 22:18
JST
acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I
am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus
Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should
hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1 Timothy 1:15–16). Paul had
long since concluded that if it were possible to bring redemption into his life,
it would be possible to bring that same grace unto the vilest of sinners. The
Lord may have agreed with Paul on that point, but told the missionary that
he calling lay elsewhere.

22.20.8—Stephen—A learned and particularly eloquent servant of God
who, after the Lord himself, appears to be the first Christian martyr in
the days of the Apostles (see 7:1–60).

22.21 The argument for a later date for Paul’s vision of the Lord, hinges on
the Lord’s comment in this verse. Is this not Paul’s mandate to go to the
Gentiles? The weakness of this position is that Paul had already spent a
goodly period of time during the First Missionary Journey teaching the
Gentiles of Cyprus and Galatia. The earlier date for the trance in the Temple
is commended to us by the fact that Ananias knew that Paul would be sent
to the Gentiles (see 9:15). It would seem unusual, given the other evidence
provided by Luke’s account, if Ananias had not revealed to Paul his destiny
among the nations of the earth. Here then would have been two immediate
witnesses, almost back to back, that Paul’s ministry lay outside of Judea; one
from a priesthood leader, another from the Lord Himself. The manner in
which missionary service is determined has not changed much.

22.21.16—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles”
means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks
themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during
the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated
as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts
and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek
through Latin.

22.22 We cannot be certain as to how much the Romans understood of that
which Paul was saying to the mob, inasmuch as he was probably speaking in
classical Hebrew rather than Aramaic or Greek. The soldiers would have
recognized the word “goyim”, however, as soon as it was uttered. The mob at
the foot of the stairway was willing to listen to Paul’s discourse until the
“Gentiles” were mention by him. Their reaction was, of course, completely
irrational, which must have been clear to the chief captain and the guards
who held him bound. How could Paul be considered an enemy to the
Romans when his countrymen exhibited such rancor against a proponent of
Gentile salvation? It is unlikely that any soldier would have been unaware
that the Jews held the Greeks and Romans in contempt, considering them
unclean in every way, unworthy of social contact. Paul had been set upon
because he advocated the redemption of the Gentiles. It would have been
difficult for the chief captain and his men to be sympathetic to the cause of
the mob. As they had cried out once before (see 21.36), so the Jews
demanded again that Paul be slain for his heretical views. The captain and
his men would be loath to do so.

22.23 There is a madness here, an unbridled religious insanity that can be
ascribed to no other source than the hatred of Lucifer for the Christ and his
servants. We may at any given time perceive the wicked and the good by
merely regarding their demeanor when confronted with truth and light.
These men had subjected themselves to the will of the devil in their treat-

21 And he said unto me, Depart:
for I will send thee far hence unto
the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience
unto this word, and then lifted up
their voices, and said, Away with
such a fellow from the earth: for it
is not fit that he should live.

Acts 22:22
JC 522
Acts 22:22–30
DNTC 2 443

23 And as they cried out, and cast
off their clothes, and threw dust
into the air,
ment of Jesus of Nazareth and in nothing did their sentiments abate with his
death. They sought to destroy all who held to the teachings of the Christ.
When frustrated in their attempts to destroy the servants of God, they
almost invariably resort to wild, uncontrollable displays of hysterical tan-
trums. This, as the prophets of God well know, is a mannerism acquired
from their master, the Adversary.

22.23.10—clothes—Either an example of more feigned drama, or a
renewal of their determination to destroy Paul in spite of the soldiers.
22.23.13—dust—This was a typical outward sign of contempt and exe-
cration, coupled with rage and malice. These men are vexed that they
cannot have their way with Paul’s person. Fortunately for everyone
concerned, the Roman soldiers stationed in Jerusalem had fairly thick
skin where the Jews were concerned.

22.24 Regardless as to how much the chief captain and the other Roman
soldiers understood of Paul’s address to the mob at the Temple, it was clear
to them that Paul’s teachings lay at the heart of the altercation. The captain
decided that Paul was the provocateur and determined to beat the truth out
of him. Paul had told the captain earlier that he was a citizen of Tarsus and
therefore a legal Roman (see 21:39) and it was by that declaration that Paul
was allowed to address the people. It may have been that the riot of the mob,
the attempt to take Paul from an armed band, convinced the officer that he
had been imposed upon, that Paul was not a citizen of Rome at all. It may
have been that the riotous conduct of the mob may have driven that simple
fact from the captain’s mind. It seems unlikely that a Roman soldier would
have endangered his own life by knowingly binding and beating a fellow citi-
zen. This would be a lapse in judgment which Paul would have no trouble
bringing to the attention of his custodians.

22.24.2–3—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as
“chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colo-
nel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.
22.24.11—castle—That is to say, the Fortress Antonia.
22.24.20—scourging—A brutal method of punishment and interrogation,
perfected by the Romans and passed on to the nations which derived from
them.

22.25 As the soldiers began to prepare their prisoner for the scourging, Paul
addressed the centurion who presided over the proceedings. In order to have
him beaten, the men were binding Paul’s wrists and stretching him out on a
vertical pole that the skin of his back might be made taut. Paul did not speak
in fear or anxiety. He said those few words that would dissuade the men
from proceeding any further. Roman law forbade the beating, scourging, or
crucifixion of any of citizen of the empire. The magistrates of the people at
Philippi were appalled at their dire circumstances when they learned that one
of the men they had punished rudely was freeborn citizen of Tarsus (see
16.37–39). There would be no less angst exhibited here.

22.25.8—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as
he began his missionary labors.
22.25.12—centurion—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman
army, the sixtieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would
be a comparable rank today: some suggest sergeant; others propose
captain.
22.25.28—Roman—A citizen of the Roman empire, and one entitled to
great personal rights.
22.25.30—uncondemned—The Greek word which is here translated as

24 The chief captain commanded
him to be brought into the castle,
and bade that he should be
examined by scourging; that he
might know wherefore they cried
so against him.

25 And as they bound him with
thongs, Paul said unto the cen-
turion that stood by, Is it lawful for
you to scourge a man that is a
Roman, and uncondemned?

JC 715
"uncondemned" derives from roots which mean "without legal trial".

22.26 The centurion had no intention of incurring the wrath of the Roman government. The person of a Roman citizen was sacrosanct. Both Peter and Paul fell into the hands of the same madman, the Emperor Nero. Both were condemned and executed. Peter was humiliated, mocked, and crucified in a hideous fashion. Paul, however, because he was a Roman citizen, was spared the public indignation of those considered to be enemies of the state. His life was taken by beheading, the only acceptable form of execution for a Roman. Whether or not the centurion and the chief captain were friends, the former did the latter a great service by bringing word to him of Paul's heritage. Paul's treatment would change dramatically from this time forward.

22.26.3—centurion—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman army, the sixtieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would be a comparable rank today: some suggest sergeant; others propose captain.

22.26.11–12—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as "chief captain" derives from roots which refer to a "chiliarch", a "colonel" over 1,000 men, "chiliad" being the number 1,000 in Greek.

22.26.24—Roman—A citizen of the Roman empire, and one entitled to great personal rights.

22.27 As was mentioned previously, Paul had at one point made it quite clear to the chief captain that he was a citizen of Tarsus. The fact that the officer asked the question implies that the man had either forgotten Paul's earlier remark or that he had dismissed it as a prevarication. One wonders at Paul's conduct here. Is he agitated in any way? Does he at any time raise his voice in indignation? It is relatively easy to imagine Paul speaking in a matter-of-fact manner, articulating his rights as a citizen of Rome. Unless the soldiers in the fortress were as depraved and lawless as the rabble who had tried to kill him in the Temple, Paul had nothing to fear.

22.27.3—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as "chief captain" derives from roots which refer to a "chiliarch", a "colonel" over 1,000 men, "chiliad" being the number 1,000 in Greek.

22.27.15—Roman—A citizen of the Roman empire, and one entitled to great personal rights.

22.28 It might be gathered from the examination that the chief captain still was entertaining grave doubts about Paul's claim of being a Roman. What was Paul's appearance like? How was he clothed? Did he look like one who could afford to purchase his citizenship? The captain was undoubtedly thinking in those terms when he related how it was that he had become a citizen. Besides being freeborn or by purchasing one's citizenship, becoming a citizen could only be granted by imperial decree. How Paul's parents became citizens in their day so that Paul could be freeborn is the subject of many essays, most of which shed little light on the truth.

22.28.3—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as "chief captain" derives from roots which refer to a "chiliarch", a "colonel" over 1,000 men, "chiliad" being the number 1,000 in Greek.

22.28.15—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

22.29 There is a superior translation of this verse which illustrates how practical the chief captain became in his dealings with his prisoner.

26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou dost: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief

Acts 22:29

JST
Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him, and the chief captain also was afraid after he knew that he was a Roman, because he had bound him, and he loosed him from his bands. (JST, Acts 22:29)

It seems unlikely that the examining squad would have continued their interrogation of Paul, even if directed to do so by their captain, until some official determination was made as to his origin. They were terrified for their lives. The chief captain is not one whit behind them in his consideration of the matter. If Paul really was a citizen of Rome, then he and his men had vastly exceeded their authority and could themselves be put to death.

22.29.14–15—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

22.29.26—Roman—A citizen of the Roman empire, and one entitled to great personal rights.

22.30 That the chief captain of the Fortress Antonia did not delay in setting his prisoner free to the degree accorded him as a citizen of Rome is made perfectly clear by the best translation that we have of this verse.

On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them. (JST, Acts 22:30)

The chief captain was taking no chances. What was paramount in his mind was the possible offense that had been given to a citizen of Rome. He did not wish to have the blame directed at him and was determined to have the issue resolved quickly. We have no idea where this council was convened.

22.30.5—he—That is, the chief captain wanted to know exactly what had happened at the Temple.

22.30.12—he—That is to say, Paul.

22.30.17—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

22.30.25—commanded—If false accusations had been raised against Paul, the men who had been instrumental in precipitating his arrest would now be subject to Roman law, possibly facing the death penalty. That the chief captain had this authority over life and death is certain.

22.30.27–28—chief priests—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The “chief priests” designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of “chief priests” to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former.

22.30.37—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Acts 22:30
JST
JC 70
23.1 In political terms, Paul’s situation was unassailable. He was a Roman citizen in the custody of Roman officers. There were certain privileges which were allotted to him that could not be denied, even though the high priest and his associates would attempt to deprive him of them. Paul had not had direct contact with the Sanhedrin for many years, but they undoubtedly were still sting by what they would have considered his defection from their number.

23.1.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.1.3—earnestly—The Greek word which is here translated as “earnestly” derives from roots which mean “stretch, gaze intently”

23.1.6—council—This may be a generic reference to the gathering, but is most likely Paul is addressing the Great Sanhedrin.

23.1.16–17—good conscience—Whether as a Jew or a Christian, Paul conducted himself in complete accordance with the regimen of his beliefs. He was no hypocrite.

23.2 Ananias’ actions here were in defiance of both Jewish Law and the Law of the Roman Empire. As a Roman citizen, Paul was had a legal right to present his own defense, and for that very purpose the Sanhedrin had been gathered by the chief captain. As a Jew he would have been under the protection of the Law of Moses until his guilt had been established.

23.2.3–4—high priest—In the days of Moses, the High Priest of the Levitical Priesthood was Aaron. Thereafter, the eldest righteous descendant of Aaron was to have that right bestowed upon him. Once set apart, he would serve for life. At the time of Jesus’ mortal ministry, the office of High Priest had become a political appointment bestowed by the Roman government. Generally it was a one-year appointment, but could be renewed. Thus, there were often more than one former High Priest alive at any given time. Caiaphas and his father-in-law Annas fell into that category.

23.2.5—Ananias—There is some controversy as to who this man was. If he was the son of Nebedaeus, as many historians assert, then he would have been appointed high priest about AD 47. This same man was sent to Rome by the governor of Syria to account for his conduct in a confrontation between the Judeans and the Samaritans and was deprived of his office about AD 52. Other scholars have suggested that this Ananias was acquitted of the accusations and restored to his position in Palestine. If tradition be any indication Ananias was a cruel and violent man who was assassinated by his own sons during the first Jewish Rebellion about AD 66.

23.3 Paul will state shortly that he did not know that the man who commanded him to be smitten was indeed the high priest. The man many have been the “sagan” or the high priest’s deputy, or any one of the Great Sanhedrin for all that Paul could know at that time. Regardless of who it was, however, he had acted contrary to the Law of Moses and Paul had no hesitancy in pointing that fact out. Additionally, Paul’s retort made it clear to the chief captain that not only was Roman law being broken, inasmuch as he was a Roman citizen, but also the theological law of the land as well. The high priest had impetuously put himself in harm’s way by violating the law of God and by violating Paul’s person as a Roman.

23.3.3—Paul—the Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he
began his missionary labors.

23.3.11–12—whited wall—Like unto the tombs of Jerusalem, beautiful on the outside, but within filled with corruption, as fine a metaphor for hypocrisy that might be found in literature (see MT-C 23.27).

23.3.21—law—Meaning, of course, the Law of Moses.

23.4 The high priests of Israel, under the Law of Moses, were lifetime callings. The person selected was to be a righteous descendant of Aaron, as much as the keys to that priesthood were to be passed on hereditarily. The occupation of Palestine by Rome was only one of many instances when the ecclesiastical mandate was not followed. For obvious political reasons, the Romans were unwilling to have any one man secured with such concentrated power and therefore took it upon themselves to appoint their own man as high priest. Sometimes the tenure was for but a few months; at other times, the high priest served for several years. For these reasons, both Annas and Caiaphas could have been considered “high priests” when Jesus of Nazareth was brought before them.

23.4.10–11—high priest—In the days of Moses, the High Priest of the Levitical Priesthood was Aaron. Thereafter, the eldest righteous descendant of Aaron was to have that right bestowed upon him. Once set apart, he would serve for life. At the time of Jesus’ mortal ministry, the office of High Priest had become a political appointment bestowed by the Roman government. Generally it was a one-year appointment, but could be renewed. Thus, there were often more than one former High Priest alive at any given time. Caiaphas and his father-in-law Annas fell into that category.

23.5 There is a superior translation for this verse.

Then said Paul, I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. (JST, Acts 23:5)

Paul quotes here from the book of Exodus. That which follows is derived from the finest translation that we have of this passage.

Thou shalt not revile against God, nor curse the ruler of thy people. (JST, Exodus 22:28)

Paul conscience is devoid of offense toward God or man, as he stated in his initial remark to the Sanhedrin. If he declared that he did not know that Ananias was the high priest that year then he would have spoken the truth of the matter. That it was possible to not know who the presiding authority of Israel was at any given time, spoke volumes to those who thought they were living in complete conformity to the Law of Moses. It would also have been a tacit warning that the members of the Sanhedrin best not allow their passions interfere with the liberties of a citizen of Rome.

23.5.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.6 The attack on Paul in the Temple at Jerusalem had been unprompted, having been devised by wicked and vicious men bent on destroying those who held to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This opposition to Christianity was the only issue which bound the Pharisees and Sadducees together. The accusation brought against Paul had been in relation to the presumption

| Acts 23:4 | 4 And they that stood by said, | Acts 23:5 | 5 Then said Paul, I wist not, | Acts 23:6 | 6 But when Paul perceived that |
| MD 356 | Revilest thou God’s high priest? | JST | brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people. | JC 66, 446 | the one part were Sadducees, and |
| | | | | MD 367 | the other Pharisees, he cried out in |
| | | | | | the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Phari- |
that he had brought an uncircumcised Greek into the Court of the Israelites (see 21.28). This false witness was perpetrated by the Sadducees in order to stir up the ire of the Pharisees against Paul. Paul clearly articulated the true motivation of the chief priest and his entourage, most of whom were Sadducees. The persecution of the Christians by the Sadducees had always been about the formers’ belief in immortality, eternal life, and the resurrection of the dead. Since the Church of Christ had little or no political power at the time, the Sadducees could oppress them with impunity. Their efforts against the sect of the Pharisees had to be far more subtle.

23.6.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.6.10—Sadducees—Primarily a sect focused on the powers deriving from the Levitical priesthood in conjunction with the remnants of the Maccabean Kingdom (see MT-C 1.14–15). Ironically, their desires were more secular than religious, but they undoubtedly saw John the Baptist as an interloper at best. They were poor guides of the people, for they sought for their own gain and not for the spiritual welfare of the children of Israel. The oral law to which the Pharisees held so tenaciously was mere foolishness to the Sadducees. They did not accept the doctrine regarding angels and personal spirits. Neither did they accept immortality and resurrection as being true. As a sect, the Sadducees did as much to Hellenize Judaism as any other Jewish entity.

23.6.14—Pharisees—An extremely orthodox Jewish sect that believed that only a rigorous adherence to the Law of Moses would save the children of Israel. Their demands, however, went far beyond the constraints of the Law, to the point that almost every man was unconditionally condemned by their philosophy. Their attention was so focused on the minutia of their own reasoning that they were unable to comprehend the simplicity of what was demanded by the Gospel of Christ. Had they been able to forsake momentarily the pride and vanity which they felt over their elaborate readings of Moses, they might have seen the purpose for which the Law had been given was to point them directly at the mortal Messiah through his messenger John the Baptist. The Pharisees believed in a future state beyond mortality and were convinced of a literal resurrection from the dead, much in the same fashion as the disciples of Christ. They accepted the notion of angelic ministers and of the living spirit housed within the body of every man. They also believed in the free will of man operating in conjunction with the providence of God.

23.6.29—son—Some scholars argue that the word “son” here is in reference to his discipleship to the doctrine of the Pharisees, rather than to his biological father. While it seems a little thing, yet this interpretation ultimately flies in the face of Paul’s determination to be honest in his dealings with his fellow men. Having once accepted Christianity, there were many tenets of the Pharisees which he no longer could accept. To claim that Paul chose sides in order to save his own life does not do his memory justice and borders on slander.

23.6.35—hope—The hope of the dead is not just resurrection, but the redemption from personal sins as well. The Sadducees did not believe that after one’s departure from mortality that there were any eternal blessings or punishments to receive at the hands of God the Father.

23.7 That the duplicity of the Sadducees had been revealed to everyone concerned is clearly illustrated by the reaction of the Pharisees who pertained...
to the Great Sanhedrin. That the Pharisees had no difficulty in believing the Sadducees capable of such chicanery should emphasize what a devious group of manipulators the Sadducees had been for generations. The heated discussion that arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees after Paul’s declaration was certainly more than a doctrinal dispute. The Pharisees must have discerned almost immediately that they had been imposed upon by their fellows in the Great Sanhedrin and the shaky alliance against Paul would then have disintegrated. The Pharisees had always considered the Sadducees to be irreligious men and their conspiracy against Paul was simply another example of what they had come to expect from the chief priest and his party.

23.7.13—Pharisees—An extremely orthodox Jewish sect that believed that only a rigorous adherence to the Law of Moses would save the children of Israel. Their demands, however, went far beyond the constraints of the Law, to the point that almost every man was unconditionally condemned by their philosophy. Their attention was so focused on the minutiae of their own reasoning that they were unable to comprehend the simplicity of what was demanded by the Gospel of Christ. Had they been able to forsake momentarily the pride and vanity which they felt over their elaborate readings of Moses, they might have seen the purpose for which the Law had been given was to point them directly to the mortal Messiah through his messenger John the Baptist. The Pharisees believed in a future state beyond mortality and were convinced of a literal resurrection from the dead, much in the same fashion as the disciples of Christ. They accepted the notion of angelic ministers and of the living spirit housed within the body of every man. They also believed in the free will of man operating in conjunction with the providence of God.

23.7.16—Sadducees—Primarily a sect focused on the powers deriving from the Levitical priesthood in conjunction with the remnants of the Maccabean Kingdom (see MT-C 1.14–15). Ironically, their desires were more secular than religious, but they undoubtedly saw John the Baptist as an interloper at best. They were poor guides of the people, for they sought for their own gain and not for the spiritual welfare of the children of Israel. The oral law to which the Pharisees held so tenaciously was mere foolishness to the Sadducees. They did not accept the doctrine regarding angels and personal spirits. Neither did they accept immortality and resurrection as being true. As a sect, the Sadducees did as much to Hellenize Judaism as any other Jewish entity.

23.8 The Pharisees would have considered as a given any suspicion that Paul had been hailed before the Great Sanhedrin because of his belief in Pharisaical doctrines than for any breach of manners in the Temple itself. The chief priests had allowed all kinds of mischief to take place in the House of the Lord, among which was the merchandizing of sacrificial animals in the Temple precincts. The cleansing of the Temple by Jesus of Nazareth would not have been frowned upon by the Pharisees; quite to the contrary. Therefore, the assertion that Paul had done anything more egregious than that which the Sadducees were already guilty of would have seemed ludicrous to the Pharisees, particularly in light of Paul’s claim that he had been of a Pharisaical mindset since childhood.

23.8.3—Sadducees—Primarily a sect focused on the powers deriving from the Levitical priesthood in conjunction with the remnants of the Maccabean Kingdom (see MT-C 1.14–15). Ironically, their desires were more secular than religious, but they undoubtedly saw John the
Baptist as an interloper at best. They were poor guides of the people, for they sought for their own gain and not for the spiritual welfare of the children of Israel. The oral law to which the Pharisees held so tenaciously was mere foolishness to the Sadducees. They did not accept the doctrine regarding angels and personal spirits. Neither did they accept immortality and resurrection as being true. As a sect, the Sadducees did as much to Hellenize Judaism as any other Jewish entity.

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23.9 Paul had testified while held in custody by the Roman guard on the stairway to the Fortress Antonia that he had spoken with the resurrected Jesus on the road to Damascus (see 22.6) and later in the Temple at Jerusalem (see 22.17–18). We are not told when the scribes and Pharisees became aware of this specific witness, whether at the Temple itself or during the commotion during this meeting of the council.

23.9.9—scribes—The scribes were the de facto scholars of the Law and the Prophets primarily because of their professional duties as the scriptural copyists. The strict rules and regulations regarding the perfection due to the texts of the Old Testament carried over into the philosophic orientation of scribes. They were as demanding in their observance of the Law as they were in their diligence to pass the texts perfectly from one generation to another. Some scholars have suggested that the strict observance of the Law found its initial expression shortly after the Return of the Jews from Babylon, and was intensified during the Maccabean period. In any event, the Pharisees considered themselves “separated” from the rest of the world, set apart as it were. As a result, many of the scribes gravitated toward the Pharisaical party politically.

23.9.14—Pharisees—An extremely orthodox Jewish sect that believed that only a rigorous adherence to the Law of Moses would save the children of Israel. Their demands, however, went far beyond the constraints of the Law, to the point that almost every man was unconditionally condemned by their philosophy. Their attention was so focused on the minutiae of their own reasoning that they were unable to comprehend the simplicity of what was demanded by the Gospel of Christ. Had they been able to forsake momentarily the pride and vanity which they felt over their elaborate readings of Moses, they might have seen the purpose for which the Law had been given was to
point them directly at the mortal Messiah through his messenger John
the Baptist. The Pharisees believed in a future state beyond mortality
and were convinced of a literal resurrection from the dead, much in
the same fashion as the disciples of Christ. They accepted the notion
of angelic ministers and of the living spirit housed within the body of
every man. They also believed in the free will of man operating in
conjunction with the providence of God.

23.9.41—fight—This was precisely the observation made by Gamaliel
when Peter and the apostles were brought before the Great Sanhedrin
(see 5.34–39). We do not whether Gamaliel would have been alive at
the time Paul appeared before the Great Sanhedrin, but there was
someone there of his philosophical bent.

23.10 The chief captain had sought to do that which he thought was the
wisest. He placed Paul before the governing body of the Jewish state in order
to allow them to decide Paul’s fate. The Roman officer was not taken by
surprise, however, and had with him at the council sufficient men to rescue
Paul if it became necessary. The Roman guard once again extricated Paul
from the hands of the Jews and carried him off to the protection of the
Fortress Antonia.

23.10.7—dissension—The Greek word which is here translated as “dis-
sention” derives from roots which mean “standing, position, popular
uprising, controversy, insurrection”. This appears to be in addition to
the original divergence referred to in verse 7.

23.10.9–10—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as
“chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colo-
nel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

23.10.13—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as
he began his missionary labors.

23.10.17—pulled—One can only imagine the scene that the chief captain
witnessed. We may assume that the gallery or courtyard in which the
council had been held became embroiled in a physical tussle between
the scribes and Pharisees on one hand and the Sadducees and priests
on the other. It would appear that each party had sought to take hold
of Paul in order to wrest him from the grasp of the other. The Phar-
isees were determined to rescue him from the clutches of the Saddu-
cees; The chief priest wished to have him dispatched as soon as pos-
sible, notwithstanding the presence of the chief captain and his men.

23.10.39—castle—That is to say, the Fortress Antonia.

23.11 From the hour of his conversion to Christianity, Paul’s sole desire was
to carry the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into every quarter of the earth
where he would be sent by the Spirit of God. He had wished to be as
effective in Jerusalem as he had been in other locations. He had come to
Jerusalem to worship at the House of the Lord and had he been allowed to
complete the task that had been given him by his brethren in the Church, he
no doubt would have spent a great deal of time teaching the masses that
visited the Temple mount. Because of the machinations of the high priest
and his minions, however, his missionary labors in Jerusalem were cut short.
He was given leave to present a short defense before the Jews gathered at the
stairs leading from the Temple to the Fortress Antonia, until that was cut
short by the tumult incited by the Sadducees. His defense before the Great
Sanhedrin was confined to hardly more a bare witness of his own conduct
and his belief in the resurrection. No doubt Paul felt that he had not been
able to do that which he had intended among his brethren in the Holy City.

10 And when there arose a great
dissension, the chief captain, fear-
ing lest Paul should have been
pulled in pieces of them, com-
manded the soldiers to go down,
and to take him by force from
among them, and to bring him into
the castle.

11 And the night following the
Lord stood by him, and said, Be of
good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast
testified of me in Jerusalem, so
must thou bear witness also at
Rome.

Acts 23:11
AF 234
JC 715
CR81-O 10
CR82-O 95
CR86-A 46
The Lord’s comforting words were, however, that he had done what he was able, and that would suffice. His venue was about to change, one that would prove to be more fruitful.

23.11.14—15—good cheer—Any thoughts that Paul had entertained regarding his failure in Jerusalem to teach the Gospel of Jesus Christ were swept away by the tender, loving assurance from the Lord.

23.11.16—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.11.25—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

23.11.33—Rome—The capital city of the Roman empire. A citizen of Rome was granted great political independence from all other governmental entities. Both Paul and Silas enjoyed this independence.

23.12 Some scholars consider these forty men as mere zealots, excusable in their oath because of their deep devotion to the Lord God of Israel and to their nation. These brigands, however, were hardly more than thugs, drapèd in ecclesiastical garb that they might vent their wickedness and lusts of the flesh. Paul was no threat to the righteous, but he was anathema to the corrupt. They were devoid of the spirit of God and were, in fact, filled with the spirit of the Adversary. Their motive for attempting to destroy Paul centered on their desire for the accolades of the world, the wealth of nations, and the power to oppress the innocent and unwary at will. They were as Cain who sought the death of his brother in order to obtain his flocks, and that he might put his righteous example out of his sight. They were as Gadianton and Kishkumen who labored in secret and in the dark that they might consume their fellow men with murder, mayhem, and raw intimidation. These were not patriots; they were the dregs of the society in which they lived.

23.12.9—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

23.12.19—curse—Did these men ever die of starvation or thirst? Of course not. Their wickedness derived from their inability to keep any covenant whatsoever. When Paul slipped through their fingers, they merely dismissed the oath that they had taken by means of the worldly sophistry of which they were so proud.

23.12.32—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.13 One filled with the love of God would never enter into a conspiracy of any kind.

23.13.11—conspiracy—The Greek word which is here translated as “conspiracy” derives from roots which mean “swearing together, plot”. The English word “conspiracy” derives from Latin roots which literally mean “breathe together, partake of the same breath, be of one spirit”. The meaning of the word is almost always negative.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.
23.14 What may we say of a body of men, chief priests and elders, who would entertain such a vile assemblage of villains? Can any man excuse such unconscionable conduct on the part of the ecclesiastical leadership of the Jews at the time? They were no better than the assassins whom they countenanced. The hearts of the Sadducees and their associates were filled with loathing for the servants of God and, contrary to all that they espoused as disciples of Moses, they were of one heart and mind with cold-blooded murderers. We ought not to be overly surprised at their corruption, for these were the scions of the very men who plotted against the life of the Lamb of God, who mocked the Lord of Life, and who delighted in his excruciating death outside the walls of the Holy City. The persecutors of Paul were past feeling, devoid of the Spirit of God and filled with the rancorous fires of bitterness, anger, and frustration, the very fires of hell.

23.14.6–7—chief priests—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The “chief priests” designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of “chief priests” to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former.

23.14.9—elders—The Greek word translated here as “elders” derives from roots which mean “senior, representative” which usually implied in Jewish circles that they would have been members of a Sanhedrin somewhere. In this case it was probably the Great Sanhedrin, the highest ecclesiastical council in Israel in that day. The Greek word is also the source for the English word “presbytery” and related words.

23.14.29—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.15 There is a superior translation for this verse.

Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though you would inquire something more perfectly concerning him; and we, before he come near, are ready to kill him. (JST, Acts 23:15)

This representative secret society among the Jews must have wielded enormous political and ecclesiastical power. They did not fear any rebuke or reprisal from the chief priests and elders of the people, knowing them to be as corrupt as themselves. The chief priests and elders were commanded by the cabal to join the conspiracy by persuading all of the Great Sanhedrin to demand that the chief captain bring Paul before them once again, a pretence that would expose Paul to the knives of the assassins. These sorts of machinations have been manifested in every generation and among every people, no matter how righteous the majority of the population may have been. There are, in every dispensation a goodly number of men willing to be seduced by the lusts of the flesh and from thence to every unseemly act that men or devils can devise. By them the saints of God have always been tormented. The great sorrow is that had they but chosen otherwise, these men could have been as exalted as their brethren. They would be served rather than to serve others; they would be worshipped rather than love those around them. They would deceive and exploit rather than edify and bless their fellow men. They would glut themselves on the labors of others rather

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.
than raise a finger to provide for anyone besides themselves. They represent the pride of the mind and heart in all of its deadliest hues.  

23.15.10—11—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

23.16 We know little or nothing of Paul’s nephew save that which is related here. One must needs ask the question, however, how it was that he became privy to the plot against his uncle’s life. He undoubtedly was a Pharisee himself, sent from Tarsus to study at the feet of the theological masters of his day just as Paul had been. Was he, as a young man, already part of the inner circle of Jewish elders just as Paul had been? Had he been informed of the conspiracy by others in the Great Sanhedrin who were knowledgeable of the plot but were not in accordance with the proposed murder of a prominent Christian? That Paul was not yet considered by the Romans to pose a threat to the empire is illustrated in part by the ease with which his nephew gained an audience between himself and the chief captain.  

23.16.3—Paul’s—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.  

23.16.18—castle—That is, the Fortress Antonia. The Greek word which is here translated as “castle” derives from roots which mean “throwing in beside, juxtaposition, battle-array, encampment, barracks”.  

23.17 The Savior himself had come to Paul in prison telling him that he need not fear anything that the Jews might attempt against him, for he would yet testify in Rome as an especial witness of the Lord Jesus Christ. What was the missionary to expect? Would he be liberated by an angelic minister as had Peter when he had been incarcerated? Would he be translated miraculously from Jerusalem to Rome as Philip had been from Jerusalem to Azotus? Paul had no preconceived notions as to how the Lord would deliver him from those who wished to destroy him, but he watched continually for divinely motivated opportunities to fulfill the word of God in his own life. We are not merely informed by revelation, but we are to be guided in our actions, the revelation pointing out to us the path we should follow, the path we should recognize because it was devised by God the eternal Father. Paul saw in the serendipitous affairs of his nephew, the hand of God working in his favor to accomplish the mission that had been given to him to do.  

23.17.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.  

23.17.7—centurions—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman army, the sixtieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would be a comparable rank today: some suggest sergeant; others propose captain.  

23.17.18–19—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

23.18 The centurion responded well to Paul’s petition, either as a response to the prisoner’s Roman citizenship or perhaps because he had come to appreciate the missionary himself. No man receives the priesthood of God and the keys of the Kingdom of God unless he is filled with love and compassion for all men as the sons of God. Paul’s treatment of his captors would have been without rancor, devoid of personal hostility. He would have been patient and kind in his afflictions and would have borne them with grace. None of this would have been perceived by the Roman guards as sullen.

16 And when Paul’s sister’s son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.  

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.
solitude. Paul’s confidence coupled with his generosity and natural affection would have marked him as different from most of the rebels with whom the Roman soldiers had been forced to deal. This willingness on the part of the centurion to do as Paul desired suggests that he had been favorably impressed by the missionary. Claudius Lysius, the chief captain, was no less accommodating. Therefore, Paul’s nephew was able to communicate directly with the only mortal person who could actually protect his uncle in the face of the imminent danger posed by the conspiracy.

23.18.10–11—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

23.18.14—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.19 The chief captain apparently sensed the urgency of the matter as suggested by the earnestness of Paul’s nephew and the serious concern of his officer. Claudius took the young man aside where they might converse in private, perhaps at the request of Paul’s nephew. Paul’s life hung in the balance as did the nephew’s. Any breach in security would certainly doom the young man, even if the conspiracy were successfully foiled, a point that the chief captain himself would make later (see 25.22). It would be intriguing to know the tone with which Claudius asked his question. It would reveal much about the chief captain himself, but would also indicate to what extent any relationship between Paul and his custodians had developed.

23.19.3–4—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

23.20 One wonders at Luke’s detail regarding the conversation between Claudius Lysius and Paul’s nephew. That Luke was ensconced somewhere in Jerusalem at the time we may surmise. Was Luke acquainted with Claudius or the nephew? Or was Luke’s association with Paul sufficient to be able to reconstruct the exchanges between the young man and the Roman officers? We cannot know with certainty at this point, but clearly Luke’s ability to dwell at some length on the event warrants our attention. Also, we may perceive in the preciseness with which Paul’s nephew cites the conspirators’ language to the chief priests and elders of the Jews that he has more than just a passing acquaintance with what took place between those parties. There is more than mere rumor indicated here; there is more than suspicion; there is a communication of fact. The clarity and simplicity of the young man’s information is such that the chief captain will immediately take measures to protect Paul in any and all circumstances. What had become certain was that Paul’s life would continually be in jeopardy were he to remain in Jerusalem.

23.20.5—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

23.20.16—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.21 Again, the details given by Paul’s nephew are explicit and reflect every aspect of the conspiracy. Who could possibly know of the number of men who had bound themselves with an oath of execration? Who could possibly

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men,
know of the nature of that oath, the abstinence from both eating and drinking until the object of their homicidal mania lay weltering in his own blood? Who would have known of the perfect link between the forty assassins and the chief priests and elders of the Jews, if not someone who enjoyed an intimate relationship with the inner circles of Jewish hierarchy? If not the nephew himself, who else might have been privy to all that had taken place and would have been sympathetic to Paul’s plight. If Gamaliel still lived, he would be one we might easily point to as being willing to aid his former friend and student. All of this is mere speculation, of course, but clearly someone close to the conspirators became the means by which the Roman captain came to comprehend the viciousness and duplicity of those with whom he had been dealing. That the plot was a personal affront to Claudius Lysius is also apparent. What would have happened to a Roman officer who allowed the brutal murder of a Roman citizen in his keeping? Every line officer above him would be clamoring for his head in order to protect themselves from the wrath of the Emperor and the Senate. The chief captain’s gratitude at having been spared that ignominious death surely must have endeared him further to both Paul and his nephew.

23.22 Claudius Lysius did not underestimate in any way the threat to the life of the man in his custody. He had rescued Paul twice from a mob of chief priests and elders, first at the Temple and then again at the council meeting. Claudius made it clear to Paul’s nephew that nothing could possibly be gained by airing any of the exchanges that had taken place between the various parties in bringing to the chief captain’s attention the threat aimed at his uncle. Not only would the lives of all those who participated in any way be forfeit, but also the deliverance of Paul from the hands of the murderers could be seriously compromised. Some heroics involve not being perceived as heroic at all. Apparently the young man was true to his charge.

23.22.3—4—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “coloneel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

23.23 A company of 475 men was drafted to protect Paul as they made the seventy-mile journey from Jerusalem to Caesarea. The trip would have probably required at least two encampments along the way. The security of the company was paramount in the mind of the chief captain.

23.23.6—7—two centurions—The chief captain was invoking what was called a “maniple” in the structure of Roman army, the third part of a “cohort”. A “maniple”, as might be expected, consisted of two hundred men, each half of which served under a centurion.

23.23.13—soldiers—These were infantry men, armed with a short sword (a “gladius”) and short spears (“pilum”) with which they could wound their enemies while protected by their large shields called “scutums”. Heavy infantry, the heart of the Roman legion were also issued “lorica segmentata”, body armor made from broad iron or steel strips fastened to leather straps.

23.23.17—Caesarea—A large seaport on the coast of Palestine (see 8.40.20). This was the home of not only Philip and his family, but also of Cornelius and his household (see 10.1).

23.23.19—horsemen—A typical legion of 6,000 men generally had about 300 mounted soldiers in its cavalry. No one who attempted Paul’s life during the journey to Caesarea could have possibly escaped from these legionnaires.

23.23.24—spearmen—While the regular soldiers in the infantry were which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.
equipped with short thrusting spears in addition to their short swords, the spearmen were equipped with longer throwing javelins. If historians are accurate in their description of the Roman military, these men would have been veterans called “triarii” and would have constituted the third rank of the legion, the “backbone” of the army.

23.29–30—third hour—Assuming sunset to be the marker for the first hour of the night, the third hour would have been sometime between 9:00 PM and midnight.

23.24 Claudius Lysius, the chief captain in Jerusalem, was taking no chances that Paul would perish while in his custody. Sending him to the governor Felix would provide Paul with the greatest degree of protection that could be afforded by the Romans in Palestine.

23.24.4—beasts—The maniple would have had its own pack animals with which to carry in baggage that might be required during the journey to Caesarea. These animals referred to here would be for Paul and his personal body guard.

23.24.9—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.24.16—Felix—In reference to Antonius Felix, the governor or procurator of Judea from AD 52 to AD 60. By all accounts he was a vicious and cruel man. He and his brother Pallas were Greek freedmen who purportedly descended from the kings of Arcadia. They had come to power during the administration of the emperor Claudius. His wife at this time, Drusilla, was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

23.25 Many scholars have concluded that the content of the letter from Claudius Lysius to Antonius Felix as given here by Luke was not merely a summary of the communication, but the entirety of the letter sent.

23.26 We are not told how Luke may have obtained a copy of the letter sent by the chief captain to the governor of Judea, but it is clear from the details that the evangelist had the text before him as he composed his narrative of Paul’s arraignment in Caesarea. The formality of the salutation is typical of the age in which it was written. The importance of honorifics in formal communications between government officials has not changed much in two millennia.


23.26.8—Felix—In reference to Antonius Felix, the governor or procurator of Judea from AD 52 to AD 60. By all accounts he was a vicious and cruel man. He and his brother Pallas were Greek freedmen who purportedly descended from the kings of Arcadia. They had come to power during the administration of the emperor Claudius. His wife at this time, Drusilla, was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

23.27 There is a superior translation for this verse.

This man was taken of the Jews, and would have been killed of them; then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman. (*JST*, Acts 23:27)

One wonders at the glossing of the events in the chief captain’s letter. Claudius, as Luke clearly states to us in his narrative, was surprised to learn that Paul could speak Greek and was indeed a freeborn citizen of Tarsus (see

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<th>Acts 23:27</th>
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<td>27 This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.</td>
<td>JC 715</td>
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21.27–29 and 22.27–28). Why he would claim that he had sent his band to rescue Paul from the Jews on the Temple mount because he already knew that Paul was a Roman has fostered great polemics among the learned. Many have suggested that Claudius is merely covering himself in what was certain to prove to be a major conflict between the governor and the leadership of the Jews. It is just as likely, however, that the chief captain was taking the most efficient course to introduce his prisoner as a Roman citizen and the responsibility which Felix had to protect him in the face of great opposition. Claudius undoubtedly knew his man and what it would take to persuade his superior officer to extend to Paul every courtesy.

23.27.7—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

23.27.9—should—A far superior translation of this verse renders this word as “would”. The subtle distinction between the two words ought to be clear to the reader. The use of “should” in the sentence might wrongly give the impression to a modern reader that Claudius thought that Paul merited death at the time he was taken into custody. The change to “would” renders the chief captain’s observation as predictive rather than judgmental.

23.27.30—Roman—a citizen of the Roman empire, and one entitled to great personal rights.

23.28 Claudius’ narration is straightforward here. He simply relates to Felix what he did in order to determine why the chief priests and the elders had murderously set themselves upon a Roman citizen. The “cause”, given the punishment the Jews were willing to impose, clearly appeared to be quite trivial, particularly from a Roman’s point of view.

23.28.19—council—Again, although we cannot be absolutely certain, it seems most likely that the council which the chief captain convened was a convocation of the Great Sanhedrin.

23.29 The case in point had to do with whether Paul, as a Roman citizen, was guilty of any action that would have merited beheading. The accusations brought against him by the chief priests and elders of the people were similar to those leveled against him in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece. The Roman officers were not theologians of any stripe, and the differences between traditional Judaism and Christianity were for them hardly more than a war of semantics. Claudius concluded that Paul, as a Roman, should neither be executed nor imprisoned.

23.29.11—law—the ecclesiastical law of the Jews; that is to say, the Law of Moses in combination with the traditions of the elders. Some ancient manuscripts add the phrase “and a man called Jesus”.

22.30 We have no way of knowing whether Claudius was a legate, or the commanding officer of the Roman legion assigned to Judea. However, it may very well have been that Claudius Lysius, as a chief captain or Tribune, would have had no local superior officer other than the governor himself. The fact that he turned to Felix would imply that he was the senior officer in Judea at the time. Claudius is careful not to overstate Paul’s peril, but does state that there was a conspiracy of some sort that had been raised against his person. Felix, being the sort of suspicious man that he was, would have been

28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.
peaked by the notion that there were secret cabals within his jurisdiction plotting against a citizen of Rome. That understated, but illuminating warning from Claudius, would be sufficient to encourage Felix to at least pay some attention to both the accused and those who accused him. If the Great Sanhedrin were somehow involved in the conspiracy, Felix would be able to use that piece of information to brace himself against the inevitable political threats and intimidations that had worked well against another procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate.

23.30.10—Judea—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

23.31 Apparently the relocation of Paul from Jerusalem to Antipatris was accomplished without incident.

23.31.20—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.31.17—Antipatris—A city positioned about half way between Jerusalem and Caesarea. It is generally identified with the ancient city of Aphek. It was turned into a military post by the Herod the Great and renamed Antipatris in honor of his father Herod Antipater. It lies two miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea between the tributaries of the Yarkon River.

23.32 Apparently the two centurions were satisfied that any danger posed by the forty assassins had passed.

23.32.3—morrow—The distance from Jerusalem to Antipatris was about 30 miles or so. Having left the city during the third hour of the night, the soldiers accompanying Paul would have arrived in the fortress sometime in the midafternoon of the next day. They would have spent the rest of the day and that night in the safety of military post, whereupon the 400 infantrymen returned to the Fortress Antonia in Jerusalem and the cavalry continued with Paul to the governor’s residence in Caesarea.

23.33 The cavalry of the Roman legions was typically comprised of rich young Roman nobles who were preparing themselves for diplomatic service in the empire rather than military excellence. The mounted men were generally used for scouting expeditions and courier service rather than in armed conflict, although they were employed during light skirmishes from time to time. Had there not been a threat to Paul’s life, the missionary would have undoubtedly received a smaller escort comprised solely of these young gentlemen.

23.33.6—Caesarea—A large seaport on the coast of Palestine (see 8.40.20). This was the home of not only Philip and his family, but also of Cornelius and his household (see 10.1).

23.33.10—epistle—The letter from Claudius Lysius, the chief captain at Jerusalem, to Antonius Felix, the governor of Judea, of course.

23.33.15—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

23.34 The letter and Paul were presented to Felix at the same moment and the question as to what province the prisoner pertained to was undoubtedly

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

33 Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what
addressed to Paul himself. Felix discovered that Paul hailed from a province outside of his jurisdiction as procurator of Judea. Unlike Pontius Pilate, there was no way that Felix could use this overlapping venue to his advantage (see LK C 23.7–12). Therefore, he determined to settle the issue himself.

23.34.24—Cilicia—The province north and slightly west of the province of Syria. The principle city of Cilicia was Tarsus, the birthplace of the Apostle Paul

23.35 With Felix in the chambers, the Great Sanhedrin would have to behave themselves and would be compelled to listen to every word that Paul had to say. They would not listen in Jerusalem, but in Caesarea they would.

23.35.21–23—Herod’s judgment hall—Called such because it had originally been built as a palace by Herod the Great. If historians be correct, during the time Paul was kept in custody, he was housed in this well-appointed place which served as a guest house for state visitors of all kinds. It is unlikely that he was kept in chains or bound in any fashion. As a Roman citizen he would have been treated with some deference by the guards assigned to him

Chapter 24

1 And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, say-

province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s judgment hall.

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and corruptions of every kind, cruel and oppressive, and a personal character that these same Jews would condemn before the Emperor not two years later, Tertullus managed to utter some rather kind words in the procurator’s general direction. The attorney for the prosecution was possessed of a silver tongue, and managed to spin the governor’s tactics against the banditti of Palestine into gold cloth which he draped about Felix’s shoulders. That any of the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem to pursue their case against Paul believed a word of what Tertullus said is highly doubtful. It is doubtful that Felix himself believed anything Tertullus said was more than exaggerated flattery. Before the Roman courts, as well as in modern judicial settings, lawyers feel compelled to spend an inordinate amount of time and energy ingratiating themselves to the judge and the jury rather than presenting any degree of truth of a matter. It is a sad state of affairs which will no doubt stand until He reigns whose right it is to reign.

24.2.7—Tertullus—A variant form of the common name “Tertius.” Scholars are divided as to the nationality of this spokesman for the high priest and his entourage, but most likely he was a Hellenized Jew who was linguistically talented and familiar with Roman judicial procedures.

24.3 Tertullus gives the impression that both in public and in private, nothing but kind and adoring words are spoken of the governor’s conduct among the inhabitants of Palestine. Nothing, of course, could have been further from the truth. Felix was hated and despised by the local rulers and the general populace. Certainly the procurator was not oblivious to the sentiments of those whom he ruled with an iron fist. Tertullus’ prologue must have had some entertainment value for those in attendance.

24.3.11—Felix—In reference to Antonius Felix, the governor or procurator of Judea from AD 52 to AD 60. By all accounts he was a vicious and cruel man. He and his brother Pallas were Greek freedmen who purportedly descended from the kings of Arcadia. They had come to power during the administration of the emperor Claudius. His wife at this time, Drusilla, was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

24.4 We are not privy to Felix’s reaction to this wave of feigned adoration from the spokesman for the high priest and his company. We cannot know whether Tertullus was having any trouble generating further rhetorical applause.

24.4.7—tedious—That the accolades were tedious for the Jews is certain; that they were for Felix one may only surmise. The oration, however, was bordering on mockery. Tertullus may have shifted verbal gears here because he could see in Felix’s expression that he had almost worn out his welcome.

24.4.20—clemency—The Greek word which is here translated as “clemency” derives from roots which mean “suitableness, equity, mildness”. The English word “clemency” derives from roots which mean “disposition to be kind, mild, compassionate, merciful”. The King James translators apparently decided to emphasize the irony of Tertullus’ speech.

24.5 Paul was guilty of none of the things of which Tertullus accuses him. The irony is that the chief priests and elders have before them one who was guilty of all four counts. Both in his personal life and as a representative of the Roman government, Felix had been proactively doing all of the things of which Paul had been charged. While it was true that the governor was not a

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Christian, yet he was of an offensive state religion which deified a man, the Emperor, as the Son of God. That none of these things was lost on Felix is certain.

24.5.8–9—pestilent fellow—The meaning of the Greek word here goes beyond the adjectival. Paul. Tertullus asserts, is not one who is merely afflicted with disease, he is the very disease itself.

24.5.12–14—mover of sedition—This accusation against the Christian Church had been continually repeated throughout the empire by the Jews in order to discredit the disciples of Christ. Because the followers of Jesus believed him to be the Son of God, was he not therefore a direct competitor for the affections of the citizens of Rome? Pontius Pilate rightly dismissed this charge as frivolous the first time that it was made against the Savior.

24.5.18—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

24.5.24—ringleader—The Greek word which is here translated as “ringleader” derives from roots which mean “one standing first in the ranks, captain, champion”.

24.5.30—Nazarenes—A common name used for the followers of Jesus because he was thought to have been born and raised in the city of Nazareth.

24.6 Tertullus unblushingly continues his litany of unfounded charges against Paul and his whitewashing of the chief priests’ conduct against him.

24.6.7—profane—This was the original accusation that the Jews of Asia Minor had raised against Paul in an attempt to destroy him (see 21.27–28). They had declared that Paul had brought Trophimus within the Court of Israel, a claim that was both baseless and vicious, for which those men should have forfeited their own lives.

24.6.16—judged—A euphemism for “murdered without due process”.

24.6.20—law—This was their feeble attempt to cover the fact that they had been abusing a Roman citizen without due process.

24.7 Claudius Lysias had been compelled to rescue Paul not once, but three times from the hands of the company of priests and elders who were complaining against Paul before Felix. The first was on the Temple grounds proper when the Jews were about to beat Paul to death over an unfounded accusation. The second at Paul’s hearing before the Great Sanhedrin in the Fortress Antonia. And the third when the chief captain provided an escort of 475 men or so to take him from Jerusalem to Caesarea. “great violence”, if there had been such a thing, was what was required in order to keep the Jews from depriving Paul of his life.

24.7.3—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

24.7.5—Lysias—Claudius Lysias, the commander in chief of the Roman forces in Jerusalem.

24.8 Tertullus complains bitterly that the chief priests and elders, probably the entire Sanhedrin, had been compelled to make the 70 mile trip to Caesarea, an inconvenience they had brought upon themselves by accepting the offer of the forty bloodthirsty conspirators who had proposed to take Paul’s life while he was in transit from one place to another. They were undoubt-
tedly peaked for the second time because they had been compelled to submit to Roman governance for the first hearing in Jerusalem. The attorney is attempting to slander the chief captain before the governor, perhaps as a tacit appeal to Felix’s Greek heritage as a Roman slave. Tertullus suggests that the whole matter had been a travesty and an imposition upon the procurator’s time. We may be assured that Tertullus’ tirade against Paul was extended, much more involved than the synopsis that Luke has given in his narrative. The evangelist has provided us with the more salient points of the advocate’s argument.

24.9 We do not know precisely how this unanimous assent was deposed. It may have come as the result of Tertullus calling various witnesses from among the men who had accompanied the high priest to Caesarea. It may have come as an assent from Ananias. It may have been presented as a voice acclamation by the body of Jews in the chamber.

24.9.3—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

24.10 There is no question that under Roman law, in the particular venue in which Paul found himself, that he would be given the opportunity to address the gathering without being interrupted in any fashion. Note that Paul’s salutation differs considerably from that of Tertullus, in that it is sincere (see 24.2–4).

24.10.2—Paul—the Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

24.10.23–24—many years—According to the historical records of the day, Felix had been in his position six or seven years. Paul thought himself in somewhat good hands in the sense that Felix was an outsider to the Jewish community who nonetheless was somewhat acquainted with the traditions of the Jews. At this time Felix was married to Drusilla, the sister of Herod Agrippa II.

24.10.34—cheerfully—the Greek word which is here translated as "cheerfully" derives from roots which mean “in fine spirits”. Paul knew that under Roman law he would be allowed to speak freely as a citizen, partially fulfilling the promise the Lord had given him that he would have the opportunity to bear witness of the Christ before both Jews and Gentiles.

24.11 When Paul had been taken into custody by Claudius Lysias, the chief captain had immediately assumed that his prisoner was the Egyptian that had caused such an uproar in Judea a short time before (see 21.37–38). How could the officer have drawn that conclusion unless there was some hint of that specific accusation in the cries of the rabble at the Temple? Paul begins his defense by categorically denying that he had ever been involved with sedition of any kind in Palestine, citing his short time in Jerusalem as evidence. He had spent less than a week in Jerusalem and the chief priests and elders could not prove otherwise. He was not the Egyptian seditionist or any other kind of usurper of authority.

24.11.18—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or

9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.
“established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, "established in peace" is by definition, the City of the great King.

24.12 Jesus had prophesied to his disciples that between the time of his ascension into heaven and the destruction of the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, there would be many men who would rise up, declaring themselves to be messianic deliverers of the people (see MT-C 24.3–5). Each of them would find support from the people and, ironically enough, from among the leadership of the Jews, the very men who were accusing Paul of sedition. The Jews, finding themselves frequently at odds with the Romans, chose to accuse the Christians of being the ones that were causing all of the religious and political unrest. These theological slurs would continue even after the destruction of the city in AD 70. Paul’s defense is based in the fact that he had not been in the Temple for any other purpose other than to worship the God of Israel.

24.12.21—synagogues—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

24.13 The chief priests and elders could only bring their slanderous words to the judgment seat of Felix; there was no hard evidence for any of the things with which they charged Paul. Paul’s testimony was in complete concert with the letter sent by the chief captain who had been present when all of the ruckus had taken place at the Temple and later during the hearing in the Fortress Antonia. Claudius Lysias had investigated the matter in some detail and had found nothing in Paul’s conduct which merited death.

24.14 Having denied being a seditionist or a disrupter of the peace, Paul does admit that he is a Christian, the only accusation which had any truth in it whatsoever. As Paul would later testify to the Romans, he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ but knew it to be the power of God unto salvation.

24.14.19–22—God of my fathers—Paul knew without any question in his mind or heart that Jesus of Nazareth, prior to his mortal birth, was the Lord God Jehovah. It was the leadership of the Jews, the chief priest and their ilk that had deliberately plotted against the God of their fathers.

24.14.31—law—Meaning, of course, the five books of Moses.

24.14.35—prophets—The writings of the servants of God in the Old Testament which begin with Isaiah and end with Malachi.

24.15 When Paul had been allowed to speak to the Jews at the Temple while standing on the stairs leading to the Fortress Antonia, he had been rudely interrupted when he had mentioned the possibility of the Lord God of Israel extending salvation to the Gentiles (see 22.21). Paul had been interrupted twice during the council held at the chief captain’s command; first, when he had declared his innocence (see 23.1–2) and second, when he had brought up his testimony concerning the resurrection from the dead (see 23.6–10). Paul had not adequately testified to either point and in the safety of Felix’s

| Acts 24:14 | AF 411 | JC 713 |
| Acts 24:15 | AF 85, 388, 394 | DNTC 2 264 | DS 1 124 | DS 2 217 | JC 24 | MD 365, 367 | EM 2 657 |
24.16 When Paul had professed his innocence before the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, the high priest had commanded those standing nearby to slap him on the mouth (see 23.1). This, of course, was contrary to both Jewish and Roman law. Again, the members of the council had to stand by and listen to the testimony of Paul of his conduct before God and man, no matter how aggravating it may have been to their own consciences. They could not raise a finger against him, nor could they raise their voices in protest for fear of angering the governor. Notwithstanding the fact that he was being held in custody by the government, it is unlikely that Paul had enjoyed greater freedom in teaching the truth than he did at this time and in this place.

24.17 This announcement that Paul had come to Jerusalem to deliver alms and offering to the inhabitants of Judea, must have been a stunning blow to the gathering of enemies standing with him in the judgment hall of Felix. They were beginning to appear more and more foolish in their feeble explanations as to why they had attacked Paul in the Temple.

24.17.3–4—many years—It is difficult to determine which period of time Paul is referring to here. The last time that he had been in Jerusalem had been at the end of his Second Missionary Journey (see 18.22.23) which some scholars testify took place in AD 56. Many chronologists of Paul’s life suggest that this instance took place four years later. Four years, then, would needs be considered "many years". If Paul, however, were referring to the last time that he had brought alms and offerings to the city, this would have taken place at least 17 years before (see 11.27–30).

24.18 The chief priests and elders of the Great Sanhedrin were no doubt feeling as if they were roasting slowly in the presence of Felix and the other Roman officers. Paul, with truth and as an act of sublime charity, focused the blame on the culprits who had started the riot in the Temple in the first place. This must have come as some relief to the leadership of the Jews who stood in the judgment hall, but they would still have to explain why they so readily sided with the Jews from Asia Minor without conducting an investigation that would have provided Paul, a Roman citizen, with due process. Paul had almost been killed without any examination at all.

24.18.3—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

24.18.5—Asia—That is, to the province of Asia Minor which lay opposite Macedonia across the Aegean Sea.

24.19 By law, Roman and Jewish, those who had accused Paul in the Temple, the act that had begun the riot which almost concluded with Paul’s death, those very men should have been present at the council being held before Felix. One wonders at their absence; one wonders at the growing

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.
discomfiture of the chief priests and elders. The Great Sanhedrin were proving to be as inept a judicial body as might be imagined by Felix and his associates, while Paul appeared as a brilliant source of truth and reason.

24.20 In the absence of Paul’s initial accusers, could not the Sanhedrin bear witness against him in so far as the hearing in Jerusalem was concerned? There were only two things that had actually happened during that meeting: the illegal slapping of Paul’s face by one of the men in attendance and the turmoil caused by the Sadducees and the Pharisees becoming divisive, a division which ultimately resulted in the chief captain having to rescue Paul from death once again. The conduct of the Jews from Asia Minor and the conduct of the Great Sanhedrin had been abominable from the beginning and everyone in the room was aware of their perfidy in the matter.

24.21 Paul is candid once again, clearly declaring his part in the disturbance, in that he had raised his voice in testimony of the resurrection of all men and of the judgment that the world would eventually face before the throne of God. To this act he freely admits, but clearly there was nothing in his actions that could have possibly condemned Paul before either a Roman or a Jewish court. If Paul were to be put to death for averring his belief in the resurrection, then a goodly number of the Great Sanhedrin would also have to suffer the same fate, together with a large portion of the Jewish population in Palestine. Again, Paul’s testimony is in complete harmony with that which had been written by Claudius Lysia to Felix, the whole matter having to do with sectarian interpretations of the Hebrew scriptures.

24.22 There is considerable controversy as to the meaning of this verse as it stands in the King James version of the Bible. The impression given by the grammar of this verse is that Felix actually had more than a passing acquaintance with the Christian religion. Some scholars argue that the governor having been in Judea for a long time, had become familiar with all of the religious sects in the country. The problem is with the phrase “having more perfect knowledge”. With whom is Felix being compared? Paul? The chief priests and elders of the Jews? Therein lies the difficulty. Other translators suggest that Felix desired to have a more perfect knowledge of Paul’s religion in order that he might judge the matter fairly and therefore put off the chief priests and elders until Claudius Lysias could come from Jerusalem to Caesarea. In the interim, Felix could have Paul teach him something of Christianity. This presents a rather generous evaluation of Felix as an administrator, an evaluation that does not seem to square with history. It seems far more likely that Felix was interested in inconveniencing the high priest and his entourage by keeping them off-balance in Caesarea, a Gentile city where they would have difficulty finding board and room because of their religious scruples.

24.22.3—Felix—In reference to Antonius Felix, the governor or procurator of Judea from AD 52 to AD 60. By all accounts he was a vicious and cruel man. He and his brother Pallas were Greek freedmen who purportedly descended from the kings of Arcadia. They had come to power during the administration of the emperor Claudius. His wife at this time, Drusilla, was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

24.22.20—Lysias—Claudius Lysias, the commander in chief of the Roman forces in Jerusalem.

24.22.22–23—chief captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief captain” derives from roots which refer to a “chiliarch”, a “colonel” over 1,000 men, “chiliad” being the number 1,000 in Greek.

20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.
24.23 While the Ananias and his party were being baited by the governor, Paul was treated with all of the courtesy due a Roman citizen. This, of course, could not possibly have been lost on the Jews. When Paul was first taken into custody by the chief captain in Jerusalem he was bound by two chains, probably attaching him to two soldiers on their side of him (see 22.33). We do not know the extent to which Paul was bound like this during the time he was attending hearings in Jerusalem and Caesarea. Nothing of the chains is mentioned until Paul’s audience with the Jews of Rome who had gathered to hear him in Rome (see 28.20).

24.23.5—centurion—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman army, the sixtieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would be a comparable rank today; some suggest sergeant; others propose captain.

24.23.8—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

24.23.14—liberty—We are not certain as to whether Paul was returned to Herod’s judgment hall for safe keeping or if he was allowed to enjoy a simple house arrest somewhere in the city. It was probably the former, given the threats that had been made against his life. Notwithstanding his personal guard, Paul would not have been kept in a cell or in chains. He was, after all, an unconvicted Roman citizen. With that degree of freedom, there can be no doubt that many members of the Church and their friends were allowed to come to Paul’s residence and be taught by the Apostle in rather comfortable circumstances.

24.24 We are not completely certain why Felix waited until his Jewish wife was available to join him in listening to Paul. His personal interest could not have been strong, but he had assured the chief priests and elders that they would have to wait until he had discerned the truth of the matter (see 24.22). The interview was quite disturbing to the governor.

24.24.6—Felix—In reference to Antonius Felix, the governor or procurator of Judea from AD 52 to AD 60. By all accounts he was a vicious and cruel man. He and his brother Pallas were Greek freedmen who purportedly descended from the kings of Arcadia. They had come to power during the administration of the emperor Claudius. His wife at this time, Drusilla, was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

24.24.11—Drusilla—The daughter of Herod Agrippa I, the tetrarch who disposed of John the Baptist by beheading. She was affianced at age six to a noble, but the agreement fell through when the man would not convert to Judaism. About the year AD 53 Herod Agrippa II, her brother, married her to King Azizus. But Felix, having once seen her, wished to have her as his own. By rather dubious methods Felix eventually succeeded. If history has accurately reflected the events of their lives, the couple had a son who, with his mother, was killed by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79.

24.24.15—Jewess—In order to distinguish her from Felix’s first wife who was also named Drusilla, a close relative of Antony and Cleopatra.

24.24.19—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

24.24.27—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

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24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.
part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

24.25 Anyone understanding, even in part, the character and conduct of Felix and Drusilla cannot read this verse without concluding that Paul is calling his host and hostess to repentance as did John the Baptist Herod Agrippa and Herodias, participants in an earlier notorious relationship. Felix was tyrannous and oppressive as governor, filled with avarice and unbridled appetite, and subject to grave consequences in the hereafter. Drusilla had forsaken her husband and her God and stood in moral jeopardy as well.

24.25.6—righteousness—The Greek word which is here translated as "righteousness" derives from roots which mean "self-evident rightness, justice, equitable, innocence, holiness, justification".

24.25.7—temperance—The Greek word which is here translated as "temperance" derives from roots which mean "strong, masterful, self-control, continence".

24.25.9—judgment—The Greek word which is here translated as "judgment" derives from roots which mean "decision, avenge, condemn, try, punish, call in question, sentence".

24.25.12—Felix—In reference to Antonius Felix, the governor or procurator of Judea from AD 52 to AD 60. By all accounts he was a vicious and cruel man. He and his brother Pallas were Greek freedmen who purportedly descended from the kings of Arcadia. They had come to power during the administration of the emperor Claudius. His wife at this time, Drusilla, was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

24.25.13—trembled—The Greek phrase which is here translated as "trembled" derives from roots which mean to "become alarmed, terrified, fright, fear"

24.25.26—convenient—The Greek word which is here translated as "convenient" derives from roots which mean "occasion, set, proper, "

The convenience of the season was measured against the possibility that Paul was willing to bribe the governor.

24.26 The first private interview between Felix and Paul had unnerved the former. The degree of Felix’s avarice is clearly marked by the frequency with which governor invited Paul to come to him. Felix could not possibly have desired to be terrified again, but he was certain that Paul and his associates had sufficient means by which the Apostle could purchase his freedom. We should remember that Paul had testified before Felix and the high priest that he had brought with him alms and offerings to the members of the Church in Judea (see 24.17). Paul refused to do this, however, because by so doing he would have tacitly admitted that he had been guilty, in part, of some

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time: when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

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26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.
crime. Paul continually and unrelentingly affirmed his own innocence. There was power in his assertion. One wonders if Felix had really hoped to have his own conscience salved by Paul’s surrendering to the governor’s petitions for money.

24.26.12—*Paul*—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

24.27 Felix was tenacious in his desire to have Paul tender a bribe to him for his release. Felix could not really bring any serious pressure to bear upon Paul because of his status as a Roman citizen.

24.27.5–6—*Porcius Festus*—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

24.27.9—*Felix*—In reference to Antonius Felix, the governor or procurator of Judea from AD 52 to AD 60. By all accounts he was a vicious and cruel man. He and his brother Pallas were Greek freedmen who purportedly descended from the kings of Arcadia. They had come to power during the administration of the emperor Claudius. His wife at this time, Drusilla, was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

24.27.10—*room*—That is, Felix was relieved of being the governor of the province.

24.27.17—*Jews*—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

24.27.19—*pleasure*—Felix knew that he had gravely offended the leadership of the nation wherein he had served as governor. He may even have known that the high priest and the elders were going to officially bring their cause before the emperor Nero. Leaving Paul in custody was a futile attempt to soften the personal attacks which were soon to follow Felix to Rome. The former governor escaped judgment because of the intervention of his brother Pallas.

24.27.21—*Paul*—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.1 By all accounts, Festus was a breath of fresh air in the governance of Judea. Unfortunately his tenure was cut short by his unexpected death in AD 62.

25.1.3—*Festus*—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

25.1.8—*province*—Specifically the region of Judea; generally Cilicia and Syria.

25.1.10–11—*three days*—No one has adequately explained the significance of Luke’s detail here.

25.1.13—*ascended*—From sea level at Caesarea to approximately 2,500 feet above sea level at Jerusalem.

25.1.15—*Caesarea*—A large seaport on the coast of Palestine (see

27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix’ room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Chapter 25

1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.
8.40.20). This was the home of not only Philip and his family, but also of Cornelius and his household (see 10.1).

25.1.7—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

25.2 Ananias and his entourage are tenaciously consistent in their hatred of Paul. Had they focused their energies on works of righteousness under the Law of Moses instead of oppressing the saints of God, the entire course of history might have been favorably changed. But these were a bloodthirsty band of criminals, determined to deprive the servants of God of their lives and property. They were willing to resort to any kind of chicanery in order to obtain their goals. This cabal could not perceive that their efforts could not possibly succeed; they were blinded by their own pride and viciousness.

25.2.3—high priest—In the days of Moses, the High Priest of the Levitical Priesthood was Aaron. Thereafter, the eldest righteous descendant of Aaron was to have that right bestowed upon him. Once set apart, he would serve for life. At the time of Jesus’ mortal ministry, the office of High Priest had become a political appointment bestowed by the Roman government. Generally it was a one-year appointment, but could be renewed. Thus, there were often more than one former High Priest alive at any given time. Caiaphas and his father-in-law Annas fell into that category.

25.2.10—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

25.2.14—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.3 The chief priests and elders had not changed their proposed method for dispatching Paul. Needless to say, the forty men who had bound themselves in a covenant to neither eat nor drink until they had assassinated Paul must have been, after the passing of two years, both parched and famished. One wonders of Claudius Lysias was still the chief captain of Jerusalem at the time that Festus became governor of Judea. If he were, then the proposal to have Festus present Paul in Jerusalem for another trial would have been thinly veiled indeed. It seems unlikely that Festus would have had the opportunity to acquaint himself with Paul’s case during his first three days in the country.

25.3.13—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

25.4 Although Festus was of a different temperament than Felix, he was

2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.

4 But Festus answered, that Paul
none the less an officer of the Roman Empire and was not easily subjected to intimidation, particularly after his predecessor had been deposed. The likelihood that Festus could be removed from office during the first few months of his tenure was nonexistent, particularly since the hearing against Felix in Rome had not yet been resolved. The Jews could not possibly have proceeded against Festus without appearing petulant in the eyes of the emperor. Festus was clearly aware of his political advantage and simply did not acquiesce to the demands of those who were impudent enough to think that they could compel him to do their will.

25.4.2—Festus—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

25.4.5—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.4.10—Caesarea—A large seaport on the coast of Palestine (see 8.40.20). This was the home of not only Philip and his family, but also of Cornelius and his household (see 10.1).

25.5 There was more of a personal and political threat to Festus if Paul were to be murdered while in the governor’s custody. Paul, as a Roman citizen, had rights in the Roman Empire that were far beyond any political power which the Jews could muster at that time. Paul could not be brought to Jerusalem to appear before the Sanhedrin, or any other body of Jews for that matter, unless he agreed to the proposal. Festus could not imagine that Paul would willingly endanger his life by submitting to the authority of the Jewish leaders. Therefore, he could not act against Paul’s rights contrary to the mind of the Apostle without endangering his own interests before the emperor.

25.5.10—able—The Greek word which is here translated as “able” derives from roots which mean “possible, force, ruler, officer, authority, efficient, capable”.

25.6 Again, as it had been in the case of their appeal to Felix, the only venue in which the chief priests and elders of the Jewish could present their case against Paul was in the city of Caesarea. In that setting, the burden of proof would be upon Paul’s accusers, upon those who had no evidence whatsoever that Paul was an insurrectionist of any kind. The cries for justice in Jerusalem were merely a cover for the setting in which Paul could be killed. The discomfiture of the high priest and his band must have been profound inasmuch as they knew that they could not possibly prove their case against their nemesis under Roman law.

25.6.8–11—more than ten days—This phrasing has troubled many scholars, and to be fair, the English translation here gives the impression that Luke has lost his grip on his narrative. Alternative manuscripts suggest that the reading here should be is “not more than ten days”.

25.6.16—Caesarea—A large seaport on the coast of Palestine (see 8.40.20). This was the home of not only Philip and his family, but also of Cornelius and his household (see 10.1).

25.6.27—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.7 Certainly by the time that the hearing was convened in Caesarea, Festus would have acquainted himself with some of the details regarding the conduct of the various parties who were embroiled in the polemic against Paul. One wonders if the Jews were foolish enough to rehash their tired accusa-

should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither.

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.

6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints
tions against Paul or whether they had invented far more outrageous claims against the Church and against Paul as its representative. Whatever their course of action, they were equally unsuccessful in prosecuting their case against Paul. Although they were loud and insistent that Paul had raised havoc among the Jews throughout the empire, there was a dearth of evidence and witnesses. The protestations of the Jews must have seemed rather shrill to the ears of the Romans.

25.7.5—come—We are not certain whether Paul was still being housed in Herod’s judgment hall or whether he had an apartment of his own somewhere in the city. It seems likely, however, that he was still under guard for his own protection.

25.7.7—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

25.7.12—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

25.7.23—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.8 Regardless of the tack taken by the Jews during the hearing, Paul was consistent in his defense against the original claims brought against him. Had he in any way violated the Law of Moses either in his conduct or in his teachings? His reply that he had done nothing that had not been prophesied by the prophets of the Lord God of Israel, that his teachings were completely consistent with their writings and the hopes of every faithful Israelite. The Jews had insisted that Paul had brought a Gentile into the sacred confines of the Temple of Jerusalem. No such thing had happened. The riot within the Temple had been caused by false men, Jews from Asia, who had hysterically attacked Paul as an act of vengeance upon his person for having been so successful during his missionary labors in Asia Minor. Since they had no logical argument to bring against him, they resorted to physical violence. The claim of the fundamentalist Jews was that Christianity insisted that the Son of God was not Caesar, but Jesus of Nazareth, and therefore a treasonous ideology. This accusation had been brought against Jesus in his hour before Pontius Pilate and the latter had dismissed the notion as frivolous. When those same accusations had been brought against Paul and his missionary companions, once again the Roman Empire did not take offense at what was clearly a spiritual matter rather than a political one. The irony was, of course, that none of the Jews standing before Festus could ever bring themselves to aver that Nero or any other emperor was of divine origin.

25.8.9–12—law of the Jews—Meaning, of course, the Law of Moses.

25.8.20—Caesar—Probably in reference to Claudius Caesar, the fourth Roman emperor who ruled Rome for thirteen years. If historians be accurate, that reign would have commenced in AD 41. He was murdered by his fourth wife, the mother of Nero, in AD 54. There is a distinct possibility, however, that Nero may be ruling by the time that Paul stood before Festus.

8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.

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25.9 It is difficult to tell just exactly what it was that Festus had in mind when he asked Paul the question. Was he sincere in his desire to ingratiate himself with the high priest and his entourage? Did he ask the question in order to give the impression that he was acquiescing to the Jews’ request to have Paul taken to Jerusalem? Knowing Paul’s history by this time, he undoubtedly would have been aware that Paul would never agree to such a proposal. Therefore, Festus’ public question would have done nothing more than tease the chief priests and elders. Festus, if nothing else can be said of him, was a loyal Roman. The political machinations of the Sanhedrin over the years would not have set well with him. Felix, as well as other procurators, governors, and kings had fallen from their places of honor because of these power-hungry Sadducees and Pharisees. The “pleasure” here would have been vacuous at best, inasmuch as Festus could not allow a Roman citizen to be abused at the hands of the “locals”. The sixty-mile trip from Caesarea to Jerusalem would have been a security nightmare.

25.9.2—**Festus**—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

25.9.7—**Jesus**—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

25.9.9—**pleasure**—The Greek word which is here translated as “pleasure” derives from roots which mean “graciousness, favor, cheerful, happy”. The English word “charisma” is produced from the same sources.

25.9.11—**Paul**—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.9.19—**Jerusalem**—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

25.10 If Festus were merely tantalizing the chief priests and elders with his question of Paul, he undoubtedly knew that Paul would do as he did. Paul, however, knowing the motive of the governor would not join in the game which he was playing. It would have been an easy thing, we might suppose, to partake of the humor of the moment. Paul, however, had no desire to side with either party in any fashion. The tenor of his reply to Festus clearly illustrates his singlenessmindedness. Paul points out that Festus already knows that there are no merits to the case brought against him by the Jews.

25.10.3—**Paul**—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.10.7—9—**Caesar’s judgment seat**—That is to say, Caesarea was the official residency of both the Judean kings and the Roman governors. Jerusalem may have been the traditional capital of Judea, but it certainly was inferior to Caesarea in the minds and hearts of the Romans. If Paul were to be judged as a Roman citizen, Caesarea was the logical place for such judgment to take place.

25.10.18—**Jesus**—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to

9 But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.
Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

25.11 Paul testified before Festus that, as a Roman citizen, he was possessed of enough integrity that he would willingly suffer death for any crime against the Empire. Central to the accusations brought against Paul was the claim that he was a member of a sect which worshipped Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God. This, said the Jews, should be considered an offense against the Roman Empire. Courts in Asia Minor, Macedonia, Achaia, and now in Judea had declared that the Emperor was by no means distressed by the Christians, any more than he would be distressed by the worship of the Jews which excluded reverencing him. The Law of Moses prohibited this, and for the most part the Caesars simply ignored that doctrine for the sake of public peace. The teachings of the Jews and of the Christians regarding the Messiah and the Kingdom of God were insignificant in the Roman worldview. When, therefore, it appeared that Festus might turn him over to another venue, Paul simply stated that the Jews could not settle the issue directly because they were not of the “offended” party. If there was anyone who could determine whether or not Christianity posed a threat to the Roman Empire, it would be Nero; all other judicial appeals had been exhausted.

25.11.42—Caesar—Probably in reference to Claudius Caesar, the fourth Roman emperor who ruled Rome for thirteen years. If historians be accurate, that reign would have commenced in AD 41. He was murdered by his fourth wife, the mother of Nero, in AD 54. There is a distinct possibility, however, that Nero may be ruling by the time that Paul stood before Festus.

25.12 After investigating all of the ramifications of the case and considering the legal and political consequences, Festus determined that passing the case along to Nero would be the course of action he should follow. Although there have been misrepresentations to the contrary, we ought not consider that Festus was miffed at Paul’s appeal to Caesar.

25.12.2—Festus—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

25.12.9—council—The Greek word which is translated here as “council” is not the same as that used to represent the gathering of the Sanhedrin which is also translated into English as “council”. We ought not to assume here that Festus consulted with the Sanhedrin. He did not. He was consulting with his own legal experts to determine what he should do in this case.

25.12.15—Caesar—Probably in reference to Claudius Caesar, the fourth Roman emperor who ruled Rome for thirteen years. If historians be accurate, that reign would have commenced in AD 41. He was murdered by his fourth wife, the mother of Nero, in AD 54. There is a distinct possibility, however, that Nero may be ruling by the time that Paul stood before Festus.

25.13 Agrippa and Bernice apparently had not been in Jerusalem or Caesarea when Festus took office and for this reason were somewhat delayed in paying their respects to the new governor.

11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.

Acts 25:11
JC 715

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go.

Acts 25:12
JC 69

13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.
25.13.6—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Galilee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

25.13.8—Berenice—A variant of “Berenice”. A daughter of Agrippa I and therefore the sister of both Agrippa II and Drusilla, the wife of Felix. She was an extraordinary woman by all accounts, notwithstanding her relationships with her uncle, Herod of Chalcis (a territory north of Palestine in Syria). She is rumored to have been the mistress of Titus, he who would one day rule as Caesar after the death of his father Vespasian. Her most notorious relationship, however, appears to have been an incestuous one with her own brother, Agrippa II.

25.13.11—Caesarea—A large seaport on the coast of Palestine (see 8.40.20). This was the home of not only Philip and his family, but also of Cornelius and his household (see 10.1).

25.13.14—Festus—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

25.14 In Festus’ discussion of Paul’s case with Herod Agrippa, we sense what was, perhaps, the governor’s feelings regarding the matter. Paul was apparently waiting for transportation to take him to Rome and the delay may have had something to do with the season of the year when travel across the Mediterranean Sea could be treacherous. One wonders as to why Festus decided to bring Paul’s case to Agrippa’s attention. The legal minds of the province had already been consulted; the decision to send Paul to Rome had already been made. Insofar as Agrippa’s jurisdiction is concerned, Festus was under no obligation to share any of the details of the prosecution against Paul with the king. This is, however, a conference of peers, political brothers, as it were, who perhaps had nothing else better to do with their time than to discuss and evaluate what appeared to be an interesting case.

25.14.9—Festus—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

25.14.11—Paul’s—the Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.14.26—Felix—in reference to Antonius Felix, the governor or procurator of Judea from AD 52 to AD 60. By all accounts he was a vicious and cruel man. He and his brother Pallas were Greek freedmen who purportedly descended from the kings of Arcadia. They had come to power during the administration of the emperor Claudius. His wife at this time, Drusilla, was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

25.15 Inasmuch as Herod Agrippa had some responsibility in selecting who the next high priest might be, Festus may have been making certain that the king knew the kind of men that he would have to deal with in Jerusalem and the danger they were posing to both Agrippa and Festus if they were successful in putting any Roman citizen to death, even if it were only another Jew.

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul’s cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.
Additionally, Agrippa had been around both Jews and Christians for most of his life and Festus’ curiosity may have gotten the better of him regarding the differences between Judaism and Christianity.

25.15.7—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

25.15.9–10—chief priests—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The “chief priests” designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of “chief priests” to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former.

25.15.13—elders—The Greek word translated here as “elders” derives from roots which mean “senior, representative” which usually implied in Jewish circles that they would have been members of a Sanhedrin somewhere. In this case it was probably the Great Sanhedrin, the highest ecclesiastical council in Israel in that day. The Greek word is also the source for the English word “presbytery” and related words.

25.15.16—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

25.15.22—judgment—The Greek word which is here translated as “judgment” derives from roots which mean “justice, decision, punishment, vengeance”. Other ancient manuscripts make the request far more pointed, suggesting “condemnation, sentence of death”. The chief priests and elders of the Jews did not want “justice”, they wanted “destruction”.

25.16 There is superior translation for this verse.

To whom I answered, It is not the matter of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accuse have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him. (JST, Acts 25:16)

Festus made it clear to Agrippa that he was minded to follow Roman law in all things and would not be intimidated by the machinations or murmurings of the people he ruled. He did not deliver Paul to the Jews (in case anyone asked) because the Apostle was a freeborn citizen of Rome and he was legally bound to protect him in any and all circumstances as the governor of the province. The real problem in the case brought against Paul was that the original accusers, the Jews from Asia Minor, had never made an appearance before the Roman judgment seat. Everything testified against Paul was mere hearsay, insofar as the incident at the Temple was concerned. Whatever happened to these original accusers? Had they returned to Asia Minor? Were...
they afraid to come forward, especially when they discovered that their witness that Paul had brought a Gentile into the Temple was false? Were the chief priests and elders reluctant to have the witnesses come forward and have their testimonies declared specious? In any event, the negative effect of their absence from the various hearings weakened the prosecution of the Jews considerably in the eyes of the Roman officials. In the first hearings held in Jerusalem, Paul had not been allowed to speak in his own defense, the entire proceeding being interrupted by one disturbance or another (see 23.1–2 and 23.6–7).

25.16.12—Romans—The dominant power in the known world at the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were the successors of the Greeks and the precursors of western civilization. They were the consummate Gentiles of their day.

25.17 There is a superior translation for this verse.

Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the day following I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. (JST, Acts 25:17)

Festus is quite particular about his proper conduct with regard to the prosecution against Paul. He did not in any way inconvenience the chief priests and elders of the Sanhedrin once they had settled in from their travels. Festus called the council together and made Paul available to them in a courtroom setting, according to Roman law. Festus made it clear that he was the one who was in Caesar’s place and that the high priest and his entourage had been required to conduct themselves with some decorum.

25.17.7—hither—That is to say, to Caesarea, the place where Festus and Agrippa are having their conversation.

25.17.13—morrow—The next day after the chief priests and elders had arrived in Caesarea, The journey from Jerusalem to Caesarea was at least a two-day trip for a company of any size.

25.18 Paul’s life had been attempted three times, twice rescued directly and once protected sufficiently that the assassins were unable to deprive him of mortality. The leadership of the country seemed to be united in their condemnation of the man when he was tried by Claudius Lysia and Felix. The prisoner had been in custody for more than two years when Festus came into his office as governor of Judea. Given that scant history, what sort of wretch did Festus expect to find in Paul? Apparently the governor was anticipating a rebel of the worst hue, but such a person he did not find. He was astonished at the lack of evidence brought against the Apostle and likewise surprised that those accusations which were brought could not possibly have merited death under Roman law.

25.19 Paul continually affirmed that he had done nothing contrary to the intent of the Law of Moses nor had he defiled the Temple in any way. The third accusation, that of having espoused a religion that supported the overthrow of the Roman governance in Judea or anywhere else, by replacing the constituted authority with those who worshipped Jesus as the Messiah, was also a product of overactive imaginations.

25.19.10—superstition—The Greek word which is here translated as “superstition” derives from roots which mean “religion”, in this case national religion, Judaism. See also 17.22.25 where this word is used in conjunction with the pantheon on Mar’s Hill. Some scholars have

17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth. (JST, Acts 25:17)

18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. (Acts 25:19, MD 772)
suggested that the use of this word would have been considered quite offensive to the ears of a Jew, even those of Herod Agrippa. It seems highly unlikely that, given the setting, Festus would deliberately antagonize Herod Agrippa. Therefore, we probably ought to assume that the word usage here is merely descriptive rather than judgmental.

25.19.14—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshu’a”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

25.19.19—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.20 Festus admits to Agrippa that he could not tell for himself whether or not the questions raised about Paul’s conduct toward the Law of Moses and the Temple were valid or whether a Roman’s life could be forfeited as a result of those charges having been sustained. Festus is not as forthcoming with Agrippa as he might have been. The question about Paul traveling to Jerusalem was clouded by a number of issues, not the least of which was the band of assassins who had conspired with the chief priests and elders to take Paul’s life. Neither did Festus confess that he had doubted from the beginning that Paul would agree to being transported back to Jerusalem for another hearing and that his question had been a clever way to peak the leadership of the Jews that stood before him. We ought not to conclude that Festus was no longer pleased with himself for so doing.

25.20.18—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

25.21 In case anyone asked, Festus assures Agrippa that once Paul had appealed to Caesar, the governor’s hands were tied.

25.21.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.21.13—Augustus—The emperor of this name, Caius Julius Caesar Octavius, was born 63 years before the birth of Jesus Christ and died in his 76th year in AD 14. Clearly Festus is not speaking of this man. In 27 BC, the Roman senate had conferred the title “Augustus” upon the emperor after the battle of Actium. Successors to the throne of Rome were often referred to by that same title, and this is the case here. “Augustus” was a formal way to refer to the leader of the Roman Empire, in this case a reference to Nero. Perhaps a better translation would have been “the Venerable One”.

25.21.26—Caesar—Probably in reference to Claudius Caesar, the fourth Roman emperor who ruled Rome for thirteen years. If historians be accurate, that reign would have commenced in AD 41. He was murdered by his fourth wife, the mother of Nero, in AD 54. There is a distinct possibility, however, that Nero may be ruling by the time that Paul stood before Festus.

25.22 One wonders if Festus has cleverly manipulated his guest into asking for an audience with Paul. It certainly would not have been above the procurator to arrange things such that he might have another man with great...
authority bestowed upon him from Rome to stand as a witness against the Jews were they to bring charges against Festus as they had against Felix. Agrippa’s curiosity is not unlike that of his great uncle Antipas (see Lk C 23.8).

25.22.2—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Galilee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

25.22.5—Festus—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Luceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

25.22.13–14—To morrow—Today we would write this phrase as one word “tomorrow”.

25.22.16—he—That is to say, Festus the Roman governor.

25.23 It is astonishing that Festus and Agrippa turned an interview between the king and Paul into a spectacle, until one remembers that Agrippa and Bernice were the son and daughter of the man who was consumed by worms, in part because of his love of self-importance and splendor (see 12.21–23). Given the nature of their lifestyle, neither sibling was equipped to learn from the mistakes of others, even the egregious ones of their father. They pressed forward in their dogged determination to aggrandize themselves before their subjects and those with whom they had any meaningful political interaction.

25.23.6—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Galilee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

25.23.10—Berenice—A variant of “Berenice”. A daughter of Agrippa I and therefore the sister of both Agrippa II and Drusilla, the wife of Felix. She was an extraordinary woman by all accounts, notwithstanding her relationships with her uncle, Herod of Chalcis (a territory north of Palestine in Syria). She is rumored to have been the mistress of Titus, who would one day rule as Caesar after the death of his father Vespasian. Her most notorious relationship, however, appears to have been an incestuous one with her own brother, Agrippa II.

25.23.19–21—place of hearing—We are not certain as to where this auditorium was located but it seems likely that it was in Herod’s praetorium where Paul had been ensconced by Felix two years before (see 23.25). If Paul still had apartments there, it would have been an easy matter to bring him from one room to another with relative safety.

25.23.24–25—chief captains—A chief captain was a “tribune” over approximately one thousand men. Historians tell us that there were five regiments quartered in Caesarea, almost an entire Roman legion. These officers would have been equal in rank to the chief captain who originally took Paul into custody in Jerusalem (see 21.31).

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus’ commandment Paul was brought forth.

Acts 25:23–27

DN TC 2 26
25.23.33—Festus—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

25.23.35—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

25.24 The presentation of Paul to King Agrippa did not particularly inform him of anything that he did not already know. Festus had already had detailed discussions with the king regarding the matter. This salutation was for the benefit of the rest of those who had been gathered to the entertainment. The public nature of the event must have been another attempt on Festus’ part to convince his subjects that he was being evenhanded in his treatment of the prisoner and those who were accusing him. Paul had been quite adamant about not going before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem because he justifiably feared for his life. If all had gone as the chief priests and elders of the Jews had planned, the hearing would never have taken place. Paul would have been assassinated along the way from Caesarea to Jerusalem. While the convocation held with Festus and Agrippa did not qualify as a formal trial, yet it could be interpreted as a gesture on the part of the governor to extend a courtesy to the reigning potentate of Palestine and the file leader of the high priest.

25.24.2—Festus—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

25.24.5—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Galilee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

25.24.26—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnant, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

25.24.33—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

25.24.36—here—Meaning, of course, Caesarea. But we ought not to be confused by the wording of the clause here. Festus was assailed by the same group of men, Jews from Jerusalem, in two different locations. He had not been approached by any such delegation from Caesarea.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.

25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of
all manner of sedition and revolution. None of these assertions had ever been substantiated. When Christians did suffer death at the hands of the authorities, the murders were facilitated by the unwillingness of the Roman governors to interfere. Hence Jesus would be crucified because Pontius Pilate was unwilling to assert his authority as the Roman procurator in favor of an innocent man. One wonders whatever happened to those who had taken the life of Stephen the evangelist. Were these murderers ever brought to justice? Unlikely or Luke would have mentioned it in his narrative. Festus knew that he could not turn a blind eye in Paul’s case because of the Apostle’s status in the empire.

25.25.20—Augustus—The emperor of this name, Caiaus Julius Caesar Octavius, was born 63 years before the birth of Jesus Christ and died in his 76th year in AD 14. Clearly Festus is not speaking of this man. In 27 BC, the Roman senate had conferred the title “Augustus” upon the emperor after the battle of Actium. Successors to the throne of Rome were often referred to by that same title, and this is the case here. “Augustus” was a formal way to refer to the leader of the Roman Empire, in this case a reference to Nero. Perhaps a better translation would have been “the Venerable One”.

25.26 Festus was facing a difficult task. Writing to Nero about Paul would require some tact, lest the emperor sense that Festus was wasting his time. Ostensibly, Festus was suggesting that Agrippa might be able to aid him in making the petition to Nero far more substantive. The king will conclude, however, after hearing Paul’s defense, that had it not been that Paul had already exercised his right to a hearing before the emperor he might have been allowed to go free (see 26.32). The effect of the public hearing in Caesarea was to focus the attention of everyone concerned on the bigoted actions of the chief priests and elders. Paul should never have been arrested, tried, or imprisoned. The whole episode had been a charade from the beginning as to the application of Roman law. The real issue had to do with the inroads that Christianity was making among devout Jews throughout the world, Paul apparently serving as the mainspring for the missionary efforts throughout Asia Minor and Greece.

25.26.11–12—my lord—A title utterly refused by both Augustus and Tiberius. According to scholars, Tiberius declared that he was “lord” or Dominus only over his slaves. He was “emperor” or general to the Legions and “prince” of the senate. By the time Nero came to the throne, Caesarean modesty had waned somewhat.

25.26.27—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Galilee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

25.27 We cannot be certain that any of the chief priests and elders were in attendance at this gathering to hear Paul. If any were, Festus’ declarations regarding Paul’s innocence, or apparent innocence, would have come as a slap in the face of those who had accused Paul in the first place. The act of bring the case to the attention of Felix had been an imposition, and the fact that the issue had dragged on another two years was a travesty. The longer

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.
the situation was unresolved, the more foolish and unreasonable the appeal to the emperor became. Festus knew, however, that King Agrippa was not going to find anything different than what he himself had uncovered. This is all staged drama devised for public consumption.

26.1 If the hearing were taking place in Herod’s praetorium, Agrippa would have been host to all those in attendance. If the audience were in a specifically Roman location, Agrippa is still the person for whom the hearing has been called and Festus has deferred the conduct of the remainder of the meeting to the king. Much has been written about the formality of the presentation which Paul makes here, much of which can be no more than mere conjecture. Paul was familiar with the rhetorical conventions of the day, the manner in which the great orators delivered their addresses to the people. Would Paul have shunned the techniques and conventions of the Greeks and Romans in order to make his teaching of the truth uncluttered by philosophies and attitudes of men? Would he have adopted some or all of the mannerisms in order to not appear too bizarre before the king and the governor? One thing is certain; this hearing was not to be a formal legal proceeding. The chief priests and elders would not be allowed to present a prosecutorial case. That trial had already taken place and Paul had appealed to Caesar. The next legal step would take place once Paul arrived in Rome. No doubt Paul addressed Herod in a fashion with which Agrippa was familiar and would not find particularly odd.

26.1.2—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Gali-lee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

26.1.5—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

26.1.18—hand—Perhaps a formal gesture used by speakers to indicate that they were willing and prepared to take the floor.

26.2 Inasmuch as Paul was not given to flattery, nor was he in danger of any particular judgment at the hands of Herod Agrippa, Paul’s words here ought to be accepted at face value. Paul was not trying to ingratiate himself to the king for legal or political purposes. He saw himself in a rather unique setting with an opportunity to testify clearly, without interruption, the whole case for Christianity. Paul saw this hearing as a missionary opportunity with Herod and Bernice as investigators. In addition, the entire royal entourage with the king and his sister would be subject to Paul’s personal witness of the resurrected Christ.

26.2.6—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Gal-

Chapter 26

1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:
lee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

26.2.18–20—*all the things*—There were three major charges brought by the members of the Sanhedrin against Paul: first that his teachings were in conflict with the Law of Moses; second, that he had defiled the Temple at Jerusalem by bringing an uncircumcised Greek into the Court of Israel; and third, that he had taught sedition against Rome when he had proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth as the Holy Messiah (see 25.8).

26.2.27—*Jews*—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

26.3 Agrippa’s father, Herod Agrippa I, had been a strict observer of the Law of Moses, more so than any of the other Herodian kings. We might surmise that, while Agrippa the younger may not have been as devout as his pious father, he certainly would have been familiar with every aspect of what it meant to be a practicing Jew. Agrippa the younger was certainly qualified to serve as an advisor to the Roman procurators and had distinguished himself sufficiently in that role that the privilege of selecting the annual High Priest in Palestine had been granted to him by decree. Thus, Herod Agrippa II was learned in the affairs and religion of the Jews, but not so orthodox that he would have condemned Paul out of hand as a heretic. Nonetheless, the fine distinctions between the beliefs of the Sadducees and of the Pharisees were sufficiently obtuse that most Gentiles had no interest in having anyone articulate even the more articulate differences. Injecting Christianity into the discussion would, indeed, require some patience on the part of Herod and his party.

26.3.18—*Jews*—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah.

26.4 Paul begins his discourse before Agrippa in a similar fashion as he had begun as he stood on the steps that led from the Temple in Jerusalem to the Fortress Antonia (see 22.3). In his hearing before the chief priests and elders of the people, Paul had clearly articulated his childhood upbringing by declaring that his was not only himself a Pharisee, but that his own father was of that orthodox sect as well (see 23.6). We are not told exactly how old Paul was when he was sent to Jerusalem to study with Gamaliel, but it seems likely that it would have happened when he would have been considered an adult under the Law of Moses; that is to say, at twelve years of age.

26.4.18—*Jerusalem*—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

26.4.22—*Jews*—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced...
to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

26.5 There were those still living who knew Paul not only as a Pharisee, but as a persecutor of the Christians. If they had stepped forward and testified to the facts surrounding his early life, Paul’s conversion story would have been placed in stark relief. This contrast the Jews had no desire to emphasize in any fashion.

26.5.9–10—would testify—Whether the Jews who knew Paul were incensed at his defection to Christianity or were mortally intimidated by their irate colleagues, they had not nor would they testify in his favor on any matter.

26.5.14–15—most straitest—A double superlative which, though a grammatical oddity, is probably not enough to adequately describe the orthodoxy of the Pharisees.

26.5.23—Pharisee—An extremely orthodox Jewish sect that believed that only a rigorous adherence to the Law of Moses would save the children of Israel. Their demands, however, went far beyond the constraints of the Law, to the point that almost every man was unconditionally condemned by their philosophy. Their attention was so focused on the minutia of their own reasoning that they were unable to comprehend the simplicity of what was demanded by the Gospel of Christ. Had they been able to forsake momentarily the pride and vanity which they felt over their elaborate readings of Moses, they might have seen the purpose for which the Law had been given was to point them directly at the mortal Messiah. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were undoubtedly both of this sect, as was Saul of Tarsus.

26.6 Many commentators have attempted to define the “hope” to which Paul refers here. Most have focused on the resurrection from the dead, which, though it is certainly a major element of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is not its entirety. Resurrection from the dead is the manner in which all things living obtain immortality. It is a free gift given to all who have taken upon themselves the flesh of the mortal body. Whether a man believes in the Savior, hopes to arise from the tomb, or desires that all around him be saved from the vicissitudes of this life has no bearing on an individual’s redemption from the grave. All will come forth in the process of time through the resurrection of the Son of God. Another seminal promise made to the fathers had to do with the quality of that endless restoration of the physical body and the spirit. Man cannot dwell in the presence of the God of Heaven ladened with the consequences of rebellion and transgression of eternal law. Though redemption from physical death is given to men without merit, the redemption from hell requires the sons and daughters of God to conform their lives to truth and light, through faith in Christ, by repentance from all wrongdoing, and by accepting all those ordinances established by the Father and the Son as tokens of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Paul stood before Agrippa just as much for his belief in the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Christ as he did for his assertion that resurrection from the dead was a reality through the redemption brought about by the Son of God. These two major elements of faith, the hope for immortality and eternal life, are derived from the Christian belief that Jesus of Nazareth was and is the Messiah.

26.7 Because Paul taught that the spirit of man was eternal, that the redemp-

5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. Acts 26:5

6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Acts 26:6–8

7 Unto which promise our twelve Acts 26:7
tion of that spirit came through the acquisition of a physical body at a time of mortal testing, and that the body and the spirit might be redeemed through the offices of the Lord God Jehovah, he had been haled before the Sanhedrin and the courts of Claudioius Lysias, Felix, and Festus.

26.7.5—twelve tribes—One wonders here to whom Paul is referring. That there were remnants of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, properly serving the Lord God of Israel in the Temple at that very hour would have been a given for Herod Agrippa. The inclusion of the other tribes, so as to include the entire House of Israel would have been provocative to say the least. Remnants of the ten northern tribes would have been found among the Samaritans, whose descendants they were, but no orthodox Jew would assert that the Samaritans were subject to salvation, unless he were also a Christian. Israel had been scattered all over the world and at the time of the Savior’s death and resurrection, many nations had been blessed by the Diaspora. It is likely, however, that Paul is referring to the legions of the faithful dead who were dwelling in the world of spirits, serving God and their fellow men continuously, that all mankind might have the opportunity to hear and accept the terms of salvation from both death and hell.

26.7.7—instantly—The Greek phrase which is here translated as “instantly” derives from roots which mean “fixed position in time, place or state, instrumentality; intent, without ceasing, fervent, extend”.

26.7.21—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Galilee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

26.7.27—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

26.8 Herod Agrippa was one who at least was familiar with the notion that the Lord God was a personage of infinite power. He also would have accepted the notion that those who worshipped such a God ought to be rewarded for their faith and commitment to live by His commandments. Hence the promises, the hope extended to the first fathers of the covenant people, were in concert with the truth and light which God had revealed through His servants. If God had covenanted with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and a host of others that through the Messiah both death and hell would be overcome in their behalf, should anyone then doubt the word of the One who had brought life and being into existence? Resurrection and redemption from sin may have been philosophical points in the past, but Paul fervently testifies to Agrippa that the reality of remission of personal sins has been assured, the outward token being the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the tomb.

26.9 Prior to his conversion, Paul had arrayed himself against the disciples of Christ in much the same way that the Sadducees and others had arrayed tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? Acts 26:8 AF 388, 394

9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things Acts 26:9–11 JC 719
themselves against Paul. He understood the mentality. Paul’s warring against the Christians was well-known among the Jews, but they were loath to testify to that fact because they would then have to explain how it was that such an intent antagonist had become such an ardent supporter. Clearly Paul had experienced some great moment in his life that had reversed his course and the Sadducees would rather have that witness silenced, inasmuch as it involved the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Messiah. The account of Paul’s persecution of the saints is related in Luke’s third person narrative (see 9:1–2) and by Paul himself at the Temple stairs (see 22:1–4).

26.9.18—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

26.9.20—Nazareth—Located due west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee, in the highlands above the Plain of Esdraelon. The adopted home of both Joseph and Mary, inasmuch as their royal lineage assigned them to the city of Bethlehem, a fact that is reflected in the account of the Savior’s birth in the second chapter of Luke. Jesus, though not born in Nazareth, was a resident there for most of his life. (See also MT-C 2.23.10)

26.10 As the Sadducees had persecuted Paul in Jerusalem, almost taking his life twice in spite of the Roman guards surrounding him, Paul himself had been an instrument of destruction among the membership of the Church in that city. As a fanatically devout Pharisee, Paul had been given a wide latitude of authority from the leadership of the Jews, perhaps unparalleled in history, to seek out those whom he considered heretical, threats to the nation and religion of the Jews. Although we only know one of these saints by name, the evangelist Stephen, it is clear that countless disciples of Christ were imprisoned and otherwise abused at his hands. While he may not have put stone in hand in opposition to the membership of the Church of Christ, he mentally and emotionally slew the saints. For this he suffered a profound grief.

26.10.7—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

26.10.12—saints—In reference to the membership of the Church of Jesus Christ, those who have covenanted to no longer partake of the wickedness of the world. The Greek word used here means “those not of the earth” (see also 9:13.21).

26.10.24–25—chief priests—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The “chief priests” designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of “chief priests” to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former.

26.10.35–36—my voice—Should we here conclude that Paul was a voting member of the Great Sanhedrin at the time this intense per-
sectors was transpiring? There are many on either side of the argument. Frankly we do not know for certain (but see 8.1).

26.11 Paul was a learned man, wise in the ways of men. He no doubt had mastered the rhetorical conventions of the Greeks and the Roman as well as the logic and wisdom of the elders of Judaism. His ability to verbally force a disciple of Christ into a dilemma of faith was undoubtedly a legend among those who opposed Christianity.

26.11.3—punished—The Greek word which is here translated as “punished” derives from roots which mean “protect one’s honor, avenge, inflict a penalty”.

26.11.8—synagogue—The word in Greek derives from a conjoining of two words which literally mean “I bring together.” Most biblical scholars have concluded that the synagogue system began in Babylon as a direct result of the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile of the Jews from the land of Israel. Even with the return to Palestine and the rebuilding of the Temple at Jerusalem, the synagogue remained at the center of daily worship.

26.11.10—compelled—The Greek word which is here translated as “compelled” derives from roots which mean “necessitate, compulsorily, distress”.

26.11.13—blaspheme—The Greek word which is here translated as “blaspheme” derives from roots which mean to “vilify, defame, revile, speak evil, speak impiously”. The English word derives from precisely the same roots through Latin. In seventeenth-century England, the word was applied to anyone who dissented from the official, prevailing religious doctrine of the day. Thus, at one moment Catholicism might be blasphemous and at the next Anglicanism, depending upon who was the reigning monarch. There was little regard for the intrinsic truths of either position. Certainly that understanding of “blasphemy” applies to the disciples of Christ. The Christians taught from a position of truth and light with which the Jews did not accept and therefore condemned. In this particular case, the disciples were probably manipulated into a position where they would confess Jesus as the Christ or would be compelled to deny their own faith in the Son of God. The latter would be, of course, the worst kind of blasphemy.

26.11.17—mad—The Greek word which is here translated as “mad” derives from roots which mean “rave on, rage against”.

26.11.25—strange—The Greek word which is here translated as “strange” derives from roots which mean “outside, out of doors, external”. In other words, Paul’ persecution of the saints extended beyond the city limits of Jerusalem.

26.12 We are not told what other communities felt the full weight and measure of Paul’s authority. Damascus is always mentioned inasmuch as it is on the road to that city that his life’s orientation changes. His experience on the road to Damascus is related in the third-person by Luke (see 9.3–9) and by Paul in Jerusalem (see 22.5–10).

26.12.6—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

26.12.8—authority—The Greek word which is here translated as “authority” derives from roots which mean “ability, privilege, force, capacity, power”.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Acts 26:11
DNDC 2 89
MM 1 200

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

Acts 26:12–18
JC 713
Acts 26:12–19
DNDC 2 444
MD 823
competency, freedom, mastery, potentate, token of control, influence”.

26.12.10—commision—The Greek word which is here translated as “commission” derives from roots which mean “permission, full power, transfer, allow, license”.

26.12.13–14—chief priests—Within the Levitical priesthood, the direct descendants of Aaron presided as the priests. From within that singular group one was selected to preside over all of those who bore the authority of God. This man would be designated the High Priest. The “chief priests” designation was more of a political label rather than an ecclesiastical one. While it is true that under Roman rule it was possible to have several living men who had served as High Priest, we ought not to limit the number of “chief priests” to them. There was far greater number of the latter than of the former.

26.13 Paul testifies both here and in his defense before the rabble at the Temple in Jerusalem that he and those who were with him were enveloped in the light from heaven (see 22.6–9). The best translation that we have of Luke’s narrative conforms to these two latter accounts (see 9.7). In his witness to the chief priests and elders at the Temple, Paul recounts that he had traveled towards Damascus until about midday when the Lord Jesus appeared to him (see 22.6). The glory of the Savior was, therefore, as has been attested to by many prophets, seers, and revelators, above the brightness of the noonday sun.

26.13.21–22—round about—Like unto a pillar of light which had rested down Paul and his companions.

26.14 One may only guess of course, but it would seem reasonable to assume that Paul was relating his account of his interview with the Lord Jesus Christ in a language which everyone in the hall would have easily understood, probably Greek. This would probably explain why Paul needed to be specific regarding the language in which Jesus spoke to him. In his defense on the Temple stairs in Jerusalem, Paul was relating his story in the Hebrew language and it would have been redundant to add that detail (see 22.1–2). Luke’s narrative account does not specify the language used, perhaps because it was not germane to the story at that particular time.

26.14.6—fallen—All of the men in the company collapsed at the sight of the pillar of light, the power of God was so strongly upon them. Being prostrate is both an attitude of reverence and fear, in this case a reference to the latter.

26.14.23—Saul—Saul of Tarsus who, after his conversion to Christianity, would become Paul the Apostle.

26.14.37—pricks—Luke includes this image in his narrative (see 9.5). For whatever reason, Paul does not make reference to it in his defense to the mob at the Temple.

26.15 We probably ought not to get too exercised by the fact that in Luke’s third-person narrative, the Lord uses the good image after Paul asks the question as to whom he was dealing and in the current account Paul says that it came before. In his defense before the chief priests on the stairs of the Temple, Paul recounts that the Savior said that his name was “Jesus of Nazareth” rather than just simply “Jesus” as we have it in the other two accounts. With a little thought, we can no doubt conjure up a reason as to why Paul was that specific on that particular day and why such specificity was unnecessary on the other occasions.

26.15.13—Jesus—As was the case with John the Baptist, the name of the

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.
Savior was provided by revelation. “Jesus” is the Hellenized version of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua”, “Oshea” or “Joshua”. The name itself means “Savior”, literally, “Jehovah put [us] into a place of safety”.

26.16 The Savior had abruptly interrupted Paul’s commission to persecute and destroy the saints of God that he might labor for a different master. He was given a charge that he should testify of that which he had seen on the road to Damascus; that is to say, the fact that Jesus of Nazareth had risen from the dead, but that he was also in fact the Messiah, the Son of the living God. Paul’s views of heaven would not be a one time instance; he was to be the recipient of countless revelations, some of which would be preserved in his epistles to the various congregations for which he would have charge. Paul was a prophet, one who had a living witness of the Savior of the world. He was a seer, one who had gazed upon time and eternity as do the Father and the Son. He was a revelator, for he had received a commission from Christ to testify of the truth and light of eternal salvation to the inhabitants of the earth.

26.16.21—minister—The Greek word which is here translated as “minister” derives from roots which mean “underoarsman, subordinate, assistant, servant, sexton, constable, one who is under the guidance and authority of another”. The primary meaning of the English word “minister” signifies essentially the same sentiment, deriving from roots which also produce words like “minor”. Paul had been a “minister” of the high priest and the elders in Jerusalem; from henceforth he would be a “minister” of Jesus Christ.

26.16.24—witness—The Greek word which is here translated as “witness” derives from roots which mean “judicial witness, one who gives legal testimony, martyr”. The English word “witness” derives from Germanic roots which mean “one who has knowledge”.

26.17 Paul stood as a prisoner bound over to the mercy of Caesar, condemned of the Jews for apostasy and sedition, and yet filled with the confidence that only a man assured by God Himself could exhibit. No power of influence could be effectively directed at Paul until the Lord God of Israel permitted it. He would be delivered out of the hand of the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, and any other political or religious power until his ministry and witness were directed elsewhere.

26.17.5—people—A reference to the leadership of the Jews, those who would persecute him for the rest of his life.

26.17.9—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

26.17.11—whom—Although Paul’s most effective work was done among the Gentiles, he was sent first to the remnants of House of Israel.

26.18 As the prophets of God had long since pointed out, the House of Israel had willingly shut their eyes, stopped their ears, and hardened their hearts against the spirit of God. Jesus testified that for this reason there were many among the Jews who would never understand his teachings. Hence, one of the primary reasons for his teaching in parables (see MT-C 13.10–17).

26.18.4—eyes—The eyes of both the Jews and the Gentiles would be

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

Acts 26:16
CR93-A 25

17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

Acts 26:18
JC 47
MD 445

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opened, whether awakened from stubbornness or ignorance.

26.18.7—*turn*—The natural man prefers darkness over light, cloaking as it does the perversions and corruptions of one’s mind and heart. Repentance constitutes a recognition all of one’s deficiencies in the full light of day, eschewing ignorance and depravity in favor of truth and knowledge. Paul, of course, literally turned from visual darkness to light when he sought to be blessed by Ananias in Damascus.

26.18.16—*power*—The power of Satan is in sin. If no man upon the earth committed sin, Satan would have no power whatsoever among the children of God.

26.18.25—*forgiveness*—Forgiveness comes with the observance of the word of God coupled with the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through faith in Christ, repentance from all wrongdoing, and adherence to the saving ordinances of the Gospel of Christ, men may become cleansed from the effects of rebellion and ignorance.

26.18.29—*inheritance*—Through the effective preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the authority of the holy priesthood after the order of the Son of God, men may become heirs of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, receiving all that the Father has in time and in all eternity.

26.18.40—*me*—Faith unto salvation, of course, must be in the Lord Jesus Christ, he who is addressing Paul in this verse.

26.19 Paul’s transformation from persecutor to proselyte was instantaneous. He would no more receive instructions from those who had employed him as their willing tool to ferret out the disciples of Christ. From the hour of his first vision, Paul pressed forward in faith, anxious to observe all that the Father and the Son would have him do. That singleness of desire, to live by every word that proceeded forth from the mouth of God, had preserved him in every difficulty and would be the means by which he would be delivered from every affliction until he had completed his course among the children of men upon the earth.

26.19.4—*Agrippa*—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Galilee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

26.20 Paul’s initial ministry among the inhabitants of Damascus was met with some dismay. The Christians in that city would have been somewhat skeptical at first when the persecutor Paul showed up at their assemblies. Only the testimony of Ananias convinced the saints that the almost impossible had taken place in the heart and mind of their erstwhile antagonist. The Jews in Damascus were confounded, as Luke says (see 9.22), no doubt by several issues. First, Paul’s conversion to Christianity would have made no sense to the leadership of the Jews, inasmuch as he had been such a rabid opponent of the Church of Christ. Second, Paul’s knowledge and powers of rhetoric were brought to bear in such a fashion as to leave the orthodox Jews speechless and infuriated. Ultimately, the Jews felt compelled to murder him since he could be silenced in no other way (see 9.23). When he escaped to Jerusalem, his reception by the members of the Church and his former colleagues essentially equaled that of the saints and sinners of Damascus. Paul

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.
spoke with such clarity and conviction that no matter where he went in his missionary labors he stirred up the hearts and minds of men to either glorious or contemptible conduct.

26.20.7—Damascus—The capital of Syria and one of the oldest cities in the history of the world. It is located approximately 130 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Certain fruit trees and finely woven cloths bear the name of this city, or a form thereof, because of the longstanding tradition that these things originated in Syria.

26.20.10—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

26.20.15–17—coasts of Judea—Paul certainly went to Caesarea (see 9.30), but of his ministry among “all” of the territories pertaining to Judea we have but little indicated by the scriptural record.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: Acts 26.22

EM 2747

26.21 Paul had been commissioned by the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the hands of his anointed servants, to carry his ministry and witness into Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia. Throughout his missionary journeys he met with great success among both the Jews and the Gentiles. But many, especially those among the Jews, succumbed to jealousy and rage, driving him from their synagogues and communities, attempting to deprive him of his freedom and then his life. It was the overt antagonism of the Jews from Asia Minor who had set the chief priests and elders on Paul while he worshipped with his fellows in the Temple at Jerusalem.

26.21.5—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

26.22 Paul had been promised by the Savior that he would be delivered from the machinations of both the Jews and the Gentiles. He looked upon his rescue from the confines of the Temple by the tribune Claudius Lysias as a blessing from God, that Claudius had been moved upon by the spirit of the Lord to take him into protective custody. He considered the same to be true when his nephew had been given the opportunity to speak with the chief captain privately that Paul might be transported to Caesarea without undue injury. Others might look upon Felix’s protection of Paul against the cruelty of the high priest and his party as mere political manipulation, but Paul perceived all that had transpired was according to the mind and will of God that His purposes might be accomplished. Undoubtedly, Paul looked upon his interview with Agrippa as part of the will of God manifested to all those with eyes to see.

26.22.12—witnessing—Paul had been kept in protective custody by the Roman governors for more than two years and yet nothing was lost as far as his ministry was concerned. His friends and associates had freedom to visit with him, as did those who were interested in the teachings of the Gospel of Christ. He had been in no way idle.

26.22.17—great—Including Felix, Festus, Agrippa, and their respective households. All of this was through the providence of God the Father
and His Son, Jesus Christ.

26.22.26—prophets—Simply put, a prophet is a faithful servant of God who bears within him a testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and is commissioned to give testimony to the fact of his Sonship to those for whom he or she has responsibility.

26.22.28—Moses—We have no idea how Amram and Jochebed referred to their son by name. This given by the princess, however, essentially is a reference to his deliverance from the Nile. In its elemental form, the name of the prophet means “is born”. The cognate in Hebrew means “drew him out”.

26.23 From the time that Jesus first appeared to him on the road to Damascus, Paul’s message had been the same. Jesus was the promised Messiah, the literal fulfillment of all that the prophets had testified of since the days of Adam and Eve.

26.23.2—Christ—Simply put, the name “Christ” is the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah”. In both Hebrew and Greek, the terms mean “anointed one”. Every prophet of God from the days of Adam has been anointed in preparation for their ministry to the world. Every king who has ruled by divine right has also been anointed as part of his ascendancy to the throne and the scepter. The same may be said of every priest who has administered the ordinances of the Priesthood, particularly those of the Melchizedek Priesthood, and most specifically in the House of the Lord. Some scholars have suggested that even though certain men have been anointed to be prophets and priests, or kings and priests, or prophets and kings, none but Jesus has been anointed prophet, priest, and king. Of course, these scholars have asserted such out of ignorance, not understanding that all those who are heirs of salvation and exaltation have been anointed prophets, priests, and kings in similitude of their Savior. Jesus is Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Great High Priest who presides over all priesthood, the prophet who has inspired all prophets in whatever time or place in which they might have lived. He is our Master in all things, but his labors have been designed to bring us all back into the presence of God as he is.

26.23.4—suffer—Not just a physical death at the hands of wicked men, but that he would take upon himself the sins of all mankind, suffering the consequences of personal sin that the faithful might be redeemed from the hell of their own making.

26.23.11—first—That is to say, the first who should be raised to immortality, never to return to the tomb. Many men, women, and children had been raised from the dead back into a state of mortality prior to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Many, like Enoch, Moses, and Elijah had been spared the separation of their spirits from their bodies through translation, but they will, if they have not as yet, pass through their equivalent “death” before they can obtain immortality.

26.23.24—people—Jesus did so while he lived in the mortal body as he preached the principles of eternal life and salvation. He did so in the spirit during the three days his body lay in the tomb. He did so after his resurrection from the grave. There lies before us a time when every eye will perceive that light, every knee will bow to that wisdom and authority, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the King of all of the earth and they who dwell therein, whether Jew or Gentile.

26.23.28—Gentiles—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles”...
means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

26.24 The whole purpose of the meeting was so that Herod Agrippa might have an opportunity to hear for himself the teachings of one who had been condemned by his own people. Therefore, Paul adapted his teachings specifically so that the king might fully understand, in terms that would have been familiar to him. Festus was not the object of the session. Had the procurator asked for further light and knowledge on these matters, Paul would have no doubt spoken to him in a manner that he would have easily comprehended the doctrine. He had done so for Felix, much to the former governor’s consternation (see 24.24–25). Inasmuch as Paul was speaking as a Jew to a Jew, the rhetorical devices, the flow of Paul’s arguments, and the evidences produced seemed hardly more than gibberish to the Roman. As other commentators have observed, there is nothing in Paul’s discourse to Agrippa that could be interpreted as worldly “learning”. Festus is at a loss as to what to say and thus ends up babbling nonsense himself.

26.24.8—Festus—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

26.24.14—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

26.25 Paul knows the mind and heart of those who sat before him in the hall. He knew those things which would most effectively move Agrippa to perceive the truth about the ill-founded accusations against the disciples of Christ. We may assume that the teachings did not fall upon deaf ears. It would be interesting to discover what means the king brought to bear when he was latter pressured to destroy the saints who dwelt in his lands. Paul knows the intellectual turmoil through which Festus is passing, a man learned in the wisdom of his people, but unprepared (for want of experience) to comprehend the teachings of Christ in the same venue with the king.

26.25.8–10—most noble Festus—An expression of great tenderness and deference indicative of Paul’s general patience and kindness towards those who might otherwise have been his enemies. Paul is not easily offended or angered, contrary to the thinking of those who do not know him.

26.26 Paul tenderly reminded Festus of the purpose for which he had been brought to stand before the governor and the king. Was it not so that Agrippa might more fully understand the issues that had been troubling the chief priests and the elders of the Jews, that he might be enabled to give Festus something to say to Nero before remanding Paul to the emperor? Therefore, Paul had done his best, howbeit somewhat idiosyncratically, to serve that purpose in his discourse. Paul knew of Herod’s upbringings, the teachings that he had received as a child from his parents. Agrippa had been a child when Jesus’ mortal ministry transpired, no more than six years old when Jesus was crucified. Notwithstanding his youth, Agrippa would have been familiar with the claims and counterclaims of all of the parties locked in mortal combat in and around Jerusalem. Having been given charge of the

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.
annual selection of the high priest in Jerusalem in AD 48, Herod Agrippa
could not have been ignorant of the issues surrounding the Christian move-
ment at the time. His own father had been responsible for taking the life of
James, the brother of John the Beloved, and the one who attempted to do
the same to Simon Peter (see 12.1–3).

26.27 Having kindly addressed Festus’ distress at being left behind intel-
lectually during his presentation, Paul turns to Herod Agrippa once again,
asking him a rhetorical question in reference to the king’s own faith in Juda-
ism. Paul knew that Agrippa believed in the prophets of God because, for the
most part, he conducted his life in accordance with their teachings. One may
point to his relationship with Bernice with some cynical scorn, but Paul
knew that notwithstanding his digressions from the Law, the king was still a
believer.

26.27.2—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the
man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He
was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaugh-
tered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child.
Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal
ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the
regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Gali-
lee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in
Jerusalem.

26.27.6—prophets—The writings of the servants of God in the Old
Testament which begin with Isaiah and end with Malachi.

26.28 Some have interpreted Herod’s reply to Paul’s question as being
clothed in an intellectual smirk. Others have proposed that the king is stating
that it would be impossible for Paul to press his case in so short a time. Still
others propose that Agrippa is saying that if left to his own devices, Paul will
convince himself that he had converted the king. All of these arguments
dismiss out of hand the one glorious truth about Paul’s abilities; he was
irresistible in his personality, in his flawless logic, in his intellectual agility,
and in his spiritual attunement to the power of God. Was Herod convinced?
Without question.

26.28.2—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the
man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He
was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaugh-
tered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child.
Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal
ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the
regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Gali-
lee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in
Jerusalem.

26.28.5—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as
he began his missionary labors.

26.28.13—Christian—One might ask the question as to which language
was being used when that title was placed upon the disciples of Christ.
Was “Christian” first uttered in Greek, or some dialect thereof? Was it
first uttered in Syriac and then later translated into Greek? In any
event, the English word “Christian” was certainly not used, that lan-
guage yet lacking several centuries of development at that time. Had
there been other peoples in other dispensations, who worshipped the
“Anointed One” in their own languages? Of course there were. Could
they have been called by a name which might easily be translated from

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a
Christian.

Acts 26:28
MD 132
EM 1 270
CR90-A 18
their language into English as “Christian”? We know that to be the case. During the meridian of time, however, it was at Antioch that those both within and without the Church referred to the disciples of Christ by that sobriquet.

26.29 Is this not the hope and expectation of all those who have received the grace of the Father and the Son into their lives? Paul knew where he stood before God, that he had pleased Him in every way. He also knew that notwithstanding the apparent circumstances in which he found himself, he would yet have many opportunities to be of service to his fellow men. Paul’s declaration that he wished everyone in the room were as he was is an expression of great love and compassion toward those who were bound down by ignorance and sin. He would have them set free as he had been, and that eternally.

26.29.2—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

26.29.31—bonds—Most commentators have suggested that Paul was wearing chains while teaching the governor and the king. It may have been, however, a reference to the building in which the hearing was being held, Herod’s hall in Caesarea where Paul was probably being kept under house arrest. He was, after all, a citizen of Rome.

26.30 We cannot know at this point precisely what the feelings were in the hearts of those who were in attendance. That they had been deeply moved by Paul’s oration there can be no doubt. Perhaps they were as Felix after he and his household had clearly understood everything that Paul had taught them regarding the coming of the Messiah and the fulfillment of that hope of Israel in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Felix had trembled and had put him off for a time, but still had communed with him occasionally (see 24.24–26) during the two years that Paul was under house arrest. One wonders if the teachings of Paul had any effect whatsoever on the relationship between Agrippa and his sister.

26.30.15—Berenice—A variant of “Berenice”. A daughter of Agrippa I and therefore the sister of both Agrippa II and Drusilla, the wife of Felix. She was an extraordinary woman by all accounts, notwithstanding her relationships with her uncle, Herod of Chalcis (a territory north of Palestine in Syria). She is rumored to have been the mistress of Titus, he who would one day rule as Caesar after the death of his father Vespasian. Her most notorious relationship, however, appears to have been an incestuous one with her own brother, Agrippa II.

26.31 Paul was returned to his apartments to wait upon his journey to Rome. Those who had been in the audience were left to their own devices, to respond to his humble and tender testimony of the truth according to the spirit which dwelt in them. All of them, it seems, were convinced of Paul’s innocence with regard to the accusations that had been brought against him by the leadership of the Jews. He had not offended the Law of Moses, nor desecrated the Temple, nor did he pose a threat to the governance of the Roman Empire.

26.31.3—they—We are left to determine whether “they” refers to the whole company who had been in attendance at the hearing, or whether Luke is referring to Agrippa, Festus, and Bernice. It seems likely that the evangelist is marking the whole congregation.

26.32 Festus had ostensibly called Paul to the audience with Agrippa in

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set free, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.
order that the king might provide the governor with something to say to Nero when Paul was sent to the emperor for judgment. Agrippa concluded that it was a shame that the situation had developed into Paul’s appeal to Caesar. The governor was going to be hard pressed to provide a justification for the legal proceedings being transferred to the capital. There are those of the learned who have suggested that Agrippa may have been instrumental in seeing to it that Paul was liberated after his first appearance before Nero. Although there is no empirical evidence to support the conjecture, it should not surprise us to discover that Paul’s exposition before Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice was far more effectual than any have supposed.

26.32.3—Agrippa—This is Herod Agrippa II the son of Agrippa I, the man who took the life of James, the brother of John the Beloved. He was also the great-grandson of Herod the Great, the man who slaughtered the innocents of Judea in his attempt to destroy Jesus as a child. Antipas, the tetrarch who ruled Galilee during the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, was his great-uncle. He ruled the regions north of Galilee, together with several cities in Perea and Galilee. At one point he was given authority to appoint the High Priest in Jerusalem.

26.32.5—Festus—The governor of Judea between Antonius Felix and Lucceius Albinus. Although scholars are not altogether certain, they place his administration between the years AD 58 to 62. Festus dies in office, the only procurator to do so, if our histories are accurate.

27.1 Paul had spent more than two years under house arrest in Caesarea by the time he had his interview with Herod Agrippa as recorded in the previous chapter. We do not know exactly how long a period of time passed before Festus arranged for Paul’s journey to Rome. Inasmuch as the governor would die in office within two or three years it is probably safe to assume that Paul’s Journey to Rome was expedited shortly after Agrippa gave his verdict as to what ought to have been done in the Apostle’s case.

27.1.7—we—Another first person pronoun marker whereby Luke reminds the reader that he had personal knowledge of the events being described.

27.1.11—Italy—The nation that constitutes the heartland of the Roman empire.

27.1.14—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

27.1.22—Julius—We know little or nothing regarding this Roman officer except that he gave Paul extraordinary deference beyond that usually reserved for a citizen of Rome.

27.1.26—Augustus—Again, this is more of a reference to the emperor of Rome as a title, rather than to the Caesar of the same name. Ancient historians mention cohorts by this familiar name.

27.1.27—band—A cohort of a Roman legion, being the tenth part of the whole. Julius would have been one of the six centurions serving in that band.

27.2 The first leg of Paul’s Journey to Rome began in Caesarea and ended in Myra, a city on the southern coast of Asia Minor. The home port of the ship which carried Paul to Myra was located several hundred miles north of Cnidus, a promontory on the southwest corner of Asia Minor.

27.2.7—Adramyttium—During Paul’s Third Missionary Journey, he

Chapter 27

1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus’ band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.
chose to walk across a small peninsula called the Troad, walking from the city of Troas to the port of Assos (see 20.13–14). Almost due east of Assos, at the point of the large bay formed by the northwest corner of Asia Minor, lay the city and region of Adramyttium.

27.2.17—Asia—Meaning, of course, Asia Minor. The track of their voyage would have taken them north along the coast of Syria and from there west along the southern coasts of Cilicia, Pamphylia, and Lycia.

27.2.19—Aristarchus—One of Paul’s many traveling companions, and one frequently mentioned in Luke’s narrative and in the letters of Paul.

27.2.21—Macedonian—An inhabitant of a Greek province of the Roman Empire, once the center of the kingdom established by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It is bounded on the northeast by the province of Thrace and on the south by the province of Achaia. The Adriatic and Aegean Seas lay respectively on the west and east sides of Macedonia.

27.2.23—Thessalonica—Originally named Therma, the village was rebuilt and expanded by Cassander who subsequently named the city after his wife, Thessalonica, the sister of Alexander the Great. Historians assert that Thessalonica had a population in excess of 200,000 persons when Paul and Silas visited for the first time.

27.3 When Paul had finally touched shore in Syria near the end of his Third Missionary Journey, it was at Tyre where he was warmly received (see 21.1–7). Here he is allowed to go ashore at Sidon some twenty miles north of Tyre. Those friends who received him there and provided him with refreshment could have been from Tyre, but no doubt Paul had many friends throughout the province including members of the Church of Christ who dwelt in Sidon. We are not told the degree to which Paul was allowed to freely roam about the city. Some scholars have suggested that he went about his business with a soldier chained to him. Perhaps we ought to consider the great impression that Paul had made on both Herod and Festus during his stay in Caesarea. Paul had long since proven his trustworthiness and the only fear that any Roman official really had concerning him was that he would be murdered while in their charge. If Paul had been accompanied by a guard, it undoubtedly was there merely as a precaution to guarantee Paul’s safety, not as a deterrent against his escape from custody.

27.3.8—Sidon—Another Phoenician city located approximately 20 miles to the north of Tyre. More often spelled “Zidon”. At one time, Sidon served as the capital of Phoenicia and as such was the target of many invasions and conquests in ancient times.

27.3.10—Julius—We know little or nothing regarding this Roman officer except that he gave Paul extraordinary deference beyond that usually reserved for a citizen of Rome.

27.3.13—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

27.4 These nautical clues have given rise to speculations as to the probable time of year during which Paul was traveling, most concluding that it was during the summer when the prevailing winds are from the west. Of this, of course, we cannot be absolutely certain.

27.4.10—under—The most direct route for the ship to have taken was to sail south of Cyprus across the expanse of the Sea to a welcoming port in Lysia. The winds that time of year, however, required the master of the ship to first sail northward, seeking the shelter of the mountains of Cyprus. Because the winds were contrary. 4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

4 And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.
27.4.11—Cyprus—An island near the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea from whence Barnabas hailed and the site of several noteworthy missionary exploits by the early Christian missionaries.

27.5 The voyage on the ship from Adramyttium ended here and the centurion booked passage on a ship that was scheduled to sail directly to Italy. Other ancient manuscripts state that this portion of the voyage took a fortnight, that is to say, about fifteen days.

27.5.8—sea—A portion of the Mediterranean Sea which bordered on the coasts of those two provinces.

27.5.10—Cilicia—The province north and slightly west of the province of Syria. The principal city of Cilicia was Tarsus, the birthplace of the Apostle Paul.

27.5.12—Pamphylia—In the region of Pamphylia, located due south of Pisidia, is located the great port cities of Perga and Attalia. Also see 2.10.3.

27.5.16—Myra—Variously referred to in ancient documents as Murrha, Smyra, and Smyrna. It is likely that the true spelling is Limyra, in reference to the principal river and city of Lycia in southern Asia Minor. The city itself was built on a high hill above the coast, but the mouth of the river served as a major harbor in that region.

27.6 Julius had been given the charge to transport Paul to Rome and present him to Nero there that the case against the Apostle might be resolved in some fashion. Had the weather cooperated, Paul and his companions might have been able to sail a more direct route. The centurion could have continued to Cnidus on the boat bound for Adramyttium, but he would then have had to find passage on another ship at that point anyway. Some scholars have suggested that Julius jumped at the opportunity to sail the entire distance to Italy rather than to travel by land across Macedonia and then up the length of Italy to Rome.

27.6.4—centurion—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman army, the sixtieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would be a comparable rank today: some suggest sergeant; others propose captain.

27.6.9—Alexandria—A major city established on the western edge of the Nile delta in Egypt. Some scholars have speculated that the grain thrown into the sea in verse 38 was wheat grown in that city on its way to heart of the empire.

27.6.12—Italy—The nation that constitutes the heartland of the Roman empire.

27.7 Paul’s Journey to Rome was fraught with extremities of every kind, the weather being one of the adversities which he was caused to bear.

27.7.7—many days—The distance from Myra to Cnidus is about 170 miles. The sailing was difficult with westerly winds, except for the short time they would have been sheltered by the island of Rhodes. Some learned men have speculated that the voyage would have taken as much as two weeks, given the conditions.

27.7.15—Cnidas—A port city located on a promontory on the southwest corner of Asia Minor. Given the wording of the text, it seems unlikely that the ship was actually able to drop anchor in the harbor because of the winds.

27.7.23—under—Having to turn south because of the heavy winds from

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;
the west, the ship sought respite from the weather sailing east and south of Crete.

27.7.24—Crete—A large island, 160 mile long running east to west across the mouth of the Aegean Sea.

27.7.27—Salmone—A cape on the eastern extremity of the island of Crete. It is visible from a great distance.

27.8 One wonders at the Luke’s mention of the city of Lasea which was located some distance from Fair Havens which, if historians have it correct, had a harbor of its own. We might speculate that accommodations at Lasea were better appointed than any at the larger harbor and, perhaps, the passengers stayed there while the voyage to Rome was debated.

27.8.2—hardly—The course around the cape, because of the contrary winds, was made with great difficulty.

27.8.13–14—fair havens—A harbor located on the southernmost point of the island of Crete. It lies midway between Cape Salmone and the western tip of Chania. Kaloi Limenes, the modern Greek name for the port, is a beautiful tourist attraction noted for its beaches.

27.8.21—Lasea—Most scholars place this city about five miles to the east of The Fair Havens, identifying it with Alassa or Lysia located near the port of Gortyna.

27.9 Those familiar with the seasons in the Mediterranean Sea and the sailing conventions of the ancient Romans assure us that Paul’s concern about the welfare of the ship on the open sea was justified. According to our best sources, the Romans felt that sailing after the 15th of September was of dubious worth and that to do so after the 11th of November would be suicidal.

27.9.15—fast—Most scholars have concluded that Luke is referring here to the Day of Atonement, that which answers to Yom Kippor in the Jewish calendar. This was the only fast day prescribed by the Law of Moses. Although the dates vary each year, the Day of Atonement was calculated in terms of the Autumnal Equinox, placing it during the mid to late fall.

27.9.20—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

27.10 Luke’s account of Paul’s travels makes it clear that Paul was an experienced traveler on the waters of the Mediterranean Sea, particularly on the eastern third of that body of water. He would have been familiar with the most propitious times to sail great distances, inasmuch as he often journeyed with time constraints imposed upon him. Certainly the master of the ship would have listened politely to one of his passengers who was possessed of such knowledge, but he being the professional sailor would have considered his own knowledge regarding the risks to be far greater than Paul’s. Paul’s true concern, however, had not come solely from his personal experience upon the water. His “perception” was based on personal revelation as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ that this particular attempt to sail from Crete to Italy would end in disaster if they persisted.

27.10.7—perceive—The Greek word which is here translated as “perceive” derives from roots which mean “be a spectator, acknowledge; look closely at, visit”. Paul was a witness of those things which were about to transpire; he was, as his calling and ordination had blessed him to be, a seer.

8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them.

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.
27.11 Julius was not being capricious or foolhardy when he took the advice of the sailors over that of Paul. He was no doubt concerned about the distance between the harbor where they were anchored and the place where his accommodations would have to be located, probably in Lasea. This apparently is the reason why they attempted the relatively short trip to the port of Phoenice where the ship and their living arrangements could be consolidated. That they did not attempt to make the harbor at Lasea by sailing five miles to the east indicates the difficulty with which the sailors were having in controlling the ship in those waters.

27.11.3—centurion—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman army, the sixtieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would be a comparable rank today: some suggest sergeant; others propose captain.

27.11.6—master—The Greek word which is here translated as "master" derives from roots which mean "helmsman, captain, pilot"

27.11.9—owner—The Greek word which is here translated as "owner" derives from roots which mean "clerk of a ship, portion, acquisition, patrimony". We cannot tell if the owner and the master were the same person or not, but it seems likely that they were two different individuals.

27.11.21—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

27.12 The decision to move from fair havens to Phoenice appears to have been a majority ruling, probably by those of sufficient means to have made themselves comfortable until the tempestuous weather ended and the voyage to Italy resumed. Contrary to what might be supposed by the translation given here, Phoenice lay almost due west of fair havens. In order to sail there, however, the ship would first have to sail to the southwest away from Crete and then tack back toward the northwest in order to make the harbor. All of this because of the westerly winds which were prevailing at that season.

27.12.6–7—not commodious—The Greek word which is here translated as "not commodious" derives from roots which mean "not well set, inconvenient; not well-placed, inappropriate". Perhaps due to the fact that there was not a nearby town capable of accommodating the nearly three hundred passengers on the ship.

27.12.12–13—more part—Surely the master, the owner, and the regular passengers bound for Italy. Wintering would require them to be housed and fed for several months.

27.12.27—Phoenice—Phoenice or Phoenix lay some fifty miles to the west of Fair Havens. The harbor is located near the modern village of Loutro.

27.12.37—Crete—A large island, 160 mile long running east to west across the mouth of the Aegean Sea.

27.13 The thinking of the men was that since the winds were light, the helmsman could scud along the southern coast of Crete the relatively short distance to Phoenice. The desire for the creature comforts which Phoenice offered was more than enough incentive to put the ship out into what they thought would be but momentary danger. That supposition, however, would not bear out. The south wind was not typical that time of year and could change at any moment.

27.13.4–5—south wind—This would not have been a particularly helpful wind inasmuch as it would have tended to blow the ship toward the rocky coastline.
27.13.15—thence—That is to say, from the fair havens.
27.13.20—Crete—A large island, 160 mile long running east to west across the mouth of the Aegean Sea.

27.14 Much unnecessary fuss has been generated over the name and nature of this great tempestuous wind. It is likely that this meteorological phenomenon was what is called today a “levanter”, a wind of the Mediterranean Sea which perversely shifts directions within seconds. Some scholars have suggested that according to the description given by Luke, the Euroclydon first blew out of the northeast, pushing the ship to the southwest away from Crete, then due east with such ferocity that the craft had to sail before the wind, and then from the southeast causing the ship to founder on the southern shore of Malta.

27.14.8—it—Some scholars conclude that the antecedent here is the ship itself. It is just as likely to refer to the south wind however.
27.13.14—Euroclydon—Etymologically, the Euroclydon derives from “Euro”, referring to the ancient Greek god of the East Wind, and “kludon” meaning “billow, dash over, surge”.

27.15 The helmsman of the ship was attempting to sail along the southern coast of Crete so as to carefully enter the harbor at Phenice. The Euroclydon, however, apparently blowing from the northeast was far too powerful to tack against, so the sailors were forced to turn themselves to the southwest and ride the storm out. There were great dangers associated with allowing a ship to sail before the wind, but far less than attempting to present the broad side of the ship to it.

27.16 The apparent design of this maneuver was to seek shelter from the Euroclydon on the leeward side of the island. This ultimately failed because the winds shifted from the northeast to the east.

27.16.10—Clauda—A small island west of Cape Matala off the southern coast of Crete. It is about seven miles long and three wide, lying 23 miles south of Crete. It is now called Gavdhos.

27.16.19—boat—Probably in reference to the longboat used to transport passengers and cargo to and from shore while the ship was at anchor in a harbor. It may have been pulled by tether behind the ship or it may have been on deck. In either case, the weather was such that the crew had a difficult time saving what would have been the means of their salvation when the ship itself began to break up.

27.17 The extraordinary buffeting that the ship was taking in the storm caused the captain of the ship to use every bit of his knowledge of seafaring techniques in order to save his craft from capsizing.

27.17.5–6—taken up—In reference to the long boat.

27.17.9—helps—The ship, driven roughly by the wind, was in danger of having the planking of the hull separate, which would have caused the ship to be lost immediately. Girding the ship around the keel and tied on deck had a tendency to keep the joints between the planks from opening up.

27.17.21—quicksands—The Greek word which is here translated as “quicksands” is literally “syritis” or “syris” in reference to the sandy shoals that frequently form in shallow waters near the coast. Much speculation has been generated regarding where these feared waters might have been. The wind was of such ferocity that the sailors may have feared being blown into the Syritis Major located off the coast of

14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat:

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strike sail, and so were driven.
Cyrenaica on the coast of northern Africa

27.17.22–21—sail—This had been variously interpreted as having reference to the canvas, and that perhaps the mainmast was removed as well. Others have suggested that perhaps the crew let go a sea anchor whose drag would keep the ship from presenting its broadside to the wind and being overcome by the waves.

27.18 The storm came close to flooding the ship in the midst and apparently the crew thought that by lightening the ship of equipment and cargo the craft would ride higher in the sea. We are not told precisely what was jettisoned over the side, but the main cargo, the wheat from Egypt, appears to have been left intact until it was clear that ship would be lost in any event. Other general cargo and perhaps some of the extra equipment and materials that the ship carried were tossed overboard.

27.19 Apparently all of the passengers were commanded to dispose of everything of the ship that was not essential to their safety.

27.19.13—tackling—The Greek word which is here translated as “tackling” derives from roots which mean “furniture, implements, equipment, apparatus, vessels”. The gear disposed of was probably that which was not necessary to sail or repair the ship, but rather those things which made the crew and passengers more comfortable while on long voyages.

27.20 The despair of those aboard ship was complete. They were unable to determine where they were in the Mediterranean Sea. The winds were high and the raging water relentless. How long would their food hold out? One wonders if the storm had been so daunting that none of the passengers and crew had been able to eat anything at all. Certainly most forms of food preparation aboard ship would have been unwise during the storm. Only Paul would be optimistic.

27.20.10—appeared—With overcast skies for several days, no navigational sightings of celestial objects could be made. Neither the captain nor the crew had any idea where they were. They were adrift at sea, and for all that their maps could tell them, they had no certain way to avoid any dangerous coastlines, atolls, or underwater hazards.

27.21 We must not accept any notion that Paul was chiding his companions for their failure to follow his counsel before they left Crete. It was not in his nature to do so. He simply pointed out the truth of the matter in order to help prepare them for what he was going to say next. He did not gloat; he did not relish their forced humility. He, by revelation, knew what the possibilities were and desired that his friends and associates would hearken to him this time, that their lives might be preserved in righteousness.

27.21.4—abstinence—The Greek word which is here translated as “abstinence” derives from roots which mean “without food, fasting”. However much the other passengers had received nourishment during the storm, Paul had purposefully fasted in order to inquire of the Lord and be sensitive enough spiritually to receive counsel as to what they should do next if their lives were to be spared. Paul knew that he would survive; he wished to know how the others could be preserved as well.

27.21.5—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

27.21.27—Crete—A large island, 160 mile long running east to west

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;

19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

Acts 27:21–25
DHC 5 31
across the mouth of the Aegean Sea.

27.22 The sailors and passengers in the ship were prepared to commit their bodies to the depths of the Mediterranean Sea. Paul, in the midst of their despair and anguish testified to them that they would yet live to see another day if they would listen to what the Lord had in mind for them. The lives of these men had been given into his charge, and Paul would do everything within his power to bring them home again alive. Paul’s promise to them was based on their following his instructions to the letter; they could not deviate or their lives would be forfeit. Hence, when some of the sailors thought to flee the sinking ship in the long boat, Paul warned the centurion that their escape must be prohibited or the lives of the other passengers would be lost (see 27.30–31). The loss of the ship was to be considered a given; it could not be saved.

27.23 When the angel of the Lord told Paul that the lives of the men with him in the ship had been given unto him, we must surely assume that more than their deliverance from death was meant. How many of the sailors, how many of the passengers, including Julius and his other prisoners, would be positively affected by Paul’s ministry among them, a ministry which breathed of hope and love? No doubt there were many who looked upon Paul and the God whom he worshipped in a different light after their voyage together ended on the island of Malta.

27.24 Paul does not hesitate in any way to share that which the angel of the Lord had communicated to him. No doubt the sailors and the other passengers were ready for divine intervention.  

27.24.2–3—fear not—One wonders at Paul’s apparent concern. Paul was an experienced Apostle, having been in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ for many years. He was fearless in every way, yet at this critical moment in his life he was troubled. He had been promised that he would be delivered from the hands of the Jews and the Romans in order that he might bear his testimony in Rome, yet the perils that surrounded him in the ship seemed to be inexplicable. Yet Paul was a man of faith. Though he might not be able to see the end from the beginning, he knew that not one word of God the Father would fail to be realized. He therefore did not fear for his own life, but rather for the lives of his friends and others for whom he had affection among the passengers and crew. For them Paul need not fear.

27.24.4—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

27.24.10—Caesar—Some scholars suggest that Paul was not destined to appear personally before Nero, but rather only before his tribunal. That conclusion is unnecessarily coy.

27.25 For the second time Paul tells his audience that they ought to be of good cheer for they were going to be delivered from the tempest and from an almost certain watery grave. Paul knew by personal revelation that he would not perish before reaching the city of Rome; there were tasks assigned to him that had, as yet, not been accomplished. So though the ship, cargo, and every other soul aboard might lose their lives, Paul would be preserved. For that reason he had no concern with regard to his own safety. The present revelation, however, dealt with the preservation of all two hundred and seventy-six souls. For that reason they should arise from their grief and despair and move forward with faith as he had done.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship. Acts 27:22

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Acts 27:23

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar; and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. Acts 27:23–24

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. Acts 27:25
27.26 The preservation of all those aboard ship, Paul testified, would come because they would make their way ashore on an island. He is not specific as to which one; it was for them at that point of no import. Paul simply told them that their escape from drowning would be realized when that island was reached. Interestingly enough, many of the men would be more frightened at the indications of a nearby island, fearing death upon the rocks rather than deliverance.

27.27 The ship had been at the mercy of the winds and waves of the sea for two weeks, since the time they had set sail from fair havens. The men were in dire need of good cheer and could only obtain it by faith in the words of their divine benefactor. Mental and physical exhaustion left them no other recourse if they were to be motivated to any action at all.

27.27.16—Adria—In modern times the boundaries defining the scope of the Adriatic or Adrian Sea have been considerably reduced. Anciently, Sicily, Malta, and Crete would have been considered islands of that body of water.

27.27.18—midnight—One wonders at what might have given the sailors the notion that land was nearby, at midnight during a storm. Certainly they would determine that they were nearing land once they sounded the sea bed. But it is clear that something in the setting gave them a forewarning as well. Some scholars have suggested that they noticed the agitation of the water that is apparent as one draws closer to shore. The question arises, however, as to how they were to distinguish that subtle change in the waves in the midst of a raging storm. Otherwise, men have pointed to the appearance of sea birds. Again, the storm and the time of day would seem to preclude that being the signal that land was near. Still others have proposed that the sailors smelled the land, the fresh vegetation, and other odors that would have been on the wind. This would have recognized at night only if the wind was blowing in the right direction.

27.28 Whatever had indicated to the crew that land was nearby, they then thought it prudent to verify their suspicions by testing the depth of the sea around them. The rather sharp change in the shallowing waters clearly indicated that they were nearing the coast of some land mass.

27.28.2—sounded—The sailor’s method for measuring the depth of the water beneath their craft. A lead weight tied to a cord knotted every six feet was used to determine the sounding. The line becoming slack in the hands of the linesman would indicate that he need only count the number of knots as he drew the cord in and he would know the numbers of fathoms of water beneath the ship. Twenty fathoms would have meant that the sea bed lay no more than 120 feet below the keel of their ship. Fifteen fathoms indicated that the sea bed had risen thirty feet in a very short time. Often the lead weight would be coated with wax so that when the plumb hit the floor of the sea it would pick up material, the nature of which could reveal much to the experienced sailor.

27.28.7—fathoms—The fathom was measured as the distance between the fingers of outstretched hands, standardized now as six feet.

27.29 We are left to speculate regarding the intensity of the storm once the ship arrived at Malta. The sailors were concerned that the ship might drift into any rocks along the shore, even though as yet they could not see them. Setting the anchors seemed to be the only way to keep the ship from

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

28 And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.
breaking up in the surf. Dropping the anchors astern may have been done for a variety of reasons, but most likely it was to keep the ship parallel with the winds from whatever direction they might be blowing. Given the nature of the Euroclydons, the winds of which were unpredictable, the precaution taken here seem completely appropriate. The ignorance of the crew as to what lay before them in the dark, whether rocks, quicksand, or clear water, unnerved the sailors somewhat.

27.30 A number of the sailors had determined that their lives were going to be in their own hands, for they did not relish the possibility of drowning on the way to the shore. The surf must have been high with no hope of even grounding the ship on the beach. Paul’s perception of the scene was clear to him, whether through long experience with sea travel or the fact that he had been shown all of this in his vision of their deliverance from the shipwreck. In either event, the intent of the sailors was clear. The guise of laying down more anchors was absolutely transparent to anyone who knew why the four anchors on the stern were in place. Additional anchors from the bow would have placed the ship in even greater danger than it was already, inasmuch as intent of the stern anchors was to let the craft swing in the varying winds which had plagued them for two weeks.

27.30.19—boat—The long boat generally used for transporting passengers and cargo to and from shore, the same that had been rescued weeks before when the storm first began (see 27.16). 27.30.23–24—colour—The Greek word which is here translated as “colour” derives from roots which mean “outward showing, pretext”

27.31 Paul had seen in open vision provided by the angel the precise manner in which the lives of all aboard would be saved, and the events portrayed did not involve the abandonment of the ship and its lading by the crew. Paul did not at that time cast any aspersions at the men who were preparing the long boat; he merely indicated that their survival depended on the sailors remaining within the craft for the time being. It is interesting that Julius and his men had become so far persuaded by Paul’s clear gift of prophecy that they did not hesitate in the slightest to deter the sailors from escaping.

27.31.1—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors. 27.31.5—centurion—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman army, the sixtieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would be a comparable rank today: some suggest sergeant; others propose captain.

27.32 One wonders at the loss of the long boat and whether the departure from the ship would have been less chaotic had the sailors not attempted to flee. Any number of miracles might have been employed to bring the passengers and crew to safety, but the use of the boat appears to have not been one of them. The probability of off-loading 276 people by means of the long boat seems dubious in any event. The dispatching of the long boat could not have been accomplished by anyone other than Julius and his men, and only then because they were armed.

27.33 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. (JST; Acts 27:33)
The sailors, and perhaps many of the passengers, had not partaken of a hot meal for nearly two weeks. With the ship at anchor and the weather having moderated somewhat, it may have been possible to cook a breakfast for all concerned without fear of setting fire to the ship.

27.33.4—day—The sailors had discovered that they were approaching a land mass about midnight (see 27.27–28).

27.33.8—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

27.33.14—meat—Food of some kind, not necessarily animal flesh. Paul was probably recommending some sort of hot meal to steel the men against the bitter cold of the sea. He knew that they would eventually have to swim for it.

27.33.25—tarried—The Greek word which is here translated as “tarried” derives from roots which mean “watch, anticipate, hope, expectation, await”. This was not passive expectation; this was ardent hope that they might be able to have something to eat.

27.33.28—fasting—The Greek word which is here translated as “fasting” is similar to the word translated as “abstinence” in 27.21. While Paul’s act was one of purposeful piety, the sailors had been prohibited from eating because of the constant peril to their lives and the ship.

27.34 It seems certain that Paul knew the manner in which they would all reach the shore in safety, and that it would undoubtedly involve being in the cold early morning waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Although there is nothing to direct suggest this was the case, we might suppose that Paul has suggested that along with the bread of which he was about to partake that something perhaps a little warmer was consumed as well, if nothing more than some hot liquid of some kind. In any event, all of the men would need some fortification against the experience that was about to transpire. Again, the Apostle testifies to them that every soul with the ship was going to make it to shore safely, that none of them would lose their life nor would any of them receive serious injury. Given the number of people on board and the hazards rife between the anchored ship and the shore of Malta, this must have seemed a rather Pollyannan remark.

27.35 There is a superior translation for this verse.

And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat. (JST; Acts 27:35)

Scholars have written copiously as to whether Paul was blessing the bread as a Jew or as a Christian. The distinction is as ludicrous as asking whether someone is blessing their meal as a Baptist or as a Methodist. Paul is acknowledging to all on the ship, regardless of their religious beliefs, that their salvation that day would be dependent upon the merciful kindness of the Lord God of Israel. It is a simple assurance of that fact and that at the end of the day, when they are all safe and sound, that it would not be amiss to render thanks again unto that same being for their deliverance.

27.35.12—thanks—Many Jews today bless their food before partaking of it. Many also bless God after having partaken, a practice that is called “Birkat Hamazon”, best translated as “Appreciation”. It is sometimes called “bentsching” a word derived from the Latin verb “benedicere” through Yiddish, “blessing”.

27.35.29—eat—Some ancient texts add, “giving it to us also”. Some

34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

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commentators have suggested that the addition was made in support of the idea that Paul was distributing the elements representing the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, passing the Sacrament we would say, before the men made their attempt to take the ship into shore. This is highly unlikely, however, inasmuch as the number of Christians aboard ship, those who had entered into solemn covenants to observe the Gospel of Jesus Christ, was relatively small. Paul’s admonition to eat had been addressed to the entire company aboard ship.

27.36 The Apostle Paul had counseled his companions to elevate their spirits for he knew that they would be delivered from the jaws of death that very day. The entire company had been so overwrought at the prospect of perishing at sea that they could think and feel of nothing else except the despair that attends the doomed. Paul’s unrelenting optimism had become somewhat infectious and a glimmer of hope began to arise in the hearts of all present.

27.37 This ship from Alexandria was of moderate size. Ancient accounts suggest that some of the Greek warships from the second century before the birth of Jesus Christ had crews of 400, with 4,000 oarsmen, together with nearly 3,000 soldier accommodated with the hull. This, however, may be mythical hyperbole. Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian writing during the first century AD mentions ships that carried approximately 600 men.

27.38 It would appear that the wheat reserved for the citizens of Rome had been reserved for last in hopes that the ship itself and its primary cargo might reach port safely. Placed in extremity, however, the sailors now desired that the ship might be grounded for repairs, thus saving an even greater resource for the Romans than the wheat itself. With the cargo gone, the ship would draw less water and would be able to come much nearer to shore, perhaps even beached on the sand. All of this exercise was in vain, inasmuch as Paul had already borne witness that the ship would be lost in spite of their efforts (see 27.22). To be fair, the sailors, no matter how fervently they might believe Paul’s words, were obligated to do all in their power to save the ship.

27.39 Either the seamen had never been to Malta or they did not recognize that part of the sea coast that they were facing. In any event, they could not be certain of any of the underwater hazards which might destroy the ship before it reached shore. Their goal was to ground the craft in a freshwater defile carved out by a stream, providing a sort of natural dry dock in which they might be able to effect their repairs to the ship. On the northeast side of the island of Malta there is today a harbor known as St. Paul’s Bay, in honor of the Apostle’s shipwreck on the island. There are, of course, numerous inlets all around the island of Malta, any one of which might have served as the site where the passengers and crew of the Alexandrian grain ship came ashore.

27.39.16—creek—The Greek word which is here translated as “creek” derives from roots which mean “bosom, bay”. Paul’s shipwreck may have involved a far greater body of water than what is suggested by the word “creek”. The question is whether Luke intended us to understand that the crew was trying to ground the ship or whether they were merely attempting to reach a safe harbor.

27.40 Dispensing with the anchors, reestablishing the steering capability of the ship, and getting the ship under sail, meant that the sailors had no inten-
tion of merely drifting towards the shore.

27.40.8—anchors—These were the four anchors which had been cast out the stern of the ship at midnight to keep the ship from drifting into shore (see 27.28–29). The water at that point was no more than 90 feet deep. Some commentators suggest that the sailors “slipped” anchors; that is to say, that they cut the cables to the anchors rather than bring them back on board ship, a dangerous and weighty task at the very least.

27.40.18–19—rudder bands—There exists a great deal of opinion as to what actually constituted “rudder bands” anciently. In nineteenth-century shipbuilding, the “rudder bands” were the “hinges” upon which the rudder pivoted. One can easily imagine the necessity for having such pivots for the steering oars. They would function like the oarlocks mounted on the gunwales of a common rowboat. This would be completely consistent with the literal meaning of the Greek word which is here translated as “bands; i.e., “join, yoke, coupling, connection, fastening”. Loosening the “oarlocks”, of course, would affect the same result insofar as the guidance of the ship was concerned.

27.40.21—hoisted—A variant spelling for the verb "to hoist". Early English recognized the verb "to hoise", a form which is seldom used today.

27.40.24—mainsail—Some scholars bristle at the use of the word “main-sail” here, suggesting that the term should be more properly the “jib”, a sail rigged to the bow of the ship. The problem we are faced with is that we do not know the exact rigging of this particular grain ship, whether it was rigged in the Greco-Roman fashion or after the Egyptian fashion. Since the ship was from Alexandria, it is possible that the craft may not have been equipped with a square mainsail. All of this protestation and argument is, of course, merely hot air.

27.41 Once the ship was grounded on the hazard hidden beneath the waves, the “following sea” beat the stern of the ship to pieces. The ship had already been weakened by the two weeks of violence created by the Euroclydon. At this point, there was no hope whatsoever that the ship could be saved

27.42 The soldiers in this instance have been severely criticized for having suggested the murder or execution of their prisoners. We do not know if the prisoners were guilty of capital crimes, but certainly their offenses were grievous, given the fact that they were incurring the expense of the Empire to carry them to Rome. The crux of the matter, however, was that the loss of the prisoners would mean that the soldiers would forfeit their own lives. One is reminded of the fearing keeper of the jail at Philippi who thought to take his life, assuming that his prisoners had escaped in an earthquake (see 16.25–30).

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers’ counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.
27.43 Did Julius the centurion have assurances from anyone that none of the prisoners would attempt escape once they reached the safety of the shore? One wonders at the effect that Paul and Silas had apparently brought about in the hearts of the other prisoners at Philippi. Although all of the prisoners had been liberated, none of them chose to leave Paul in the jail. Had Paul brought about a similar change of heart in the prisoners who were being transported with him to Rome? We may not know for sure, but clearly something had transpired in the mind and heart of the centurion. Julius was a professional soldier whose life would also be in jeopardy if any of those in his charge were to escape. Yet for the life of Paul the Christian Apostle, he was willing to risk all. Had he become converted in part, just as the jailer in Philippi (see 16.30–34)?

27.43.3—centurion—A captain of one hundred men in the Roman army, the sixieth part of a Legion. Opinions differ as to what would be a comparable rank today: some suggest sergeant; others propose captain.

27.43.7—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

27.43.19—swim—Historians tell us that all soldiers in the Roman army were taught to swim, a skill required for fording large rivers. The problem facing the soldiers, however, was that they would have to discard all of their armor and weapons in order to do so. On shore, they would not have any advantage over their prisoners.

27.44 Of the many passengers aboard ship, we know but little. Were there women and children? Were there those of great age? Were there any infirm? These may not have been able to swim for obvious reasons. Not everyone in the ancient Greco-Roman world was afforded the opportunity to learn water safety skills. If modern nautical practices are any indication, many sailors themselves did not know how to swim, and would have drowned immediately. This infacility among sailors was rampant during the 19th century. The long boat, which might have afforded some of the passengers a safer way to shore, had long since been destroyed (see 27.30–32). Those who could not swim had to provide their own flotation devices. Needless to say, the fact that all 276 passengers and crew made it safely to land in spite of the adverse circumstances must be considered a product of divine intervention. No doubt all who participated in the episode regarded their safe arrival on shore in precisely those terms.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

Chapter 28

1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

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Malta is further complicated by the nomenclature for the archipelago. Along with Malta and Gozo, the two largest islands in the group, there are several smaller islands including Comino, Cominotto, Filfla, Manoel, Fungus Rock, and St. Paul’s Island, the latter being an assertion for preference. The primary argument between Mljet in the Adriatic and Malta seems to be a sectarian one, Greek Orthodoxy on the one hand and Roman Catholicism on the other.

28.2 Once the inhabitants of the island became aware of the ship wreck they did all within their power to comfort the survivors. One wonders at the number of citizens that were available to care for 276 people. Uninhabited or sparsely inhabited islands certainly would be hardpressed to provide such extraordinary service.

28.2.3—barbarous—The Greek word which is here translated as “barbarous” is of uncertain derivation but refers to “foreigners”; that is to say, non-Greeks. Some linguists trace the word through Indo-European, making the association with the Sanskrit word “barbara”, meaning “stammering, non-Aryan”. Other linguists have pointed to the Semitic patronymics used by the linguistically diverse Phoenicians as the source for the word (“bar”, meaning “son of”). Simply put, the word originally meant an unintelligible people, speaking a radically different language. The question which remains regards the unfamiliar language which neither Paul nor the ship’s company knew. If the shipwreck took place at Malta, which is likely, the dialect may have been an ancient version of Phoenician heavily influenced by Greek and Latin.

28.3 Apparently the rain and the cold had rendered the cold-blooded reptile somewhat lethargic. When placed near the flames the serpent became much more agile. The bonfire may have been prebundled by the natives of the island against this need, the snake having entered into the stack afterwards. Neither Paul nor the islanders were aware that the viper had secreted itself there. Therefore, as Paul began to place the sticks he had personally gathered on the pyre, the snake having revived once the stack was ignited struck at the closest flesh: Paul’s hand.

28.3.3—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

28.3.19—viper—The Greek word which is here translated as “viper” refers to an adder or any other poisonous snake. The inhabitants of Malta immediately recognized the serpent for what it was.

28.4 Because Paul had been attacked so soon after having escaped death by drowning, the inhabitants of the island thought that there must have been something amiss is his personal life for him to have been struck down by the snake. They clearly had a notion of retributive justice. That they couched their observations in the religious icons of their day should not surprise the reader in any fashion. The Semitic peoples also had this same notion of retribution, that no evil deed goes unpunished. If a man avoided a death by stoning, he might be crushed by a fall from a height. If he should have been burned to death, he would subsequently fall into a fire or be poisoned by a serpent. And the list continues. The conclusion drawn by the islanders that since Paul had an evil befall him that he himself was evil is the subject of the book of Job in the Old Testament. The assumption made by Job’s friends is the same: that bad things do not happen to good people, therefore Job and Paul must have some hidden sin that must be paid for.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.
28.4.32—vengeance—The Greek word which is here translated as “vengeance” derives from roots which produce the name for the Greek
goddess “Dike”, she who was the personification of divine justice.
28.5 One of the promises given to the faithful in Christ was that if they were
to be attacked by a venomous serpent they would receive no hurt (see MK-C
16.18). As astonishing as it may seem, countless writers have argued the case,
speculating whether or not the serpent actually injected venom into Paul’s
body. These polemics have no relevance whatsoever except as the subject of
idle curiosity. No doubt there have been those who have anguished over the
fate of the viper as well.

5 And he shook off the beast into
the fire, and felt no harm.

28.6 The conviction in their hearts that Paul was an exceptionally evil man
undoubtedly constrained the islanders from coming to Paul’s aid in some
fashion. They suspected him of being a murderer and in their opinion must
have been a character of a volatile personality. No one dared approach him.
They merely waited for “Dike” to reap a harvest of justice by assenting to his
death. But to their consternation, Paul’s hand did not inflame, nor did any
of the other symptoms that should have been manifested appear. As time
passed, their astonishment must have grown until they could draw no other
conclusion that he was exempt from injury because he was himself a divine
being. This was not an unusual line of thinking. Recall that when Paul and
Barnabas first arrived in Lystra, that they were instrumental in healing a man
who had been crippled from his mother’s womb. After the man had been
made whole, the Lystrans prepared to worship them as Jupiter and Mercury,
whom they assumed had come to earth to visit the city (see 14.8–18). The
two missionaries were hardpressed to dissuade the inhabitants of the city
from doing them honor. A similar situation took place in Zarahemla after
Nephi the son of Helaman identified the murderer of the Seezoram, their
chief judge. The people concluded that Nephi was either a great prophet or a
god. The Nephites spent a great deal of time intellectualizing about the
matter, in the same vein as those who argue whether or not Paul was actually
poisoned by the viper.

6 Howbeit they looked when he
should have swollen, or fallen down
dead suddenly: but after they had
looked a great while, and saw no
harm come to him, they changed
their minds, and said that he was a
god.

28.7 In that general area where the Alexandrian grain ship had broken up,
the governor of the island made his residence. One wonders at the prospects
of the Adriatic “Melita” sporting such an official. Needless to say, none of
the other islands in the Malta archipelago would serve as the residence of a
Roman official. Tradition, long standing tradition, is in this case probably
correct. The lingering question would have to do with the specific definition
of “quarters”. The Greek word used here is the same which influences
English words like “topographical” and literally mean “spot”.
28.7.9—chief—The Greek word which is here translated as “chief”
derives from roots which mean “foremost”. According to ancient
inscriptions found on the island, it was the word used to refer to the
governor of Malta.
28.7.17—Publius—We know little or nothing about this man except for
what tradition has preserved. Publius is venerated in the Roman
Catholic Church as the first Bishop of Malta who purportedly died a
martyr’s death in AD 122 during the reign of the Emperor Trajan.

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the
island, whose name was Publius;
who received us, and lodged us
three days courteously.

28.8 We may only speculate as to the disease which the father of Publius
suffered, but many modern scholars have pointed to a deadly strain of
cholera as the probable agent. It is clear that during the three days Paul and
his companions were guests of the governor that the Apostle had opportu-

8 And it came to pass, that the
father of Publius lay sick of a fever
and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul
entered in, and prayed, and laid his

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nities to share his witness of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, his history as a servant of God, and no doubt to extend the invitation to Publius to exercise faith, repent of his sins, and receive the ordinances of salvation. The faith necessary to bring about a release from a terminal illness like cholera did not appear in a vacuum. Note that Paul, as all other servants of God, followed the prescribed manner of blessing the sick and afflicted.

28.8.10—Publius—We know little or nothing about this man except for what tradition has preserved. Publius is venerated in the Roman Catholic Church as the first Bishop of Malta who purportedly died a martyr’s death in AD 122 during the reign of the Emperor Trajan.

28.8.15—fever—The Greek word which is here translated as “fever” derives from roots which mean “be on fire, lightning”.

28.8.19–20—bloody flux—The Greek word which is here translated as “bloody flux” derives from roots which mean “hard, with difficulty, grievous, bowel”. It is the source for the English word “dysentery”.

28.8.23—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

28.8.29–31—laid his hands—Administering to the sick and the afflicted remains the same among the faithful.

28.9 At what point was Paul given leave to teach the inhabitants of the island? We are not told precisely, but how can anyone doubt that the healing of the governor’s father did much to provide Paul and his companions a great deal of freedom. During the three months that the party waited to find passage to Italy, the missionaries were not idle. As the principles of the Gospel were taught, as faith in Christ continued to increase in the hearts of the people, the power of the priesthood was employed to heal the sick and infirm.

28.10 The travelers on the Alexandrian grain ship had lost all of their belongings during the storm and in the wreck. They were, for all practical purposes, destitute of worldly things. The only clothing they possessed was that which they had been wearing when they swam ashore. Any currency they might have had with them would have been thrown away as they attempted to swim to shore from the ship. Other provisions would have lost or ruined. The family of Publius had been blessed by the presence of Paul and his companions in profound ways, and in an attempt to express their gratitude, provided the Apostle and his companions with shelter, food, and clothing. When time came for them to depart for Rome, the governor and other faithful on the island provide means whereby Paul could present himself before the tribunal of Nero with comeliness and dignity.

28.11 Although Julius might have compelled the Alexandrian ship to leave sooner, clearly the centurion had learned his lesson regarding sea travel during the winter.

28.11.3–4—three months—The company waited on the island of Malta until the season of severe storminess had passed.

28.11.11—Alexandria—A sister ship to the one that had broken up on the coast of Malta.

28.11.14—wintered—That is to say, the ship and crew had spent the stormy season of the nautical year in port. This ship probably had been there longer than Paul and his companions.

28.11.19—sign—The Greek word which is here translated as “sign” derives from roots which mean “sidemarked, labeled, badge, figurehead”.

hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.
28.11.21—23—Castor and Pollux—In Greco-Roman mythology, these are twins, the sons of Zeus and Leda, and the brothers to Helen of Troy. They are also the subjects of the constellation Gemini. They were also fellow Argonauts with Jason, that perhaps giving rise to the notion that they were the patrons of all sailors.

28.12 The course of the grain ship would take them along the eastern coast of Sicily, through the straits of Rhegium, and along the western coast of Italy. The distance from Malta to Syracuse is approximately one hundred miles. The rationale for the stop at the city may have been nothing more than to resupply and repair any faults in the craft after its first cruise in several months.

28.12.4—Syracuse—A port city located on the southeastern coast of Sicily. It was the birthplace of Archimedes, the Greek mathematician, physicist, and engineer who lived in the third century before Jesus Christ.

28.13 The residual effects of the winter storms were still manifest as the ship traveled north from Syracuse to the Strait of Messina.

28.13.5—7—fetched a compass—The Greek word which is here translated as “fetched a compass” derives from roots which mean “come all around, stroll, vacillate, veer, wander, vagabond”. The contrary winds caused the ship to tack and tack again in order to travel northward. The south wind obviated the necessity for this nautical circumlocution. The English phrase “fetched a compass” is lost on most modern speakers. It means to travel in a circular course as the free leg of an instrument for making a circle would do.

28.13.11—Rhegium—A prominent city across the Strait of Messina from northeastern tip of Sicily. The name means “broken off” undoubtedly in reference to the apparent separation of Sicily and Italy at that point.

28.13.27—Puteoli—A major port city on the western coast of Italy about 170 miles south of Rome, located on the northern shore of the Bay of Naples.

28.14 The centurion Julius does not appear to constrain Paul in any way during the journey to Rome, allowing his charge a free rein in conducting his affairs. It may be, of course, that the Roman officer had, by this time, become a disciple himself.

28.14.4—brethren—We are not told how there came to be Christians in Italy before the arrival of Paul. Of course, Paul was not the only Apostle with a commission to preach the Gospel of Christ. It may have been, however, that some of Paul converts to the Church of Christ had heard that he was on his way to Rome and had traveled there from Asia Minor, or Greece in order to help provide for his comfort before he appeared at Nero’s tribunal.

28.14.19—Rome—The capital city of the Roman empire. A citizen of Rome was granted great political independence from all other governmental entities. Both Paul and Silas enjoyed this independence.

28.15 Luke gives us a detailed account as to how they traveled to Rome once they had disembarked from their ship at Puteoli. Finding friends to usher him on his way to a difficult hearing with the emperor must have been a great comfort to the Apostle and his friends. He would want for nothing during his stay in Rome.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence we came to Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God,
28.15.3—thence—That is from Rome, where these disciples had taken up residence.

28.15.18–19—Appii forum—A market town located on the Appian Way, an ancient road constructed to connect the length of Italy from Rome to Brindisi in the southeast, built by Appius Claudius Cæcus in the fourth century BC after whom it was named. Appii forum was located about 52 miles south of the city of Rome.

28.15.22–23—three taverni—Another town on the Appian Way approximately 33 miles south of Rome.

28.15.26—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

28.15.24—whom—The brethren, not the taverns.

28.16 Again, as was probably the case while Paul was being held in Caesarea, Paul enjoyed all of the rights and privileges of a Roman citizen. He was as yet uncondemned by Roman law. He was in custody, accompanied by an escort, but having great freedom.

28.16.6—Rome—The capital city of the Roman empire. A citizen of Rome was granted great political independence from all other governmental entities. Both Paul and Silas enjoyed this independence.

28.16.8—centurion—Julius, he who had accompanied Paul from Caesarea through all of his adventures at sea.

28.16.11—prisoners—The charges of the soldiers during the voyage to Rome. Needless to say, their reception in the capital city was somewhat different than that experienced by Paul and his traveling companions.

28.16.14—captain—The Greek word which is here translated as “captain” derives from roots which mean “ruler of an army, Praetorian prefect”. In other words, the commander of the emperor’s guards.

28.16.19—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

28.17 It will be recalled that when Paul came to Corinth for the first time that he became acquainted with Aquila and his wife Priscilla. This couple had been living at Rome when Claudius had commanded that all Jews remove themselves from the city (see 18.2.21). Claudius died about AD 54 and most historians suggest that Paul’s arrival in Rome took place about ten years later. We are not told how or why the ban was lifted, but it is clear that the emperor’s decree had either been reversed or was simply being ignored now that he was dead. In any event, clearly a goodly number of Jews had returned to Rome and in fact there appears to have been several synagogues functioning in the city by the time Paul arrived there. Since Paul’s journey to Rome had been somewhat circuitous, he was not certain what might have been communicated to the Jews at Rome by those in Jerusalem. Certainly those in Jerusalem, including the High Priest, were determined to have Paul condemned before Nero, especially since Festus had not given them satisfaction. Paul for his part would have had little or no communication himself from Palestine given his experiences at sea and on the island of Malta. Given the storminess of that winter, it is probable that any letters from the chief priests and elders in Jerusalem to Rome would have been delayed as Paul had been. We might speculate why it was that Paul called this meeting with the presiding authorities of Judaism in Rome. His motives may not be as clear as some would suppose. He is not attempting to deflect any epistolary blow from Jerusalem, even though there may have been such from that quarter. He is not attempting to dissuade the Jews in Rome from taking up the

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.
Palestinian case against him. The potential for condemnation, either from the Jews or the Romans, does not concern him. He is first and foremost a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, charged with the responsibility to teach the principles of salvation in every place where he found himself. As was his practice, he first spoke with the Jews of Rome before he turned to the Gentiles. Paul used his current circumstances merely as a springboard. By doing so, he intrigued the Jews who had gathered to his hearing.

28.17.10—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

28.17.16—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

28.17.56—Jerusalem—There has been much speculation as to the linguistic heritage of the name of the Holy City. Simply said, the name literally derives from roots which mean together, “flowing peace” or “established in peace”. The great city of Salem, built in the days of Melchizedek and Abraham, was a Zion society and may have indeed enjoyed the same destiny as that of the city of Enoch. Any city, “established in peace” is by definition, the City of the great King.

28.17.56—Romans—The dominant power in the known world at the time of the mortal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were the successors of the Greeks and the precursors of western civilization. They were the consummate Gentiles of their day.

28.18 Paul recounts the various trials and hearing which transpired while he was yet in Palestine, though apparently without unnecessary detail. He assured his audience, as he had in every one of the reviews of his conduct, that he had done nothing contrary to the Law of Moses or contrary to the established rules regarding the Temple of God. The hearings before Claudius Lysias in Jerusalem had established none of the accusations against the Apostle and the same was true in those held in the company of Felix, Festus, and Herod Agrippa.

28.19 At every step of the way, the chief priests and elders of the Jews complained bitterly against the decisions of the Roman authorities, so much so that Paul was required to exercise his right as a Roman citizen to have his case heard before the emperor in Rome. This he did so that he would not be compelled to return to Jerusalem where he was certain to be assassinated by those liars in wait who had taken an oath to put him out of mortality. Paul assured the Jews of Rome that he was not there to bring any accusation against the Jews in general, but only to defend himself against the false allegations that had been leveled at him by the leadership of the Jews in Jerusalem. Given the precarious state of Jewish affairs in the city of Rome, Paul felt compelled to provide them with that particular assurance.

28.19.4—Jews—That is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

28.19.14—Caesar—Probably in reference to Claudius Caesar, the fourth Roman emperor who ruled Rome for thirteen years. If historians be

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

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19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.
accurate, that reign would have commenced in AD 41. He was murdered by his fourth wife, the mother of Nero, in AD 54. There is a distinct possibility, however, that Nero may be ruling by the time that Paul stood before Festus.

28.20 Notwithstanding all that Paul had said in helping the Jews to understand why it was that the disciple had come to Rome, there was only one reason for having gathered the leadership to his apartments. He wished them to know that at the heart of the matter was the fulfillment of all of the prophecies regarding the coming of a mortal Messiah, the Son of the living God. It was for his anticipation of the resurrection from the dead, his testimony of the redemption of the spirit from personal sin, that he had been taken into custody. The chief priests and Sadducees of the Great Sanhedrin were beside themselves with unbridled fury that they could not effectively stop Paul from openly teaching doctrines that were anathema to them. We cannot at this point know the exact theological composition of the Jews in Rome, but the tenor of his argument would lead us to believe that they leaned more toward the philosophy of the Pharisees who believed both in the literal resurrection of the body and in the expectation of both blessings and punishments after this mortal life has come to an end.

28.20.24—Israel—In reference to the covenant people, traditionally the posterity of the patriarch Jacob. There are those, however, who have been adopted into the House of Israel through obedience to the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

28.21 One may wonder at the lack of communication from Jerusalem to the Jews at Rome regarding Paul’s case, especially since the leadership of the Jews in the former city had been rabid in their attempts to kill the Apostle. We may speculate that any communication might have been lost when the ship was sunk off the coast of Malta. Letters against Paul might have been delayed through the winter season. The Jews may have been preoccupied with more pressing matters as the tension between the Romans and the Jews intensified prior to the First Jewish Rebellion which terminated with the destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Some scholars feel, however, that inasmuch as Paul had been extradited to Rome that he no longer presented an immediate problem to their power base in Jerusalem. Still other learned men have concluded that since the Jews knew that their case had no possible chance to succeed, they had simply let the matter drop.

28.21.12—Judaea—In the days of John the Baptist and Jesus, the province of Judea stretched from Malatha on the south to the Plain of Esdraelon on the north, from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the River Jordan on the east, comprising approximately 5,000 square miles.

28.22 All of these men who were gathered in the apartments of Paul had been driven from the city of Rome by the edict from Claudius just as Aquila and Priscilla had been. Before they had returned to Rome after the death of Claudius they must have undoubtedly come in contact with those who professed or denied that Jesus of Nazareth was the very Christ. It was a raging controversy mostly fueled by unbridled emotionalism. These men, in fairness to Paul and perhaps to the Church of Christ, desired to at least intellectually entertain Paul’s teachings on the matter before any adverse communications came from the leadership of the Jews at Jerusalem. What would begin as an academic exercise would become something far more profound.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.
28.23 Paul’s effectiveness as an ambassador of Christ had not diminished in the slightest, even though he was somewhat constrained in his movements. When he could not seek out those to whom he could teach, they were enticed to come to him.

28.23.15–16—his lodging—As we will discover, below, Paul had rented a place where he might live for a time, and one large enough that he might entertain large groups of people, those who wished to learn more of Jesus Christ and his teachings.

28.23.20—expounded—The Greek word which is here translated as “expounded” derives from roots which mean “expose, declare, present”. In other words, it is the act of instruction.

28.23.22—testified—The Greek word which is here translated as “testified” derives from roots which mean “attest, protest earnestly, hortative, charge, witness”. In other words, confirming that what has been taught is also true.

28.23.35–37—law of Moses—Once one comprehends that the sacrifices and other ordinances of the Law of Moses were performed in similitude of the life, teachings, and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is virtually impossible to ignore the clarity of that volume’s witness of the Messiah.

28.23.42—prophets—A prophet is one who testifies that Jesus is the Christ. This is a patently clear definition as one peruses the writing of the ancient seers and revelators, none of whom wrote without bearing their witness of the coming Messiah.

28.24 As has been the case in every dispensation, there were those who had been prepared to receive the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and there were those who were ill-disposed to accept the principles of eternal life. We may speculate as to why a certain portion of the children of God on the earth is more receptive than another, but it would be a fruitless exercise. Men are the product of their individual choices, their personal responses to their personal circumstances.

28.25 We are not privy to the nature of the discord. It may have been as simple as the natural division that the Pharisees and Sadducees found among themselves. This disagreement may have been far more profound in relation to the varied opinions regarding the Law and the prophets. Again one is reminded of the experience of Nephi, the son of Helaman, in the city of Zarahemla. For the inhabitants thereof it was a matter of intellectualization over spirituality and none of the men and women who had concluded that Nephi was either a prophet or a god spent any practical time taking advantage of their intellectual convictions. In a similar fashion, the Roman Jews left Paul’s apartments bickering among themselves over tenets rather than allowing the principles of faith and repentance take hold of the hearts and minds.

28.25.12—Paul—The Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

28.25.15–16—one word—The Greek word which is here translated as “word” derives from roots which mean “utterance, matter, topic, narration”. While we might conclude that Luke is referring to the entire narration that Paul is giving, he might just as well be referring to the scripture cited from Isaiah. If we must focus on one word, perhaps “Gentiles” would suffice. It was the very word which originally caused the problem with the Jews in the Temple.

28.25.23—Esaias—An alternative spelling for the name of the prophet

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging: to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esias the prophet unto our fathers,
Isaiah.

28.25.25—*prophet*—A prophet is one who testifies that Jesus is the Christ. This is a patently clear definition as one peruses the writing of the ancient seers and revelators, none of whom wrote without bearing their witness of the coming Messiah.

28.26 The citation is from Isaiah where the prophet is recounting the events surrounding his call to the ministry. The passage in the Old Testament reads as follows:

And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. (Isaiah 6:9)

The quote here in Acts is essentially the same as appears in Matthew 13 where the Lord is attempting to explain to the Apostles why it is that they will comprehend his parables and the Pharisees, scribes, and Sadducees will not (see *MT-C 13.10–17*). Paul is testifying of these unrepenting Jews that they are of the same cut as those who plotted against Jesus of Nazareth to take his life and those who would not hearken to the greatest of Israel’s prophets.

28.27 The quote from Isaiah 6 continues:

Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. (Isaiah 6:10)

Isaiah was told to preach even though the response of the people of his day would be less than enthusiastic. Isaiah was to testify to the people and by so doing their hearts, ears, and eyes would close against him and against the God whom he served. This was the prophetic gift that was given to him at the time of his call. Note that it is the willful rejection of the people that condemned them. They closed their eyes; they closed their ears; they hardened their hearts. They did so because they did not wish to pass through the process of repentance, either through pride, fear, or indolence. There were many, however, who did hearken to the preaching of Paul, accepted his testimony, and received the saving ordinances at his hands.

28.28 As he had on so many other occasions, Paul reprimands the faithless among the Jews and bares his witness that not only will the Gentiles have the opportunity to hear the fullness of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, he testifies that they will readily receive it. This, of course had been prophesied many centuries before when Abraham was told that through his posterity, and the priesthood thereof, the entire world would be blessed. That same theme continued throughout the writings of the prophets of Israel whose testimonies are contained in the Old Testament. In addition we have the Allegory of Zenos whose Olive Trees clearly depict how the blessings of the fathers would come to those outside of the patriarchal covenant of Abraham.

28.28.16—*Gentiles*—The Greek word here translated as “Gentiles” means “foreigners” or “strangers”, and was first applied to the Greeks themselves when that empire came in contact with the Jews during the early part of the fourth century BC. The Hebrew word translated as “Gentiles” carries with it the notion of “massing” like unto locusts and other ravenous insects. Our English word derives from the Greek through Latin.

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.
28.29 There are ancient manuscripts which render this verse thusly: “After he said this, the Jews left, arguing vigorously among themselves.” It is to be hoped that some of these men had actually come to terms with Christianity in a wholesome and prosperous way, that there was more transpiring in the hearts and minds then mere polemics. To what extent did the bickering continue? We may only guess, but it must be assumed that there were those among the learned Jews who perceived exactly what Paul was teaching and in the integrity of their own souls came to the conclusion that they must join themselves with the disciples of Christ through repentance and saving ordinances.

28.29.9—Jews—that is, those who could trace their lineage back to Judah, one of the twelve sons of Jacob. The land of Palestine had been home to twelve tribes at one time, but this had been generally reduced to the remnants, the largest faction being that of the tribe of Judah. In this case, Luke is probably speaking of the ecclesiastical leadership of the people.

28.30 Paul had spent two years under house arrest as the guest of Felix until Festus assumed the seat of the governor. During that time Paul had been free to teach the principles of salvation to any and all who desired to enter his quarters (see 24.23–27). This was undoubtedly due to his position as a Roman citizen. In Rome the same privileges were extended as he waited upon the clemency of Nero. At this point we cannot know how many earnest souls were blessed by their association with the Apostle, but many hundreds if not thousands.

28.30.2—Paul—the Latin name of Saul of Tarsus which he adopted as he began his missionary labors.

28.31 Paul feared no one. He cared not for the threatenings exuded by his detractors whether near or far. His sole concern was to enlighten as many of the children of God to the truths of eternal life in whatsoever circumstances he might find himself. If tradition has it correct, Paul would appear before Nero’s tribunal and all charges against him, whatever they were made out to be, would be dismissed. By the year AD 65, however, the official animosity of the Empire would be arrayed against the Church of Christ, and many prominent men would lose their lives. Peter was crucified as if he had been a treasonous vassal; Paul was beheaded as if he had been a treasonous Roman citizen. Of the intervening four or five years between the end of the book of Acts and his execution we only have tradition to guide us. He may have gone to the Iberian peninsula, the location of modern day Spain and Portugal. Certainly he would have revisited as many of those congregations that he had established in Syria, Galatia, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia as was possible.

28.31.14–15—Jesus Christ—all effective ordinances of any kind are performed in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Into his hands has the destiny of the earth and her inhabitants been placed. By the power of the authority given to him by his Father is all substantive labor in behalf of the salvation of mankind accomplished, whether by Jesus himself, or through his ordained agents.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 And Paul dwelt two years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.
Alphabetized List of Specifically Noted Words and Phrases in the Acts of the Apostles Commentary

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Alexandrians—6.9.19
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