

**EPAPHRODITUS: THE MAN OF MACEDONIA;
THE BEGINNING OF PAUL'S GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES;
AND THE AUTHOR OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE AND
THE BOOK OF ACTS
(A New Testament Thought Experiment)**

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RELEVANT SOURCES

The Circumcision Summit in Jerusalem According to the Book of Acts

And Certain Men which came down from Judea [to Antioch] taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be Saved.

When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them [e.g., Titus], should go up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and Elders about this question.

And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the Apostles and Elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

But there rose up certain of the Sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.

And the Apostles and Elders came together for to consider of this matter.

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 [the Roman Caesareans].

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by Faith.

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?

But we believe that through the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be Saved, even as they.

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.

And after they had held their peace, James [the brother of the Lord] answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me;

Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his Name.

And to this agree the words of the Prophets, as it is written,

After this I will return, and will build again the Tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

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.

Known unto God are all his works from the Beginning of the World.

Wherefore my Sentence is, That we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

But that we write unto them, That they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

For Moses of Old Time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath Day.

Then pleased it the Apostles 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;

And they wrote letters by them after this manner [the Jerusalem Church Mandate]; The Apostles and Elders and brethren send Greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain 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:

It seemed Good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

Men that have hazarded their lives for the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.

For it seemed Good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

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.

So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the Epistle:

Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

And Judas and Silas, being Prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the Apostles.

Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord, with many others also. (Epaphroditus, the Book of Acts, Chapter 15:1-35.)

Paul's Version of His Conversion and the Circumcision Summit

I marvel that ye [Galatians] are so soon removed from him that called you unto the Grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Which is not another; but there be some [Jerusalem Apostles from James] that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ.

But though we, or an Angel from Heaven [the Angel of the Book of Revelation], preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached unto you, let him be Accursed.

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be Accursed.

For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the Servant of Christ.

But I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it;

And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his Grace,

To Reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood;

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me: but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and there abode with him fifteen days.

But other of the Apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.

Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia:

And was unknown by face unto the Churches of Judea which were in Christ:

But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the Faith which once he destroyed.

And they glorified God in me.

Then fourteen years after I went up again [from Antioch] to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.

And I went up by Revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.

But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

And that because of False Brethren [from James] unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our Liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into Bondage:

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the Truth of the Gospel might continue with you.

But of those who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

But contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel of the Uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the Circumcision was unto Peter;

(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the Apostleship of the Circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be Pillars, perceived the Grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the Right Hands of Fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision,

Only they would that we should remember the Poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

For before that Certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the Circumcision.

And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

Knowing that a man is not Justified by the Works of the Law, but by the Faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be Justified by the Faith of Christ, and not by the Works of the Law; for by the Works of the Law shall no flesh be Justified.

But if, while we seek to be Justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the Minister of Sin? God forbid.

For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a Transgressor.

For I through the Law, am dead to the Law, that I might live unto God. (Paul's Letter to the Galatians, Chapters 1:6-24; 2:1-19; from Macedonia.)

Paul's Conversion According to the Book of Acts

And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the High Priest,

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.

And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined about him a Light from Heaven:

And he fell to the earth, and heard a Voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

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.

And he trembling and astonished said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do [the first lie].

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a Voice, but Seeing no man.

And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a Vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here Lord.

And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

And hath seen in a Vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much Evil he hath done to thy Saints at Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the Chief Priests to bind all that call on thy Name.

But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel: for I will show him how great things he must suffer for my Name's sake [the second lie].

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.

And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.

And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

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 hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him.

Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.

And when Paul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples [the third lie]: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

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.

And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

And he spake boldly in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him,

Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. (Acts 9:1-30; in the second version of this event recorded in Acts 22:3-10, Paul relates the event in the Temple under Roman guard, and this time those that were with him Saw a Light, but heard not a Voice; and in the third version, Acts 26:12-20, Paul relates his experience to King Herod Agrippa II, and this time all that are with Paul fall down in the Light, but only Paul hears the Voice; this version is the most consistent with Paul's version. Epaphroditus may have deliberately given different versions to tip the reader off

that his reporting may not be that accurate, since he likely heard first hand from Paul his own vastly different version; otherwise he was just reporting the official Jerusalem Church version.)

The Beginning of Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles According to Acts

And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas [in Antioch], 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.

And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

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;

And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the Grace of God.

And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman which was a Jewess, and believed, but his father was a Greek:

Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

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.

And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep [the Mandate], that were ordained of the Apostles and Elders which were at Jerusalem.

And so were the churches established in the Faith, and increased in number daily.

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia,

After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not.

And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

And a Vision Appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a Man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help **us**.

And after he had Seen the Vision, immediately **we** endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called **us** for to preach the Gospel unto them.

Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

And from thence to Philippi, which is the Chief City of that part of Macedonia, and a [Roman] Colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

And on the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God [she was a Prophetess], heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

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.

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination [a Pythoness of Apollo] met us, saying, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: the same followed Paul and us, saying, These men are the Servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the Way of Salvation.

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.

And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and threw them into the marketplace unto the Rulers [the Forum], and brought them to the Magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

And the multitude rose up together against them; and the Magistrates rent their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the Jailor to keep them safely:

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

And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

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 loosed.

And the Keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors opened, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

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

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be Saved?

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be Saved, and thy house.

And they spake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

And when it was day, the Magistrates sent the Serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

And the Keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The Magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

And the Serjeants told these words unto the Magistrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans.

And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.

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.

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonika, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them [this was Peter's territory according to the Right Handshakes of Fellowship, but he had Silas to back him up], and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures,

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 [the Messiah].

And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks [lovers of the Most High God known as God-Fearers], a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the lesser sort [as Peter had done in the Ananias/Sapphira incident], 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.

And when they had 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,

Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another King, one Jesus.

And they troubled the people and the Rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas [a Prophet in the Jerusalem Church] by night unto Berea: who coming thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.

These were more noble than those in Thessalonika, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

But when the Jews of Thessalonika had knowledge that the Word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timothy abode there still.

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.

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

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.

Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, 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.

And they took him, and brought him to the Areopagus [Aries' Hill; the KJV has Mars' Hill, but the translators Romanized Greek Gods], saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

(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.)

Then Paul stood in the midst of Aries' Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious,

For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD [this inscription has never been found]. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeth that he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.:

And have made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device [like the Ten Commandments].

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Because he hath appointed a Day, in the which he will Judge the world in Righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath Raised him from the dead.

And when they heard of the Resurrection of the Dead, some mocked: and other said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

So Paul departed from among them.

Howbeit certain men clave to him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Aeropagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with is wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

And when they had 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.

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.

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.

Then Spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a Vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:

For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

And he continued there a year and six months. (Acts 15:40 – 18:11.)

Paul, Silas, and Timothy in Athens

Paul, and Silvanus [Silas], and Timotheus [the author of Acts denied Silas' and Timothy's presence in Athens when Paul was first there], unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers;

Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the Sight of God and our Father;

Knowing, brethren beloved, your Election of God.

For our Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.

And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost;

So that we were ensamples in all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

For from you sounded out the Word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God:

And to wait for his Son from Heaven, even Jesus, which delivered us from the Wrath to Come.

For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain:

But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention.

For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile:

But as we were allowed of God to put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not of pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness:

Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the Apostles of Christ.

But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail: for laboring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God.

Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved among ourselves among you that believe.

As you know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father does his children,

That we would walk worthy of God, who hath Called you unto his Kingdom and Glory.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not at the word of men, but as it is in Truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus; for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews;

Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be Saved, to fill up their sins away; for the Wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.

Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.

For what is our Hope, or Joy, or Crown of Rejoicing? Are not even ye in the Presence of our Lord Jesus at his Coming?

For ye are our Glory and Joy.

Wherefore we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone [all three were in Athens];

And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlaborer in the Gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto,

For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.

For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, but by some means the Tempter have tempted you, and your labor be in vain.

But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always; desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you:

Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you in all of our afflictions and distress by your faith:

For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God:

Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?

Now God himself and our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way unto you.

And the Lord make you to increase and abound in Love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:

To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints.

Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how we ought how to walk and to please God, so ye should abound more and more.

For we know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus [the Jerusalem Church Mandate],

For this is the Will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor;

Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God:

That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified.

For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.

He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who also hath given unto us his Holy Spirit.

But as touching Brotherly Love need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to Love one another.

And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep [dead], that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain until the Coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall Rise first:

Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

For yourselves know perfectly that the Day of the Lord so Cometh as a Thief in the Night [this was the view of Epaphroditus in his Gospel of Luke, Chapter 12:37-40; cf. Matthew 24:27, 44; 25:13].

For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

But ye, brethren, are not in Darkness, that that Day should overtake you as a Thief.

Ye are all the Children of Light, and the Children of the Day; we are not of the Night, nor of Darkness.

Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

For they that sleep sleep in the Night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the Night.

But let us, who are of the Day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of Faith and Love; and for an Helmet, the Hope of Salvation.

For God hath not appointed us to Wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

And we beseech ye, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

And to esteem them very highly in Love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

See that none render Evil for Evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is Good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

Rejoice evermore.

Pray without ceasing.

In every thing give thanks: for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Quench not the Spirit.

Despise not prophesyings.

Prove all things: hold fast that which is Good.

Abstain from all appearance of Evil.

And the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Faithful is he that Calleth you, who also will do it.

Brethren, pray for us.

Greet all the brethren with an Holy Kiss.

I charge you by the Lord that this Epistle be read unto all the Holy Brethren.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. (Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians, Chapters 1-5; this is believed to be Paul's first letter written to believers after the Circumcision Summit and includes elements of the Jerusalem Mandate because Silas is a co-author of the Letter, with perhaps

elements added by Timothy much later after Paul's beheading in Rome. It appears that Nero sided with Paul's adversaries for disrupting the people of Ephesus and threatening one the Seven Wonders of the World, the Temple of Artemis. I'm also intrigued by the extent of the evangelization of Macedonia and Achaia beyond Athens [1:7-10], from where the letter was written, and also by a slight suggestion that the Jerusalem Church had already begun infiltrating Paul's churches [3:6]. Epaphroditus leaves us with the impression that Paul's pre-Corinth account consisted of a very brief and largely unsuccessful ministry in Athens before moving on alone to Corinth.)

The Forgery by Silas

Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace unto you, and Peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;

So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:

Which is a manifest token of the Righteous Judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer;

Seeing it is a Righteous Thing with God to recompense tribulation to them who trouble you;

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be Revealed from Heaven with his Mighty Angels,

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Who shall be punished with Everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power;

When he shall Come to be Glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that Day.

Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this Calling, and fulfil all the Good Pleasure of his Goodness, and the Work of Faith with Power:

That the Name of our Lord may be Glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the Grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

That ye be not soon shaken in mind, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us [First Thessalonians], as that the Day of Christ is at hand [he will come as a Thief in the Night].

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that Day shall not Come, except there come a Falling Away first [not as a Thief in the Night but conditional], and that Man of Sin be Revealed [the Beast from the Earth], the Son of Perdition;

Who opposeth and exalted himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

Remember ye not [this is called “gaslighting”], that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

And now ye know what withholdeth [James] that he [the Man of Sin] might be Revealed in his Time,

For the Mystery of Iniquity doth already work: only he [James] that now letteth [prevents] will let, until he be taken out of the way [the murder of James was said by some to be the beginning of the Jewish War with Rome].

And then shall that Wicked be Revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his Mouth [Revelation 19:11-16], and shall destroy with the Brightness of his Coming:

Even him whose coming is after the Working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

And with all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the Truth, that they might be Saved.

And for this cause God shall send them Strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie:

That they all might be Damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the Beginning Chosen you to Salvation through sancification of the Spirit and belief of the Truth:

Whereunto he Called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath Loved us, and hast given us Everlasting Consolation and Good Hope through Grace,

Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every Good Word and Work.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course, and be Glorified, even as it is with you:

And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for all men have not faith.

But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from Evil.

And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.

And the Lord direct your hearts in the Love of God, and into the Patient Waiting for Christ [Christ was supposed to come soon and quickly per Revelation].

Now we commend you, brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us [Jerusalem Church doctrine].

For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you;

Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought; but wrought with labor and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you;

Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Now the Lord of Peace himself give you Peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all.

The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write [this is the only letter alleged by Paul to carry this diabolical forged token of his handwriting, with the possible exception of Galatians 6:11, which was not a forgery]].

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen. (Paul's Alleged Second Letter to the Thessalonians, Chapters 1-3; the Book of Revelation was revised after the failure of the Caligula Statue Crisis and refigured to apply to Nero, for Caligula had been assassinated and was regarded as the Head of the Beast that had "been wounded in death" [Revelation 13:3], yet was reincarnated in Nero, and the forged letter reflects this change. I would like to acknowledge the German scholar Gerd Ludemann for teaching me how and why this letter is a forgery.)

The Caligula Statue (Image of the Beast) Crisis

Now, Caius [Caligula] managed public affairs with great magnanimity during the first and second year of his reign, and behaved himself with such moderation, that he gained the good-will of the Romans themselves, and of his other subjects. But, in process of time, he went beyond the bounds of human nature in his conceit of himself, and, by reason of the vastness of his dominions, made himself a god, and took upon himself to act in all things to the reproach of the Deity itself.

There was now a tumult arisen at Alexandria, between the Jewish inhabitants and the Greeks; and three ambassadors were chosen out of each party that were at variance, who came to Caius. Now one of these ambassadors from the people of Alexandria was Apion, who uttered many blasphemies against the Jews; and, among other things that he said, he charged them with neglecting the honors that belonged to Caesar; for that while all who were subject to the Roman empire built altars and temples to Caius, and in other regards universally received him as they received the gods, these Jews alone thought it a dishonorable for them to erect statues in honor of him, as well as to swear by his name.

Many of these severe things were said by Apion, by which he hoped to provoke Caius to anger at the Jews, as he was likely to be. But Philo, the principal of the Jewish embassy, a man eminent on all accounts, brother to Alexander the alabarch, and one not unskillful in philosophy, was ready to betake himself to make his defence against those accusations, but Caius prohibited him, and bade him begone: he was also in such a rage, that it openly appeared he was about to do them some very great mischief.

So Philo, being thus affronted, went out, and said to those Jews that were about him, that they should be of good courage, since Caius's words indeed showed anger at them, but in reality had already set God against himself.

Hereupon Caius, taking it very heinously that he should be thus despised by the Jews alone, sent Petronius to be president of Syria, and successor in the government to Vitellius, and gave him order to make an invasion into Judea, with a great body of troops, and, if they would admit of his Statue willingly, to erect it in the Temple of God; but, if they were obstinate, to conquer them by war, and then to do it.

Accordingly Petronius took the government of Syria, and made haste to obey Caesar's epistle. He got together as great a number of auxiliaries as he possibly could, and took with them two legions of the Roman army, and came to Ptolemais, and there wintered, as intending to set about the war in the spring. He also wrote word to Caius what he had resolved to do; who commanded him for his alacrity, and ordered him to go on, and to make war with them, in case they would not obey his commands.

But there came many ten thousands of the Jews to Petronius, to Ptolemais, to offer their petitions to him, that he would not compel to transgress and violate the law of their forefathers; "but if," said they, "thou art entirely resolved to bring this Statue, and erect it, do thou first kill us, and then do what thou hast resolved on, for while we are alive we cannot permit such things as are forbidden us to be done by the authority of our legislature, and by our forefathers' determination that such prohibitions are instances of virtue."

But Petronius was angry at them, and said, "If indeed I were myself emperor, and were at liberty to follow my own inclination, and had designed to act thus, these your words would be justly spoken to me; but now Caesar hath sent to me, I am under the necessity of being subservient to his decrees, because a disobedience to them will bring upon me inevitable destruction."

Then the Jews replied, "Since, therefore, thou art so disposed, O Petronius! that thou wilt not disobey Caius's epistles, neither will we transgress the commands of our Law; and as we depend upon the excellency of our Laws, and, by the labors of our ancestors, have continued hitherto, without suffering them to be transgressed, we dare not by any means suffer ourselves to be so timorous as to transgress those Laws out of the fear of death, which God hath determined are for our advantage; and, if we fall into misfortunes we will bear them, in order to preserve our Laws, as knowing that these who expose themselves to dangers, have good hope of escaping them: because God will stand on our side when, out of regard to him, we undergo afflictions, and sustain the uncertain turns of fortune. But, if we should submit to thee, we should be greatly reproached for our cowardice, as thereby showing ourselves ready to transgress our Law; and we should incur the great anger of God also, who, even thyself being judge, is superior to Caius."

When Petronius saw by their words, that their determination was hard to be removed, and that, without a war, he should not be able to be subservient to Caius in the dedication of his Statue, and that there must be a great deal of blood shed, he took his friends, and the servants that were about him, and hasted to Tiberias, in wanting to know in what posture the affairs of the Jews were; and many ten thousands of the Jews met Petronius again, when he came to Tiberias. These thought they must run a mighty hazard if they should have a war with the Romans, but judged that the transgression of the Law was of much greater

consequence, and made supplication to him, that he would by no means refuse them to such distresses, nor defile their city with the dedication of the Statue. Then Petronius said to them, “Will you then make war with Caesar, without considering his great preparations for war, and your own weakness?” They replied, “We will not by any means make war with him; but still we will die before we will see our Laws transgressed.” So they threw themselves down upon their faces, and stretched out their throats, and said they were ready to be slain; and this they did for forty days together, and in the meantime left off the tilling of their ground, and that while the season of the year required them to sow it. Thus they continued firm in their resolution, and proposed to themselves to die willingly, rather than to see the dedication of the Statue.

When matters were in this state, Aristobolus, King Agrippa’s brother, and Helcius the Great, and the other principal men of that family with them, went in unto Petronius and besought him, that, since he saw the resolution of the multitude, he would not make any alteration, and thereby drive them to despair; but would write to Caius that the Jews had an insuperable aversion to the reception of the Statue, and how they continued with him, and left off the tillage on their ground; that they were not willing to go to war with him, because they were not able to do it, but were ready to die with pleasure, rather than suffer their Laws to be transgressed; and how, upon the land’s continuing unsown, robberies would grow up, on the inability they would be under of paying their tributes; and that perhaps Caius might be therefore moved to pity, and not order any barbarous action to be done to them, nor think of destroying the nation; that if he continues inflexible in his former opinion to bring a war upon them, he may then set about it himself. And thus did Aristobolus, and the rest with him, supplicate Petronius.

So Petronius, partly on the account of the pressing instances which Aristobolus and the rest with him made, and because of the great consequence of what they desired, and the earnestness wherewith they made their supplication – partly on the account of the firmness of the opposition made by the Jews, which he saw, while he thought it a horrible thing for him to be such a slave to the madness of Caius, as to slay so many ten thousand men, only because of their religious disposition towards God, and after that to pass his life in expectation of punishment; Petronius, I say, thought it much better to send to Caius and let him know how intolerable it was for him to bear the anger he might have against him for not serving him sooner, in obedience to his epistle, for that perhaps he might persuade him; and that, if this mad resolution continued, he might then begin the war against them; nay, that in case he should turn his hatred against himself, it was fit for virtuous persons even to die for the sake of such vast multitudes of men. Accordingly he determined to hearken to the petition in this matter.

He then called the Jews together to Tiberias, who came many ten thousands in number; he also placed that army he now had with him opposite to them; but did not discover his own meaning, but the commands of the emperor, and told them that his wrath would, without delay, be executed upon them such as had the courage to disobey what he had commanded, and this immediately; and that it was fit for him who had received so great a dignity by his grant, not to contradict him in anything: – “Yet,” said he, “I do not think it just to have such a regard to my own safety and honor, as to refuse to sacrifice them for your preservation, who are so many in number, and endeavor to preserve the regard that is due to your Law; which, as it hath come down to you from your forefathers, as do you esteem it worthy of your utmost contention to preserve it; nor, with the

supreme assistance and power of God, will I be so hardy as to suffer your Temple to fall into contempt by the means of the imperial authority. I will, therefore, send to Caius, and let him know what your resolutions are, and will assist your suit as far as I am able, that you may not be exposed to suffer on account of the honest designs you have proposed to yourselves; and may God be your assistant for his authority is beyond all the contrivances and power of men; and may he procure you the preservation of your ancient Laws, and may not he be deprived, though without your consent, of his accustomed honors. But if Caius be irritated, and turn the violence of his rage upon me, I will rather undergo all that danger and that affliction that may come either on my body or my soul, than see so many of you perish, while you are acting in so excellent a manner. Do you, therefore, every one of you, go your way about your own occupations, and fall to the cultivation of your ground; I will myself send to Rome, and will not refuse to serve you in all things, both by myself and by my friends.”

When Petronius had said this, and had dismissed the assembly of the Jews, he desired the principal of them to take care of their husbandry, and to speak kindly to the people, and encourage them to have good hope of their affairs. Thus did he readily bring the multitude to be cheerful again. And now did God show his presence to Petronius, and signify to him, that he would afford him his assistance in his whole design; for he had no sooner finished the speech that he made to the Jews, but God sent down great showers of rain, contrary to human expectation; for that day was a clear day, and gave no sign, by the appearance of the sky, of any rain; nay, the whole year had been subject to a great drought, and made men despair of any water from above, even when at any time they saw the heavens overcast with clouds; inasmuch, that when such a great quantity of rain came, and that in an unusual manner and without any other expectation of it, the Jews hoped that Petronius would by no means fail in his petition for them.

But as to Petronius, he was mightily surprised when he perceived that God evidently took care of the Jews, and gave very plain signs of his appearance, and this to such a degree, that those that were in earnest much inclined to the contrary, had no power left to contradict it. This was also among those other particulars when he wrote to Caius, which all tended to dissuade him, and by all means to entreat him not to make so many ten thousands of these men go distracted; whom if he should slay (for without war they would by no means suffer the Laws of their worship to be set aside) he would lose the revenue they paid him, and would be publicly cursed by them for all future ages. Moreover, that God, who was their governor, had shown his power most evidently on their account, and that such a power of his as left no room for doubt about it: – and this was the business that Petronius was now engaged in.

But King Agrippa, who now lived at Rome, was more and more in the favor of Caius; and when he had once made him a supper, and was careful to exceed all others, both in expenses and in such preparations as might contribute most to his pleasure; nay, it was so far from the ability of others, that Caius himself could never equal, much less exceed it, (such care had he taken beforehand to exceed all men, and particularly to make all agreeable to Caesar;) hereupon Caius admired his understanding and magnificence, that he should force himself to do all to please him, even beyond such expenses as he could bear, and was desirous not to be behind Agrippa in that generosity which he exerted, on order to please him.

And so Caius, when he had drunk wine plentifully, and was merrier than ordinary, and said thus during the feast, when Agrippa had drunk to him: – “I know before now how great a respect thou hast had for me, and how great kindness thou hast shown me, though with those hazards to thyself, which thou underwentest under Tiberius on that account; nor hast thou omitted anything to show thy good will toward us, even beyond thy ability; whence it would be a base thing for me to be conquered by thy affection. I am therefore desirous to make thee amends for everything in which I have been formerly deficient; for all that I have bestowed on thee, that may be called my gifts, is but little. Everything that may contribute to thy happiness shall be at thy service, and that cheerfully, and so far as my ability to reach;” – and this was what Caius said to Agrippa, thinking he would ask for some large country, or the revenues of certain cities, but, although he had prepared beforehand what he would ask, yet had he not discovered his intentions, but made this answer to Caius immediately, that it was not out of any expectation of gain that he formerly paid his respects to him, contrary to the commands of Tiberius, now did he now do anything related to him out of regard to his own advantage, and in order to receive anything from him; that the gifts he had already bestowed upon him were great, and beyond the hopes of even a craving man; for although they may be beneath thy power, [who art the donor,] yet are they greater than any inclination or dignity, who am the receiver; – and, as Caius was astonished at Agrippa’s inclinations, and still the more pressed him to make his request for somewhat which he might gratify him with, Agrippa replied, “Since thou, O my Lord, declarest such in thy readiness to grant, that I am worthy of thy gifts, I will ask nothing relating to my own felicity; for what thou hast already bestowed upon me has made me excell therein; but I desire somewhat which may make thee glorious for piety, and render the Divinity assistant to thy designs, and may be for an honor to me among those that inquire about it, as showing that I never once fail of obtaining what I desire of thee; for my petition is this, that thou will no longer think of the dedication of that Statue which thou hast ordered which thou has ordered to be set up in the Jewish Temple by Petronius.”

And thus did Agrippa venture to cast the die upon this occasion, so great was the affair in his opinion, and in reality, though he knew how dangerous a thing it was so to speak; for, had not Caius approved it, it had tended to no less than the loss of his life. So Caius, who was mightily taken with Agrippa’s obliging behavior, and on other accounts thinking it is a dishonorable thing to be guilty of falsehood before so many witnesses, in points wherein he had with such alacrity forced Agrippa to become a petitioner, so that it would look as if he had already repented of what he had said, and because he greatly admired Agrippa’s virtue, is not desiring him at all to augment his own dominion, either with larger revenues, or other authority, but took care of the public tranquility, of the Laws, and of the Divinity itself, he granted him what he requested. He also wrote thus to Petronius, commending him for his assembling his army, and thus consulting him about these affairs. “If, therefore,” said he, “thou hast already erected my Statue, let it stand; but if thou hast not already dedicated, do not trouble thyself further about it, but dismiss thy army, go back, and take care of those affairs which I sent thee about at first, for I have now no occasion for the erection of that Statue. This I have granted as a favor to Agrippa, a man whom I honor so very greatly, that I am not able to contradict what he would have, or what he desired for me to do for him.”

And this is what Caius wrote to Petronius, which was before he received his letter, informing him that the Jews were very ready to revolt about this Statue, and that they seemed resolved to threaten war against the Romans, and nothing else. When, therefore, Caius was much displeased that any attempt should be made against his government, as he was a slave to base and vicious actions on all occasions, and had no regard to what was virtuous and honorable, and against whomsoever he resolved to show his anger, and that for any cause whatsoever, he suffered not himself to be restrained by any admonition, but thought the indulging his anger to be a real pleasure, he wrote thus to Petronius; – “Seeing thou esteemest the presents made thee by the Jews to be of greater value than my commands, and art grown insolent enough to be subservient to their pleasure, I charge to thee to become thy own judge, and to consider what thou art to do, now thou art under my displeasure; for I will make thee an example to the present and to all future ages, that they may not dare to contradict the commands of their emperor.”

This was the epistle which Caius wrote to Petronius; but Petronius did not receive it while Caius was alive, that ship which carried it sailed so slow, the other letters came to Petronius before this, by which he understood that Caius was dead; for God would not forget the dangers Petronius had undertaken on account of the Jews, and of his own honor. But when he had taken Caius away, out of his indignation of what he had so insolently attempted, in assuming to himself divine worship, both Rome and all that dominion conspired with Petronius, especially those that were of the senatorian order, to give Caius his due reward, because he had been unmercifully severe to them; for he died not long after he had written to Petronius that epistle which threatened him with death. But as for the occasion of his death, and the nature of the plot against him, I shall relate them in the progress of this narration.

Now, that epistle that informed Petronius of Caius’s death came first; and a little afterward came that which commanded him to kill himself with his own hands. Whereupon he rejoiced at this coincidence as to the death of Caius, and admired God’s providence, who, without the least delay, and immediately gave him a reward for the regard he had for the Temple, and the assistance he afforded the Jews for avoiding the dangers they were in. And by this means Petronius escaped that danger of death which he could not foresee. (Josephus, The Antiquities of the Jews, Book XVIII, Chapter VII, Verse 2b – Chapter VIII, Verse 9 [Whiston]; a shorter version appears in his Wars of the Jews, Book I, Chapter X.; I have broken up the Whiston text by adding more paragraphs in order to make it more readable.)

The Cult War in Asia Between John Zebedee and Nicolas of Antioch

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his Servants THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS [they did not come shortly to past and thus this is False Prophecy per Deuteronomy 18:20-22]; and he sent and signified by his Angel [Satan appearing as an Angel of Light] unto his Servant John [Zebedee]”

Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the Testimony of Jesus Christ, and of All Things that he Saw.

Blessed is he that Readeth [out loud], and they that Hear the Words of this Prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND [it never was.]

John to the Seven Churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and Peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the Seven Spirits which are before his Throne,

And from Jesus Christ, who is the Faithful Witness, and the First Begotten of the Dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth. Unto him that Loved us, and Washed us from our Sins in his own Blood,

And hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; to him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Behold, he Cometh with Clouds; and every Eye shall See him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, Saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to Come, the Almighty.

I, John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the Kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the Testimony of Jesus Christ.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and Heard behind me a Great Voice, as of a Trumpet,

Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last: and, What thou Seest, write in a Book and send it unto the Seven Churches which are in Asia: unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

And I turned to see the Voice that Spake with me. And being turned, I saw Seven Golden Candlesticks;

And in the midst of the Seven Candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a Garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a Golden Girdle.

His head and his hairs were White like Wool, and White as Snow; and his Eyes were as a Flame of Fire;

And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his Voice as the Sound of Many Waters.

And he had in his right hand Seven Stars; and out of his Mouth went a Sharp Tvoedged Sword; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

And when I Saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, Saying unto me, Fear not; I am the First and the Last;

I am he that Liveth, and was Dead; and, behold, I am Alive forever more, Amen; and have the Keys of Hell and of Death.

Write the things which thou hast Seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

The Mystery of the Seven Stars which thou Sawest in my right hand, and the Seven Golden Candlesticks. The Seven Stars are the Angels of the Seven Churches: and the Seven Candlesticks which thou sawest are the Seven Churches.

Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus write: These things saith he that holdeth the Seven Stars in his right hand, who walketh in the Midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks;

I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are Evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are Apostles, and are not, and has found them liars;

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my Name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy First Love.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and Repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee Quickly, and will remove thy Candlestick out of his Place, except thou Repent.

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes [disciples of Nicolas, an Apostle of the Church in Antioch], which I also hate.

He that hath an Ear, let him Hear what the Spirit [Satan] Saith unto the Churches; To him that Overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the Midst of the Paradise of God.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Smyrna write: These things saith the First and the Last, which was Dead, and is Alive;

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan [Nicolas was a proselyte - Acts 6:5 - meaning he had been a Gentile circumcised according to the Law of Moses, and hence admitted into the Brotherhood of Israel as a genuine Jew].

Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.

He that hath an Ear, let him Hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; He that Overcometh shall not be hurt of the Second Death.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Pergamos, write: These things saith he which hath the Sharp Sword with Two Edges;

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's Seat is [Nicolas' House]; and thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my Faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan Dwelleth.

But I have a few things against you, because thou hast there them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the Children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

So hast thou also them that hold the Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

Repent; or else I will Come unto thee Quickly, and will fight against them with the Sword of my Mouth.

He that hath an Ear, let him Hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches; To him that Overcometh will I give to eat of the Hidden Manna, and will give him a White Stone, and in the Stone a New Name Written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Thyatira, write: These things Sayeth the Son of God, who has his Eyes like unto a Flame of Fire, and his feet are like Fine Brass: I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel [Lydia], which callest herself a Prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

And I gave her space to Repent of her fornication; and she Repented Not.

Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into Great Tribulation, except they Repent of their deeds.

And I will kill her children with death; and all the Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

But unto you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this Doctrine, and which have not known the Depths of Satan [the Doctrine of Divine Sonship], as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

But that which ye have already hold fast till I Come.

And he that Overcometh, and keepeth my Works unto the end, to him I will give Power over the nations:

And he shall rule them with a Rod of Iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father.

And I will give him the Morning Star [Lucifer].

He that hath an Ear, let him Hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis write; These things Saith he that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the Seven Stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou Livest, and art Dead.

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to Die: for I have not found thy works Perfect before God.

Remember therefore how thou hast received and Heard, and hold fast, and Repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will Come on thee as a Thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will Come upon thee. [This was the teaching of Paul in I Thessalonians 5:1-2.]

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall Walk with me in White: for they are Worthy.

He that Overcometh, the same shall be Clothed in White Raiment; and I will not Blot Out his name Out of the Book of Life, but I will Confess his name before my Father, and before his Angels.

He that hath an Ear, let him Hear what the Spirit Saith unto the Churches.

And unto the Angel of the Church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is Holy, he that is True, he that hath the Key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth, and no man openeth;

I know thy works: Behold, I have set before thee an Open Door no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and has kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name;

Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan [Gentile Believers], which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have Loved thee.

Because thou has kept the Word of my patience, I also will keep thee, I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY [he didn't]; hold fast which thou hast, that no man take thy Crown.

Him that Overcometh will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will Write upon him the Name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my New Name.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.

And unto the Angel of the church of the Laodiceans write: These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God:

I know thy works, that thou art neither Cold nor Hot: I would thou were Cold or Hot.

So then because thou art Lukewarm, and neither Cold nor Hot, I will Spue thee out of my Mouth.

Because thou sayest, I am Rich, and increased with Goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art Wretched, and Miserable, and Poor, and Blind, and Naked:

I counsel thee to buy of me Gold tried in the Fire, that thou mayest be Rich: and White Raiment, that thou mayest be Clothed, and that the Shame of thy Nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with Eyesalve, that thou mayest See.

As many as I Love, I Rebuke and Chasten; be Zealous therefore, and Repent.

Behold I stand at the Door, and Knock: if any man Hear my Voice, and Open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To him that Overcometh will I grant to Sit with me in my Throne [this was the Zebedees' dream: Mark 10:35-45], even as I also Overcame, and am Set Down with my Father in his Throne.

He that hath an Ear, let him Hear what the Spirit sayeth unto the Churches.

After this I looked, and, behold, a Door was opened in Heaven: and the first Voice which I Heard was as it were of a Trumpet Talking with me; which said, Come up hither [to Third Heaven: Paradise; see II Corinthians 12:1-5], and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a Throne was set in Heaven, and One sat on the Throne.

And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a Rainbow round about the Throne, in sight like unto an emerald....

And I saw another mighty Angel come down from Heaven clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

And he had in his hand a Little Book open; and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth,

And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried, Seven Thunders Uttered Their Voices.

And when the Seven Thunders had Uttered Their Voices, I was about to write: and I heard a Voice from Heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the Seven Thunders Uttered, and write them not [II Corinthians 12:4]....

And I will give power unto my Two Witnesses [Zebedee Brothers], and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

These are the Two Olive Trees, and the Two Candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devourest their enemies; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

And when they have finished their testimony, the Beast that ascended out of the Bottomless Pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the Great City, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt [Jerusalem], where also our Lord was Crucified....

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a Great Beast rise up out of the sea, having Seven Heads and Ten Horns, and upon his Horns Ten Crowns, and upon his Heads the Name of Blasphemy [Caligula at first, then Nero]....

And I saw one of his Heads as it were wounded to death [Caligula]; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the Beast.

And they worshipped the Dragon which gave power unto the Beast: and they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast? who is able to make war with him?...

And I beheld another Beast coming up out of the earth [Agrippa]; and he had Two Horns like a Lamb, and he spake as a Dragon.

And he exerciseth all the power of the First Beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the First Beast, whose deadly wound was healed [Nero].

And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the Beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an Image to the Beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. (John Zebedee, The Book of Revelation. Chapters 1:1 – 4:3; 10:1-4; 11:3-8; 13:1, 3-4; 11-14.)

The Jerusalem Church's Attempt to Steal the Antioch Fellowship

Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen [Saul had him stoned to death] traveled as far as Phenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch [by Nicolas], preaching the Word to none but the Jews only.

And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians [Gentiles], preaching the Lord Jesus.

And the Hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Then tidings of these things came into the ears of the Church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

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.

For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of Faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, to seek Saul:

And when he had found him, he brought him into 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. (Acts 11:18-26.)

Herod Agrippa's Persecution of the Apostolic Triumvirate

And in those days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea.

Which also they did, and sent it to the Elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. [According to Paul, this never happened: Galatians 1:17 – 2:1; Epaproditus spins this tale in lieu of the much later Collection for the Poor per the Right Hand of Fellowship agreement at the Circumcision Summit which had not yet occurred.]

Now about that time [circa 40-42 A.D.] Herod the King [Agrippa I] stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

And he killed James [Zebedee] the brother of John with the sword [beheaded].

And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the Days of Unleavened Bread.)

And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quarternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter [Passover] to bring him forth to the people.

Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

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.

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.

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.

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.

When they were passed 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.

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.

And when he had considered the thing, he came to the House of Mary [wife of Clopas/Alphaeus, brother of Joseph, the father of Jesus] the mother [sister of Barnabas] of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.

And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.

But Peter continued knocking; and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

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 show these things unto James [the brother of the Lord], and to the brethren. And he departed, and went unto another place.

Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and there abode. (Acts 11:27 – 12:19; it is likely that the examination showed that the guards had been bribed.)

The Second Caesar Statue Crisis Under Agrippa I

Now Claudius Caesar, by these decrees of his which were sent to Alexandria and to all the habitable earth, made known what opinion he had of the Jews. So he soon sent Agrippa away to take his kingdom, now he was advanced to a more illustrious dignity than before, and sent letters to the presidents and procurators of the provinces, that they should treat him very kindly. Accordingly he returned in haste, as was likely he would, now he returned in much greater prosperity than he had before.

He also came to Jerusalem and offered all the sacrifices that belonged to him, and omitted nothing which the Law required; on which account he ordered that many of the Nazarenes should have their heads shorn. And for the golden chain which had been given him by Caius, of equal weight with that of that iron

chain wherewith his royal hands had been bound, he hung it up within the limits of the Temple, over the treasury, that it might be a memorial of the severe fate he had lain under, and a testimony of his change for the better; that it might be demonstration how the greatest prosperity may have a fall, and that God sometimes raises what is fallen down; for this chain thus dedicated, afforded a document to all men, that King Agrippa had been once bound in a chain for a small cause, but recovered his former dignity again; and a little while afterwards got out of his bonds, and was advanced to be a more illustrious King than he was before. Whence men may understand, that all that partake of human nature, how great soever they are, may fall; and that those who fall may gain their former illustrious dignity again.

And when Agrippa had entirely finished all the duties of the divine worship, he remembered Theophilus, the son of Ananus, from the High Priesthood, and bestowed that honor of his on Simon, the son of Boethus, whose name was also Cantheras, whose daughter King Herod had married, as I have related above. Simon, therefore, had the High Priesthood with his brethren, and with his father, in like manner as the sons of Simon, the son of Onias, who were three, had it formerly under the government of the Macedonians, as we have related in a former book.

When the King had settled the High Priesthood after this manner, he returned the kindnesses which the inhabitants of Jerusalem had shown him; for he released them from the tax upon houses, every one of whom paid it before, thinking it a good thing to requite the tender affections of those that loved him. He also made Silas the general of his forces, as a man who had partaken with him in many of his troubles. But after a very little while, the young men of Doris, preferring a rash attempt before piety, and being naturally bold and insolent, carried a Statue of Caesar into a synagogue of the Jews, and erected it there. This procedure of theirs greatly provoked Agrippa; for it plainly tended to the dissolution of the Laws of his country.

So he came without delay to Publius Petronius, who was then president of Syria, and accused the people of Doris. Nor did he less resent what was done than did Agrippa, for he judged it a piece of impiety to transgress the Laws that regulate the actions of men. So he wrote the following letter to the people of Doris in an angry strain: – “Publius Petronius, the President under Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, to the Magistrates of Doris, ordains as follows: – Since some of you had the boldness, or madness rather, after the edict of Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, was published, for permitting the Jews to observe the Laws of their country, not to obey the same, but have acted in entire opposition thereto, as forbidding the Jews to assemble together in the synagogue by removing Caesar’s Statue and setting it up therein, and thereby have offended not only the Jews, but the Emperor himself, whose Statue is more commodiously placed in his own temple than in a foreign one, where is the place of assembling together, while it is a part of natural justice, that everyone should have the power over the place belonging peculiarly to themselves, according to the determination of Caesar, – to say nothing of my own determination, which it would be ridiculous to mention after the emperor’s edict, which gives the Jews leave to make use of their own customs, as also gives order that they enjoy equally the rights of citizens with the Greeks themselves, –

I therefore ordain, that Proculus Vitellius, the Centurion, bring those men to me, who, contrary to Augustus’s edict, have been so insolent as to do this thing

at which those very men who appear to be of principal reputation among them, have an indignation also, and allege for themselves that it was not done with their consent, but by the violence of the multitude, that they might give an account of what hath been done. I also exhort the principal magistrates among them, unless they have a mind to have this action esteemed to be done with their consent, to inform the Centurion or those that were guilty of it, and take care that no handle be hence taken for raising a sedition or quarrel among them, which those seem to me to hunt after, who encourage such doings; while both I myself, and King Agrippa, for whom I have the highest honor, have nothing more under our care than that the nation of the Jews may have an occasion given them of getting together, under the pretence of avenging themselves, and become tumultuous. And that it may be more publicly known what Augustus hath resolved upon this whole matter, I have subjoined those edicts which he hath lately caused to be published at Alexandria, and which, although they may be well known, to all, yet did King Agrippa, for whom I have the highest honor, read them at that time before my tribunal, and pleaded that the Jews ought not to be deprived of those rights which Augustus hath granted them. I therefore charge you, that you do not, for the time to come, seek for any occasion of sedition or disturbance, but that every one be allowed to follow their own religious customs.”

Thus did Petronius take care of this matter, that such a breach of the Law might be corrected, and that no such thing might be attempted afterwards against the Jews. And now King Agrippa took the High Priesthood away from Simon Cantheras, and put Jonathan, the son of Ananus, into it again, and owned that he was more worthy of that dignity than the other. But this was not a thing acceptable to him, to recover that his former dignity.

So he refused it, and said, “O King! I rejoice in the honor that thou hast for me, and take it kindly that thou wouldst give me such a dignity of thine own inclinations, although God hath judged that I am not at all worthy of the High Priesthood. I am satisfied with having once put on the sacred garments; for I then put them on after a more holy manner than I should now receive them again. But, if thou desirest that a person more worthy than myself should have this honorable employment, give me leave to name thee such a one. I have a brother that is pure from all sin against God, and of all offenses against thyself; I recommend him to thee, as one that is fit for this dignity.” So the King was pleased with these words of his, and passed by Jonathan, and according to his brother’s desire, bestowed the High Priesthood upon Matthias. Nor was it long before Marcus succeeded Petronius, as President of Syria. (Josephus, Antiquities, Book XIX, Chapter VI [Whiston]; I have again added more paragraphs.)

Paul’s Sarcastic Critique of the Book of Revelation and John Zebedee

And when I was present with you [Corinthians], and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied; and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so I will keep myself.

As the Truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

Wherefore? because I love ye not? God knoweth.

But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory [the Apostles from Jerusalem], they may be found even as we.

For such are False Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ.

And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light [The Angel of the Book of Revelation].

Therefore it is no great thing if his Ministers also be transformed as the Ministers of Righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works....

It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to Visions and Revelations of the Lord.

I knew a man in Christ [John Zebedee] above fourteen years ago [at the Circumcision Summit], (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the Third Heaven.

And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words [the Seven Thunders], which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. (Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, Chapters 11:9-15; 12:1-5; Paul mocks the prophecy for it does not reveal what the Seven Thunders uttered, and is therefore no revelation; ironically, this means that John is the only human who will ever hear these words, making him a special person, for everyone will ask him continually for the rest of his life what the Thunders uttered, and he has the perfect excuse for keeping them secret. It's the same as when Jeremiah hid the Ark of the Covenant in a secret cave in Mount Nebo so that no one could ever open it and discover that there were really only Ten Commandments originally, not the Twelve that we have today, thus concealing the fact that two were added centuries later by the YHWH Only Party, to wit, Jeremiah and his father, the High Priest Hilkiyah.)

Paul's Take on the Beginning of His Gospel to the Gentiles

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the Saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons:

Grace be unto you, and Peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,

For your fellowship in the Gospel from the First Day until now....

But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me [his arrest in the Jerusalem Temple] have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the Praetorium [Herod's Palace in Caesarea], and in all other places....

Yet I supposed it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, my Brother, and Companion in Labor, and Fellowsoldier, but **your Apostle**, and he that Ministered to my wants....Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: because for the Work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me....

I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

And I intreat thee also, True Yokefellow [Lydia?], help those women which labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement also [the Keeper of the Prison?], and with other my fellowlaborers, whose names are in the Book of Life....

Now ye Philippians know also, that in the Beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonika ye sent once and again unto my necessity. (Paul's Letter to the Philippians [written from Caesarea], Chapters 1:1-4; 2:25, 29-30; 4:15-16.)

Early Days of the Communist Triumvirate in Jerusalem Prior to the Hellenist Expulsion and the Subsequent Murder of Ananias and Sapphira and the State of Fear and Tyranny of Terror that Followed

And the multitude of those 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; but they had all things in common.

And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and Great Grace was upon them all.

Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

And laid them down at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

And Joses, who by the Apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, The Son of Consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,

Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the Apostles' feet.

But a certain man name Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

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.

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?

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

And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost; and Great Fear came on all them that heard these things.

And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether you sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

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.

And Great Fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things....

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians [Hellenists: Greek speaking Jews, liberal as to food forbidden by the Law of Moses] against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

Then the Twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve tables.

Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of Faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenus, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

Whom they set before the Apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

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....

And Saul was consenting unto his [Stephen's] death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the [Hellenist] church which was at Jerusalem; and they [the Hellenists] were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles [the Hebrew church]....

Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch [Nicolas], preaching the Word to none but the Jews only,

And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks [Gentiles], preaching the Lord Jesus. (Acts 4:32– 5:11; 6:1-7; 8:1; 11:19-20; the idea of Seven Deacons being under the control of the Twelve is pure whitewash, but reporting it was necessary in order to justify the Jerusalem's Church's attempted seizure of the Hellenistic churches after being established by the Seven, especially those by Philip and Nicolas, a founder of the church in Antioch and those he outreached in Asia.)

Paul's Collection for the Poor in Jerusalem

Now concerning the Collection for the Saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye [Corinthians].

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality to Jerusalem.

And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.

And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.

For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.

But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost.

For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. (Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 16:1-4; from Ephesus.)

Moreover, brethren [Corinthians], we do you to wit of the Grace of God bestowed on the Children of Macedonia;

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and of their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the Gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the Saints.

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the Will of God.

Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same Grace also.

Therefore as ye abound in every thing, in Faith, and Utterance, and Knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this Grace, also.

I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.

For you Know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

And herein I give my advice; for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.

Now therefore perform the doing of it; as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.

For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.

For I mean not that the other men be eased, and ye burdened:

But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

As it written, He that hath gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.

For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

And we have sent with him the brother [Epaphroditus? Aristarchus?], whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches;

And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this Grace [the Guardian of the Phlippian Collection], which is administered by us to the Glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:

Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:

Providing for honest things, not only in the Sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you.

Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you; or our brethren be enquired of, they are the Apostles of the churches, and the Glory of Christ.

Wherefore show ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

For as touching the ministering to the Saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:

For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many.

Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:

Lest haply of they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting.

Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, and not as of covetousness.

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

And God is able to make all Grace Abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

(As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his Righteousness remaineth for ever.

Now he that ministereth seed to the sower, both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the Saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.

Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glory God for your professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;

And by their prayers for you, which long after you for the exceeding Grace of God in you.

Thanks be unto God for his Unspeakable Gift. (Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, Chapters 8-9; from Macedonia.)

Yea, so I have strived to preach the Gospel, and not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you [Rome].

But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain [never happened], I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company.

But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the Saints.

For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the Poor Saints which are at Jerusalem.

It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit I will come by you into Spain.

And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel of Christ

Now I beseech ye, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea: and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the Saints;

That I may come unto you with joy by the Will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

Now the God of Peace be with you all. Amen. (Paul's Letter to the Romans, Chapter 15:20-33; from Cenckrea, a port city of Corinth; according to Acts Paul originally wanted to travel to Jerusalem by ship from Cenckrea but the Jews laid in wait to kill him, so he changed his mind and escorted the Collection to Phlippi in Macedonia where he was joined by Epaphroditus, as made clear in the following section.)

The Rejection of Paul's Collection for the Poor by James, the Brother of Our Lord, According to the Book of Acts

After these things were ended [his ministry in Ephesus, in disobedience of the Jerusalem Church], 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.

So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

And the same time there arose no small stir about that Way.

For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana [Artemis], brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

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:

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 [Artemis: one of the Seven Wonders of the World] should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Artemis of the Ephesians.

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.

And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

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.

Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

And they drew Alexander [a Jewish Coppersmith and disciple of John Zebedee] out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Artemis of the Ephesians.

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 Artemis, and of the Image [a meteorite] which fell down from Jupiter [Zeus]?

Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your Goddess,

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.

But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

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.

And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria [from Cenchrea], he purposed to return through Macedonia.

And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus and Gaius; of Derbe, Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus [guardians of the Collection to the Poor].

These going before tarried for us [note the beginning of the second “we” section] in Troas.

And we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread and came unto them to Troas five days; where we abode seven days.

And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

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.

And Paul went down and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

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.

And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul; for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene,

And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus.

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.

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the Elders of the church.

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.

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:

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

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.

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God.

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.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch, and remember, by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

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.

I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

I have showed you all things, how that so laboring 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 [This saying is not in the Gospels].

And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

And they all went sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

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.

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:

And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

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.

And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem [i.e, Paul was Tempted of the Spirit].

And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way: and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship, and they returned home again.

And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

And the next day we that were part of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the House of Philip the Evangelist, which was one of the Seven [Deacons]: and abode with him.

And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles [Paul is further Tempted by the Spirit].

And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem [Tempted for the third time].

Then Paul answered, When mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.

And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The Will of the Lord be done.

And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

And the day following Paul went in with us unto James [The King of the Restored Kingdom of God]; and all the Elders were present.

And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

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 [Zealot Revolutionaries]:

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.

What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

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.

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 [Hieros Gamos: Temple Prostitution].

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.

And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia [disciples of John Zebedee, e.g., Alexander the Coppersmith], when they saw him in the Temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him.

Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the Law, and this Place: and further brought Greeks also unto the Temple, and hath polluted the Holy Place.

(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus, an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the Temple.)

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.

And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto Chief Captain of the Band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

Who immediately took soldiers and Centurions, and ran down unto them [from the Fortress Antonia]; and when they saw the Chief Captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

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....

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.

And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

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.

Now therefore ye with the Council signify to the Chief Captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him; and we, if ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the Castle [Fortress Antonia], and told Paul.

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.

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 has something to say unto thee.

Then the Chief Captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is it that thou hast to tell me?

And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down to morrow into the Council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

But do not thou yield unto them: for they lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an Oath, that will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

So the Chief Captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me.

And he called unto him two Centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen three score and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the Governor.

And he wrote a letter after this manner:

Claudius Lysis unto the most excellent Governor Felix sendeth greeting.

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.

And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their Council:

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.

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.

Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the Castle:

Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the Governor, presented Paul also before him.

And when the Governor had read the letter, he asked of what Province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in the Praetorium [Herod's Judgment Hall]. (Acts 19:21 – 21:33; 23:12-35; it is assumed that the Collection for the Poor was rejected by James, in the belief that Paul, like Simon Magus before him [Acts 8:9-24], was trying to buy a Jerusalem Church Authorized Apostleship. It appears almost compelling that James set a trap for Paul, leading to his eventual arrest in the Temple for the riot attributed to him in Ephesus, and, of course, for his disobedience of James for going into Asia.)

Paul's Ministry to Crete with Titus According to Paul

Paul, a Servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the Faith of God's Elect, and the acknowledging of the Truth which is after Godliness;

In Hope of Eternal Life, which God, which cannot lie, promised before the world began;

But hath in due times manifested his Word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the Commandment of God our Savior;

To Titus, mine own son after the Common Faith: Grace, Mercy, and Peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

For a Bishop must be blameless, as the Steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;

Holding fast the faithful Word as he had been taught, that he may be able by Sound Doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

For there are many unruly and vain, talkers and deceivers, specially they of the Circumcision:

Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

One of themselves, even a Prophet of their own, said, The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies.

This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be Sound in the Faith;

Not giving heed to Jewish Fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the Truth.

Unto the Pure, all things are Pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure [cf. I Corinthians 6:12 & 10:23: “All things are lawful unto me; but all things are not expedient”]; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate.

But speak thou the things which become Sound Doctrine...

Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the Glorious Appearance of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ;

Who gave himself for us that he might Redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates, to be ready to every good work.

To speak Evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness to all men.

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

But after that the Kindness and Love of God our Savior toward man Appeared,

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he Saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Which he shed upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior;

That being Justified by his Grace, we should be made Heirs according to the Hope of Eternal Life.

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

A man that is a heretick after the first and second admonitions reject;

Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis [Macedonia]: for I have determined there to winter.

Bring Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them.

And let our's also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful.

All that are with me salute thee. Greet them that love us in the Faith. Grace be with you all. Amen. (Paul's Letter to Titus, Chapters 1:1 – 2:1,13 – 3:15; from Corinth.)

Paul's Non-Ministry to Crete According to the Book of Acts

And when it was determined that we [the third “we” section begins, indicating that now Epaphroditus is an eye-witness] should sail into Italy [from Caesarea because of Paul’s Appeal to Caesar], they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a Centurion of Augustus’ Band. [Augustus was the First Emperor of Rome, and though dead – Nero was at the time reigning – things he instituted still retained his name.]

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 [likely one of the certain other prisoners].

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.

And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

And when we had sailed over the Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.

And there the Centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

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;

And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea [they are now in Crete].

Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

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.

Nevertheless the Centurion believed the Master and the Owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

And because The Haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice [Phoenix], and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete. (Acts 27:1-13; in verses 14 through 28:1, the ship is caught in a storm and crashes on the rocks off the coast of the Island of Miletus; however, according to Epaphroditus, Paul and Titus never had a ministry in Crete, for none of the believers, or whether there were any believers in Crete, are mentioned.)

Paul's Experience with Alexander the Coppersmith of Ephesus

Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the Commandment of God our Savior, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our Hope;

Unto Timothy, my own son in the Faith: Grace, Mercy, and Peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

Neither give heed to Fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.

Now the end of the commandment is Charity [Giving Love] out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the Law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

But we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully;

Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, of murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,

For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to Sound Doctrine;

According to the Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor; and injurious: but I obtained Mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

And the Grace of our Lord was Exceeding Abundant with Faith and Love which is in Christ Jesus.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ 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 show forth all longsuffering, for a Pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to Life Everlasting [if God has Saved Paul, he has Saved everyone].

Now unto the King Eternal, immortal, invisible, the only Wise God, be Honor and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning Faith have made shipwreck:

Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. (Paul's First Letter to Timothy, Chapter 1:1-20; from Macedonia, likely Philippi.)

I charge thee [Timothy] therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his Appearing and his Kingdom;

Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure Sound Doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto Fables.

But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the

Faith:

Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his Appearing.

Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me:

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Only Luke is with me. Take [John] Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

Alexander the Coppersmith did me much Evil: the Lord reward him according to his works:

Of whom be thou ware also, for he hath greatly withstood our words.

(Paul's Second Letter to Timothy, Chapter 4:1-15; from Rome, waiting trial before Caesar over the incident in Asia, where his luck ran out; it is likely that Alexander appeared as a witness against him.)

The Free-For-All Cult Competition in Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia According to the Book of Acts

And when Gallio was Deputy in Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the Judgment Seat.

Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the Law.

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:

But if it be a question of words or names, and of your Law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.

And he drave them from the Judgment Seat.

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 these things.

And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered into the synagogue [against the order of James], and reasoned with the Jews.

When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

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.

And when he had landed in Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church [in Jerusalem], he went down to Antioch.

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 [Paul made new disciples, to whom he wrote his Letter to the Galatians, which proved such an embarrassment to Epaphroditus that he obscured the location].

And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus.

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 [to wit, a disciple of the Jerusalem Church].

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 [Christ King Mysticism: Christ In You; the Baptism of the Holy Spirit].

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:

For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was Christ [Messiah].

And it came to pass that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

He said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? and they said, Unto John's baptism [they were disciples of John Zebedee].

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.

When they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

And all the men were about twelve.

And he went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God.

But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake Evil of that Way before the multitude [e.g., Alexander the Coppersmith], he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the School of one Tyrannus.

And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. (Acts 18:12 – 19:10; Paul's trial under Gallio can be accurately dated chronologically because Gallio's tenure can be verified in secular sources.)

The Free-For-All in Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia According to Paul

Paul, Called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the Will of God, and Sosthenes our brother [the Ruler of the Corinthian synagogue; he obviously replaced Crispus, and was now a believer],

Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are Sanctified in Christ Jesus, Called to be Saints, with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and ours;

Grace be unto you, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ...

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the House of Chloe, that there are Contentions among you.

Now this I say, if every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Is Christ Divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius;

Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name.

And I baptized also the House of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect....

For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you enying, and strife, and Divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

For while one sayeth, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor....

For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel.

Wherefore I beseech ye, be ye followers of me.

For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church....

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any....

Am I not an Apostle? am I not free? have I not Seen Jesus Christ our Lord?

If I be not an Apostle, yet doubtless I am to you: for the Seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord.

Mine answer to them that do examine me is this,

Have we not power to eat and to drink?

Have we not power to lead about a Sister, a Wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the Brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?...

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not....

Whether ye therefore eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the Glory of God....

Now in this I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.

For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be Divisions among you; and I partly believe it.

For there must be also Heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you....

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

By which also ye are Saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ Died for Our Sins according to the Scriptures;

And that he was buried, and that he Rose Again the Third Day according to the Scriptures....

But now is Christ Risen from the Dead, and become the First-Fruits of them that slept.

For since by man came Death; by man came also the Resurrection of the Dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,

But every man in his own order: Christ the Firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his Coming.

Then cometh the End, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom of God, even the Father: when he shall have put down all Rule and all Authority and Power,

For he must Reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet, The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death.

For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

And when all things shall be subdued unto him, than shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be All in All.

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?

And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?

I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die....

Behold, I show you a Mystery; We shall not all sleep. But we shall all be Changed,

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last Trump; for the Trumpet shall Sound, and the dead shall be Raised incorruptible, and we shall be Changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is Swallowed Up in Victory.

O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?

The Sting of Death is Sin; and the Strength of Sin is the Law.

But thanks be to God, which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, Chapters 1:1-3, 10-17; 2:3-8; 4:15-17; 6:12; 9:1-6; 10:23, 31; 11:17-19; 15:1-4, 20-32, 51-57; the phrase above that states that Paul should be allowed a Sister to accompany him is intriguing, especially if Sister and Wife are not meant to be the same person. Some scholars have speculated that Paul was romantically involved with Lydia, who could be the "True Yokefellow" mentioned in his Letter to the Philippians, and I am in agreement with this; but I also like the idea of the Pythoness he exorcised becoming a traveling companion after Paul bought her as a slave, and assuming he then set her free. After all, she already knew how to prophesy accurately, even if she had been possessed by a Demon impersonating the God Apollo.)

INTRODUCTION

I would like to thank the German scholar Gerd Ludemann for teaching me that when the letters of Paul contradict the Book of Acts (as they surely do in the passages above), Paul's letters are always to be preferred as most accurate. Taking this stance, it becomes clear that the author of the Book of Acts, although a talented writer and story-teller, especially in his descriptions of sea voyages, is still an unreliable narrator. In fact, he is clearly a propagandist for the Jerusalem Church.

In the following pages we will make, as a New Testament Thought Experiment, certain assumptions in order to show what wonderful kinds of stories can be told with the New Testament documents alone if one assumes that the people and events recorded therein all lived and took place between 6 B.C. and 72 A.D., regardless of when they were actually written down or by whom.

In my opinion the Book of Acts is clearly authored by the person Paul saw in his Vision of the Man of Macedonia, for immediately thereafter the first series of "we" sections in Acts begins, indicating that the author is now relating first hand experiences. (Acts 16:9-10.)

Thus, we assume that the author was a Macedonian.

We further assume this man was Epaphroditus, for we learn in Paul's Letter to the Philippians that Epaphroditus was with Paul from the Beginning of his Gospel to the Gentiles

and is regarded by the Philippians as their Apostle. (Philippians 2:25; 4:15.) The only other male Macedonian mentioned in the letter is a man named Clement. Since nothing is known about Clement, other than that he aided Paul in his ministry, we have assumed Epaphroditus was the Man of Macedonia who appeared to Paul in a Vision he experienced in Troas, making him the author of both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts.

We further assume in this article that the King James Holy Bible is the best English version of the Bible because the translators were still in that Newtonian shadow-land where hard science was still blended with Magic and Alchemy. After all, Sir Isaac Newton was both a Scientist and an Alchemist; plus, he believed in Biblical Prophecy.

Moreover, King James instructed the translators to highlight the passages that demonstrate the Divine Right of Kings, as well as the English Secret Doctrine, for those who have eyes to see. All subsequent English translations have lacked this spiritual grandeur, which is why they seem so dead and lifeless when you read them. Having to struggle through the thees and thous of King James English is well worth the effort when one stands to gain so much Gnosis, to wit, Secret Wisdom.

Furthermore, we assume that the proper way to read the Bible is in a state of Suspended Disbelief, or, as I call it, Positive Magical Thinking. I believe in hard science and Deep Time but I also believe in the Power of Prayer, which makes me a magical thinker. All of the people in the New Testament, as well as the English translators, believed in Magic, Astrology, Ghosts, Spirits, Witches, Sorcerers, Giants, Dragons, and the lot – and, in my opinion, had a better grip on reality compared to the atheistic scientists of today.

So, in light of these assumptions, let's see what kind of fun we can have when we assume that the author of Acts is Epaphroditus, the Man of Macedonia. And especially, why he omitted such key events and people such as Paul's True Damascus Conversion; his True Circumcision Summit of Equals in Jerusalem with Barnabas and Titus representing Antioch and the Three

Pillars, Peter (Cephas), John Zebedee, and James (the Lord's brother), representing the Jerusalem Church; Paul's ministry to Crete with Titus; and, last but not least, the Collection for the Poor in Jerusalem and its fate.

The bare fact is that the author of Acts never mentions Titus even once, or even alludes to him, which is very strange since Paul states that he took him to the Circumcision Summit in his Letter to the Galatians, and, after all, his penis was on the chopping block! Epaphroditus is further mysteriously silent as to the Caligula Statue Crisis and the challenge posed by John Zebedee's Book of Revelation, which precipitated Herod Agrippa I's persecution of the Apostles, especially those that are prophesied as being the Two Witnesses at the End of the World, which everyone knew were supposed to be the Zebedee brothers. Although Epaphroditus chose to ignore this story in his Gospel of Luke, it is told as criticism in both the Gospels of Mark and Matthew:

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him [Jesus], saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us, whatsoever we shall desire.

And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you?

They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy Glory

But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask; can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup I drink of [James was beheaded]; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. (The Gospel of Mark, Chapter 10:35-45; the passage in The Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 20:20-23, is similar except it is the mother of the Zebedees who makes the request; in both versions it is noted that the other Ten Apostles were very angry about this power play, demonstrating both that their belief in a physical Kingdom of Heaven where they would be supreme rulers over real subjects, and as well as to their limited ability to understand Jesus .)

It is also noteworthy that John Zebedee was not present in Jerusalem when Herod chopped off his brother's head and imprisoned Peter in Jerusalem (around 40-42 A.D.: Acts 12:1-4), but he is definitely back in Jerusalem for the Circumcision Summit approximately ten

years later (circa 50A.D.: Galatians 2:9). In fact, John disappears entirely from Acts after he and Peter steal the church that Philip had begun in Samaria (Acts 8:14-25).

Where did he go? As we will see, he likely followed suit to Asia where he attempted to steal the churches of Nicolas of Antioch. This is very apparent in the Book of Revelation which he composed on the Island of Patmos. I doubt that he was in prison at the time because the parchment on which the book is written would have been way too expensive for a prisoner to afford.

The New Testament is a special book for it gives us both sides of the Good and the Evil, expressing them both as the Truth in the greatest Cult War at the Beginning of Christianity, where the two Versions of the Gospel are presented equally: one WITH the Law of Moses (the Accursed Evil: Galatians 1:8-9), and one WITHOUT the Law of Moses (the Blessed Good: Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16).

The latter is known as Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles.

The Beginning of the Gospel to the Gentiles

The Right Handshakes of Fellowship between the Pillars of Jerusalem and the representatives of the Antioch fellowship, are not only the historical event which begins our article, it was also the Seed of Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles. He was free to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles WITHOUT the Law of Moses and he was free to preach it in all of its fantastic Mystery:

Whereof I am made a Minister, according to the Dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God;
Even the Mystery which hath been Hid from Aeons and from Generations, but now is made Manifest to his Saints:
To whom God would make Known what is the Riches of the Glory of this Mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the Hope of Glory. (Paul's Letter to the Colossians, Chapter 1:25-27.)

Yes, Paul preached that once a Gentile believer receives the Holy Spirit, after believing in the Saving Faith of Jesus Christ, and not their own, he or she then becomes a Divine Son or

Daughter of God, with all of the Powers and Privileges of Divine Christ Kings contained therein. Paul preached Jesus as a World Savior within an Intergalactic Conspiracy of Archons and Powers, the Kosmocrats of this Aion's Darkness, and of Spiritual Wickedness in High Places (Ephesians 6:12); and asserted that the only condition put upon him and his preaching to the Gentiles from the Jerusalem Church was for him to remember the Poor, as the members of the Jerusalem Church were known. This he did religiously.

The Author of Acts, however, has Paul agree to several restrictions that are based on the Law of Moses, and Silas is sent with Paul to make sure he stays in line as this message is communicated to the Churches founded by the Antioch fellowship. In other words, the Jerusalem Church is stealing the Antioch churches like they had the Samaritan, the Caesarean, and the Asian churches before them.

Then Paul starts his official mission to the Gentiles, after a breakup with Barnabas (Acts 15:36-40 says it was over John Mark; whereas Paul says in Galatians 2:11-13 it was because Barnabas had sided with Peter in Antioch after Peter betrayed his eating with the Gentiles; and later Paul praises John Mark for his work: II Timothy 4:11.). Instead, he takes with him Silas and Timothy, and I would speculate also Titus, especially since he was the test case for the Law of Moses. Note that they are told to stay out of Asia and other areas that John Zebedee has worked (as seen in the Book of Revelation), and where the Nicolaitanes are also active. The author of Acts makes this prohibition seem to come from the Holy Spirit, but one can easily see the hand of the Jerusalem Church in it. When Paul eventually breaks this prohibition, it leads to his evil demise.

Legend has it that Paul lost his case and his head during the Christian uprising under Nero which eventually led them to set fire to the city in an attempt to fulfill the Book of Revelation's pronouncement of Judgment of Doom upon the city of Rome. I also know of the more popular version that states that Nero ordered the city to burn because of the stench that would rise from

the slums below. But I highly doubt this version, mainly for when Nero first heard of the fire, he immediately returned to Rome to fight it.

And I have no reason not to think radical Christian Apocalypse Now freaks set fire to the city, because that fever still exists in some elements of Christianity today. I'm thinking of the ones that want to blow up the Dome of the Rock Mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem so that a Third Temple can be built because of the belief that this is an essential act that must occur before Christ can come again. That's absolutely crazy and would likely end with a nuclear crater where the Mount used to be.

Of course, there were always some Christians who thought that the prophesied Doom on Babylon the Great was code for, not the City of Rome, but the City of Jerusalem. (Revelation 18.) But that was mainly after the Romans destroyed it in 70 A.D.

Brief Summary of the Early Jerusalem Church

Almost everything we know about the Early Christian Church comes from deductions made from the Gospels (especially from Luke), and the Book of Acts. However, as we have seen, the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts is an unreliable narrator. He tells lies out of thin air, spins legends and weaves in some of his personal experiences. What he says, as the only source, must be taken with a grain of salt unless it directly contradicts Paul's letters, which we will assume tells the Truth.

Epaphroditus begins his Gospel with special Appearances by the Angel Gabriel to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. (Luke 1:5-20 26-38.) Gabriel is only mentioned once in the Old Testament, and that is in the famous 70 Week Vision of the Prophet Daniel, when he predicted the exact historical time of the birth of the Promised Messiah. (Daniel 9:1-27; the Angel Daniel can fly, verse 21.) Thus Epaphroditus links the New Testament Appearances to Old Testament Prophecy. (See my Holy Blood: Holy Birth: the Seed of David in Prophecy.)

He later actually gives us the real name of the father of Jesus, Joseph from the line of Nathan, another son of David and Solomon's brother by Bathsheba. (Luke 4:23-38.) My Scofield Reference Bible inartfully states, with zero evidence, that this was the genealogy of Mary, who allegedly was also a descendent of David. However, Epaphroditus strongly suggests that she was from the line of Aaron, the brother of Moses. (Luke 1:5, 36.) Moreover, the fact that both Solomon and Nathan are descendants of David and Bathsheba, is essential in the History of Salvation for it makes God work with them wholly a matter of Grace, for otherwise under the Law of Moses they were both the Sons of Adultery and Murder, deserving the Death Penalty.

This Mary, of course, was betrothed at the time to Joseph of the Royal Line of Solomon, showing that Mary's so called virgin birth was actually a Holy Union (Hieros Gamos), allowing the Curse of the Prophet Jeremiah against the Royal Bloodline. (Jeremiah's Paradox: Chapter 33:17 versus 36:30.) We see that this involved a back room conspiracy, where the Curse against the Jehoiakim Royal Line would be overcome by having the Son of David through Nathan impregnate Mary, though she was betrothed to Joseph of Solomon, a direct descendant of the Cursed Jehoiakim, at the time. In the same manner, Isaiah had fathered Ahaz's son, Hezekiah. (Matthew 1:18-25; Isaiah 7:10 – 8:4; II Kings 18:2; II Chronicles 29:1.)

Abi/Abijah was a Prophetess because her father, Zecharias, was a Prophet. (II Chronicles 26:5.) The Hieros Gamos was not a private affair but was held in front of Uriah, the High Priest, and the Virgin Prophetess' father, the Prophet Zecharias, the son of Jeberechiah, years before the birth was announced. (Isaiah 7:14.) It is to be noted that Hezekiah was 25 years old at the time he became King, a grown man, meaning that if he were Ahaz's son, Ahaz would have been only 9 years old at the time of conception, making it impossible for him to be the true father; legend has it that Isaiah was of the Seed of David, so the Bloodline would have remained pure. (See my, [Holy Blood: Holy Birth: The Seed of David in Prophecy.](#))

It must have been hard on Joseph, knowing that his betrothed wife was carrying another man's son, but, after all, God works in Mysterious Ways, and the child was the Promised Messiah [Christ]. The author of the Gospel of Matthew, who, in my opinion, was mainly authored by James the Just, the brother of Our Lord, tells us that Joseph of the Royal Line almost divorced Mary over this, but an Angel Revealed to him in a dream that Mary was carrying the Christ. I believe Joseph was killed in Galilee in 6 A.D., when Jesus was 12 years old, during a revolt by Judas the Galilean, the founder of the Zealot Movement. After all, a Son of David would have been required to legitimate this revolt. This would have occurred when Jesus was 12 years old when he was separated briefly from his parents, eventually being found in the Temple arguing Scripture with the Experts. (Luke 2:41-52.) Epaphroditus must have really liked this story because no one else recorded it.

It also belies the fact that Joseph was Royalty and could have afforded to have scrolls of Scripture for his son to study. The idea that he was a poor carpenter is propaganda from the Jerusalem Church, in order to deflect inquiry into the descendants of David after the disastrous War with Rome. The Greek word at play is "tekton," which means Builder, and includes carpentry, among one of building materials, and likely was a nickname from the time of Solomon, meaning the Builder of the Temple.

Epaphroditus adds many extra colorful events in his Gospel not found in the other three, but his version of the last days of Jesus Christ after he rose from the dead in the city of Jerusalem is riddled with contradictions. He ended his Gospel of Luke when Jesus ascended to Heaven in a cloud, like Superman, after appearing to his disciples in the city, on the same day. This, of course, contradicts both the endings of Matthew and John, and, likely, the original ending of Mark, which leave Jesus on earth after his Appearances in Galilee. (Matthew 28:16-20; John 20:18-31; Mark 16:1-8.)

In my opinion, Epaphroditus totally ignores the original origin story of the Church in Galilee in his Book of Acts, preferring the Jerusalem origin story of the Twelve Apostles. This would make sense because Epaphroditus was a Roman citizen and would have been sensitive to the fact that the Jewish War with Rome began in Galilee in 66 A.D, a repeat of the original Zealot revolt in Galilee when Jesus was 12 years old, where his father, Joseph, was the likely figurehead.

Ironically, the ending of his Gospel of Luke also contradicts the beginning of his Book of Acts (See:, Luke 24:36-54 and compare with Acts 1:1-11), because after the Resurrection, Jesus allegedly hung with the disciples for an extra 40 days, at which time he passed on a series of Revelations from the Scriptures that were then needed to compete with the rivals of the Jerusalem Church in a Competition Free-For-All in the Roman Empire, where all agreements, even Right Hands of Fellowship Agreements, were off the table and it was every church for itself, just as it is in modern times, where New Revelations are always the rage.

As we laid out in previous articles (Holy Blood, Holy Birth; The 22 Christ Kings of Zion) the Twelve Apostles were chiefly bodyguards for Jesus, the Son of David End Time Apocalyptic Prophet Messiah, and were otherwise borderline Galilean terrorists consisting of Zealot Freedom Fighters and Sicarii Dagger Assassins. Being a Son of David, Jesus was Royalty, and some of his followers were prominent women, some notorious, some of Royalty, like Salome, daughter of Herodias, who had danced for Herod Antipas for the head of John the Baptist, and was one of the women at the end who observed the Crucifixion and was present at the tomb the next morning. (The Gospel of Mark 6:14-28; 15:40-41; 16:1; The Gospel of Thomas, Saying 61: where Jesus sits down next to Salome on her couch and she declares herself his disciple, which has all of the necessary ingredients of a sexual seduction.)

Salome's identity is further strengthened by the fact that she appears in the scenes accompanied by Joanna, the wife of Herod's Steward, which shows the wide appeal and

charisma that Jesus possessed, even in Herod's court. (The Gospel of Luke 8:3; 24:10.) Her salvation would have been even more dramatic than Paul's himself – both parties had been complicit in murders – and thus both could be seen as Patterns for Salvation: if God can Save these Sinners, he can Save anyone! (I Timothy 1:16.)

Not to mention his consort, Mary Magdalene, to whom he first Appeared after his Resurrection. (John 20:11-18.) Around this time, Jesus secretly gave Mary a Revelation, a Parable concerning the passwords to gain entry past the Seven Gates of the Afterlife, guarded by Seven Daimons, who would prevent anyone from passing if they lacked the passwords. (The Gospel of Mary, Chapter 5:10-24.) The Jerusalem Church denounced Mary as a heretic, a view passed on in the Gospel of Luke, where instead of the Seven Daimons at the Gates of Heaven in a Parable, she was slandered and was said to have been possessed by Seven Devils, making her at the least a Witch, who was eventually exorcised and Saved by Jesus. (Luke 8:2.)

At the beginning of the Passover Feast Jesus led his band into Jerusalem as the Apocalyptic Prophet of Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9), on King David's Donkey, like King Solomon before him (I Kings 1:1-40), and was declared King by his throng, then reigned in Zion when his followers seized the Temple, precipitating a failed riot where people were killed. (Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:15-19; 13:7; Luke 23:19.)

I agree with Albert Schweitzer that when Jesus realized that his role as an Apocalyptic Savior was now moot, he changed his mission to one that was in line with the Suffering Servant role of Second Isaiah. (Isaiah 53.) His best friend, Judas Iscariot (the Sicarii), according to prophecy (Psalm 41:9) and Jesus's orders (John 13:27), would betray him and hand him over to the Jews. Note that in John, Judas just leads them to Jesus, and neither talks to Jesus nor kisses him (John 18:2-13).

A few days later Jesus was Crucified by the Romans for leading this revolt as the King of the Jews, and was Buried. Coincidentally, this had all be been prophesied in the Scriptures. (I Corinthians 15:3-4.) On Sunday morning, the consort of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, had a Vision of him as being Raised from the Dead, but she wasn't believed by the Apostles. Jesus then Appeared to her and several of his followers that evening where he gave them the Holy Spirit. This was the Beginning of the True Church. (The Gospel of John, Chapter 20.)

However, according to the Book of Acts, the Holy Spirit never came to the rest of the Apostles, if at all, until 50 days later on the day the Jews celebrated the Giving of the Law to Moses, to wit, Pentecost, thus associating the Law of Moses with the Holy Spirit. The Twelve Apostles, mostly under the leadership of a Triumvirate – consisting of ex-fishermen partners Simon Peter and the Brothers Zebedee, James and John – reigned over a group of disciples who became known as the Poor because they practiced a form of Communism where everything was supposedly held in common. Among these were some Greek speaking Jews who were more liberal in their reading of Moses, especially when it came to restrictions on food. Their leaders were mischaracterized in Acts as the “Seven Deacons,” slave names, that is, of way lesser authority than the Twelve: they were to serve tables. (Acts 6:5.)

The Tyranny of Terror

The first thing the Jerusalem Church did after Jesus ascended into Heaven like Superman was to replace Judas as a member of the Twelve, since they had likely murdered him earlier. It is unlikely that he hung himself or died from a fall that split his stomach open, unless someone first gutted him with a dagger and then threw the body over a cliff. (Matthew 27:3-5; Acts 1:15-18.)

The Twelve held sway over the group by a Tyranny of Terror, murdering two of their members, a married couple, Ananias and Sapphira, for keeping a certain sum of money after selling a property where most of the proceeds were given to the church. Peter accused them of withholding funds from God and had them murdered at the hands of a gang of young thugs.

(Acts 5:1-11: “And Great Fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.”)

Thus, the necessary Terror had been created, but it apparently didn’t have the same effect on the Greek Speaking Jews led by Stephen, Philip, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch, and four others, who continued to preach against the Temple. (Acts 6:1-7.) This drove Saul of Tarsus, a student of Rabbi Gamaliel, crazy, because he believed the idea of a crucified Messiah to be madness and blasphemy and hence persecuted the Hellenists to torture and death, beginning with Stephen. (Acts 7:1 – 8:4.)

Note that he left the Hebrew Church (the Apostles) alone; he only went after the Hellenists. It appears that Peter had made some kind of deal with Gamaliel that spared them from the persecution. (Acts 5:35-39.)

For some reason Saul pursued them to Damascus with letters from the High Priest giving him the authority to arrest, torture, and kill the disciples. Members of a local Jerusalem religious cult, the Dead Sea Essenes at Qumran, had once abided in Damascus, and perhaps some of these had become believers in Jesus, and thus Paul wanted to take them out of the picture. We really don’t know why Saul went to Damascus, but he did and Jesus Appeared to him there and changed his life. (The Dead Sea Scrolls: The Damascus Document, relating the Teacher of Righeousness’ duel with the Wicked Priest; Galatians 1:11-16.)

Philip – not the same as one of the Twelve, but likely the one named as the author of the Gospel of Philip – fled and started churches in Samaria and then Caesarea, which were then taken over by Peter and John, representing the power of the Jerusalem Church. Peter would then go on to Antioch, where the same routine was practiced. The church at Antioch was started by the Hellenists, and likely by Nicolas, since he was foreshadowed as one of the Seven Deacons.

John likely went on to Asia, where it appears that Nicolas was active as an Apostle of the Independent Church of Antioch. The war between John and Nicolas was a violent one, and it

seems that a man named Antipas, a disciple of John Zebedee, was killed in Pergamos. A follower of Nicolas, a Prophetess in Thyatira (Lydia), was persecuted as a Jezebel, where she likely fled for her life to Philippi. Here, she established herself as a rich merchant, and then led a small prayer congregation that met on Saturday by a river. The City of Philippi, a Roman Colony and the Capital of Macedonia, owned a gold mine and was very rich and had an active merchant class.

Lydia had good reason to fear for her life for, after all, John had threatened her in his Book of Revelation. He stated that he would kill all of her children and slay her on a bed of adultery with those with whom she had committed fornication. (Revelation 22-33; the word fornication is rooted in the Latin, fornis, which means an archway or a vault, for Roman prostitutes used to hang out under vaulted places to practice their trade.)

Then Caligula came to the throne and complete chaos must have shadowed the early movement, but we must speculate on this since Epaphroditus will not have any of it, totally ignoring one of the most explosive events in the history of First Century Israel. He does, however, mention that Herod Agrippa I persecuted the Apostles after his kingdom was restored by Claudius, killing James Zebedee by the sword, which we take to be a beheading, and throwing Peter in prison for later execution. It seems that John Zebedee was still in Asia, having recently composed the Book of Revelation, and likely had a warrant for his arrest.

Who was James Zebedee?

But why James Zebedee? Just who was he? He is rarely mentioned in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke, called synoptic since they can be studied side by side), but always among the few who knew information the others didn't. For example, he is named in all three Gospels with his brother, John, when Jesus calls them to follow him on the shore of Galilee. (Matthew 4:21; Mark 1:19-20; Luke 3:10.) He is also named as one of the Twelve

Apostles appointed by Jesus. (Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14.) Finally, all three Gospels mention him being present at the Transfiguration. (Matthew 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28.)

However, Mark adds that he was with Jesus and John when they entered Simon's house after Jesus cast out a spirit in the synagogue. (Mark 1:29.) Moreover, he was present in the ruler of the synagogue's house when Jesus healed his daughter. (Mark 5:37.) And, of course, he and his brother tried to talk Jesus into letting them sit at his right and left hands. (Mark 10:35-41; Matthew has their mother making the request: Matthew 26:37.)

Luke adds that James was present during a healing and both he and John later wanted Jesus to call fire down from Heaven where a town in which they had preached rejected them. (Luke 8:51; 9:54.) He omits, however, his presence in Simon's house, as well as the request to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus, as noted in Mark. Was Epaphroditus's mention of James and his brother wanting Jesus to call down fire from Heaven a subtle hint that James Zebedee was a violent murderous man? I think so.

In the Gospel of John, he is only mentioned once, not by first name, but by his last with his brother John, when they are fishing in Lake Galilee after the Resurrection. (John 21:2.) Then, in Acts, Epaphroditus mentions James two times: in the first chapter as one of the Twelve after Jesus ascends into Heaven; then, at the time he was beheaded. (Acts 1:13; 12:2.) We are given no knowledge of him in Acts other than these two mentions.

It is assumed that he was John's older brother, who, along with Peter, was so prevalent in the first chapters of Acts, preaching and healing. (Acts 2-4.) Thus, we assume that James played more of a background leadership role in the original Triumvirate of the Jerusalem Church. Hence, he must have done something in this role to anger the Jews enough to get Herod Agrippa to behead him. I don't believe Peter's mission to the Gentiles would have angered Agrippa at all.

So, in my opinion, the Jews, learning of the Book of Revelation, which was a blueprint for Insurrection, informed Agrippa, who then acted suddenly and brutally, fearing an actual

Insurrection. These same people had attempted one already in the past, ending with the Crucifixion. They would have been an obvious target for displeasure.

We are not told why Herod Agrippa persecuted the Church, only that it pleased the Jews, but according to Jewish Law a person could only be beheaded for murder, or for city-wide idolatry. There being no city-wide idolatry, who, then, was murdered? Judas, Ananias, Sapphira, and Stephen, all believers, come easily to mind, as well as whoever the Sicarii had murdered recently. And because of the recent tumult over the Caligula Statue Crisis, the Zealots and Sicarii must have been more violent than ever.

It is also likely that this explains why John is not mentioned as being present at the Circumcision Summit by Epaphroditus, who is from a Roman Colony and wants to avoid any hint of Insurrection against Rome in his writings. In fact, he doesn't represent the meeting as a Summit at all, but as a Question to be answered by King James as he sits in judgment over his Caliphate.

It is the silence in Acts over the Caligula Statue Crisis and the subsequent report of Herod's persecution of the Jerusalem Church – directly caused by the Book of Revelation and its equation of Agrippa as the Beast who ascends from the Bottomless Pit – that are, in my opinion, no coincidence, and makes them related. It must be remembered that prior to the Caliphate of James, the Church represented Jesus, the Son of David, as the Messiah, who had led a failed Insurrection and was Crucified for it. This group of Galilean ruffians was being led now by ex-fishermen Zealots from Galilee. It was thus logical that Agrippa would look to that Church first when the drums of Insurrection were pounding in the background, which they surely were during the Statue Crisis.

Somehow, miraculously, Peter escaped prison – his guards were later executed for taking bribes – and afterwards informed the House of Mary [Clopas] that he had escaped, and to especially make sure that James heard of it. (Acts 12:5-19.) This is another subtle hint from

Epaphroditus that the government of the Jerusalem Church changed at that moment from a Tyrannical Triumvirate to a sole Dictatorship by the Son of David and Brother of the Lord, James the Just. His rule will be known as a Caliphate posing under the ideal of the Kingdom of God on Earth ruled by the Restored Tabernacle of David, where he was King and a High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek.

James the Just is regarded as the Restraining Force keeping the Man of Sin from taking over before his time. (II Thessalonians 2:3-12.) Many Jews at the time regarded the Jewish War with Rome to have begun with the murder of James by the High Priest in 62 A.D., proving the prophecy in the forged II Thessalonian prophecy to be true, even though the official beginning of hostilities wouldn't be until four years later.

The Question of the Gentiles and the Final Solution

As a result of the Antioch outreach to the Gentiles, Saul (who started calling himself Paul after a mission to Cyprus), approximately ten years after the Handshakes, decided to have it out with the Apostles of the Jerusalem Church who, in their attempt to seize their church, taught them that they needed to be circumcised to be True Jews. Seeing himself as an Independent Apostle (he was never under anyone's authority other than Jesus'), not bound to any church, Paul, by a Revelation, took Barnabas and Titus with him to have a Summit of Equals in Jerusalem to decide the Question of whether the Gentiles were or were not bound by the Law of Moses. The accounts of this meeting as portrayed in the sources above couldn't be more different.

The Two Contrary Solutions

1.) The Solution according to the Book of Acts, to wit, the Jerusalem Church Mandate: James, the brother of the Lord, in a restored Davidic Kingdom (the Tabernacle of David), where he was King, to wit, of the Jerusalem Church (Caliphate), pronounced judgment on the matter

and gave orders that the Gentiles did not have to be circumcised but must obey certain of the Laws of Moses concerning food and sex idolatry.

2.) The Solution according to Paul's Letter to the Galatians: the Gentiles were not under any of the Laws or Traditions of Moses, and the only condition was that he and Barnabas were to remember the Poor, to wit, the Collection for the Jerusalem Church.

Again, the main difference between the Gospels of the Jerusalem Church and that of Paul's, is that Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles was totally WITHOUT the Law of Moses. (Romans 3:22; Galatians 2:16.)

Back to the Beginning of Paul's Gospel to the Geniles

Thus the stage was set for Paul's great mission to the Gentiles and the Gospel he designed by Revelation to preach to them. Strapped with Silas and the Jerusalem Mandate, Paul longed for total independence from Jerusalem, which, to Paul, represented the Law of Moses (Galatians 4:22-25.). Things must have been pretty violent in Asia since he was prohibited to preach there. There was at least one fatality: Antipas, slain in Pergamos. (Revelation 2:13.)

Thus, Paul and Silas ended up in Troas, a port in Mysia. It appears that a group of believers resided there, since a church is reported being there later with no information about who founded it. (Acts 19:6-12.) Anyway, it is there by Revelation that Paul is introduced to Epaphroditus, a Man of Macedonia, specifically from the City of Philippi, which owned a gold mine.

And a Vision Appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a Man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help US.

And after he had Seen the Vision, WE endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had Called US for to preach the Gospel unto them. (Acts 16:0-10.)

I imagine Paul and Epaphroditus sitting down and planning how to evangelize the country as the "Beginning of Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles," during which Paul learned that Lydia of Thyatira [likely not her real name: Thyatira is in the ancient region of Lydia], a God-Fearing

Gentile Prophetess, had recently passed through there after barely escaping being murdered by the disciples of John Zebedee. It seems that the disciples of Nicolas weren't starting their own churches, but were largely independent Prophet Sons and Prophetess Daughters of God led by the Holy Spirit, which is why they were viewed as such a threat to Jerusalem, who only possessed the Spirit of the Law.

Paul and Epaphroditus may have kept some of their plans secret from Silas, since he was the Jerusalem Church Watchdog. If this was so, then it helps to explain why he reports in Acts the ministry of Peter to Cornelius and the Romans at Caesarea as being the first mission to the Gentiles, where he was no party to it. As a Roman citizen he appears to have been distancing himself from any deviance from the Jerusalem Mandate as Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles surely represented.

Thus we begin the first "we" section in the Book of Acts, which occurs immediately after the Vision, so it's sort of a no brainer as to the identity of Man of Macedonia. We've been largely bound by the Book of Acts' account of the Early Church so far, but when the "we" sections begin, we can tell when Epaphroditus is being unreliable because we have the measuring stick of Paul's letters to aid us. This all gives us fresh insights into the Greatest Cult War of the age.

After making plans, Epaphroditus relates how they took a ship at Troas and, passing the island of Samothracia, entered Europe at the port of Neapolis on the Macedonian coast, then went on to the City of Philippi. It was a city named after Alexander the Great's father, Philip of Macedon, but had become a Roman Colony after a great battle fought there in 42 B.C., between the Armies of Brutus and Cassius, the assassins of Julius Caesar, and young Octavian and the Roman General Antony, Caesar's avengers, at the end of the Roman Civil War. Although the original inhabitants were Greek, a lot of retired Roman soldiers had settled there. Epaphroditus

appears to have been very pro-Roman, but we really learn nothing about him or his role in the city.

Epaphroditus tells us that Philippi was the chief city of Macedonia. They spent a few days there before the Sabbath, but we are not told where they stayed or how many believers there were in Epaphroditus's local company. We are only told that on the Sabbath they went to a river where a group of women were meeting for prayer. Apparently, there was no synagogue in Philippi for lack of Jewish males, and the female Jews and God Fearers met at the river for prayer. There Paul met Lydia of Thyatira, a merchant dealing in Purple, a commodity that had made Thyatira world famous and Lydia very rich. She and her entire household were baptized by Paul and she allowed his party to abide in her house.

Later, when Paul's party went to prayer, we assume by the river on a Sabbath, they were met by a slave woman with a spirit of divination, as the KJV has it. However, it should be translated that she was a "Pythoness," a woman Oracle with a spirit of the God Apollo, the Greek God of Prophecy. Apparently she was very good at her trade making her masters a lot of money.

The God Apollo was associated with the Giant Flying Python (Dragon) that guarded the Shrine of Gaia, the Earth Mother Goddess, at Delphi. According to the legend, the God Apollo slew the Python and took over the shrine for himself, adopting the title Python Apollo for himself. Thus, his prophetess's were called Pythoness's, whether at fixed sites, like Delphi, or independents, like the Philippian slave girl. For many days she prophesied that Paul and Silas "were Servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the Way of Salvation," a True Oracle. (Acts 16:17.) It appears that Epaphroditus was present during these visitations.

The Pythoness was tolerated for a while until Paul was at his wits end with her and cast out her Daimon, which made her worthless to her slave masters. Why did Paul exorcise her if she was preaching the Truth? Was Paul upset with the idea that Apollo might be taking some credit in the Way of Salvation? Who knows? Paul took the reason to his grave.

As we will see, the love of money is a major player in the Book of Acts, just as it is in the churches of today. It seems everybody forgets when a lot of money is involved that “the love of money is the root of all Evil.” (I Timothy 6:10.) A saying attributed to Jesus that I believe is authentic and supports Paul’s deduction, cautions all those with a lot of money, that it’s not money that is Evil, it is the Love of Money, that is, Mammon:

No Servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.” (Luke 16:13; it is the same in Matthew 6:24.)

In my imagination I can see Paul or Lydia down the road purchasing this girl from her masters who view her now as a burden and waste of money. I see them baptizing her (she already was believer, vouched by her Oracle), and then becoming a loyal follower as a Sister, a traveling companion. She may have been one of the women in the Philippian fellowship, either Euodius or Syntyche, who weren’t getting along with one another. (Philippians 4:2.)

We are told that Lydia was a worshipper of God, but Epaphroditus conceals the fact that she was an independent Prophetess and a disciple of Nicolas of Antioch. He particularly conceals the fact that she had recently escaped with her life from Thyatira with a Death Warrant from the Jerusalem Church because she was a Jezebel, encouraging her disciples to eat foods sacrificed to idols and to participate in fornication. Paul had carried similar Death Warrants made out by the High Priest before he attempted to execute them in Damascus.

John Zebedee had equated these alleged teachings (the Doctrine of the Nicolaitanes) with the Doctrine of Balaam in the Old Testament, who had tempted the Children of Israel with idolatry and fornication. Actually, the real Doctrine, if you can call it that, was that the idols are imaginary and no curse would befall anyone who ate foods sacrificed to them, and otherwise to be moderate in all things because one’s body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit: “Christ in You.” (Colossians 1:27.)

These believers knew that Hell was Abolished on the Third Day after Christ Died on the Cross for the Sins of the World, to wit, All Sin was Paid in Full on the Cross by the Blood of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In my opinion, Epaphroditus had arranged this meeting with Lydia in advance in order to rehabilitate her with the blessing of Silas, who may have arranged a withdrawal of the Warrant from John Zebedee.

Lydia formed a close attachment with Paul and will become his main money source as he spreads his Gospel to the Gentiles throughout the land. With her backing, Paul will eventually part with Silas and embark on a totally independent ministry, running into other independent ministries like those of Apollos from Alexandria, and Aquila and Priscilla from Rome.

The result of this exorcism proved to be a disaster for Paul and Silas, but not a total one. We can't be sure where Epaphroditus was during this episode, since he is not mentioned, but the slave masters stirred up a riot and had Paul and Silas dragged forcibly to the Magistrates in the Market Place, which would have been the Forum in a Roman Colony.

These slave mongers alleged to the Magistrates that Paul and Silas, "Being Jews, do exceeding trouble our city, and teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, being Romans." (Acts 16:20-21.) Epaphroditus then tells us that these allegations caused the multitude to rise up against Paul and Silas, and as a result, the Magistrates beat them with rods. We can assume that there was some Jewish hatred in Philippi, which is likely why there was no synagogue there.

Afterwards they were imprisoned. After their arrest, Epaphroditus brings the first series of "we" sayings to an end. He's no longer a first hand witness, but he does spin a whopper of a tale about their imprisonment, which will be told as it, since nothing in Paul contradicts it.

The Jailor, who we will assume is a Roman, is charged with keeping Paul and Silas secured safely. In obedience, he chains them in the inner prison and makes their feet fast in stocks. At midnight (note the drama), Paul and Silas pray and sing praises to the Lord, and after

noting that they were heard by the other prisoners, a great earthquake answers their prayers. The earthquake is so powerful it looses everyones' chains, but no one escapes.

The Jailor is awakened, and fearing that everyone has escaped because all the doors have been flung open, is about to do what the Romans all seem to do in times of ultimate frustration: he attempts to commit suicide. However, Paul hollers to him to stop for no one has escaped. The Jailor gets a light and examines the prison, and, realizing that Paul is right, no one has escaped, is overjoyed, and falls at their feet. The Jailor brings them out of the prison and Epaphroditus, ever the evangelist, then has the Jailor say, "Sirs, What must I do to be Saved?" To which Paul answers, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be Saved, and thy House." (Acts 16:30-31.)

The Jailor then takes them to his house, washes the bloody stripes on their backs, feeds them, then listens as they preach the Word and baptize the entire house. With this score, the second in Philippi, the Beginning of Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles is off to a successful start, but it does not come easy. In my opinion, Epaphroditus and Lydia worked behind the scenes, likely spreading a lot of coin around, advising the Magistrates that both Paul and Simon were Roman citizens and had been denied due process, which is notice and a hearing. The Magistrates, embarrassed that they have beaten two Roman citizens unlawfully, order the Jailor to release Paul and Silas, but here, Paul does something unexpected: he refuses to leave until the Magistrates admit that they were wrong.

This they do, and Paul and Silas, now satisfied, return to Lydia's House, after which they hasten to get out of Dodge. We won't hear first hand from Epaphroditus again until years later when Paul passes through Philippi with the Collection for the Poor.

Is there anything in the account in Acts that contradicts what Paul says about the incident. Not really. In I Thessalonians 2:1-2: Paul states that they were treated "shamefully" in Philippi. However, I believe we must take the account of the earthquake as literary dramatic license, and

thus with a grain of salt. And note that Epaphroditus keeps the name of the Jailor a secret from the reader. Why? Perhaps because he is a Roman. That's my best guess.

Next stop on the soul train: Thessalonika.

Epaphroditus relates how Paul and Silas passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, then came to Thessalonika because it had a synagogue. For three sabbaths Paul argued with them out of the Scriptures that Christ had to suffer and then rise from the dead and that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ. Many Jews and devout Greeks, especially some Chief Women, believed Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles, but many Jews did not. Some of them were "lewd fellows of the baser sort," moved with envy, who formed a company and set the whole city in an uproar, assaulting the House of Jason, and demanded he hand over Paul and Silas who apparently were dwelling there.

When they wound up empty handed, they seized Jason and certain of the brethren and took them before the Rulers of the City, alleging: "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also, whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another King, one Jesus." The allegations were taken seriously and they weren't released until they had posted security, that is money, to guarantee their presence at a hearing. Secretly at night, they helped Paul and Silas escape to Berea.

Epaphroditus does not tell us how long Paul and Silas spent in Thessalonika, but from Paul's Letter to the Philippians, he says that the Philippian fellowship provided funds for his ministry there:

Now ye Philippians know also in the Beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.

For even in Thessalonika ye sent once and again unto my necessity.
(Philippians 4:15-16.)

Who was Aristarchus?

The only names of Thessalonians Epaphroditus gives us, other than Jason, are Aristarchus, Secundus, and Gaius, the latter a possible mistake since Paul mentions a Gaius in Corinth/Cenchrea, whom he had previously baptized, even dwelling in his house when writing to the Romans. (I Corinthians 1:14; Romans 16:23):

And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus and Gaius; of Derbe, Timotheus, and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. (Acts 20:4: I have omitted the semicolon in the KJV after the one that appears after Secundus, since we learn that Gaius was from Thessalonika when he was dragged into the Ephesian Theater with Aristarchus, and not from Derbe. There is, however, a man named Gaius from Corinth: Romans 16:2; I Corinthians 1:14; and, perhaps, III John 1.)

In my opinion, Epaphroditus not only omits all mention of Titus, he is also reluctant to discuss events or people from Corinth, beyond what he has to. He never mentions who represented Corinth in the Collection for the Poor, and even that he reports as just a gathering of believers from all of the churches. If there was only one Gaius, of whom both Epaphroditus and Paul mention, then by misplacing Gaius in Thessalonika would give him more reason to keep Corinth in the background. After all, Macedonia and Achaia were great historical rivals, and a rivalry between their churches after the death of Paul would almost be inevitable.

The other names, however, are given much later in the drama, and must have been important people, which raises the question: Why doesn't Epaphroditus mention at least Aristarchus when he first relates the mission there, mentioning only Jason?

The unbelieving Jews had stirred up the people and as Paul informs us in I Thessalonians, the church there underwent and was undergoing great persecution of the kind the Jerusalem Church once faced, forcing Paul and Silas to escape to Berea. It appears that the Jews filed formal charges against them and tried to serve them at the House of Jason, a Thessalonian believer who had taken them in. When they were not found there, Jason was forced to pay a

Security Bond for them. We are left to wonder what role Aristarchus, Secundus, and Gaius, if at all, played at this time.

However, the author does give us certain clues that may provide an answer. First, we discover that Paul's preaching in Ephesus against the idols upset a silverworkers guild, and their response was to seize Aristarchus and Gaius, fellowlaborers with Paul from Macedonia, and drag them into the Theatre, causing a general riot. Paul alludes in his First Letter to the Corinthians, that he fought beasts in Ephesus, so we can accept the account in Acts to be fairly accurate. However, in that account the disciples keep Paul from entering the Theatre, whereas, from Paul's account, we can assume that Paul was actually present because he says that he not only fought beasts at Ephesus, but he also feared for his life. (Acts 19:23; I Corinthians 15:32.)

Epaphroditus mentions Aristarchus one more time, hinting strongly that what's at the heart of Paul's legal case, is the riot in Ephesus. He mentions him as a fellow passenger on the ship that took Paul to Rome after his Caesarean incarceration, but states no reason for his presence there. It is not too hard to surmise that he was also a prisoner under guard for the Ephesian riot. (Acts 27:2; he names Aristarchus as being present after he states that the ship was carrying "other passengers.")

It was surely the Jews from Asia that started the uproar in the Jerusalem Temple, the same ones involved in the Ephesian riot, alleging that Paul had taken an uncircumcised Gentile from Asia, Trophimus, into the Temple. (Acts 21:27-28.) Paul was in the Temple paying the vows of several Nazirites in order to demonstrate to the Jews that he still followed the Law of Moses – in which he complied in order that James would accept his Collection for the Poor. (Acts 21:14-26.) This ended up being a trap because having to be in the Temple in order for him to perform his duties, he was observed by the Jews from Asia who had started the riot over the Goddess Artemis in Ephesus:

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,

Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the Law, and this Place: and further brought Greeks also into the Temple, and hath polluted this Holy Place.

(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the Temple.)

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. (Acts 21:27-30; this ends the second “we” section.)

We must not forget that Epaphroditus is quite the dramatist, for not only does he give us that wonderful entrance of himself in a Vision to Paul in Troas, he now uses the event in the Temple to signify that it is no longer a proper place to worship God: the doors are shut forever.

Paul refers to Aristarchus twice in his letters, the first time likely soon after the riot in the Theatre:

All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:

Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts:

With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.

Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus [John Mark] sister’s son to Barnabas [Mary and Clopas’s son], (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circucision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the Kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Epaphrus, who is one of you, a Servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the Will of God.

For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which in his house.

And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans: and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. (Colossians 4:7-16; from prison in Ephesus.)

It appears that the Lukewarm church at Laodicea was liberated from the Tyranny of Terror of John Zebedee’s vengeful Book of Revelations. Legend has it that the Letter to the

Ephesians was originally the Letter to the Laodiceans; and that Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, was freed per Paul's letter to him, and eventually became the Bishop of Ephesus, enabling him to gather the letters of Paul into a collection for church edification. Thus we owe him much gratitude for preserving the Gospel to the Gentiles in the New Testament.

The second instance is, we assume, when Paul is perhaps imprisoned in Ephesus, at the same time he wrote Colossians, writing to the Asians in Colossae. He states optimistically:

But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.

There, salute thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus;

Marcus [John Mark], Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlaborers.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. (Philemon 22-25.)

However, he appears to get more realistic about his fate in his Second Letter to Timothy, which I believe are the last words we have from Paul himself:

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermongenes.

The Lord give Mercy unto the House of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain.

But, when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.

The Lord grant unto him that he might find Mercy of the Lord in that Day; and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well....

For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonika; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee; for he is profitable to me for the ministry [he knew Jesus].

And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.

Alexander the coppersmith did me much Evil: the Lord reward him according to his works.

Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.

At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.

Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

And the Lord shall deliver me from every Evil Work, and will preserve me unto his Heavenly Kingdom; to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Salute Prisca [Priscilla] and Aquila, and the Household of Onesiphorus.

Erastus abode at Corinth; but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.
 Do thy diligence to come before winter. Eubulus greeteth thee, and
 Pudens, and Linus, and Claudia, and all the brethren.
 The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen. (II
 Timothy 1:15-18; 4:10-22; from Rome.)

Again we see more evidence that Paul was on trial for the riot in Ephesus, since Alexander the coppersmith had apparently testified against him before Caesar. We are glad to see that Aquila and Priscilla are back in Ephesus with Timothy and likely avoided the persecution under Nero. We note that Aristarchus is no longer mentioned. Was he not allowed to testify? Did he return with Demas to Thessalonika? In my opinion it is likely. But we will never know for sure.

According to the Scriptures

Paul tells the Romans that Christ was of the “Seed of David” and later tells Timothy to, “Remember that Jesus Christ of the ‘Seed of David’ was raised from the dead according to my Gospel.” (Romans 1:3; II Timothy 2:8.) Jesus Christ of the “Seed of David” was an essential part of Paul’s Gospel, which was all according to the Scriptures:

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;
 By which also ye are Saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.
 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received [by Revelation], how that Christ died for our Sins according to the Scriptures;
 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. (I Corinthians 15:1-4; I leave off the appearances to Peter, the 12, the 500, and James, because at the end Paul saw all of these alleged brethren as enemies of himself and the Gospel to the Gentiles without the Law of Moses.)

In other words, the whole plan of Salvation is in the Scriptures if you have eyes to see. (See my, Holy Blood, Holy Birth: the Seed of David in Prophecy.) This is essential to understand how the Gospel was received by the Bereans.

The Book of Acts informs us that the Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians because they received the Word gladly and searched the Scriptures to see if what was alleged by Paul and Silas was actually in the Scriptures. We are told later that Sopater was from Berea and

he had been chosen to accompany Paul on his way to Jerusalem to deliver the Collection of the Poor. (Acts 20:4.)

However, when the Jews of Thessalonika heard that Paul and Silas were doing well in Berea, they once again stirred up the people, causing them to send Paul to Athens. For some reason Silas and Timothy were left behind, and Paul had to issue an order that they join him immediately in Athens. Why were they separated? And why does Epaphroditus not link them up again with Paul until after he begins his ministry in Corinth?

We are not told because Acts leaves us guessing about Silas after he joins Paul in Corinth. Epaphroditus ignores the time all three of them had spent time together in Athens, but fortunately we have I Thessalonians to correct that error. Some times the Bible actually does interpret the Bible. Epaphroditus informs us that Paul basically failed in his mission to Athens, naming only Dionysius and a woman named Damaris, as well as unnamed others. However, Paul informs us that when he was in Athens he baptized the Household of Stephanas, “the firstfruits of Acaia.” In fact, the Church in Athens, “had addicted themselves to the ministry of the Saints,” and Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, provided Paul with money and necessities while he was in Epesus. (Acts 17:34; I Corinthians 16:15-18,)

It’s the fact that II Thessalonians exists that provides us with a possible solution to the Silas question. And that’s on its insistence that the Day of the Lord will not come as a Thief in the Night, as revealed in I Thessalonians, but only after some historical events must first come to pass, emphasizing the Restraining Power James has over the End Times.

Anyway, Paul meets Aquila, who was originally from Pontus, but has recently come from Rome with his wife Priscilla, after Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. In one of his more helpful moments, F.F. Bruce, in his Commentary on the Book of Acts (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1954), tells us that Claudius expelled the Jews because of constant riots over “Chrestus,” in other words the Christians were causing riots, likely because of the Book of

Revelation. (Id., p. 368.) He quotes from a passage from Suetonius' Life of Claudius xxv. 4, but wavers over the meaning of "Chrestus":

"This Chrestus may have been an otherwise unknown trouble-maker who was active in Jewish circles, but in that case Suetonius would probably have referred to him as 'a certain Chrestus.' It is more likely that he had the Founder of Christianity in mind." (Id.)

Bruce's dogma caused him to almost worship the author, whom he believed was Luke, the beloved physician, and was otherwise clueless when dealing with Paul's Vision in Troas with the Man of Macedonia. and especially with the Circumcision Summit. (Id., pp. 298-316, 325.) He took the view that Galatians was written shortly before the Summit, instead of years after it. This view makes it easy to deny any contradictions between the two contrary accounts. Bruce further gaslights his readers with the absurd idea that Titus is never mentioned because he was Luke's brother. (F.F.Bruce, Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free [Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1977], p. 339, fn.5.)

Thus, we assume that Aquila and Priscilla were prior Christians who fled Rome at this time. It turns out that they and Paul had tentmaking as an occupation in common. From then on, they have a lasting friendship and work together to further the Gospel to the Gentiles. (Acts 18:2, 18, 26.)

Paul will follow them to Ephesus (I Corinthians 16:19), salute them when they travel to Rome (Romans 16:3), and again when they return to Ephesus (II Timothy 4:19). Like Philip and Nicolas before them, they appear to belong to no local church, but are roving evangelists, largely working with existing churches, but independent of any of them.

According to Acts, after Silas and Timothy joined him in Corinth, he attempted to preach Jesus as the Christ to the Jews, but when they opposed him, he said: "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." (Acts 18:6; II Corinthians 1:19.)

I believe Epaphroditus is essentially telling us that this is where Silas parted with Paul, for when Paul goes to the Gentiles he is gladly leaving the Jerusalem Mandate behind. However, I believe that Silas stayed in Corinth because Jerusalem Church representatives, like Peter and the Brothers of the Lord, freely competed in Corinth for the minds of Gentile believers, and it would be logical for Silas to provide a base for their operations.

After all, he had been a Prophet in the Jerusalem Church before being assigned to escort Paul. In my opinion, Silas was behind the forgery of II Thessalonians, and, in fact it would have been a good location for him to compose The Book of Hebrews, which displays a mixture of Paul and Jerusalem.

Paul then abided with Justus, a Gentile who worshipped God, who lived in a house next door to the synagogue, whose Chief Ruler was Crispus; and he too, and his house, became believers. In fact, Paul's mission was highly successful and many Corinthian Gentiles were Saved.

Paul Before Gallio

To get a better picture of where we are at chronologically, the events take place when Gallio was Proconsul to Achaia, which occurred in the year 51 A.D. His Praetorium, Judgment Seat, was in Corinth. So we are in solid Classical History at this time.

In my opinion Aquila and Priscilla, fellow leatherworkers with Paul, provided an excuse for him to part ways with Silas and the Jerusalem Mandate in Corinth so that he could preach the total Liberty of the Gospel to the Gentiles. We see the potential conflict of this in Epaphroditus's fable that Paul first decided to go to the Gentiles when he was rejected by the Corinthian Jewish synagogue, but we know that his mission to the Gentiles actually began in Troas and Philippi with the collusion of Epaphroditus himself.

It appears that the leader of that synagogue, a man named Crispus, was defrocked after joining forces with Paul, and replaced with a man named Sosthenes. This man, who, according

to the tale spun by the Book of Acts, prosecuted Paul in Roman court, alleging: “This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the Law,” but before Paul was able to respond, Gallio was having none of it, stating:

O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:
 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 such matters.
 And he drave them from the Judgment Seat.
 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.
 (Acts 18:4-17.)

This beating must have caused Sosthenes to think twice about what he was doing, because a few years later, we see him as a brother co-writing Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, after traveling to Ephesus and reporting the chaos taking place in his city. (I Corinthians 1:1-17.)

But we are getting ahead of ourselves.

Epaphroditus then informs us that after the Judgment Seat, Paul tarried in Corinth for “a good while,” eventually shaving his head in Cenchrea, after taking a vow that was to be completed in Jerusalem. Simultaneously, Aquila and Priscilla decided to carry the Gospel to Asia, so, together, they took a ship at Cenchrea and sailed to Ephesus. We are told cryptically:

And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.
 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;
 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. (Acts 18:19-21.)

I believe Epaphroditus wrote cryptically at this point in his narrative because, as we all know, Paul was allegedly told by “the Holy Spirit,” to stay out of Asia. (Acts 16:6.) He was thus disobedient to the Church of Jerusalem, since he had agreed that Peter was the one who would evangelize the Jews. (Galatians 2:7-9.)

We assume that this synagogue must have been influenced by John Zebedee's Reign of Terror, but they were nevertheless eager to hear Paul's version of events, even though they were said to have "hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes," which John also hated. (Revelation 2:6.)

I can see nothing in Paul's letters that contradict this, so we will take it with a grain of salt and move on.

Paul in Asia

I think it only fair at this time that I date the letters of Paul in chronological order as much as I can determine. I could be mistaken as to a few but I believe I am on sound ground otherwise: I Thessalonians; I Corinthians; Ephesians; Colossians together with Philemon; I Timothy; Titus; II Corinthians; Galatians; Romans; Philippians; and II Timothy. I believe II Thessalonians was a forgery by Silas. I could care less what the scholars say about which letters are authentic and which are not because they are all in my Holy Bible, which is more than the sum of its parts, and are fair game according to the assumptions in our Thought Experiment. Plus they are rich in names and events and aid in understanding our alternate New Testament history.

Some scholars, still suffering from cognitive dissonance, attempt to rationalize the many contradictions by having Paul compose Galatians early in his ministry, to wit, prior to the Circumcision Summit in Jerusalem, which they call the Jerusalem Council. However, I believe the strong similarities in themes between Galatians and Romans convince me that they were written around the same time. For example, the similar phrases in Romans 3:22 and Galatians 2:9, regarding the fact that we are Saved by the Faith of Jesus Christ without the Law, and not by our own faith or works; the arguments about Abraham's faith (Romans 4:1-25; Galatians 3:6-29); both letters have similar teachings about circumcision versus uncircumcision (Romans 2:25-29; 4:9-12; Galatians 5:2-3; 6:12-13); but, most importantly, both contain the Secret Teaching of Divine Sonship and Daughtership, concluding with the battle cry, "Abba, Father!" (Romans 8:6; Galatians 4:15.)

Finally, it is my opinion that Paul lost his Appeal before Caesar because of the turmoil Christians were causing in the city of Rome, resulting in Paul being beheaded around 62 A.D. Ironically, James the Just was murdered by the High Priest in Jerusalem that very same year. Four years later some crazy apocalyptic Christians tried to burn down Rome to make the Book of Revelation come true and all Christians everywhere came under suspicion of Insurrection, especially after the Sicarii seized the Temple in Jerusalem in that same year, starting the War with Rome.

But that is all in the future. Right now, one wonders what was at the heart of the Nazarite vow Paul took in Cenchrea. I believe it is reasonable to see it as something related to the Collection for the Poor, for only after this vow does Paul make it a priority in his mission. His ship takes him to Caesarea, but he doesn't appear to have visited the believers there:

And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluteth the Church, he went down to Antioch.

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. (Acts 18:22-23.)

I believe this includes some recent evangelization of Galatia, which is inferred in Galatians 1:6. Epaphroditus then interrupts the Pauline narrative for a brief mention of what Aquila and Priscilla were up to in Ephesus. But let's not be too hasty, for those last two paragraphs contain a lot of relevant information, or lack thereof. For instance, who accompanied Paul? We can guess at least Timothy, but was there anyone else? Perhaps a female companion?

He must have had some contact with James when he was in Jerusalem for the Feast, where he would have been relieved of his Nazarite vow. He had good news, for the spread of the Gospel to the Gentiles in Macedonia and Achaia had been very successful, and he again must have checked in with the Elders in Antioch, but his further mission to Asia may have still been a secret to the believers in both Jerusalem and Antioch.

His recent evangelization of Galatia had also been successful, so successful that the Church in Jerusalem sent representatives there to lay down the Law of Moses on them, as made clear in his Letter to the Galatians. He would have no need of reminding them of the Collection for the Poor, since he had likely already developed a plan for them to meet this obligation while he had been present. He says elsewhere from Ephesus that he had already given details to the Galatians about the Collection. (I Corinthians 16:1.)

Now for Apollos, the Alexandrian Prophet. We tolerate this interruption because it demonstrates perfectly the next phase of the Gospel to the Gentiles, which is the Free-For-All Cult Competition between the churches of Paul, which were created independent of Jerusalem, and the Church of Jerusalem, which was trying to steal the churches for total control.

Aquila and Priscilla, who had gone ahead to pave the way for Paul, encountered Apollos, a gifted Jew from Alexandria, who was said to be “an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures.” Epaphroditus then informs us that Apollos 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,” to wit, water baptism. (Acts 18:24-25.) Did he come straight from Alexandria? If so, then we logically assume there had been some evangelization of that city, but by whom and when we may never know.

After arriving in Ephesus, Apollos immediately began to speak boldly in the Jewish synagogue, the same one attended by Aquila and Priscilla. We are told that the married couple then “expounded unto him the Way of God more perfectly.” (Acts 18:26.) We assume this teaching included being Baptized in the Holy Spirit, after receiving the Spirit of Sonship. (See Galatians 4 and Romans 8 above.)

It appears that Aquila and Priscilla had made some headway in the synagogue that had received such a dire warning in the Book of Revelation regarding their toleration of the Nicolaitanes. (Revelation 2:1-7.) Apollos then desired to take his message to Achaia, and the

believers wrote to the churches there (Athens and Corinth) for them to receive him, and that's the last we hear of him in Acts. Paul mentions him in his First Letter to the Corinthians, as the leader of a party in Corinth, and in his Letter to Titus, as passing through Crete with the lawyer Zenas, on his way to Ephesus or Corinth. (I Corinthians 1:13; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3:13.)

Meanwhile, when Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the upper coasts to Ephesus. At this time I hear very suspenseful music blaring in the background, like the them to "Mission Impossible," as Paul fulfills his dream to evangelize the forbidden Roman province of Asia. Peculiarly, he finds twelve disciples there who hadn't heard of the Holy Ghost, and like Apollos, only knew the Baptism of John.

One can't miss the irony here, for these disciples must have been disciples of John Zebedee who had been terrorized to fear the teaching of the Nicolaitanes. If so, this confirms our suspicion that John Zebedee did not teach the Secret Doctrine of the Divine Sonship and Daughtership of Believers, which is "the Way of God more perfectly," even though there is a vague reference to it in Revelation 1:6, where he says that Christ has made believers, "Kings and Priests unto God and his Father":

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.

When they heard this, they were Baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them: and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

And all the men were about twelve. (Acts 18:26; 19:4-7.)

I can't shake the feeling that Epaphroditus is making some subtle comparisons here, since we are told that Paul has the power to Baptize with the Holy Spirit, a power that originally only belonged to the Twelve Apostles. So it seems likely that Epaphroditus is equating the original Twelve Apostles with the Twelve Disciples of Ephesus, meaning that they are ignorant of the true Holy Spirit, mistaking it for the Spirit of the Law.

Paul then spent the next three months boldly preaching “the things concerning the Kingdom of God:”

But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake Evil of that Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the School of one Tyrannus.

And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the Word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. (Acts 19:9-10.)

Time to start thinking magically. Epaphroditus now adds a bit of comedy with demonology with a story about the success of Paul driving out demons, competing with a Jewish priestly exorcist family, namely Sceva, a Chief Priest, and his seven sons. Epaphroditus calls them “vagabond Jews,” which had started to use the Name of Jesus in their exorcisms: “We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth:”

And the Evil Spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?

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.

And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus: and Fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.

Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed. (Acts 19:15-20.)

Paul then planned on going through Macedonia and Achaia before going to Jerusalem with what I imagine would have been the Collection for the Poor. His long range mission was to go to Rome after delivering the Collection, but little did he know that he would end up in Rome by other means.

We are told however, that Paul’s message reached all of Asia, and his letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, and to Philemon, evidence a vibrant ministry in those cities as well as those of Hierapolis and Laodicea. In Colossae it appears that church met in the House of Philemon and in Laodicea, the House of Nymphas. (Colossians 4:15.) If you recall, the Angel tells John in Revelation that he will Spue the Laodiceans out of his Mouth because they are

Lukewarm and Naked (Revelation 3:16): Nymphas obviously survived this Terror fully clothed. Paul adds an admonition to Achippus to take heed of his ministry at the very end of his letter. (Colossians 4:17.)

We wouldn't know any of this if we were left to information in Acts alone, for Epaphroditus barely mentions anyone that Paul worked with in Asia, other than Tychicus and Trophimus, who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem with the Collection. (Acts 20:4.) Epaphroditus mentions Trophimus again as the one seen by the Jews of Asia being with Paul when he was in the Temple in Jerusalem, which led to Paul's arrest. (Acts 21:29.) After these, he never mentions them again.

Paul mentions both men several times. He mentions Tychicus as being his courier for the Letter to the Ephesians, 6:21-22. He also sends him with Onesimus, Philemon's slave, to the Colossians, since both Philemon and his slave were from Colossae. He also sends greeting from Epaphras, who is also a Colossian. (Colossians 4:7-12.) In his Letter to Philemon, requesting the freedom of his slave, he also mentions a woman, Apphia, and a man, Archippus, whom he admonishes in his Letter to the Colossians. (Philemon 1-2; Colossians 4:17; I've often wondered if archaeologists ever excavate the ruins of Colossae – since it was mainly destroyed in an earthquake in 60 A.D. – if an original copy of Colossians could have miraculously survived.)

Paul states to Titus that he will be sending Artemas or Tychicus to relieve him in Crete. (Titus 4:12.) We assume Artemas is an Asian since he is otherwise never mentioned, but Tychicus seems to have been a main player. Anyway, Paul wants to return to Macedonia and sends Timothy and Erastus to scout out the territory, while he stays behind in Ephesus. (Acts 19:22.)

He mentions Erastus again in his Second Letter to Timothy, written from Rome, informing him that Paul left Erastus in Corinth. (II Timothy 4:20.) We are told no more about him, other than that he was a fellowlaborer in the Gospel.

Epaphroditus then relates that while Paul abided in Ephesus for a season after the three months he spent evangelizing in the synagogue, and the two years he spent teaching in the School of Tyrannus, that Demetrius, a silversmith, and likely Alexander, a coppersmith, stirred up the city over the Goddess Artemis and her Temple, which we have already related. (Acts 19:8-10.) It is obvious that Paul wrote his First Letter to the Corinthians after this riot, for he informs them that, after the manner of men, he fought beasts in Ephesus. (I Corinthians 15:32.) Moreover, he relates these events to the Corinthians again:

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life;

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:

Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. (II Corinthians 1:8-10.)

He doesn't mention the role that Aquila and Priscilla played in the drama, but in Paul's greeting to them when they were in Rome, he states:

Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:

Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. (Romans 16:3-4.)

If we recall, Aristarchus and Gaius were seized and dragged into the Theatre along with Paul, and they may have been imprisoned for a while after the riot over Artemis and her Temple (one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World), for the Rulers had decided that the people must pursue their case through legal challenges because they were otherwise faced with prosecution from Rome:

For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your Goddess...

For we are in danger to be called in question for this days' uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. (Acts 19:37-41.)

What's really in question here is the ultimate effect this event will have on Paul's ministry, in fact, bringing it to an end. Later, when Paul is arrested in the Jerusalem Temple, the

true cause of the legal charges against him are never fully set forth. We are left guessing: was it because he brought Gentiles into the Temple? This one seems to pop up automatically.

But note that it is the Jews from Asia that start the riot in the Temple by making the accusation that he brought uncircumcised Gentiles into the Temple. I believe the main clue is the fact that when the third “we” section begins, in Caesarea, shipping off to Rome for the Appeal, Aristarchus is listed as being with them, the same that had been in the Ephesian Theatre with Paul, and whom he called his fellowprisoner.

The Jews from Asia, among them likely Alexander, had failed to nail them in Ephesus but James had provided them an opportunity to get him in Jerusalem. In a letter to Timothy, Paul despairs that all from Asia abandoned him in Rome. Thus, Paul’s Doom was his mission to Asia in disobedience to the Antichrist James. The ultimate charge, disturbing the sanctity of the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

If this were the case, then Gallio’s Ruling in Corinth may have gotten the case dismissed. But again, Epaphroditus remains silent on the matter, and we would never have known about Paul’s imprisonment in Ephesus but for Paul’s letters. This appears to be another case of when Rome is involved, Epaphroditus thought it best to remain silent.

Epaphroditus does tell us, however, that Gaius and Aristarchus had been seized prior to Paul’s involvement in the riot (Acts 19:29), so it is possible that they had been imprisoned there. Paul says he was a prisoner in his letters to the Ephesians [Laodiceans] (Ephesians 2:1; 4:1; 6:20); as well as in his Letter to the Colossians (Colossians 4:3), where he says Aristarchus is his fellowprisoner. (Colossians 4:10.)

For this reason, I believe Paul was imprisoned briefly in Ephesus over this riot, from where he wrote Ephesians [the letter to the Laodiceans] and Colossians. The KJV attestations at the end of the letters state that they were written from Rome, as it does with Galatians and Philippians, but the Ephesus location makes more sense to me, as does Caesarea for the Letter to

the Philippians. As for Galatians, I believe Macedonia, likely Philippi, is the best location. Incredibly, the KJV in its attestation at the end of I Corinthians, says that it was written from Philippi, when Paul himself states in the letter that he is going to tarry in Ephesus. (I Corinthians 16:8.) So we take the attestations with a grain of salt.

Whoever wrote the attestations were still under the delusion of Platonic Philosophical Categories (e.g., the idiocy of theodicy: if God is Good he cannot have Created Evil), that the Book of Acts never contradicts the Letters of Paul. We have demonstrated from the evidence in Acts and the Letters of Paul that this philosophical a priori deduction (Nietzsche called it a dogmatist's error), is patently false. We are not so lame as to call all of the clear contradictions to be only apparent contradictions, for this is nothing but a gaslighting term to deflect honest analysis.

God is known by the things he has created, and everything he Created is both Good and Evil. (Romans 1:19-20; Isaiah 45:7; Genesis 1:31.) Water, Earth, Fire, and Air are all necessary and thus Good, but they also can be Evil, as in Floods, Earthquakes, Wild Fires, and Hurricanes. Human nature is no different. It is both Good and Evil and God eventually settled with the idea that his Creation of Mankind with Free Will resulted in "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only Evil continuously;" and after the Great Deluge, he said:

I will not again Curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is Evil from his youth. (Genesis 6:5; 8:21.)

So even though God brags to Cyrus the Great that, "I Form the Light, and Create Darkness; I Make Good, and I Create Evil: I YHWH do all these things" (Isaiah 45:7: the Great Isaiah Scroll), modern Christians still operate under Platonic Categories and continue to lie about God in a theological system of thought called Theodicy: the defense of God's Goodness, leading to an abyss of absurdity (the idiocy of theodicy), like, if God is Good then he can do no Evil. But God says he Created both Good and Evil, and thus he is beyond Good and Evil.

So what happened in Corinth during the three years or so Paul spent in Ephesus, when he wasn't in prison? I call this period the great Free-For-All Cult Competition. Let us see what Paul had to deal with.

The Great Free-For-All Cult Competition: Chaos in Corinth

We see that Paul put his boxing gloves on before he entered the Forbidden Province of Asia, meaning that the Right Handshakes of Fellowship were no longer in effect. The Jerusalem Church had broken this trust long ago, and they had no hesitation in attempting to bring the Law to the Corinthians, with both Peter and the Brothers of the Lord competing openly in the city. (I Corinthians 1:12; 9:5.) Not to mention any competition from Apollos. (I Corinthians 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 16:12.) Paul also mentions Barnabas as if the Corinthians are familiar with him, either as a character in stories told to them by Paul, or perhaps first hand if Barnabas ever passed through Corinth. (I Corinthians 9:6.)

We learn of the great turmoil all of this competitive teaching caused in the minds of the believers in Corinth when Sosthenes brought it all to the attention of Paul in Ephesus. It appears that he had brought news that there was Chaos in Corinth, especially in the House of Chloe:

For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the House of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.

Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.

Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name.

And I baptized also the Household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other.

For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to Preach the Gospel; not with wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made of none effect. (I Corinthians 1:11-17.)

I couldn't help but notice that there was no party saying, "I am of Silas." He and Timothy were with Paul in Corinth at the beginning of his ministry there. (II Corinthians 1:19.) I'm not sure, but I believe I know why there was no Silas party. He was a representative of the Jerusalem

Church, whereas Peter was a Pillar of that Church. Therefore, those that were saying “I am of Peter,” were already in the Silas party. I also believe we can be fairly certain that this party was really into the Law of Moses.

The party I am most interested in is the party that said, “I am of Christ.” These were the Spirituals of the Corinthian fellowship. They had been schooled in the Secret Mysteries of the Divine Sonship and Daughtership of God in the Holy Spirit. They were Christ Kings, but they were still very immature in the Spirit and ripe for Paul’s criticism. They believed that they had begun to reign as Kings without Paul, for some had begun to demean his ministry, comparing him against the Jerusalem Apostles, judging him less important:

But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self.

For I know nothing by myself: yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord Come, who both will bring to Light the Hidden Things of Darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have Praise of God.

And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.

For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as Kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you. (I Corinthians 4:3-8.)

If these parties were equally divided, then a fourth of Corinthian believers had been initiated into the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. There was one main thing that they were lacking and that was The Giving Love of God. Paul composed a great and world famous Hymn to God’s Love in I Corinthians 13, ending with: “And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity [God’s Love], these three; but the greatest is God’s Love.” (I Corinthians 13:13.)

The Apollos party was at least in line with Paul’s teaching, so much so that the Corinthians wanted to know if he was returning to Corinth sometime soon. Assuming that he was abiding in Ephesus at this time, Paul cautions the Corinthians:

As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time. (I Corinthians 16:12.)

It appears that Peter was up to his old tricks stealing churches from other Apostles, even bringing the Lord's brothers, like Jude, into the fold. The fascination with the real Jesus must have given this party real clout, so much that when Paul decared the Gospel that he preached, he added after the parts that were according to the Scriptures, the allegation that Christ after his Resurrection first Appeared to Cephas, then of the Twelve." (I Corinthians 15:5.)

This Free-For-All didn't change things for the better. Anti Paul Jews were increasing in their tendency toward violence. They would eventually conspire to murder Paul, but that was still in the future.

Paul ends his first Letter to the Corinthians with instructions regarding the Collection for the Poor Saints in Jerusalem. Stephanas is mentioned again – his House is noted as the “Firstfruits of Achaia” – at the end of the letter along with Fortunatas and Achaiacus, for they had supplied a gift for Paul in support of his ministry, to wit, money and necessities. (I Corinthians 16:17-18.)

Paul was careful up to this point not to badmouth Peter, but he never saw him as his superior, even though he first traveled to Jerusalem after his Conversion to meet with Peter to make sure he was not running in vain. (Galatians 1:18; 2:6.) I don't believe it would be too radical to view Peter as an adversary of Paul. After all, Paul had to rebuke him in Antioch. (Galatians 2:11-14.) It would also be hard to forget that Peter was the Joseph Stalin of the Early Church, and had betrayed Jesus three times on the night of his arrest (Matthew 26:69-75), and that Satan had so totally blinded him to the real mission of Jesus that Jesus had to rebuke him in the harshest manner:

From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the Elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be if far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. (Matthew 16:21-23.)

The Last Days of Paul's Ministry: The Collection for the Poor

The last days of Paul's ministry were filled with having to relive the circumcision question all over again, as if the Summit had never happened, as demonstrated by the sections in Galatians and Romans that deal with the subject (see above, p. 79; and see, Colossians 2:11; 3:11; 4:11; Philippians 3:2-3; Ephesians 2:11; and Titus 1:10.)

The most important issue in his last days was, of course, the Collection for the Poor in Jerusalem. After his imprisonment in Ephesus, it appears that inroads were being made by the Circumcision Party in Colossae and Laodicea, finally coming to a head in Galatia. It is interesting to see the progression of Paul's dealing with these formidable adversaries, for he reluctantly mentions Peter, the 12, James, the brother of the Lord, and other Apostles from the Church in Jerusalem, in his ode to his Gospel, in I Corinthians 15:5-7; but in II Corinthians 11:12-15 his dealings with them become much more serious, ending with Paul calling them Ministers of Satan, and finally in Galatians 1:6-9, Cursing their Gospel with the Law.

It is apparent that the Free-For-All Cult Competition turned into a dog eat dog, drag down fight. with the wholesale invasion of Paul's free churches by those whose goal was to place them all under the Law of Moses. Paul then spends some time in Macedonia, ending up in Corinth for three months with plans to take the Collection to Jerusalem from the port in Cenchrea. However, his adversaries had become blood thirsty and desperately tried to stop him:

And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece.

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. (Acts 20:3.)

Epaphroditus then informs us that several people accompanied Paul, without telling us why he purposed to return through Macedonia. I believe Epaphroditus is silent about this Collection because it proves Paul's Gospel was without the Law of Moses. Paul is also silent about this journey, other than his mention at the end of his Letter to the Romans:

But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the Saints.
For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a Certain Contribution for the Poor Saints which are at Jerusalem.
It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their Spiritual Things, their duty is also to minister unto them in Carnal Things.
When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you unto Spain.
And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the Fulness of the Blessings of the Gospel of Christ.
Now I beseech ye, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me: That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my Service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the Saints. (Romans 15:25-31.)

It is noteworthy that Paul salutes Aquila and Priscilla, who have gone back to their old haunts in Rome, in his letter to that city:

Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus; who have for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.
Likewise greet the church that is in their House. Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.
Greet Mary, who bestowed much labor on us." (Romans 16:3-6.)

Who is this Mary? In my opinion, it is Mary Magdalene. As for Epaenetus, he must have been in the House of Stephanus, for Paul stated at the end of I Corinthians, that his House was "the firstfruits of Achaia." (I Corinthians 16:15.) It is also interesting that all the people that were with Paul when he planned on sailing from Cenchrea to Syria are not mentioned by Epaphroditus as accompanying Paul from Cenchrea to Philippi, except for perhaps Sosipater:

Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.
I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle, salute you in the Lord.
Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the Chamberlain of the City saluteth you, and Quartus a brother. (Romans 16:21:23.)

Compare this to what Epaphroditus records:

And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and [of Corinth] Gaius... (Acts 20:4.)

We assume that Sosipater is the same as Sopater of Berea, and Jason is the one who posted security to the authorities in Thessalonika. I have taken the liberty of adding “of Corinth” to Gaius in the text because it was from his house that Romans was written. Otherwise, Epaphroditus ignores the representatives of this city, and it seems likely to me that Titus had something to do with it, since he gathered the Collection in Corinth at the last minute:

Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the Grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the Riches of their liberality.

For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves:

Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the Gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the Saints.

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the Will of God.

Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same Grace also. (II Corinthians 8:1-6.)

We'll give Epaphroditus the benefit of the doubt about the blood-thirsty Jews who laid in wait for him to murder him before he sailed from Cenchrea to Syria. For the end of this letter demonstrates that he was in Cenchrea when he wrote Romans and his desire was to go to Rome after delivering the Collection on his way to Spain. So the fact that he later changed his mind and traveled to Syria via Philippi because there was a murder conspiracy against him has the ring of truth to it.

The Passion of Paul

Paul's journey to Jerusalem is told by Epaphroditus in the same manner as he recorded the Passion of the Christ in his Gospel of Luke. Jesus knows there is to be no good ending but trudges ahead anyway:

And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51; cf. Isaiah 50:7.)

In Philippi Paul meets up with Epaphroditus and the representatives from Asia and Derbe. Are we to assume that Timothy, representing Derbe, is also the representative for all of Galatia? Your guess is as good as mine.

Five days after the Days of Unleavened Bread, they set sail, and the second “we” first person section begins. Five days later they disembarked in Troas, where they stayed for seven days with believers. Epaphroditus then records what appears to be a genuine miracle, the raising of a young man from the dead. The boy fell out of a third loft after falling asleep during one of Paul’s preaching sessions that went late into the night. (Acts 20:7-12.)

Of course, the young man might not have been really dead, for it appears that Paul could have merely resuscitated him, who appeared otherwise lifeless. But then again he could have been really dead for a few minutes. It’s a great story, though.

I can’t say I fully understand the next section in the narrative, for it appears very peculiar, so I will just relay it and move on:

And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in and came to Mitylene.

And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios: and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus,

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. (Acts 20:13-16.)

I don’t know about you, but this whole thing suggests that Paul is doing some things in secret. Bruce says that, knowing the ship would take some time to reach Assos, he took the land route, because it was faster and gave him more time in Troas. (Commentary on Acts, p. 409.) Whatever the reason, he joined his shipmates in Assos and remained with them until they sailed past Ephesus, “because he would not spend the time in Asia,” reminding us that he had barely escaped Ephesus with his life.

From Miletus, which, I assume, is not in Asia, Paul summoned the Elders of the Ephesian Church to inform them of the current state of the Free-For-All, which Epaphroditus reports to us in his subtle manner, for he suggests that the enemy Jews are unbelievers:

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.

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:

And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house.,

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying bonds and afflictions abide me.

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.

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. (Acts 20:17-25.)

We now learn facts that Epaphroditus has been keeping from us, for in every city Paul has received prophecies from the Holy Spirit that bad things are in store for him in Jerusalem. Instead of heeding the warnings, he accepts them as tests of faithfulness, and the prophecies as temptations to disobey his calling. Who says that God never tempts anybody? Those old scholars who believed that Paul escaped death in Rome and went on to a ministry in Spain fail to discern the real purpose of this speech, or the amount of blood shed in the Cult War since John singled out Ephesus in the Book of Revelation. For Epaphroditus knows that Paul will never see the Ephesians face to face ever again, and Paul knows it too:

Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God.

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.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

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.

I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

I have showed you all things, how that so laboring 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.

And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship. (Acts 20:26-38.)

At least Epaphroditus makes it clear that Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles was a message of Grace and Righteousness by other means than obedience to the Law of Moses, for, lest we forget, Epaphroditus was a Gentile. And though he attempts to disguise the role of the Church of Jerusalem behind Paul's woes, like he does with the Collection for the Poor, it doesn't take that much guesswork to figure it out. For the Jews, both believers and unbelievers, were in agreement against Paul's Gospel WITHOUT the Law to the Gentiles. They were totally antagonistic to the idea that the Righteousness of God could be attained without the Law by believing that the Faith of Jesus Christ Saves All Sinners from Condemnation. (Romans 8:1-4.)

And less I forget, Paul's summons to the Elders to meet him in Miletus also tends to prove the idea that Paul had been imprisoned in Ephesus and barely escaped with his life and didn't want to risk arrest in Asia by sailing into port there. But the negative temptations are only going to get worse the closer Paul gets to Jerusalem.

Epaphroditus narrates the sea voyage from Miletus to Tyre, on the coast of Syria, where the ship unloaded its cargo, and where they spent seven days with disciples. And once again, the Spirit tempted Paul, "that he should not go up to Jerusalem." (Acts 21:1-4.)

They then proceed to Ptolemais where they saluted the brethren and abode them for a day, before taking ship again to Caesarea. You may recall that Ptolemais was where Petronius, the Roman governor, stalled in erecting Caligula's statue in the Holy of Holies. In Caesarea, they stay with Philip and his daughters.

And we entered into the House of Philip the Evangelist, which was One of the Seven; and abode with him.

And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain Prophet, named Agabus [whose previous prophecy of the famine under Claudius had come to pass, and therefore was from God under the test of Deuteronomy 18:20-22].

And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus Saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him nought not to go up to Jerusalem.

Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the Name of the Lord Jesus.

And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The Will of the Lord be done.

And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem. (Acts 21:8b-15.)

I am aware that the Antichrist Letter of James says that, "Let no man say, when he is Tempted, I am Tempted of God, for God cannot be Tempted with Evil, neither Tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." (James 1:13-14.) But this is one of the biggest Lies in the Bible. In my opinion this shows the influence of Platonic thought in the Hellenistic World, for Jesus knew the Truth when he taught us to pray to the Father, "Lead us not into Temptation, but Deliver us from Evil," for he himself had been Led by the Holy Spirit into Temptation by the Devil for forty days. (Matthew 6:13; 4:1.)

This was something that Paul understood, but was unable to convey to his friends, who were only trying to prevent him from his fate. With that out of way we are free to ask Epaphroditus: What happened to the Gentile church founded by Peter in the House of Cornelius,

the Roman Centurion? Did Philip have anything to do with it? As in founding it just to have it stolen by Peter?

It is something to think about, since James has in store for Paul a real Temptation of his own: Will Paul continue on to Jerusalem to Seal his mission with the delivery of the Collection for the Poor, thus guaranteeing that the mission to the Gentiles is without the Law of Moses? Or, as he feared in his Letter to the Romans, will James not accept it, and lay his mission to waste? (Romans 15:31.)

The Temptation of James

Now we enter the true Diabolical World of the great Satanic Temptation of James, the brother of our Lord: the true First Century Antichrist. He sits on his restored Tabernacle of David throne and holds out the Forbidden Fruit of the acceptance of Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles, a Gospel that is without the Law of Moses, in exchange for Paul's Collection for the Poor Saints in Jerusalem. Will Paul take the bait? Let's see.

The Collection Party are on land now, so they form a protection caravan to transfer the Collection safely to Jerusalem:

And after those days we took up our carriages and went up to Jerusalem.

There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought one with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the Elders were present.

And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

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:

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.

What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou are come.

Do therefore this that we say to thee; We have four men which have a vow on them;

Then 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 walketh orderly, and keepest the Law.

As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication. (Acts 15-21.)

Let us carefully examine the above narration. First we note that James is the undisputed leader of the Jerusalem Church. Epaphroditus downplays this by having the condition issued by James and the Elders, but make no mistake, James is in charge. Second, Epaphroditus was present for this event, since he is still using the plural “we” in the narration.

And where are the other Two Pillars, Peter and John? Has John joined his brother? Was he a casualty in the Asian Cult War. Is Peter away still stealing Paul’s churches in Macedonia and Achaia?

Third, there is nothing said about the Collection for the Poor. Fourth, a new condition other than the Jerusalem Mandate is now necessary for Paul to fulfill – more hoops to leap through – before he reaches his goal: the acceptance of his Law Free Gospel to the Gentiles. Fifth, and most important, the new condition requires him to be in the Temple on a certain day, to be calculated from the day the four men shave their heads. An easy calculation for his enemies, both believers and unbelievers. Sixth, no one, least of all Epaphroditus, know that it is a trap set by James. I can just see James behind the scenes conspiring with John Zebedee’s believers in Asia – e.g. Alexander the Coppersmith – letting them know the day and hour Paul will be in the Temple.

I’m beginning to think that somehow Paul and Aristarchus must have escaped their Ephesian prison, and are now fugitives from justice, knowledge possessed by the Jews from Asia – knowing that it was likely they have a warrant out for their arrest! After all, the offended parties were free to take Paul to law for their complaints. (Acts 19:38-39.)

Epaphroditus must be thinking, “Hey, everyone calls this guy ‘James the Just,’ so he must be a good guy and have good intentions,” thus blinding him to the Devil horns and pointed tail sitting on the throne. Yes, Satan is presiding over the Jerusalem Church, just as he did over the Seven Churches of Revelation. When this passage is read out loud in modern churches, if you strain your ears, you should be able to hear maniacal laughter in the background. So, let us get on with our story.

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.

And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

Crying out, Men of Israel, help. This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the Law, and this Place: and further brought Greeks also into the Temple, and hath polluted this Holy Place.

(For they had seen before with him in the City Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the Temple.)

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.

And as they went about to kill him, tidings came to the Chief Captain of the Band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar,

Who immediately took soldiers and Centurions and ran down unto them [from the Fortress Antonia]; and when they saw the Chief Captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

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.

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.

And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him. (Acts 21:26-36,)

Can't you imagine the look on James' face when they tell him that Paul got away before they could kill him and was rescued by the Roman Guard? As for Paul, he talks the Captain to allow him to speak to the riotous crowd. At first the Captain resists, thinking that Paul is a known Egyptian agitator who had led four thousand murderers into the wilderness. But Paul informs him that he is a Jew from Tarsus and then is allowed to address the crowd.

Paul seizes on the opportunity to evangelize his own people before the Temple. The scene is so dramatic, that one wonders what embellishments Epaphroditus has added. He then relates in the Hebrew tongue his history and especially the Damascus Road Event. This is the second account of Paul's Conversion, and has a slight contradiction about who saw the Light or Heard the Voice. He further relates how Ananias restored his eyesight, and how he had a Vision where the Ascended Lord told him to preach to the Gentiles. We know from Paul's own version that this is total fiction, but Epaphroditus never names his source of information.

So far, the crowd has been attentive, but as soon as he mentions the word "Gentiles," the crowd goes berserk again, yelling:

Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.
And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the
air,
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. (Acts 22:1-24.)

The Mystery of the Formal Charges Against Paul

Paul then informs him it is not legal to scourge a Roman citizen and the Chief Captain panics because he has already violated Paul's rights as a Roman citizen. He thinks it over and in order to cover his ass, he orders that on the morrow, the Chief Priests and all their Counsel to appear before him, "because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews." The next morning he unloosed Paul's bonds and held the noticed hearing, allowing Paul to confront his accusers.

This, of course, allows Paul the opportunity to play the Sadducees against the Pharisees because he tells them of the Resurrection of Jesus, and, because the Sadducees say there is no Resurrection, Chaos ensues. The Chief Captain is left no wiser, ordering his soldiers to save Paul from being torn to pieces and return him to the Castle. Note that we do not receive any knowledge of any formal charges against Paul – even the Roman is left guessing. But I am not sure if Epaphroditus is deliberating obfuscating the information, to, so to say, keep us in the dark.

As this debacle proceeds, we will take note of this obfuscating, until at the end, we have to make intelligent deductions.

Paul receives a Vision in the night; it's Jesus and he is told: "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.)

But that doesn't stop the Jews from trying to kill him:

And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a Curse [this is Black Magic], saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

And there were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

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.

Now therefore ye with the Council signify to the Chief Captain that he bring him down to you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him; and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him. (Acts 23:12-15.)

We are in the hands of a master story-teller, for Epaphroditus gives the reader suspense, danger, bloodshed, and a mockery of the law, for we will never know for sure what crimes Paul died for. It kind of reminds me of the plot in The Trial, by Franz Kafka, where the anti-hero eventually is executed for a crime of which is never revealed. This is not a total mystery, for we will likely discern the crime by the end of the article. Back to the murder plot.

And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the Castle, and told Paul.

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.

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.

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?

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.

But do not thou yield unto them; for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an Oath, that they will neither eat nor drink until they have killed him; and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

So the Chief Captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me. (Acts 23:16-22.)

For the first time we discover that Paul had relatives in Jerusalem, for his own nephew comes to him in the Castle to inform him of the plot. Who was his sister? Is her husband still alive? Did they become believers? And how did his nephew discover the murder plot? We are left guessing.

I have a feeling that his sister and nephew were believers, for they seem eager to save him from the plot, regardless of how they knew about it. And if they were believers, then the forty assassins bound by a Black Magic Vow must have been believers too. One wonders what became of them because the Chief Captain immediately orders that Paul be taken to Caesarea for his own protection.

He assembles two hundred soldiers and sixty cavalry and two hundred spearmen for a protective escort at three o'clock in the morning. He then writes a letter to Felix the governor, who resides in Caesarea in the Praetorium (Herod's old palace hall), informing him of the situation:

Claudius Lysias unto the Most Excellent Governor Felix sendeth greeting:
 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.
 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their Council:
 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.
 And when it was told me how that 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. (Acts 23:26-30.)

One has to hand it to the Chief Captain, he knew how to cover his ass. Note that he left out the fact that he had originally illegally treated a Roman citizen. Anyhow, Paul escapes the murder plot and we are never told what happened to the assassins. Did they starve to death? Did they break their Black Magic Vow and escape the consequences? Actually, one does not really care.

Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.

On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the Castle:

Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;

I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's Judgment Hall [the Praetorium]. (Acts 23:31-35; the mention of the Praetorium as Paul's residence in his Letter to the Philippians [Philippians 1:13: KJV has 'the palace'], is enough for me to assume that Paul was a prisoner in Caesarea at the time he wrote the letter, and not in Ephesus or Rome. Perhaps translating "Herod's Judgment Hall" in Acts, and "the Palace" in Philippians, instead of the actual word, "Praetorium," may have been deliberate obfuscation by the KJV translators, for they attested the letter was written from Rome.)

The stage has now been set for the showdown. Five days later Ananias the High Priest arrives in Caesarea along with the Elders and with a professional Orator named Tertullus who accused Paul before Felix. After a brief warmup, Tertullus got to the point:

For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a Mover of Sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a Ringleader of the Sect of the Nazarenes:

Who also hath gone about to Profane the Temple; whom we took, and would have judged according to our Law.

But the Chief Captain Lysius came upon us, with great violence took him away out of our hands,

Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so. (Acts 24:5-9.)

Epaphroditus must love courtroom drama. One wonders if his Gospel of Luke and Book of Acts were written to a legal official named Theophilus, because both books are dedicated to him. What he does reveal is a Deep State behind the scenes plot – a conspiracy – against Paul by the High Priest and the Jews from Asia, for example Alexander, and perhaps, even James. Was the Church of Jerusalem, the Caliphate of James, known to the Romans as the Sect of the Nazarenes vis-a-vis Jesus of Nazareth? Had it been declared illegal?

It appears that Tertullus was equating this Sect with one of the more well known dangerous Zealot/Sicarii movements out of Galilee, and not necessarily the Jerusalem Church.

But that's just a wild guess. Yes, we have to guess, but it is a fact that Tertullus suggests it is a dangerous Sect.

This is the closest we are ever to get to the accusations against Paul. I found the following accusations in the text to be:

1.) Paul is a pestilent fellow, a Mover of Sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and Ringleader of the Sect of the Nazarenes. I am sure that the High Priest was aware of Paul's unpopularity in the Church of Jerusalem, and that is why I believe the Sect of the Nazarenes is to be distinguished from the Caliphate of James. Perhaps being the Ringleader is a separate charge, for F.F. Bruce sees it that way in his Commentary on the Book of Acts. (Id., p.465.) It is, although, difficult for me to separate the two.

2.) Paul had Profaned the Jerusalem Temple, for it was believed that Paul allowed an uncircumcised Greek, Trophimus the Ephesian, into the Temple beyond the noticed barrier that threatens Gentiles on the pain of death not to take one step further. This, of course, is number three as far as Bruce is concerned, but if the Temple of Artemis was included, then this charge alone would be enough to state a cause of action against the Roman Empire. (Id., p. 466.)

If we assume that the Empire was aware of the Book of Revelation, then they would have been very susceptible to such charges, for after all, just a few years later radical believers attempted to burn down Rome hoping to make the Revelation come true. Nero executed dozens of them afterwards. But that is still to come.

Thus, Profaning the Jewish Temple would not qualify as a matter for Roman Law, but attempting to Profane the Temple of Aretmis in Ephesus sure would. Of course, Epaphroditus would have reason to leave that one out. He would not like Theophilis to believe that Paul was in any way a threat to the Empire.

Thus, in light of the evidence we do possess, namely: One: that Aristarchus is with Paul when he sails off to Rome, which we assume means that he was a co-defendant, for, after all, he

had been in the Theatre in Ephesus with Paul. (Acts 19:29; 27:2.) Two: he was said by Paul in his Letter to the Colossians to be his fellowprisoner when they were imprisoned in Ephesus. (Colossians 4:10.) Three: Paul's admonitions to Timothy to watch out for Alexander the Coppersmith in Ephesus, (I Timothy 1:20; II Timothy 4:15.) And Four: Paul sadly informs Timothy that all of Asia had abandoned him at his trial in Rome. (II Timothy 1:15.) So, an intelligent guess would be that the main issue in Rome was over the riot in Ephesus, and, in the end, Paul lost his head over it.

We are getting further and further away from the last "we" section, meaning that Epaphroditus is recreating each scene beginning with Paul's arrest in the Temple. Thus we find Felix pondering the matter after Paul's rousing defense, which is mainly that they are unable to prove any of their accusations and he is mainly a prisoner because of his belief in the Resurrection of the Dead:

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.

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 to him. (Acts 24:10-23.)

A few days later Felix called Paul in front of him and his wife, Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He asked Paul about the Way and after he was informed, he trembled:

Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient time season, I will call for thee.

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.

But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' Room, and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound (Acts 24:25b-26.)

I see the request for money more as a matter of bail than of bribery corruption. I find this as more evidence that even though the Collection for the Poor was not officially accepted, they still kept the money from being used to bail out Paul, leaving Paul high and dry for two years.

Epaphroditus leaves us guessing as to the outcome of the testimony of Lysias if and when he arrived in Caesarea. Leaving us in the dark is a sure proof that money talks.

Paul Appeals to Caesar

Festus proved to be a wily politician. He's not confronted with Paul's situation until he leaves Paul in Caesarea and travels to Jerusalem. There the High Priest and someone called the "Chief of the Jews" informed him of Paul's situation. They have prepared an ambush for Paul when Festus sends for him, but Festus foils this plot by ordering Paul to stay in Caesarea and hearing the matter there:

And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

And while he [Paul] 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.

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?

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 well knowest.

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 whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I Appeal unto Caesar.

Then Festus, when he had conferred with the Council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go. (Acts 25:7-12.)

The crime has been twisted from a riot in Ephesus to an act against Caesar by the subtle touch of Epaphroditus, who obfuscates the real offense. Anyway, Paul had no real choice since an ambush was waiting for him on the way to Jerusalem.

But the courtroom drama doesn't end there. Soon the new King, Agrippa II, with his beautiful consort, Queen Bernice, came to Caesarea to salute Festus. There are several views of Agrippa's relation with his younger sister. Some believed they lived together in sin, since they never officially married, while others saw the relationship as Platonic, since there were rumors of Agrippa's homosexuality. But Epaphroditus makes no moral judgments as he relates the story in a manner that downplays all the charges against Paul:

There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

About whom when I was in Jerusalem, the Chief Priests and the Elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

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.

Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:

But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

But when Paul had Appealed to be reserved unto the Hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar. (Acts 25:14b-21.)

Epaphroditus paints the picture as being a question of Jewish Law and Belief, as if the real crime is not really before Festus. As a result, Agrippa's curiosity is tweaked and he wants to hear more, so Agrippa sets another hearing for the next day.

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.

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.

But when I had found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath Appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

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.

For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him. (Acts 25:23-27.)

That's really tricky. The Sedition charge has been totally whitewashed for any reasonable reader, especially for Theophilus. No further information is gathered by Agrippa's examination, which only allows Paul an opportunity to evangelize the King, fulfilling a prophecy he received at his Conversion that he would witness before Kings.

Agrippa jokes with Paul afterwards: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

(Acts 26:28.) Finally, Agrippa takes Bernice and Festus aside and they end up sharing the same view of Paul's case:

And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not Appealed to Caesar. (Acts 26:32.)

I believe we are dealing with mainly artistic license in this scene. How did Epaphroditus discover what was said? It really makes no sense. They could have set Paul at liberty at any time, and his Appeal to Caesar would have been moot if they were unable to draw up charges worthy of death. Epaphroditus is playing upon Theophilus' sense of Roman Justice here, but the real charges were sent along with Paul and Aristarchus when they were sent to Rome.

And this is where the third and final "we" section begins. Epaphroditus is back in Caesarea and is going to escort Paul on his voyage. We must remember that Paul spent over two years in loose custody there and there was plenty of time for Epaphroditus to travel back and forth between Caesarea and Phlippi with news and supplies, a scenario described in Paul's Letter to the Phlippians.

The Final Act

We come to end of our journey. As we have seen, Paul's voyage takes him to Crete, but there is nothing said about his ministry there with Titus. The voyage is then interrupted by a storm, a shipwreck, an everyone-for-himself swim to safety, and an eventual touchdown in Rome. Epaphroditus ends his work with these words:

And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,
Preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. (Acts 28:30-31; he does not reside in the Praetorium.)

From here on, we assume that all of Paul's churches were eventually sucked up by the growing Roman Catholic Church after Marcion came out with the first version of the New Testament in the Second Century, a collection of Paul's letters, beginning with Galatians, and including parts of the Gospel of Luke. The Roman Cult response was to reluctantly include

Paul's letters with the Four Gospels and other accepted writings in a competing New Testament, that eventually became part of the Roman Catholic Holy Bible.

Marcion rejected all of the Old Testament, and his version was slowly erased from existence as the Roman Church became the Roman Empire's official religion.

Conclusion

What have we gained by our Thought Experiment? First, it has given us an open mind look at the New Testament. Second, it has exposed many contradictions and lies in the source materials. Whether or not it has any historical value is left to the reader.

Epaphroditus was confronted with a horrible situation after the death of Paul. I believe it is the conflict that arose with that event that kept him from giving any credit or mention to Titus. They must have spent some time together as they evangelized Macedonia and Achaia. It must have been because of some hostility between the parties which caused Epaphroditus to forget to mention Paul's mission to Crete.

His goal to Theophilus was to show that Christianity was no real threat to Rome, but that became a moot point after the radical believers attempted to burn down Rome and the Jews revolted against the Empire in the same year. A few years earlier both of the parties representing the Two Gospels were executed, one in Jerusalem and one in Rome.

Whatever his motives, Epaphroditus has left us with a great source for what occurred in the Beginning of Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles. The New Testament is a wonderful book if one has eyes to see. So God bless you all and may all of the Truth in the Holy Bible be revealed to you in the Name of Jesus Christ Our Lord.

POSTSCRIPT: SOME FINAL NOTES ON THE ARK OF THE COVENANT AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1.) The Ten Commandments engraved on two stone tablets were a graven image under the definition of the Second Commandment: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image,

or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above [like Cherubim and Seraphim], or that is in the Earth beneath [like Palm Trees, Lions, Bronze Oxen, Pomegranates, and Letters and Words, etc.], or is in the water under the Earth.”

It is reported, without embarrassment, that Moses made, through the skilled artificers, Bezaleel and Aholiah (Exodus 35:30-35), graven images of Cherubim that were on top of the Ark of the Covenant, as well as a bronze Asherah Pole with a Seraphim wrapped around it that was later idolized by the people of Israel, then destroyed by King Hezekiah as an idol made of bronze. (Numbers 21:6-9; II Kings 18:4.)

An incorrect depiction of the Cherubim is rampant, usually depicted as humans with wings, or cute, chubby babies with wings (called cherubs); when, after all, they were in reality Winged Egyptian Sphinxes, with a body of a lion, head of a human, and wings of an eagle. (See, Images 644 and 649, in James B. Pritchard’s, The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1969, 2d ed., pp. 212-213.)

Later, Solomon would follow suit, building two massive Golden Cherubim to stand side by side guarding the Ark of the Covenant inside the Oracle he had built inside the Holy of Holies within his private chapel, the House of YHWH. This demonstrates that there was no such negative commandment at this time forbidding the making of graven images, only a prohibition not to worship them, and that this negative commandment was added much later, likely under the reign of Josiah, aided by Hilkiyah, the High Priest and co-author of the proto-Deuteronomy text, and father of the Prophet Jeremiah, the other co-author.

The latter two are better known as the leaders of the YHWH Only Party in Jerusalem, or known by scholars as the Deuteronomists, who more than anything wanted to ban the worship of YHWH’s wife, Asherah. In the last reference of the Ark in the Bible it is reflected that King Josiah, after his religious reforms, wanted the Priests to return the Ark to the Temple (II Chronicles 35:3), but we are never told that they restored it.

In fact, it is said in the Second Book of Maccabees, Chapter 2:4-8 (in the Old KJV Apocrypha):

It was also contained in the same writing, that the Prophet, being warned of God, commanded the Tabernacle and the Ark to go with him, and he went forth into the Mountain, where Moses climbed up and saw the heritage of God.

And when Jeremy [Jeremiah] came thither, he found an hollow cave, wherein he hid the Tabernacle, and the Ark, and the Altar of Incense, and so stopped the door.

And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it.

Which when Jeremy perceived, he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather his people again together, and to receive them unto Mercy.

Then shall the Lord show them these things, and the Glory of the Lord shall Appear, and the Cloud also, as it was showed under Moses, and as when Solomon desired that the Place might be honorably sanctified.

The mountain that Moses climbed at the end of his life was Mount Nebo, in the Land of Moab, as documented in the Book of Deuteronomy, Chapter 34:1-6:

And Moses went up from the Plains of Moab unto the Mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And YHWH showed him all the land of Gilead unto Dan,

And all Naphtali, and the Land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the Land of Judah, unto the utmost sea,

And the south, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palm Trees, unto Zoar.

And YHWH said unto him, This is the Land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy Seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt no go over thither.

So Moses the Servant of YHWH died there in the Land of Moab, according to the Word of YHWH.

And he buried him there in a Valley in the Land of Moab, over against Beth-Peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

In my opinion, Moses was murdered by Josiah and Phineas, the High Priest for attempting to form a political union, or to continue one, with Midian. A Prince of Simeon named Zimri, and Cozbi, daughter of the Midian King, Zur (who was later slain in the so-called Holy War with Midian), were engaged in act of a Hieros Gamos inside the Tabernacle to seal this treaty, witnessed outside by Moses and the Tabernacle Prostitutes (known as Holy Ones), when the Aaronic Priest, Phineas, snuck up behind them and ran a spear through both of them, one

skewered on top of the other. This act of barbaric murder was interpreted as Zeal for YHWH and was later used to describe the Zealot Movement in Galilee at the time of Jesus. (Numbers 25:6-18; 32:8.)

In other words, since the End of Time Prophecies proved to be Strong Delusion, the Ark of the Covenant was, like the sepulchre of Moses, hidden permanently. In my opinion, the modern day quest to find it is pure folly and a losing proposition, for even Jeremiah prophesied:

And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith YHWH, they shall say no more, The Ark of the Covenant of YHWH: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it: neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. (Jeremiah 3:16.)

And, when you really think about it, the Ark itself was a graven image and an idol, and contained proof that the original Ten Commandments consisted of only Ten, and not Twelve, and that the two that were absent, in my opinion, the Prohibition against Graven Images and the Sabbath, were added later by the Deuteronomists. Jeremiah thus effectively covered up their crime against God so that the Power of the Ark would still remain in the mythological imaginations of the people of the world, which it does, even in the present day.

Perhaps if archaeologists ever find the grave of Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, Egypt (Jeremiah 32:1-7), it may contain clues as to where he hid the Ark on Mount Nebo. But both scenarios are highly unlikely.

2.) Most of the depictions of the Ark of the Covenant are grossly incorrect, which is proven by I Kings 8:6-10:

And the Priests brought in the Ark of the Covenant of YHWH unto his Place, into the Oracle of the House, to the Most Holy Place, even under the wings of the Cherubims.

For the Cherubims spread forth their two wings over the Place of the Ark, and the Cherubims covered the Ark and the Staves thereof above.

For they drew out the Staves, that the ends of the Staves were seen out in the Holy Place before the Oracle and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

There was nothing in the Ark save the two Tablets of Stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when YHWH made a Covenant with the Children of Israel, when they came out of the Land of Egypt.

And when it came to pass, when the Priests were come out of the Holy Place, that the Cloud filled the House of YHWH.

It is clearly stated that the orientation of the Ark inside the Oracle was to face it toward the Temple Hall, with the two cherubim on top of the Ark on either side, meaning that either of the long sides of the Ark would be facing the Hall. Thus, when the Poles were partially withdrawn backward, only their ends would be facing the Hall, meaning depictions where the Poles are situated on the long sides of the Ark, though visually enticing, are still incorrect. The Poles were on the short sides of the Ark. Think about it.

When the Ark was used to lead the procession of Israel as it marched through the Wilderness, crossed the Jordan, or in battle, God would be facing the front of the column, his back to the rear, and therefore not riding sideways, where he would only be facing only one side of the march. I imagine both of the long sides of the Ark were exactly the same, meaning either of the long sides could have faced the Hall, with the Poles on the short sides pushed to the rear.

3.) The contents of the Ark of Covenant only contained the Two Tables of Stone on which were graven the Ten Commandments, and nothing else. (I Kings 8:9.) That means that later legends about the Ark containing the Golden Pot that held Manna and Aaron's Almond Branch Rod that had budded (Hebrews 9:4-5), are incorrect. Besides, in each of the cases stated it was only said that these items were laid beside the Ark, not inside it: the Golden Pot: Exodus 16:33-34 [it was just a pot, nothing is said about it being golden]; the Rod: Numbers 17:6-10.

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