

## **PAUL VERSUS THE JERUSALEM CHURCH: THE GREAT LIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**

by  
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### **PAUL AND JERUSALEM IN 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 round 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, and go into the City, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

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 to 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.

And 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.

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 who 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. But their laying await was known of Saul.

And they watched the Gates day and night to kill him. Then the Disciples took him by night, and let him down by the Wall in a basket.

And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the Disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a Disciple.

But Barnabus 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 [Jews who spoke Greek]; 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

As we shall see in the excerpt below, there is very little truth in this tale. It is almost pure fiction, for Paul obviously knew of this version when he wrote to the Galatians toward the last days of his ministry to deliver his Gospel to the Gentiles. If you examine his version carefully, you will see how he counters almost every single thing in the version of Acts. It is either that or a totally uncanny coincidence, and I believe that to be unlikely.

### **PAUL'S VERSION IN GALATIANS**

But I Certify you, Brethren, that the Gospel that 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 to Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and 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 unto 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. – Galatians 1:11-24

## **WAS PAUL SAUL BEFORE HE WAS PAUL, AND DID HE USE BLACK MAGIC?**

While it is true that Paul never calls himself Saul in his letters, I consider arguments like this to be basic nit-picking having no value for resolution. Paul was well known among the Priestly classes in the Jewish World of the Diaspora. The Book of Acts gives a plausible answer to this where Saul changed his name to Paul on the Island of Cyprus, where the Ruler of the Island was saved from the influence of a Jewish Magician when Paul Cursed him with blindness.

This of course raises the question: Did Paul defeat the Evil Magician by the use of Black Magic? To begin with, the Elders of the Antiochian Fellowship laid hands on Barnabus and Saul and sent them forth as missionary Apostles:

And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they Preached the Word of God in the Synagogues of the Jews; and they had also John [Mark] to their minister.

And when they had gone through the Isle unto Paphos, they found a certain Sorcerer, a False Prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-Jesus; which was with the Deputy of the Country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabus and Saul, and desired to Hear the Word of God.

But Elymas the Sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the Deputy from the Faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) Filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said,

O full of all Subtilty and all Mischief, thou Child of the Devil, thou Enemy of all Righteousness, wilt thou not cease to Pervert the Right Ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the Hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be Blind, not seeing the Sun for a Season.

And immediately there fell on him a Mist and a Darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. Then the Deputy, when he saw what was done, Believed, being Astonished at the Doctrine of the Lord.

Now when Paul and his Company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

– Acts 13:3-13

In this Sorcerer's Duel, a favorite trope of the author of Acts, we see Paul using the Power of the Holy Spirit to inflict harm on an opponent. Is this really any different than a Black Magic Curse? A similar duel occurred between Peter and Simon Magus in Samaria, where Peter

used the Power of the Holy Spirit to Curse Simon because he wanted to know how to use the same power and was willing to pay for it:

And when Simon saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was Given, he offered them Money, saying, Give me also this Power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may Receive the Holy Ghost.

But Peter said unto him, Thy Money Perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the Gift of God may be Purchased for Money. Thou has neither Part nor Lot in this matter: for thy Heart is not Right in the Sight of God.

Repent therefore of this thy Wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the Thought of thine Heart may be Forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bond of Iniquity. – Acts 8:18-23

Moreover, Paul himself didn't hesitate to Curse any Apostle or Angel that Preached another Gospel from his own:

I Marvel that ye are so soon Removed from him [Paul] that Called you unto the Grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that Trouble you, and would Pervert the Gospel of Christ.

But though we or an Angel from Heaven, Preach any other gospel unto you than that which 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. – Galatians 1:

He also used a technique called “Delivering unto Satan,” which acted like a Black Magic Curse:

It is reported commonly that there is Fornication among you, and such Fornication as is not so much as Named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are Puffed Up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done might be Taken Away from among you.

For I Verily, as absent in body, but present in Spirit, have Judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed.

In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the Power of Our Lord Jesus Christ, to Deliver such an one unto Satan for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the spirit may be Saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus. – I Corinthians 5:1-5

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. – I Timothy 1:19-20

I have a hard time reconciling such acts with Paul's Unconditional Gospel of Grace, and would like to believe these passages were added later by Sosthenes, who was listed as a co-

author of I Corinthians, or perhaps Timothy, since he is listed as the recipient of I Timothy and was active with Paul in Corinth. Anyway, what I am saying is that the end result is little different from a Black Magic Curse and the Use of the Holy Spirit is like how Sorcerer uses an Evil Spirit to perform Evil Deeds for him.

It appears that these Curses did not involve the Death of the person so Cursed. In these instances Paul states the purpose of such actions: the Destruction of the Flesh for the fornicator, which sounds like a Death Curse, so that his spirit would be Saved; as well as Hymanaeus and Alexander to learn not to Blaspheme. I believe this was a form of early Excommunication where the congregation participated in Banning a person or persons from the community as a means of Punishment for Ungodly Acts by Believers or False Brothers, like Alexander.

Alexander was a Coppersmith in Ephesus who likely testified against Paul in one of the Hearings on his Appeal to Caesar in Rome, where all in Asia had forsakened him, demonstrating that the trial was about the riot in Ephesus by the Metalworkers, and not about a matter of Jewish Law. (II Timothy 1:15; 4:14.)

Since Paul never denied any of this explicitly in his Letters, I believe we have enough evidence to conclude that the author of Acts was at least communicating some truth in Paul's actions among his Gentile Churches.

### **WAS PAUL REALLY FROM TARSUS?**

Tarsus was the Capital of the Roman Province of Cilicia. It was the famous City that witnessed the meeting of Cleopatra and Antony in classical history. While it is true that Paul never mentions in his Letters that he was from Tarsus, he does go straight to Cilicia and Syria after his visit with Peter in Jerusalem. (Galatians 1:21.) This is some evidence that Paul was from Tarsus, and since he never denied it in his Letters, we will assume that he was.

## **WAS PAUL SAVED ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS?**

Now we come to the infamous Road to Damascus Conversion. I will list the salient points in this Legend and the various other versions of it. The first version in Acts states that Paul was Blinded by the Light of Christ and was so Blind for three days until Ananias, as the result of a Vision, came and laid hands on Saul and baptized him. But Paul states that after the Vision, the location not specifically stated, he conferred with no one but went immediately into Arabia for an undesignated period of time, then returned to Damascus. So while the Revelation happened in the vicinity of Damascus, he doesn't say it was on the Road.

However, the Damascus Road was so well known as the location for Paul's Conversion, I see no valid reason why this fact should be rejected as an outright Lie, even though the story of Ananias and Paul's Blindness appear to be total Fiction. So, yes, we can safely say he was Saved on the Road to Damascus.

I believe Paul gives a clue to his destination in Arabia when later in the Letter he informs us that Mount Sinai was in Arabia, to wit, Petra, the Capital of the Nabatean Nation. He had Received Jesus Christ into his heart and as a Faithful Jew, and since the origin of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai [Horeb] was in Petra, it was only inevitable that Paul would have sought out this site.

Another question is: Who was with Paul when God Revealed his Son in Paul? In the first version of this tale, the people that were with him "stood speechless, Hearing a Voice, but seeing no man; and they afterwards took Blind Paul by the hand and led him into the City." (Acts 9:7-8.)

The first version is told from a godlike point of view by the author, but the second and third versions are allegedly told by Paul himself in the first person, though still reported by the author. The second version occurs when Paul is delivered from a murderous crowd of Jews

attempting to avenge the events in Asia by murdering Paul just outside of the Jerusalem Temple.  
(Acts 21:27 – 22:11.)

In this version, Paul Preaches to the Mob and he still Sees a Great Light from Heaven and Hears a Voice and states that, “They that were with me Saw indeed the Light, and were afraid, but they Heard Not the Voice of him that Spake with me.” This of course totally contradicts the first version where they Heard a Voice but saw no man, and the reason for this I believe is that the author is giving us a clue that something is wrong with the story. This becomes more evident in the third version, in which Epaphroditus may have been present, which Paul gave in front of King Agrippa II and his sister/wife Berenice in Caesarea just prior to Appealing to Caesar so that his Trial would not be Heard in Jerusalem:

Whereupon as I went to Damascus with Authority and Commision from the Chief Priests, at midday, O King, I Saw in the Way a Light from Heaven, above the Brightness of the Sun, Shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

And when we were all fallen to the earth, I Heard a Voice Speaking unto me, and Saying in the Hebrew Tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he Said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have Appeared unto thee for this Purpose, to Make thee a Minister and Witness both of these things which thou hast Seen, and of those things in the which I will Appear unto thee:

Delivering thee from the People, and from the Gentiles, unto whom Now I Send thee, to Open their Eyes, and to Turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may Receive Forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among them which are Sanctified by Faith that is in me.

Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the Heavenly Vision; but Showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the Coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should Repent and Turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance. – Acts 26:12-20

This version is true to Paul’s own account in Galatians, where there is no Blindness and no Ananias laying his hands on Paul to restore his sight and giving him his Mission to the Gentiles. Thus, the first two versions are absolute Lies, Fabricated likely by the Jerusalem Church in order to deceive Believers into believing that Paul was always under their control, where in fact he had a completely different Power structure supporting him and his Independent

Mission and his Special Gospel to the Gentiles which began in Philippi and which he Preached as the Righteousness of God Without the Law of Moses:

Always in every prayer of mine for you all [Philippians] making request with joy, for your Fellowship in the Gospel from the First Day until now....

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. (Philippians 1:5; 4:15.)

But Now the Righteousness of God Without the Law is Manifested, being Witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even the Righteousness of God which is by [the] Faith of Jesus Christ unto All and upon All them that Believe: for there is no difference: for All have Sinned, and come Short of the Glory of God.  
– Romans 3:21-23.)

### **WHAT WERE THE REAL REASONS WHY PAUL ESCAPED DAMASCUS?**

Although both sources agree on the fact that Paul made his escape by basket down by the Wall of Damascus, the reasons given are startlingly different and strongly suggest either some kind of crime committed or some kind of coverup. Paul states following his Conversion:

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 Gentiles: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were Apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days....  
– Galatians 1:15-18

He also states in II Corinthians, which I believe was written close to the time Paul wrote Galatians:

In Damascus the Governor under Aretas the King kept the City of Damascus with a Garrison, desirous to apprehend me: and through a window in a basket was I let down by the Wall, and escaped his hands.  
– II Corinthians 11:31-33

Thus it appears that King Aretas of the Nabateans, wanted Paul for some of his activities while he was in Arabia, and, since Damascus was part of that Kingdom at the time, for perhaps his activities in Damascus. However, this is not the idea given in the Book of Acts, where his ministry in the Synagogues caused much hostility with the Jews there:

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: but their laying await was known of Saul.

And they watched the Gates day and night to kill him. Then the Disciples took him by night, and let him down by the Wall in a basket. – Acts 9:22-25

This isn't the first time we have encountered such discrepancies even in the stories where certain facts are agreed upon. The discrepancy here is the same we will encounter in the story of what really happened in Ephesus when Paul went against the so-called orders from the Holy Spirit by entering into Asia. (Acts 16:6.)

He and Silas had been forbidden by Jerusalem under the guise of the Holy Spirit (Silas was a Chief Man and Prophet of the Jerusalem Church [Acts 15:22-27, 32, 40], who, on behalf of the Jerusalem Church, was riding herd on Paul at the time); but the Ban was likely to keep them out of the Great Cult War in Asia being waged by John Zebedee on behalf of the Jerusalem Church, and Nicolas, ordained an Apostle by the Elders of the Antioch Fellowship. (Revelation 1-3.)

For some reason King Aretas wanted him enough to set a Garrison, whether or not the Jews in the City wanted to kill him. And whether he was let down in a basket by the Wall because of a Garrison ordered by Aretas or because Jews were laying in wait for him at the Gates is a matter for the reader to decide.

Perhaps both versions are true.

One thing they both agree on is that Paul escaped by means of a basket let down by the Wall of Damascus. It is really satisfying, but very rare, when both Paul and the Book of Acts agree with each other on some point.

### **DID PAUL GO TO JERUSALEM WITH BARNABAS FOR FAMINE RELIEF?**

This was an allegation that must have really rubbed Paul the wrong way. It appears that the Jerusalem Church came up with this one in order to counter the tragic results of the later Collection for the Poor of Jerusalem collected by Paul from his Gentile Churches in order to

seal his half of the bargain he made with the three Pillars of the Jerusalem Church: Peter, John, and James the Brother of the Lord. First, the Famine Relief version in Acts:

And in these days there came Prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and Signified by the Spirit that there should be a 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....

And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their Ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark. – Acts 11:17-30; 12:25

The pause between the verses in Chapter 11 and Chapter 12 is due to the persecution of Herod Agrippa I against the Triumverite leadership of Peter and James and John Zebedee in the Jerusalem Church. Herod beheaded James and put Peter in prison, with John likely in Asia engaged in his Cult War against Nicolas. After Peter miraculously escaped by bribing the guards, James the brother of the Lord, took over as the Big Kahuna in the City. (Acts 12:17.)

This changes the scope of the Jerusalem Church from a Communist Dictatorship to a Caliphate where James, the true firstborn of Joseph of the Royal Line, was now an unspoken King in an Earthly Kingdom of God, where we see him Ruling the Congregation during the Circumcision Summit, usually known by its false title, the First Jerusalem Council. (Acts 15:1-29.) King James Ruled after Peter's Conversion of Cornelius, the Roman Centurion in Caesarea, that Gentiles didn't need to be circumcised but did need to obey certain parts of the Law of Moses so they could take part in the Fellowship of Christ. (Id.)

As I have said, I believe Paul was fully aware of this version reported in Acts which is why he did not hesitate to deny that after his first visit to Jerusalem three years after his Conversion, he did not travel again to Jerusalem until fourteen years later, when he went to Jerusalem by Revelation to settle the issue of whether the Gentiles needed to be circumcised in order to become members of the Church, the New Israel:

Then fourteen years after I went up again 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 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 these who Appeared to be Somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God Accepteth no man's person:) for they 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 in 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 Hand 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. – Galatians 2:1-10

First to be noted is that at the alleged Relief Mission, John was not present in Jerusalem, for the Persecution of Herod Agrippa I was taking place. Yet, after the death of Agrippa, he was present for the Circumcision Summit years later.

Plus the Famine Relief can be distinguished from the Gentile Collection for the Saints, because at the time of the so-called Relief Fund, there was not yet a Mission to the Gentiles from whom a Collection could have been gathered, and Paul was still known as Saul. The Relief Fund had been provided by the Disciples in Antioch, not by the Gentile Churches, if it really took place at all.

### **WAS PAUL'S COLLECTION FOR THE POOR ACCEPTED BY JAMES?**

The Book of Acts does not cover the Gentile Collection for the Poor Jews of the Jerusalem Church, which was Paul's half of the Bargain he made with the Pillars, but does document it under the guise of just another visit by Paul with many members of his Gentile Churches when he was under many death threats from the Jews in the Gentile World. It is worth

documenting this in it's full context from the violent events of the Ephesian Metalworkers Riot to the final Confrontation with James:

And after the Uproar was over, Paul called unto him the Disciples [in Ephesus], 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, and he was about to sail into Syria, 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 Corinth]; of Derbe, Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

And these going before us tarried in Troas. – Acts 20:1-5

I have taken the liberty of providing the correct Corinthian delegation, represented by Gaius, who had a house church in Corinth, because the author attempts to conceal this fact by having him allegedly coming from Derbe. (Romans 16:23.) For some unknown reason, the author fails to mention the Corinthian delegation and the reason for this is the same reason I believe he fails to mention the person of Titus as well. We know Titus had provided a key ministry in collecting the money for the Collection in Corinth as we see in Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. (II Corinthians 2:12-13; 8:16-24; 9:1-15.)

It also appears that there was a certain rivalry between Macedonia and Achaia that Paul exploited for the Collection and Titus was a main player in this, which Epaphroditus, who I believe was the author of the Book of Acts, may have resented enough to leave Titus out of his Book. This could have been exasperated after the Collection was Rejected by the Jerusalem Church.

I believe that after Paul was Beheaded in Rome after losing his Appeal before Caesar that Titus would have been one of the main rivals for superiority in the Churches of Macedonia and Greece. Even though his penis had been on the chopping block at the Circumcision Summit, making him one of the main celebrities in Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles, Epaphroditus sought to erase him from existence in his Book of Acts.

But this was to be expected in his attempt to reconcile Paul with James in his report to Theophilus (Acts 1:1; cf., Luke 1:1-4), the target audience of the Book and likely a Roman Official concerned with the new religion, to make sure there was no perceived threat from Gentile Churches in the Roman World, which appears to have been his main purpose for writing the Book. Let us continue our journey where the author now joins the Party as a member from Philippi:

And we sailed away from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread, and came unto them to Troas in 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. – Acts 20:6-16

Epaphroditus is such a tricky author. Paul appears to do strange things like going on foot to Assos from Troas and sailing by Ephesus to avoid any time in Asia allegedly in order to save time. We know that this is a smokescreen because it was likely that Paul had been imprisoned in Ephesus because of the Metalworkers Riot. We don't know the details of his release, but it must not have been safe for him anymore in Asia, a province the Jerusalem Church had Banned him from evangelizing to begin with.

Before we deal with Paul's address to the Ephesian Elders, let us first go over the events leading up to the Metalworkers Riot, and the specific people involved:

After these things were ended [burning of black magic books], 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. – Acts 19:21

During the time Paul spent in Macedonia he composed II Corinthians, Galatians, I Timothy, and when he ended up in Corinth, the Letter to the Romans.

We know from the end of his Letter to the Romans, that Paul intended on delivering the Collection for the Poor in Jerusalem, and then journey to Spain via Rome:

Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, 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 in Jerusalem. – Romans 15:24-26

We know that two of the people that traveled with Paul were Gaius from Corinth and Aristarchus from Thessalonika. They are important because they were both with Paul in the Theatre at Ephesus during the Riot. We wonder if they were all out on bail after the Metalworkers pressed charges legally against them and that is why they avoided going into the City for the option of having the Ephesian Elders meet them in Miletus. Now, back to the Riot:

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 Occupations [e.g., Coppersmiths], 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 [Artemis] 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 [Achaia and] 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 [the Coppersmith; II Timothy 4:14] out of the Multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with one hand, and would have made his Defense unto the People.

But when they knew 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 which fell down from [Zeus] Jupiter?

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. – Acts 19:21 – 20:1

It seems obvious to me that when Epaphroditus says at the time of the Riot that Paul spent a Season in Ephesus after sending Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, he meant that he spent time in an Ephesian prison before having enough money to bail himself and Gaius and Aristarchus out of the prison. His letters to the Ephesians, Colossians, and his private letter to Philemon, appear to have been written from a place in Ephesus where he was incarcerated. (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Colossians 4:10 [Aristarchus was with Paul in the Theatre]; Philemon 1, 9, 23.)

The other evidence for this incarceration is sparse, but I believe conclusive. The first is the mention in 1 Corinthians that, "If after the manner of men I have fought with Beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me...." (I Corinthians 15:32.) This is gladiator language implying that Paul and others had been charged and incarcerated with a crime via the Legal System, where fighting Wild Beasts was a common form of Roman punishment in an Arena or Theatre.

However, Relief must have come from some one who could afford to bail them out until a Roman Magistrate from Pergamum could Hear the case. I believe this Relief came from his business partners, Aquila and Priscilla, “Who have for my life laid down their own necks...” (Romans 16:4.)

I believe Alexander, the Jewish Coppersmith, had first been part of John Zebedee’s Ephesian Church (Revelation 2:1-7), and later took an opposing part in Paul’s Ephesian Ministry, likely testifying against him at a Roman Hearing on his Appeal to Caesar as to the Riot in Ephesus over the Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. (I Timothy 1:19-20; II Timothy 1:15; 4:14.)

If the money was not bail, then it was likely a bribe, in exchange for them to never enter into Asia again. This would have given Paul a good reason to avoid the City of Ephesus at all costs when he called for the Ephesian Elders to meet him in Miletus. It is also noteworthy that both Gaius and Aristarchus, the two other Disciples who had been dragged into the Theatre by the Mob of Metalworkers, were with him at this time.

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, but have Showed 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, 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 unto the Ship. – Acts 20:17-38

Tychicus and Trophimus had been part of Paul's Asian Crusade and had waited in Troas for Paul and his Company to cross into Troas so that they could join Paul's Collection for the Poor Saints in Jerusalem. It's obvious to me that Epaphroditus, knowing full well the fate of Paul in Rome, could not help himself to portray the incident of the Ephesian Elders in a somber light. Yes, they would see his face no more, except for all those who had Forsaken him at his Appeal in Rome.

I must take note that this is another of the author's last "we" sections, where he actually participated as a first person witness in the adventure. I feel safe in its overall reliability, although we know that Epaphroditus did not shy away from over-exaggeration. Although there is a feeling of coverup when it comes to the events in Ephesus, he gives us enough details so one almost smells the sea from the deck of the Ships he was sailing.

We must also remember that the structure of this adventure Epaphroditus is creating, is similar to the one he created in his Gospel where Paul is going to Jerusalem under the same cloud as Jesus when he last traveled to Jerusalem: "And it came to pass, when the Time was Come that he should be Received Up, he [Jesus] Steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." (Luke 9:51.) From the Passion of the Christ to the Passion of Paul.

We get a clear sense of this when he tells the Ephesians that in every City they have been in so far the Holy Spirit has Witnessed that Bonds and Afflictions await Paul in Jerusalem. Most of the Disciples interpreted this as a Warning not to go, but Paul viewed it as a Temptation to endure like when the Holy Spirit Led Jesus into the Wilderness for Forty Days to be Tempted by the Devil.

Jesus told us to Pray to the Father not to Lead us into Temptation (Matthew 6:13), because we know that sometimes he does, regardless of what Jesus' Evil half-brother had to say on the subject, absolutely contradicting his brother: "Let no man say when he is Tempted, I am Tempted of God: for God cannot be Tempted, neither Tempteth he any man." (James 1:13.) Let us now return to our Sea Adventure:

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.

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 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; and abode with him.

And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did Prophecy. 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. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that Place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready to 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. – Acts 21:1-14.

Ptolemais was the port City where the Governor of Syria garrisoned the army he had raised to enforce the will of Caligula to have a giant statue of himself erected inside the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple. He stalled there for enough time for Caligula to be assassinated by his own Praetorian Guard and thus, the Crisis was thus averted. Of course, Epaphroditus never mentions this in his Book of Acts. (See, Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, Book XVIII, Chapter 8, Verses 1-9 [Whiston].) It's as if this event and the Book of Revelation, first written around that time, never existed.

It was nice to see Philip again for after the author had him venture to Caesarea we never heard about him again; instead, the author turned the focus of his narrative to Peter and Cornelius, the Roman Centurion. (Acts 8:5-40; 10:1-48.)

It's uncanny how accurate Agabus was as a Prophet. Both of his Prophecies about the Famine under Claudius and Paul's Fate in Jerusalem came to pass, and thus pass the test of True Prophecy as laid out in Deuteronomy 18:20-22. We note that the Prophecies in the Book of Revelation that were Promised to occur Shortly and Quickly, never came to pass, and thus fail this test.

It truly amazes me that Epaphroditus at this point is still silent on the main purpose of this Caravan to Jerusalem, which was to deliver the Collection of the Poor Saints of Jerusalem from Paul's Gentile Churches and Seal Paul's half of the Hand Shake agreement that on the accomplishment of this act, his Apostleship to the Gentiles would be publicly recognized by the Jerusalem Church. (Galatians 2:7-10.)

Unfortunately, this was never going to happen. We come now to the final Great Lies in the Book of Acts:

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; 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 thousand 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 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 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 themselves from things Offered to Idols, and from Blood, and from Strangled, and from Fornication.

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.

– Acts 21:15-26

Epaphroditus makes it ambiguous who is speaking, but since it turns out to be a Ruling, it is very likely that King James is doing the Judging, and not the Elders, likely in order to Trap Paul and be done with him once and for all. James has changed the terms of the Agreement: Paul's Collection for the Poor Saints will only now be accepted if Paul performs certain acts in the Temple to convince the Zealous Jew Believers that Paul still follows the Law of Moses.

We are not told who provided the funds for these Vows he will have to perform but I doubt it came from the Collection, which would have been viewed as tainted by the Gentiles in the minds of the Zealous Jews. The true outcome for this money is never revealed, but I doubt that it was ever accepted by James and the Zealous Jews. By the way, the War with Rome was started by Zealous Jews, which is why they were known as the Zealots.

They likely would have treated the Collection money like the Chief Priests treated the 30 pieces of Silver Judas got for betraying Jesus, after he threw it back at them after he had Repented. They bought a Potters Field with it, a cheap graveyard for the poor, and because it was the Price of Blood, the Potters Field was known as The Field of Blood. (Matthew 26:3-8.)

SNAP! That's the sound a mousetrap makes after its spring has been sprung, and that's the sound we should be hearing during the end of the Days of Purification when the Jews from Asia started a Riot just like the one they had started in Ephesus:

And when the Seven Days were almost ended, the Jews which were in 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.

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; and when they saw the Chief Captain and the Soldiers, they left Beating of Paul. – Acts 21:27-32

From this stage on Paul is in Roman Custody till the day he dies, first in Jerusalem and then in Caesarea for two years prior to his Appeal to Caesar as a Roman Citizen. Epaphroditus spins it so we believe that the Appeal is all about a Question of Jewish Law, to which there had already been a prior Roman Judgment under Gallio in Corinth, that Jewish Law was of no concern to Rome. (Acts 18:12-17.) Unfortunately for Paul, what the Appeal was really about was the Riot in Ephesus. (II Timothy 1:15; 4:14-18.)

### **DID PAUL HAVE A MINISTRY IN CRETE DURING HIS TIME IN ASIA?**

We would know nothing about this ministry from the Book of Acts, which only mentions Crete in passing as places the Ship he was being sent to Rome on took port because of bad weather:

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.

Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the Fast was 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, 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 17:7-13

However, if we accept the Letter to Titus as authentic, which I do with the reservation that Titus, like Timothy, adjusted the Letter to suit his own circumstances after the death of Paul, we have evidence of a vibrant ministry in Crete, likely around the time that Paul was bouncing back and forth between Corinth and Ephesus. We assume this because of the people mentioned in passing, and I will now provide excerpts from that letter in support of my belief:

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, that 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 left I in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting and Ordain Elders in Every City, as I had Appointed thee....

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; 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 unto every Good Work Reprobate....

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

Bring Zenas the Lawyer and Apollos on their Journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them. – Titus 1:1-5, 10-16; 3:12-13

Since he intended on Wintering in Nicopolis, which is on the West Coast of Greece between Achaia and Macedonia, I believe Paul was in this region at the time of his writing the Letter to Titus. From here I assume he ended up in Corinth where he wrote to the Romans, and then began his Delivery of the Gentile Collection for the Poor Saints in Jerusalem.

Also, in the background there is the unambiguous threat of Jewish Apostles who have no intention of keeping the Jerusalem Church's part of the Bargain with Paul, that they would leave the Gentiles to Paul. This was demonstrated as early as Peter's invasion of Antioch, and the Commotion he caused by refusing to eat with the Gentiles when Men from James showed up. (Galatians 2:11-18.) As an aside, I believe the Jewish Fables that Paul mentions are the ones to be found in the Old Testament, for Paul Rightly Divided the Word of Truth. (II Timothy 2:14-16.)

We also know that this was in the latter days of Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles because at this time he was in such a competition with Jerusalem for the Gentile Believers, that the appointment of Elders and Deacons, and eventually Bishops, became necessary.

So we are back to the motive of Epaphroditus for omitting the Name and Ministry of a man that Paul considered his own son, a man who had been willing to put his penis on the chopping block for the benefit of Paul's Gospel to the Gentiles, and a man who helped to establish a vibrant ministry on the Island of Crete.

From most other Cities of this last sea voyage to Syria in which Epaphroditus participated, they were almost always greeted by local Brethren, demonstrating the rapid spread of Believing Gentiles in the Roman World. However, Epaphroditus mentions only a place and a city of Crete that they docked in: The Fair Havens and Lasea. He records no meeting with Brethren when they were in Crete. In other words, he deliberately suppressed this Truth.

We know from Paul's Letter to Titus, that Paul's ministry was in more than one City in Crete, so the fact that Epaphroditus is silent on this matter, demonstrates some kind of deep grudge he had for Titus. (Titus 1:5.) And I believe he left out Titus because of the turmoil, confusion, and competition that must have followed after Paul lost his Appeal, for even All in Asia had Forsaken him. ( II Timothy 1:15.)

I know that Dogma and Tradition are powerful negations in my decision to name Epaphroditus as the author of the Book of Acts, but I am really amazed at how much total Fiction has been swallowed in the argument that Luke, the Physician of Paul, was the author. Whole lives of Luke have been invented by Christians in the past so it would seem to the average Believer that there is no reasonable doubt as to this authorship.

However, there is lots of reasonable doubt on this subject.

Really, when you realize that there are only three mentions of Luke in the New Testament, with little to none background information, it is pure folly in my mind to consider him as the author of the Gospel of Luke or the Book of Acts:

Luke, the Beloved Physician, and Demas, greet you. And Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. – Colossians 4:13-14

Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the Ministry. – II Timothy 4:10-12

There Salute thee Epaphras, my Fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my Fellowlaborers. – Philemon 24

Although Mark can be spelled Marcus, and Luke can be spelled Lucas, we still have only three mentions in the New Testament. The only real information we have about Luke then is that he was a Physician and Fellowlaborer of Paul. And when one considers that the author only Ministered with Paul in Troas and in the City of Philippi, as well as Macedonia, and accompanied Paul on the Mission of the Collection for the Poor Saints of Jerusalem, and on the Sea Voyage to Rome, this makes Luke an unlikely person to be the author of the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts.

However, Early Church Fathers like Eusebius (circa 260 - 359 A.D.), the Bishop of Caesarea Maritima – and close confidant to the Emperor Constantine at the Council of Nicea – over two hundred years later, had this to say about Luke:

Luke, who by race was an Antiochian and a physician by profession, was long a companion of Paul, and had careful conversation with the other Apostles, and in two books left us examples of the medicine for souls which he had gained



from them – the Gospel, which he testifies that he had planned according to the tradition received by them by those who were from the beginning eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word, all of whom, he says, moreover, he had followed from the beginning, and the Acts of the Apostles which he composed no longer on the evidence of hearing but of his own eyes. – Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Vol. 1, Bk III, Chpt. iv., 6-8

This is all legend and fantasy because Eusebius had the same sure information that we do: the three verses in the New Testament. This leads me to believe that the true author was forgotten as a result of a coverup when Believers were unable to tolerate Macedonians like Epaphroditus, likely because his name was associated with the Greek Goddess Aphrodite, the Goddess of Sexual Love. Thus, an Antiochian was more preferable to the Early Church Fathers than a Macedonian.

### **CONCLUSION**

There are of course more Lies in the Book of Acts, but I believe the ones that we have covered are the Greatest. This in no way diminishes the Book of Acts in my mind. Epaphroditus introduced himself as “The Man of Macedonia” (Acts 16:9), and likely saw himself as an Alexander the Great when it came to pride of birth.

The Book of Acts has brought millions to the Lord Jesus Christ through its masterful story-telling, and it is obvious to me that Epaphroditus was a better Evangelist than he was a Historian.

### **THE BOOK OF ACTS AS A SERIES OF SHORT STORIES**

Even though critical of the historical accuracy of the Book of Acts, I cannot overemphasize its grand story telling. For an example, I will lay out one of the last short stories in the Book of Acts, “The Storm,” that led to a shipwreck on the Island of Malta, known in the story as Melita. The story begins with a foreshadowing dialog between Paul and the Centurion in Charge of the Prisoners, whether to continue the journey. On board the Ship with Paul were the Thessalonian, Aristarchus – also a prisoner from the Ephesian Riot – and Epaphroditus.

**THE STORM**  
A Short Story  
by  
Epaphroditus the Elder

Cassandra's Curse

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.

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 of 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 [modern day Phoenix], and there to Winter; which is an Haven of Crete, and lieth toward the South West and North West.

Poseidon's Wrath

And when the South Wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete. But not long after there arose against it a Tempestuous Wind, called Euroclydon. And when the Ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

And running under a certain Island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the Boat: which when they had taken up, they used Helps, undergirding the Ship; and fearing lest they should fall into the Quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

And we being exceedingly tossed with a Tempest, the next day they lightened the Ship; and the third day we cast out with our own hands the Tackling of the Ship. And when neither

Sun nor Stars in many days appeared, and no small Tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, “Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this Harm and Loss. And now I exhort you to be of Good Cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the Ship.

### The Angel of God Fights Poseidon

“For there Stood by me this night the Angel of God, whose I am, and whom I Serve, saying, ‘Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath Given thee all them that sail with thee.’

“Wherefore, Sirs, be of Good Cheer: for I Believe God, that it shall be even as it was Told me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain Island.”

But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about Midnight the Shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country; and Sounded, and found it twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little further, they Sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the Stern, and wished for the day. And as the Shipmen were about to flee out of the Ship, when they had let down the Boat into the Sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the Foreship, Paul said to the Centurion and to the Soldiers, “Except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved.”

Then the Soldiers cut off the ropes of the Boat, and let her fall off. And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, “This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued Fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: that there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.”

And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and Gave Thanks to God in presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of Good Cheer, and they also took some meat.

And we were in all in the Ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the Ship, and cast out the wheat into the Sea. And when it was day, they knew not the land; but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the Ship. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the Sea, and loosed the Rudder Bands, and hoisted up the Main Sail to the wind, and made toward shore.

And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the Ship aground; and the forepart stuck, and remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

And the Soldier's counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. But the Centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: and the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the Ship, escaped all safe to land.

And when they were escaped, then they knew that the Island was called Melita. And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

#### The Last Attack of the Kosmocrats

And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hands. And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live."

And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt not harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

#### THE END

One has to admit that Epaphroditus was a skilled story-teller, regardless of the fact that he is an unreliable narrator when it comes to history. I like how he evokes the Serpent in Eden with the Hidden Viper, which was one of the most lethal snakes in the World. In fact Cleopatra utilized one for her suicide. And I have no doubt that he was on that Boat and was shipwrecked with Paul. Except for the whitewash of Paul's mission in Crete, the story rings so authentic it is totally convincing to me.

Which would you have chosen: swim for the shore or ride the surf on boards from the wrecked ship? I can almost hear Dick Dale and the Del Tones belting out "Miserlou" in the background, and I can imagine Paul, Aristarchus, and Epaphroditus, hanging ten, riding a big heavy, with the rain pouring down, thunder crashing, lightning flashing, illuminating the wild surf: Stoked!

I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.