

Ancient Sources for Acts

Chapter 21

21:1–6

Lucan, *Pharsalia* 8.243–44

And Ephesus lay behind him, and the air
Breathed freely on him from the Coan shore.
Cnidus he shunned, and, famous for its sun,
Rhodos, and steering for the middle deep
Escaped the windings of Telmessus' bay;
Till rose Pamphylian coasts before the bark,
And first the fallen chieftain dared to find
In small Phaselis shelter; for therein
Scarce was the husbandman, and empty homes
Forbad to fear.

Livy, 37.16

Caius Livius was sent to Lycia, with two Roman quinqueremes, four Rhodian quadriremes, and two open vessels of Smyrna; being ordered to proceed, first, to Rhodes, and to communicate all his designs to the government there. The states, which he passed in his way, Miletus, Myndus, Halicarnassus, Cnidus, and Cous, cheerfully obeyed his orders. When he came to Rhodes, he explained to the persons in authority, the business on which he was sent, and, at the same time, desired their opinion. They all approved the design; and gave him three quadriremes, in addition to his squadron; and with these he set sail for Patara. The wind, being favorable at first, carried them very near the city, and they were in hopes of effecting something by surprise; but this suddenly veering, they had to labor in a very heavy sea. However, by dint of rowing, they reached the land, but there was no safe anchorage there, nor could they ride in the road, as the sea was rough, and night was coming on. They therefore sailed past the city, to the port of Phellus, which was not quite two miles distant, and which afforded shelter from the violence of the waves, but was overlooked by high cliffs; and these the townspeople, joined by the king's troops in garrison there, immediately seized. Livius, though the landing-place was rugged and difficult, sent against them a party of the auxiliaries, composed of Issæans, and light infantry of Smyrna. These, (as long as the business was carried on with missile weapons, and in slight attacks on the few who were there at first, and which was rather a skirmish than a battle,) supported the contest sufficiently well. But greater numbers flocking thither from the city, and, at length, the whole multitude poured out, which made Livius

fear, not only that the auxiliaries might be cut off, but that the ships would be in danger lying so near the land. In consequence he led out to the engagement, not only the soldiers, but the marines, and even the crowd of rowers, armed with such weapons as each could find. After all, however, the fight was doubtful; and, besides a considerable number of soldiers, Lucius Apustius fell in this disorderly combat. At last the Lycians were routed, and driven within their gates; and the Romans, victorious, but not without loss of blood, returned to their ships. They then proceeded to the gulf of Telonessus, which washes Caria on one side, and Lycia on the other, where all thoughts of any farther attempt on Patara were laid aside, the Rhodians were sent home, and Livius, sailing along the coast of Asia, crossed over to Greece, that he might have a meeting with the Scipios, who were at that time in Thessaly, and then take his passage to Italy

21:7–11

Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* 3.31

1. THE time and the manner of the death of Paul and Peter as well as their burial places, have been already shown by us.
2. The time of John's death has also been given in a general way, but his burial place is indicated by an epistle of Polycrates (who was bishop of the parish of Ephesus), addressed to Victor, bishop of Rome. In this epistle he mentions him together with the apostle Philip and his daughters in the following words:
3. "For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the last day, at the coming of the Lord, when he shall come with glory from heaven and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and moreover John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and being a priest wore the sacerdotal plate. He also sleeps at Ephesus."
4. So much concerning their death. And in the Dialogue of Caius which we mentioned a little above, Proclus, against whom he directed his disputation, in agreement with what has been quoted, speaks thus concerning the death of Philip and his daughters: "After him there were four prophetesses, the daughters of Philip, at Hierapolis in Asia. Their tomb is there and the tomb of their father." Such is his statement.
5. But Luke, in the Acts of the Apostles, mentions the daughters of Philip who were at that time at Caesarea in Judea with their father, and were honored with the gift of prophecy. His words are as follows: "We came unto Caesarea; and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him. Now this man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."
6. We have thus set forth in these pages what has come to our knowledge concerning the apostles themselves and the apostolic age, and concerning the sacred writings which they have left us, as well as concerning those which are disputed, but nevertheless have been publicly used by many in a great number of churches, and moreover, concerning those that are altogether rejected and are out of harmony with apostolic orthodoxy. Having done this, let us now proceed with our history.

21:20–26

Josephus, *Antiquities* 19.6.1 §294

On which account he ordained that many of the Nazirites should have their heads shorn. And for the golden chain which had been given him by Caius, of equal weight with 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 a demonstration how the greatest prosperity may have a fall, and that God sometimes raises what is fallen down;

m. Naz. 6.6

A. Cutting off the hair on account of contracting corpse uncleanness: how [is it done]?

B. “One would sprinkle [with purification water] on the third and seventh day and cut off his hair on the seventh day and bring his offerings on the eighth day.

C. “But if he cut off his hair on the eighth day, he brings his offerings on that same day,” the words of R. Aqiba.

D. Said, R. Tarfon, “What is the difference between this one and a *mesora*?”

E. He said to him, “In the case of this one, cleaning him is contingent on the passing of his [seven days], but in the case of the *mesora*, declaring him clean is contingent [in addition] upon his haircutting.

F. “And he [the Nazir] brings an offering only when the sun has set after conclusion of his purification rite.”

21:27–36

Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 5.5.2 §193–94

When you go through these [first] cloisters, unto the second [court of the] temple, there was a partition made of stone all round, whose height was three cubits: its construction was very elegant; upon it stood pillars, at equal distances from one another, declaring the law of purity, some in Greek, and some in Roman letters, that “no foreigner should go within that sanctuary;” for that second [court of the] temple was called “the Sanctuary.”

Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.11.5 §417

Thus was the first enclosure. In the midst of which, and not far from it, was the second, to be gone up to by a few steps; this was encompassed by a stone wall for a partition, with an inscription, which forbade any foreigner to go in, under pain of death.

Philo, *Embassy to Gaius* 212

But above all other observances their zeal for their holy temple is the most predominant, and vehement, and universal feeling throughout the whole nation; and the greatest proof of this is that

death is inexorably pronounced against all those who enter into the inner circuit of the sacred precincts (for they admit all men from every country into the exterior circuit), unless he be one of their own nation by blood.

m. Mid. 2.3

A. Inside it [the Temple mount, surrounding the inner area which contained the women's court and the Temple court] is a latticed railing, then hand-breadths high.

B. There were thirteen breaches in it,

C. which the kings of Greece opened up.

D. They went and closed them up again and decreed on their account thirteen prostrations.

E. Inside it is the rampart, then cubits [wide].

F. And there were twelve steps there [leading up from the rampart to the women's courtyard].

G. The height of each step is a half-cubit, and its tread, a half-cubit.

I H. All the Steps which were there [within the Temple mount] were a half a cubit in height and a half-cubit in tread, except for those of the porch –which had a tread of a cubit].

II I. All of the entrances and gates which were there were twenty cubits high and ten cubits wide, except for that of the porch.

III J. All the entrances which were there had doors, except for that of the porch

IV K. All the gates which were there had lintels, except for the Tadi gate, which had two stones leaning against one another [as a pointed arch].

V L. All the gates which were there were changed [and covered] with gold, except for Nicanor's gate, because a miracle was done with them.

M. And there are those who say, "Because their bronze shone like gold."

m. Kelim 1.8

A. (3) Within the wall [of Jerusalem] is more holy than they.

B. For they eat there lesser sanctities and second tithe.

C. (4) The Temple mount is more holy than it.

D. For *Zabim*, and *Zabot*, menstruating women, and those that have given birth do not enter there.

E. (5) the Rampart is more holy than it.

F. For gentiles and he who is made unclean by a corpse do not enter there.

G. (6) The court of women is more holy than it.

H. For a *tebul-yomi* does not enter there, by they are not liable on its account for a sin offering.

I. (7) The court of Israel is more holy than it.

J. For one who [yet] lacks atonement [offerings made in the completion of his purification rite] does not enter there, and they are liable on its account for a sin offering.

K. (8) The court of the priests is more holy than it.

L. For Israelite(s) do not enter there except in the time of their (cultic) requirements: for laying on of hands, for slaughtering, and for waving.

Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 6.2.4 §124–28

(124) Now Titus was deeply affected with this state of things, and reproached John and his party, and said to them, “Have not you, vile wretches that you are, by our permission, put up this partition-walls before your sanctuary? (125) Have not you been allowed to put up the pillars thereto belonging at due distances, and on it to engrave in Greek, and in your own letters, this prohibition, that no foreigner should go beyond that wall? (126) Have not we given you leave to kill such as go beyond it, though he were a Roman? And what do you do now, you pernicious villains? Why do you trample upon dead bodies in this temple? And why do you pollute this holy house with the blood both of foreigners and Jews themselves? (127) I appeal to the gods of my own country, and to every god that ever had any regard to this place (for I do not suppose it to be now regarded by any of them); I also appeal to my own army, and to those Jews that are now with me, and even to you yourselves, that I do not force you to defile this your sanctuary; (128) and if you will but change the place whereon you will fight, no Roman shall either come near your sanctuary, or offer any affront to it; nay, I will endeavor to preserve you your holy house, whether you will or not.”

Testament of Levi 10:3

And ye shall deal lawlessly together with Israel, so He shall not bear with Jerusalem because of your wickedness; but the veil of the temple shall be rent, so as not to cover your shame.

Testament of Judah 23:3

For which things' sake the Lord shall bring upon you famine and pestilence, death and the sword, beleaguering by enemies, and revilings of friends, the slaughter of children, the rape of wives, the plundering of possessions, [the burning of the temple of God,] the laying waste of the land, the enslavement of yourselves among the Gentiles.

Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 6.4.5 §250

But, as for that house, God had for certain long ago doomed it to the fire; and now that fatal day was come, according to the revolution of ages; it was the tenth day of the month Lous [Ab], upon which it was formerly burnt by the king of Babylon.

Sibylline Oracles 3:337–40

³³⁷Again there shall be very great signs among men: ³³⁸for deep eddying Tansis shall leave the Maeotic sea, ³³⁹and down the deep bed a fertile furrow shall be drawn, ³⁴⁰and the vast stream shall bend its neck.

1 Enoch 90:28–29a

²⁸And I stood up to see till they folded up that old house; and carried off all the pillars, and all the beams and ornaments of the house were at the same time folded up with it, and they carried it off and laid it in a place in the south of the land. ²⁹And I saw till the Lord of the sheep brought a new house greater and loftier than that first, and set it up in the place of the first which had been folded up.

Tg. Isa. 5:5 (See on Acts 6:11–15)

t. Menah 13.22

A. Said R. Yohanan b. Torta, “On what account was Shiloh destroyed? Because of the disgraceful disposition of the Holy Things which were there.

B. “As to Jerusalem’s first building, on what account was it destroyed? Because of idolatry and licentiousness and bloodshed which was in it.

C. “But [as to] the latter [building] we know that they devoted themselves to Torah and were meticulous about tithes.

D. “This teaches you that hatred of one for another is evil before the Omnipresent, and Scripture deems it equivalent to idolatry, licentiousness and bloodshed.”

b. Yoma 39b (See on Acts 6:11–15)

Lam. Rab 31.2 (See Acts 6:11–15)

Josephus, Jewish Wars 5.5.8 §238

Now, as to the tower of Antonia, it was situated at the corner of two cloisters of the court of the temple; of that on the west, and that on the north; it was erected upon a rock, of fifty cubits in height, and was on a great precipice; it was the work of king Herod, wherein he demonstrated his natural magnanimity.

21:37–40

Josephus, Jewish Wars 2.13.3 §254–57

(254) When the country was purged of these, there sprang up another sort of robbers in Jerusalem, which were called Sicarii, who slew men in the daytime, and in the midst of the city; (255) this they did chiefly at the festivals, when they mingled themselves among the multitude, and concealed daggers under their garments, with which they stabbed those that were their enemies; and when any fell down dead, the murderers became a part of those that had indignation against them; by which means they appeared persons of such reputation, that they could by no means be discovered. (256) The first man who was slain by them was Jonathan the high priest, after whose death many were slain every day, while the fear men were in of being so served, was more afflicting than the calamity itself; (257) and while everybody expected death every hour, as men do in war, so men were obliged to look before them, and to take notice of their enemies at a great distance; nor, if their friends were coming to them, durst they trust them any longer; but, in the midst of their suspicions and guarding of themselves, they were slain. Such was the celebrity of the plotters against them, and so cunning was their contrivance.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.8.5 §160–66

(160) Now, as for the affairs of the Jews, they grew worse and worse continually; for the country was again filled with robbers and impostors, who deluded the multitude. (161) Yet did Felix catch and put to death many of those impostors every day, together with the robbers. He also caught Eleazar, the son of Dineus, who had gotten together a company of robbers; and this he did by treachery; for he gave him assurance that he should suffer no harm, and thereby persuaded him to come to him; but when he came, he bound him and sent him to Rome. (162) Felix also bore an ill will to Jonathan, the high priest, because he frequently gave him admonitions about governing the Jewish affairs better than he did, lest he should himself have complaints made of him by the multitude, since he it was who had desired Caesar to send him as procurator of Judea. So Felix contrived a method whereby he might get rid of him, now he was become so continually troublesome to him; for such continual admonitions are grievous to those who are disposed to act unjustly. (163) Wherefore Felix persuaded one of Jonathan's most faithful friends, a citizen of Jerusalem, whose name was Doras, to bring the robbers upon Jonathan, in order to kill him; and this he did by promising to give him a great deal of money for so doing. Doras complied with the proposal, and contrived matters so, that the robbers might murder him after the following manner:—(164) Certain of those robbers went up to the city, as if they were going to worship God, while they had daggers under their garments; and, by thus mingling themselves among the multitude, they slew Jonathan (165) and as this murder was never avenged, the robbers went up with the greatest security at the festivals after this time; and having weapons concealed in like manner as before, and mingling themselves among the multitude, they slew certain of their own enemies, and were subservient to other men for money; and slew others not only in remote parts of the city, but in the temple itself also; for they had the boldness to murder men there, without thinking of the impiety of which they were guilty. (166) And this seems to me to have been the reason why God, out his hatred to these men's wickedness, rejected our city; and as for the temple, he no longer esteemed it sufficiently pure for him to inhabit therein, but brought the Romans upon us, and threw a fire upon the city to purge it; and brought upon us, our wives, and children, slavery,—as desirous to make us wiser by our calamities.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.8.10 §185–88

(185) Upon Festus's coming into Judea, it happened that Judea was afflicted by the robbers, while all the villages were set on fire, and plundered by them. (186) And then it was that the sicarii, as they were called, who were robbers, grew numerous. They made use of small swords, not much different

in length from the Persian acinacae, but somewhat crooked, and like the Roman sicae [or sickles] as they were called; and from these weapons these robbers got their denomination; and with these weapons they slew a great many; (187) for they mingled themselves among the multitude at their festivals, when they were come up in crowds from all parts to the city to worship God, as we said before, and easily slew those that they had a mind to slay. They also came frequently upon the villages belonging to their enemies, with their weapons, and plundered them, and set them on fire. (188) So Festus sent forces, both horsemen and footmen, to fall upon those that had been seduced by a certain impostor, who promised them deliverance and freedom from the miseries they were under, if they would but follow him as far as the wilderness. Accordingly those forces that were sent destroyed both him that had deluded them, and those that were his followers also.

Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 2.13.5§ 261

But there was an Egyptian false prophet that did the Jews more mischief than the former; for he was a cheat, and pretended to be a prophet also, and got together thirty thousand men that were deluded by him;

Josephus, *Antiquities* 20.8.6 §167–72

(167) These works, that were done by the robbers, filled the city with all sorts of impiety. And now these impostors and deceivers persuaded the multitude to follow them into the wilderness, (168) and pretended that they would exhibit manifest wonders and signs, that should be performed by the providence of God. And many that were prevailed on by them suffered the punishments of their folly; for Felix brought them back, and then punished them. (169) Moreover, there came out of Egypt about this time to Jerusalem, one that said he was a prophet, and advised the multitude of the common people to go along with him to the Mount of Olives, as it was called, which lay over against the city, and at the distance of five furlongs. (170) He said farther, that he would show them from hence, how, at his command, the walls of Jerusalem would fall down; and he promised that he would procure them an entrance into the city through those walls, when they were fallen down. (171) Now when Felix was informed of these things, he ordered his soldiers to take their weapons, and came against them with a great number of horsemen and footmen, from Jerusalem, and attacked the Egyptian and the people that were with him. He also slew four hundred of them, and took two hundred alive. (172) But the Egyptian himself escaped out of the fight, but did not appear any more. And again the robbers stirred up the people to make war with the Romans, and said they ought not to obey them at all; and when any persons would not comply with them, they set fire to their villages, and plundered them.