



Annotated Scripture Series



**The Acts of the
*Apostles***



CHRIST THE KING BOOKS

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Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2020

ISBN 9-7816379406-4-8

Publisher:

Christ the King Textbooks, Inc.

25150 Oregon Trail Road

St Marys, KS 66536

www.ckbooks.org

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About

Have you ever wondered what happened after Our Lord ascended in to heaven? Did the Holy Ghost ever come, as Jesus had promised? Where did the Apostles go after that? Did the Jews kill them all, just like they killed Our Lord? What happened to the Church? How did it spread? Whatever happened to Judas after he betrayed Our Lord? How does St. Paul enter the picture, and what did he do for the Church? How did the Church get transferred from Jerusalem to Rome, like we see today?

The four gospels do not answer such questions, for:

- St. Matthew's Gospel ends with the Ascension;
- St. Mark's Gospel ends with the Ascension;
- St. Luke's Gospel ends with the Ascension;
- St. John's Gospel ends with Our Lord appearing to the Apostles and disciples after His Resurrection, but before the Ascension.

The Acts of the Apostles is a wonderful and very interesting book of Scripture which provides help with the above questions and much more. This book could be called "The Beginnings of the Christian Religion". It is the fullest history which we possess of the manner in which the Church developed in the century following the Ascension of Christ. It is certain that the author of the Acts of the Apostles is St Luke the Evangelist, as may be seen from Tradition, internal evidence in the Acts themselves, and from the Book's relation to the third Gospel. It was most likely written in the year A.D. 64. The fervor of the Christians at that epoch was very great, and the Apostles worked many miracles which led to converting and baptizing thousands upon thousands. At this stage of the life of the Church, miracles were necessary to attest the truth of her teaching, and the power of miracles was abundantly bestowed upon the Apostles. These miracles are not reviewed in detail in Acts, but it is stated: "And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people" (Acts 5:12).



Our Lady and the Apostles receive the Holy Ghost on Pentecost, *Jean II Restout*, [Public domain]

Lesson 1: Acts, Chapters 1 - 2

Acts Chapter 1

The ascension of Christ. Matthias is chosen in place of Judas.

1:1 The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, of all things which Jesus began to do and to teach,

1:2 Until the day on which, giving commandments by the Holy Ghost to the Apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up.

1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God.

1:4 And eating together with them, he commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard (saith he) by my mouth.

Notice that this book, like St Luke's Gospel, is also dedicated to Theophilus. This and other reasons make it certain that Luke authored both. In addition to similarity, there are parallels of description, arrangement, and points of view. The recurrence of medical language in both books indicates his profession as a physician.

Again – St. Luke's gospel leaves off at the Ascension.

Jesus lived on Earth for forty days after His Resurrection, until He ascended to Heaven, during which time He appeared several times to the Apostles and to disciples. It is pious tradition that He privileged His Holy Mother by appearing her to her first of all, after His glorious Resurrection.

Jesus shows Himself to be truly and **physically** resurrected, which He mercifully shows by eating with the Apostles and disciples, in a normal bodily way. The "promise of the Father" refers to the Holy Ghost, whom Jesus promised to send after He ascended.



As with most of the books of the New Testament, Jerusalem is the key city in the Acts of the Apostles

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1:5 For John indeed baptized with water: but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.

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- 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming: and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- 2:3 And there appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire: and it sat upon every one of them.
- 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost: and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.

after Passover, to give thanks for the completed harvest.

The Hebrews use the word “tongue” for almost anything pointed, like a flame.

At times this “gift of tongues” entailed the Apostles to speak in their own language, and yet to be miraculously understood by the hearer; at other times, the Apostles spoke the language of the hearer, by a miracle.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f0/Duccio_di_Buoninsegna_018.jpg Duccio di Buoninsegna, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

- 2:5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, **out of every nation under heaven.**

Jerusalem was crowded with pilgrims who had arrived to worship and sacrifice during Pentecost.

Take note of that – Jews from countless nations were present. Why is this? In fact, many questions arise here. First, what does the word ‘Pentecost’ mean? Why were Jews coming to Jerusalem at this time, anyway? ‘Pente’ is the Greek for five, while ‘pentekostos’ means fifty. Our Lord rose from the dead on Easter Sunday (let us call that day 1); then 40 days later He ascended into Heaven (day 40); then 10 days later (day 50), the Holy Ghost descended. But the Jews also had their own feast of Pentecost, instituted in the Old Testament, to celebrate the giving of the *Torah* (the first five books in the Hebrew Bible) to Moses at Mount Sinai. This is why so many Jews were in Jerusalem – the Feast of Pentecost was important for them (but not as important as the feast fifty days early, namely, that of Passover). But why Jews from so many nations? This is because the Jews, in preceding centuries, had been conquered several times because of their sins and infidelities. They were then taken out of the Holy Land and dispersed into various areas, and **those same conquered Jews eventually began to speak the language of their conquerors. Many of these Jews, in fact, no longer even knew Hebrew or Aramaic.** That is why these men are so astounded by the Apostles speaking their own languages! Also note that the Holy Ghost caused a very loud wind / sound; countless men heard it and took notice: “...a mighty wind coming: and it filled the whole house where they were

sitting”.

By replacing the Jewish Feast of Pentecost with the Catholic Feast of the Holy Ghost (God Himself) coming, we can see another step in God systematically replacing the merely symbolic (and inferior) Jewish religion with Catholicism: the One True Faith.

2:6 And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue.

2:7 And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these that speak Galilean?

2:8 And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born?

2:9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

2:10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome,

2:11 Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

2:12 And they were all astonished, and wondered, saying one to another: What meaneth this?

Note in the next few verses: The stubborn, proud Pharisees and Sadducees and others had seen Jesus' miracles with their own eyes, and then mocked Him, refused to believe and convert, and eventually killed Him. Perhaps they and others of their ilk (we do not know for sure – it could be men who were just skeptical) now begin mocking His Apostles, claiming they are drunk, and just uttering nonsense. They claim this even though the account above clearly shows that the Apostles were speaking articulately in various languages, and not just some drunken gibberish.

2:13 But others mocking, said: These men are full of new wine.

2:14 But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke to them: Ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you and with your ears receive my words.

2:15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day:

I.e., 9 a.m. Men normally do not get drunk in the morning, but at night after work.

The next verses show us something amazing. We see Peter – that simple, ignorant fisherman who had denied Our Lord three times – now bravely (remember – the Jews had just killed Our Lord!) and skillfully quoting and explaining Sacred Scripture to the Jews. Where did Peter learn – to do this? How did he get the power? (Verse 2:4 above: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost...”)

2:16 But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel:

2:17 *And it shall come to pass, in the last days, (saith the Lord), I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy: and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.*

2:18 *And upon my servants indeed and upon my handmaids will I pour out in those days of my spirit: and they shall prophesy.*

2:19 *And I will shew wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath: blood and fire, and vapour of smoke.*

2:20 *The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and manifest day of the Lord to come.*

2:21 *And it shalt come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man

Not merely a man, but the God

approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as you also know:

2:23 This same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain.

Man. But here Peter refers to His assumption of a real human nature.

Indeed, Their Wills being One single Will of God, the Father delivered up His Son; and His Son delivered up Himself, for the love of us, and for the sake of our salvation; and so Christ's being delivered up was holy, and was God's own determination. But those who betrayed Him and crucified Him did wickedly, following the evilness of their own heart and the instigation of the devil. God is in no way the Author of evil or wickedness, though He at times permits evil to be accomplished, to draw out good therefrom. And such a great good was drawn from this: the salvation of man.

2:24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that he should be holden by it.

That is, Christ having suffered through and then completely overcome the pains of death and the power of Hell, it was impossible that He should be holden by that primeval curse, death, which He took upon Himself but was not held by, as He was God.

From verse 25 to 36 below, Peter will beautifully explain something very difficult: how King David writing his *Psalms* some 1000 years earlier, was not speaking of himself, but prophesizing about Our Lord's Resurrection. When reading the following passage, wherever you see 'I', think of Our Lord speaking. But most Jews had been reading the passage for centuries as if it were David speaking of himself:

2:25 For David saith concerning him: *I foresaw the Lord before my face: because he is at my right hand, that I may not be moved.*

2:26 *For this my heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced: moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

2:27 *Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell: nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.*

2:28 *Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.*

Now Peter will *prove* David could not possibly be speaking of himself in the above verses, for David **did** die and his body **did** see corruption. Saint Peter then explains the true meaning: King David, being a prophet, remembered that God had sworn an oath to him that one of his (David's) descendants (namely, Our Lord Jesus Christ, who was a direct descendant of David and of the same tribe of Judah) would be the Great King of Israel. As Peter is explaining all this, try to imagine what might be going through the minds of the Jews (at least those who are of good will): "We were persuaded to desire and even take part in the crucifixion of this man Jesus. Now Peter, obviously with this miraculous violent wind and his speaking in tongues, is telling us this Jesus was the one promised to the great King David, and he is proving to us that we have been misreading Psalms all along." It is not just his words that will move their hearts to repentance, but the very strong **interior graces given by the Holy Ghost**.

2:29 Ye men, brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David: that he died and was buried; and his sepulchre is with us to this present say.

2:30 Whereas therefore he was a prophet and knew that God hath sworn to him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins one should sit upon his throne.

2:31 Foreseeing this, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ. For

This proves that the Psalm spoke

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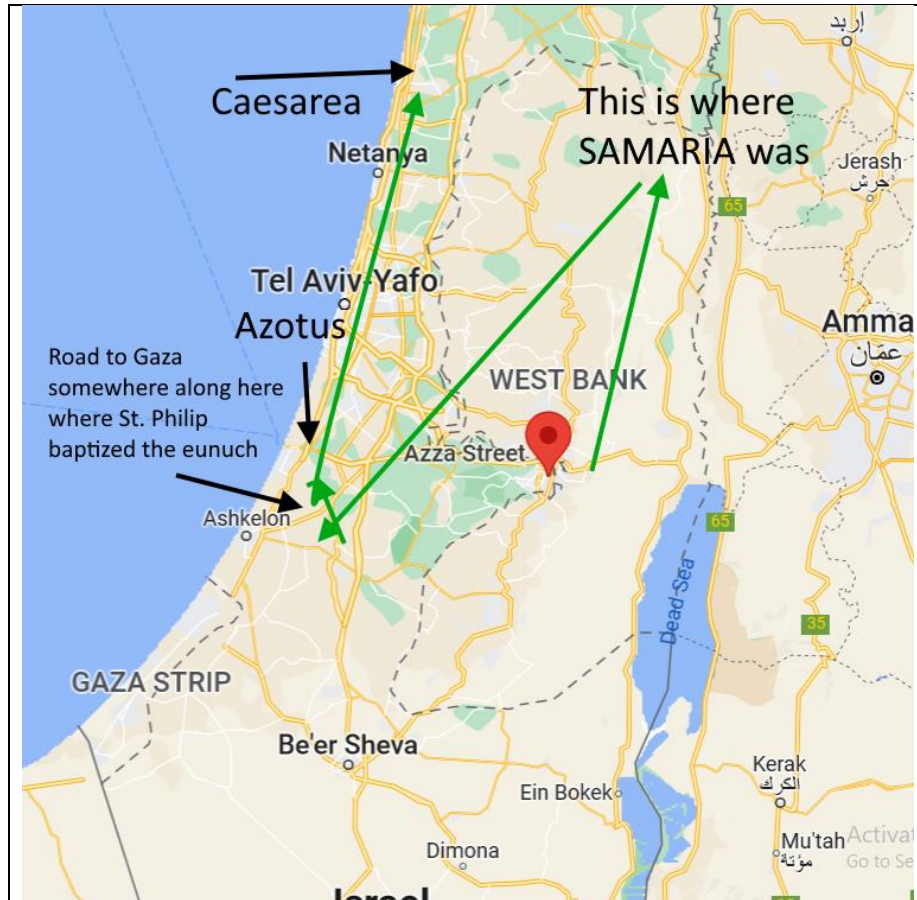
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/92/MCC-42373_Doop_van_de_kamerling_%2837%29.jpg Museum Catharijneconvent, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took away Philip: and the eunuch saw him no more. And he went on his way rejoicing.

Similar to Elias who was physically translated to a different place (Third Book of Kings), Phillip was miraculously taken in his body to Azotus, to continue preaching the Gospel.

8:40 But Philip was found in Azotus: and passing through, he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Cities like Caesarea (named of course after the Roman Emperor) are a clear reminder to all that the Romans are in control.



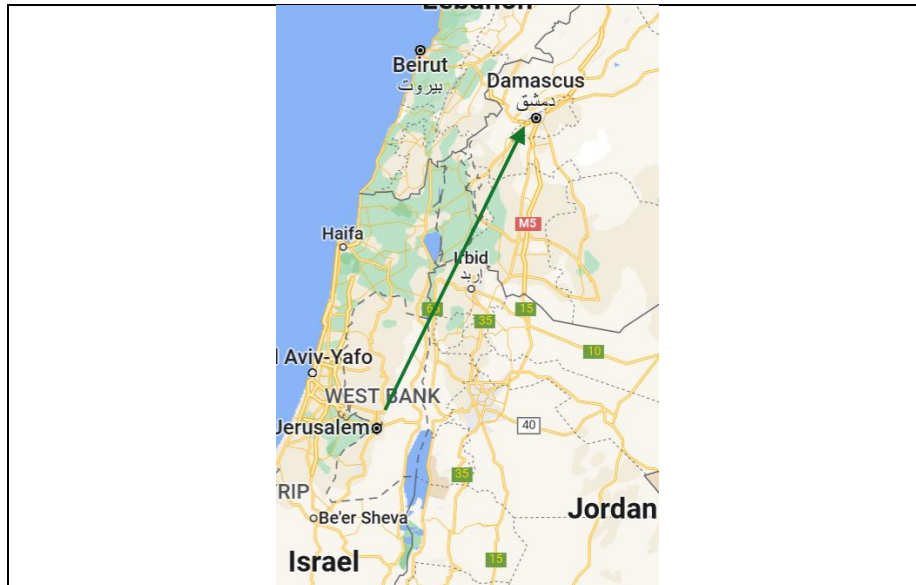
St. Philip's journeys shown on a modern map: Following the green lines and arrows, we see that he begins in Jerusalem (the red balloon), then is sent to Samaria where converts many, and then is told by the angel to go down to the road to Gaza, where he baptizes the eunuch. He then makes the short trip to Azotus, then up to Caesarea, which was the seat of the Roman government for the entire province of Judea.

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Acts Chapter 9

Paul's conversion and zeal. Peter heals Eneas and raises up Tabitha to life.

- 9:1 And Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest
- 9:2 And asked of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues: that if he found any men and women of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.



St. Paul travels from Jerusalem up to Damascus (which is today the capital city of Syria).

Map data © 2023 Google, Mapa GISrael, with our annotations added

9:3 And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus. And suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him.



https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/67/Conversion_on_the_Way_to_Damascus-Caravaggio_%28c.1600-1%29.jpg Caravaggio, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

9:4 And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

9:5 Who said: Who art thou, Lord? And he: I am Jesus whom thou

St. Paul's Conversion on His Way to Damascus, Caravaggio, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

This picture shows only St. Paul on the ground, but he tells us in Acts 26:14 that all the men with him were also thrown to the ground.

In the Traditional calendar, the Catholic Church celebrates the conversion of St. Paul on January 25th. Thus, St. Paul has three feastdays in the liturgical year: first, that of his conversion; second, that which is shared with St. Peter on June 29th; and third, his own Commemoration of St. Paul on June 30.

Jesus here identifies Himself with the members of His Church, as He had formerly: "He that despiseth you, despiseth Me"

	persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad. ³	
9:6	And he, trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?	
9:7	And the Lord said to him: Arise and go into the city; and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. Now the men who went in company with him stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice but seeing no man.	
9:8	And Saul arose from the ground: and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But they, leading him by the hands, brought him to Damascus.	
9:9	And he was there three days without sight: and he did neither eat nor drink.	Not eating or drinking, in sorrow of his past actions, and fasting to prepare for the grace for which he waited.
9:10	Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision: Ananias, And he said: Behold I am here, Lord.	This is, of course, a different Ananias from the one who was killed along with his wife in Chapter 4.
9:11	And the Lord said to him: Arise and go into the street that is called Strait and seek in the house of Judas, one named Saul of Tarsus. For behold he prayeth.	"Strait Street" being the longest road going through Damascus, in Syria.
9:12	(And he [Saul] saw a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight.)	Saul "saw" him coming, mystically, or in a vision from God.
9:13	But Ananias answered: Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem.	Ananias is frightened, naturally.
9:14	And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke thy name.	Saul had a kind of unregulated authority for the persecution of Christians; wherever and whenever he saw fit, he was charged with bringing them in to the chief priests.
9:15	And the Lord said to him: Go thy way: for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.	
9:16	For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.	
9:17	And Ananias went his way and entered into the house. And laying his hands upon him, he said: Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, he that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest, that thou mayest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.	This is not the imposition of hands we have seen the Apostles doing in order to impart the gifts of the Holy Ghost (Confirmation), but rather another type which the Apostles and some disciples used, laying hands upon a person with some physical or spiritual malady to heal them. If St Paul here received the Holy Ghost, it was directly from God and not by the ordinary means, which would have been through an Apostle at this time. Often in the infant Church, were such miracles able to be performed by the faithful.

³ **goad:** a spiked stick used for driving cattle; in other words, Our Lord is telling Saul that His will is like a sharp stick, and those work against it will suffer pain.

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Lesson 5: Acts, Chapters 16 - 19

Acts Chapter 16

From this point to the end, the Acts is exclusively devoted to the three missionary journeys of St. Paul.

Important note: The Popes, Fathers, Doctors, and saints through the centuries (before Vatican II, at least) have stated consistently that:

- There is only one True Church (with a capital C), and that is the Catholic Church started by Our Lord Jesus Christ and headed by the pope.
- Outside of this Church, there is absolutely no salvation; all men must, in some way or another, be in the Catholic Church to get to heaven.
- **All other so-called 'churches' are not worthy to be called 'churches'**, whose founder is Satan, the father of lies. Before the 1960's, the popes and saints were always careful to refer to non-Catholic groups as heretical organizations, cults, and sects – never giving them the title of 'churches'. These holy men had a reason to be very careful in their speech, for a 'church' is a place where God is truly worshipped, but God is not worshipped except in the Catholic Church.⁵

But in the Scriptures, you will sometimes see the sacred writers sometimes use the word 'churches' (plural). You will read in the verses below about the "church at Jerusalem" or the "church at Antioch". Know that the sacred author of the Acts (St. Luke) is not referring to different organizations (with doctrines and leaders different than those of the Catholic Church), but instead, he is referring merely to organized "pockets" or groups of Catholics in various geographical areas. Each of these groups is under a local bishop, and all are under the pope as their supreme head. We have already seen the primacy of Peter demonstrated multiple times in the Acts of the Apostles, and that clear primacy is also present in the four gospels. St. Luke knows St. Peter is the supreme head of all the new Christians.

But as with just about every subject and verse in Scripture, certain misdirected or proud men, not wanting to submit to an ultimate authority higher than themselves, have also misinterpreted this 'churches' issue. For example, the so-called "orthodox"⁶ sects (Russian, Greek, Armenian, etc.) insist even today that these various 'churches' are actually independent organizations all having equal authority, and subject to no higher authority. Thus, they claim the man we Catholics refer to as 'pope' is merely the "Patriarch of the church of Rome", while the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople, etc. are also supreme heads of their own 'churches', all possessing authority equal to the Patriarch of Rome. This dangerous ideology has yielded for them the fruits one would expect – heresy and error. For example, these same 'orthodox' deny many infallible doctrines of the Catholic Faith. Some of these groups even allow divorce or abortion in some circumstances.⁷ In acting this way, they align themselves with most Protestants sects which also deny any kind of truly authoritative hierarchical structure of the Church, with such Protestant groups each referring to themselves as a 'church', and of course, falling into many of the same doctrinal and moral errors as a result.

We thank God that He did not start so many 'independent churches' as those outside the True Church claim to be the case, but rather, only One Church, with one supreme visible head on earth – even if that head is sometimes a very bad pope. May the so-called "orthodox" and all other heretics and schismatics convert to the One, True Faith before they die.

Paul visits the churches. He is called to preach in Macedonia. He is scourged at Philippi.

- 16:1** And he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, there was a certain disciple there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman that believed: but his father was a Gentile.
- 16:2** To this man the brethren that were in Lystra and Iconium gave a good testimony.
- 16:3** Him Paul would have to go along with him: and taking him, he circumcised him, because of the Jews who were in those places. For they all knew that his father was a Gentile.

Paul did this in order to avoid being a scandal to the Jews there. Remember that the Council of Jerusalem just decided that

⁵ Quotes from multiple authorities could be given, but here is just one: "*The Holy Catholic Church teaches that God cannot be adored except within the Catholic Church.*" - Pope Saint Gregory the Great, Father and Doctor of the Church, *De Moralis*, Bk.14, §5

⁶ We say "**so-called** orthodox" because the word orthodox has a positive connotation, meaning "conforming to what is generally or traditionally accepted as right or true; established and approved." But it is simply not true that these men accept what Our Lord really wanted, and thus they use a positive, pleasant-sounding word to name their false belief systems.

⁷ In the pdf entitled, "The Orthodox Christian Tradition – Religious Beliefs and Healthcare Decisions", we read, "Under normal circumstances, the Orthodox Church teaches that abortion is wrong and should be avoided. *However, in the case of a genuine threat to the life of the mother or an ectopic pregnancy, the Church makes room for some choice, advising a prudence in consultation with all parties involved.*"

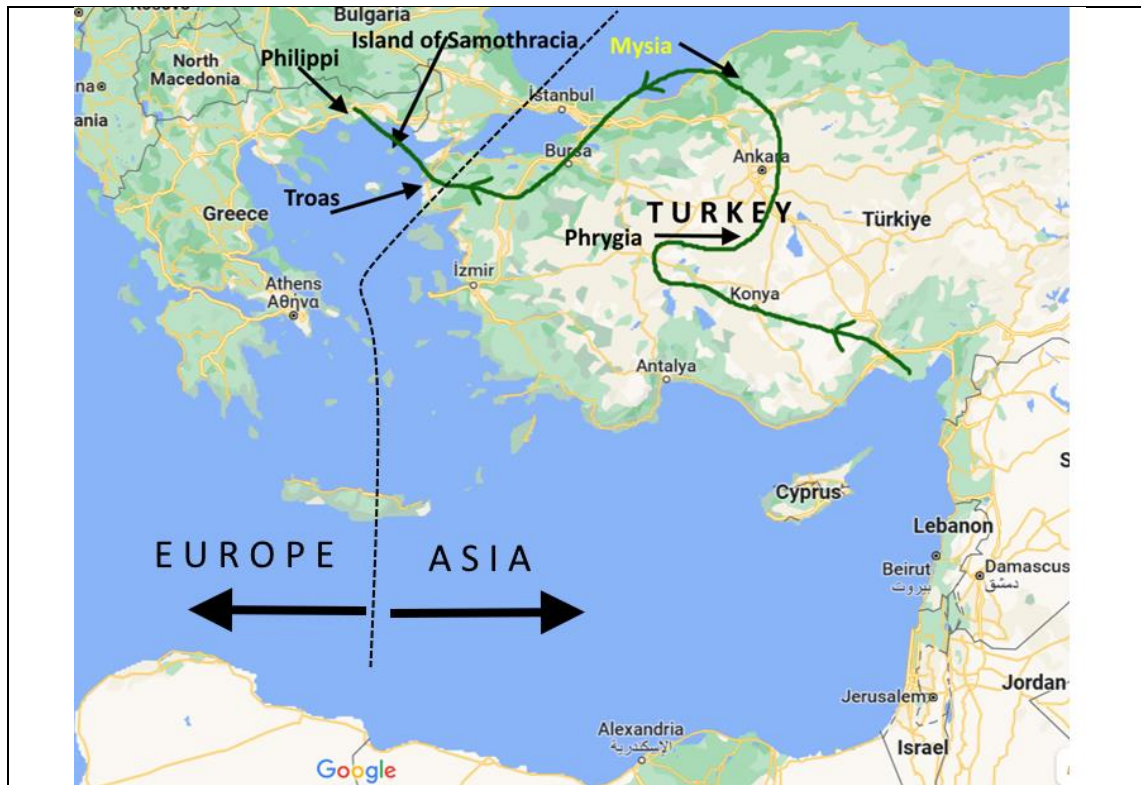
circumcision was no longer necessary. But neither was it yet forbidden at this time, though it was passing away. St Paul does this out of charity, and it is completely just, since it is not yet a sin to religiously circumcise Timothy. Circumcision done today for religious reasons would indeed be a sin.

16:4 And as they passed through the cities, they delivered unto them the decrees for to keep, that were decreed by the Apostles and ancients who were at Jerusalem.

16:5 And the churches were confirmed in faith and increased in number daily.

Important note: The True Faith passes into Europe!

Thus far in the Acts, the Catholic Faith has been limited to the Holy Land, Turkey, and places nearby, which are all considered by most modern geographers to be part of the modern-day continent of Asia. (Notice the black, dashed separator line below.) But how did the Catholic Faith ever get into the continent of Europe, where it eventually blossomed into the most glorious culture the world has ever known? Notice on the map below the relative positions of Turkey and Greece, with the cities named in which St. Paul will pass through with St. Timothy. Turkey is part of Asia, while Greece is considered part of Europe.



The places visited on St. Paul's second voyage, first part

Map data ©2023 Mapa GISrael, Google, Inst. Geogr. Nacional, GeoBasis-DE/BKG (©2009), with our annotations added

16:6 And when they had passed through Phrygia and the country of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.

In His inscrutable judgement, God turns Paul and Timothy away from Lesser Asia, perhaps because the people were not yet ready to hear the Gospel, or because they were reserved for the preaching of Saint John.

16:7 And when they were come into Mysia, they attempted to go into

The Spirit of Jesus, that is, the Holy Ghost, Who proceeds from the

Bithynia: and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.

Father and the Son. The Spirit of God is One.

16:8 And when they had passed through Mysia, they went down to Troas.⁸

16:9 And a vision was shewed to Paul in the night, which was a man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him and saying: Pass over into Macedonia and help us.

Many commentators consider this to be a guardian angel of Macedonia, who appears to St Paul as a Macedonian, to implore him.

16:10 And as soon as he had seen the vision, immediately **we** sought to go into Macedonia: being assured that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Notice the sudden change in narration from the third to the first person! It is therefore inferred that the author, St Luke, joined St Paul at Troas, and was thereafter his inseparable companion. Since the person changes again to the third after this chapter and resumes in the first once more at Acts 20:5, it is possible that St Luke was absent on some mission in between this one and their sailing from Philippi.

16:11 And sailing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the day following to Neapolis.

16:12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were in this city some days conferring together.

Paul and Silas have now entered the Greek city of Philippi, which will eventually become a great Catholic stronghold. St. Paul will later write his *Epistle to the Philippians*, that is, to the converts of this city.

16:13 And upon the Sabbath day, we went forth without the gate by a river side, where it seemed that there was prayer: and sitting down, we spoke to the women that were assembled.

The Greek suggests "where there was customarily prayer"- here either meaning prayerful people, or something like an oratory.

16:14 And a certain woman named **Lydia**, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, did hear: whose heart the Lord opened to attend to those things which were said by Paul.

Lydia is considered the first European convert.

16:15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying: If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there. And she constrained us.

16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain girl having a pythonical spirit met us, who brought to her masters much gain by divining.

A pythonical spirit... That is, a spirit pretending to be divine and tells fortunes. She was a kind of slave, whose masters made money through her work of fortune telling.

16:17 This same following Paul and us, cried out, saying: These men are the servants of the Most High God, who preach unto you the way of salvation.

16:18 And this she did many days. But Paul being grieved, turned and said to the spirit: I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to go from her. And he went out the same hour.

This demon was constrained, according to the will of God, to tell the truth. St Paul allows this to be done only for so long until he frees this girl from the demon by an exorcism.

16:19 But her masters, seeing that the hope of their gain was gone, apprehending Paul and Silas, brought them into the market place to

⁸ Troas, Turkey – shown on the map, is the same as, or was a very near neighboring city as the famous Troy, mentioned in Homer's *Iliad*.

the rulers.

16:20 And presenting them to the magistrates, they said: These men disturb our city, being Jews:

Jews, here indicating *Christians*, since this was the first name given to the Christians. Angry at their loss of prophet, these evil men bring Paul before the rulers to be punished.

16:21 And preach a fashion which it is not lawful for us to receive nor observe, being Romans.

There was a standing decree of the Senate in Rome which forbade any new religion or divinities to be preached in Rome without the consent of the government.

16:22 And the people ran together against them: and the magistrates, rending off their clothes, commanded them to be beaten with rods.

16:23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the gaoler⁹ to keep them diligently.

16:24 Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast¹⁰ in the stocks.

16:25 And at midnight, Paul and Silas, praying, praised God. And they that were in prison heard them.

16:26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened and the bands of all were loosed.

16:27 And the keeper of the prison, awakening out of his sleep and seeing the doors of the prison open, drawing his sword, would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

In despair and anxiety for his coming punishment, the soldier nearly kills himself. St Paul hinders him from this great sin, with great compassion.

16:28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying: Do thyself no harm, for we all are here.

16:29 Then calling for a light, he went in: and trembling, fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas.

16:30 And bringing them out, he said: Masters, what must I do, that I may be saved?

16:31 But they said: believe in the Lord Jesus: and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

16:32 And they preached the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house.

16:33 And he, taking them the same hour of the night, washed their stripes: and himself was baptized, and all his house immediately.

This is one Catholic argument for the baptism of infants, as there were probably infants within his family, all of whom were baptized.

16:34 And when he had brought them into his own house, he laid the table for them: and rejoiced with all his house, believing God.

16:35 And when the day was come, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying: Let those men go.

16:36 And the keeper of the prison told these words to Paul: The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart. And go in peace.

16:37 But Paul said to them: They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned,

See the zeal of Saint Paul to suffer

⁹ **gaoler**: an archaic form of *jailer*

¹⁰ *Made them fast*: that is, bound them well

men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison. And now do they thrust us out privately? Not so: but let them come,

for Christ! Under Roman law, it was forbidden for a Roman citizen to be scourged unless he was likewise convicted of a capital crime. St Paul first suffers the punishment, and then reveals that both he and Silas are in fact Romans!

16:38 And let us out themselves. And the serjeants told these words to the magistrates. And they were afraid: hearing that they were Romans.

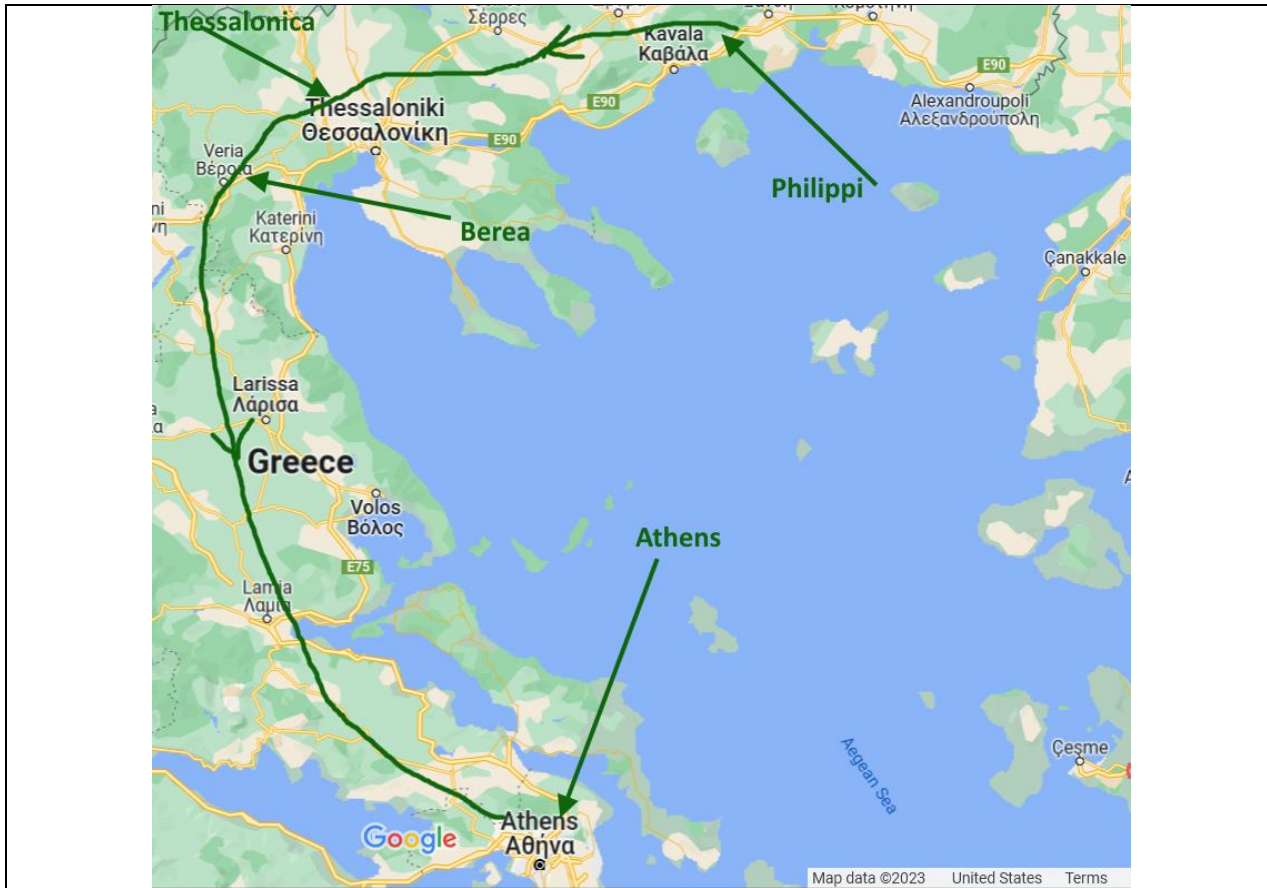
16:39 And coming, they besought them: and bringing them out, they desired them to depart out of the city.

The dignity of citizenship was upheld most strongly among Romans, and the magistrates were worried that St Paul could bring a case against them, for breaking the law.

16:40 And they went out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia: and having seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.

Acts Chapter 17

Paul preaches to the Thessalonians and Bereans. His discourse to the Athenians.



The second part of St. Paul's second voyage

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17:1 And when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to **Thessalonica**, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

Just like Philippi, Thessalonica would eventually boast a growing Catholic community, and St. Paul would write to them his two *Epistles to the Thessalonians*. But from the problems on this first visit, one might not guess the good results in the future!

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