



Acts of Paul and Thecla.

As Paul was going up to Iconium after the flight from Antioch, his fellow-travellers were Demas and Ermogenes, full of hypocrisy; and they were importunate with Paul,²¹⁰⁶ as if they loved him. But Paul, looking only to the goodness of Christ, did them no harm, but loved them exceedingly, so that he made the oracles of the Lord sweet to them in the teaching both of the birth and the resurrection of the Beloved; and he gave them an account, word for word, of the great things of Christ, how He²¹⁰⁷ had been revealed to him.

And a certain man, by name Onesiphorus, hearing that Paul had come to Iconium, went out to meet him with his children Silas and Zeno, and his wife Lectra, in order that he might entertain him: for Titus had informed him what Paul was like in appearance: for he had not seen him in the flesh, but only in the spirit. And he went along the road to Lystra, and stood waiting for him, and kept looking at the passers by according to the description of Titus. And he saw Paul coming, a man small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, well-built,²¹⁰⁸ with eyebrows meeting, rather long-nosed, full of grace. For sometimes he seemed like a man, and sometimes he had the countenance of an angel. And Paul, seeing Onesiphorus, smiled; and Onesiphorus said: Hail, O servant of the blessed God! And he said: Grace be with thee and thy house. And Demas and Ermogenes were jealous, and showed greater hypocrisy; so that Demas said: Are not we of the blessed God, that thou hast not thus saluted us? And Onesiphorus said: I do not see in you the fruit of righteousness; but if such you be, come you also into my house and rest yourselves.

And Paul having gone into the house of Onesiphorus, there was great joy, and bending of knees, and breaking of bread, and the word of God about self-control and the resurrection; Paul saying: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God:²¹⁰⁹ blessed are they that have kept the flesh chaste, for they shall become a temple of God:²¹¹⁰ blessed are they that control themselves, for God shall speak with them: blessed are they that have kept aloof from this world, for they shall be called upright:²¹¹¹ blessed are they that have wives as not having them, for they shall receive God for their

2106 Or, persisted in staying with Paul.

2107 Or, how they.

2108 Or, healthy.

2109 Matt. v. 8.

2110 Comp. 1 Cor. vi. 18, 19.

2111 Comp. Rom. xii. 2.

portion:²¹¹² blessed are they that have the fear of God, for they shall become angels of God:²¹¹³
blessed are they that have kept the baptism, for they shall rest beside the Father and the Son: blessed
are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy,²¹¹⁴ and shall not see the bitter day of judgment: blessed
are the bodies of the virgins, for they shall be well pleasing to God, and shall not lose the reward
of their chastity; for the word of the Father shall become to them a work of salvation against the
day of His Son, and they shall have rest for ever and ever.²¹¹⁵

And while Paul was thus speaking in the midst of the church in the house of Onesiphorus, a
certain virgin Thecla, the daughter of Theocleia, betrothed to a man *named* Thamyris, sitting at the
window close by, listened night and day to the discourse of virginity and prayer, and did not look
away from the window, but paid earnest heed to the faith, rejoicing exceedingly. And when she
still saw many women going in beside Paul, she also had an eager desire to be deemed worthy to
stand in the presence of Paul, and to hear the word of Christ; for never had she seen his figure, but
heard his word only.

And as she did not stand away from the window, her mother sends to Thamyris; and he comes
gladly, as if already receiving her in marriage. And Theocleia said: I have a strange story to tell
thee, Thamyris; for assuredly for three days and three nights Thecla does not rise from the window,
neither to eat nor to drink; but looking earnestly as if upon some pleasant sight, she is so devoted
to a foreigner teaching deceitful and artful discourses, that I wonder how a virgin of such modesty
is so painfully put about. Thamyris, this man will overturn the city of the Iconians, and thy Thecla
too besides; for all the women and the young men go in beside him, being taught to fear God and
to live in chastity. Moreover also my daughter, tied to the window like a spider, lays hold of what
is said by Paul with a strange eagerness and awful emotion; for the virgin looks eagerly at what is
said by him, and has been captivated. But do thou go near and speak to her, for she has been
betrothed to thee.

And Thamyris going near, and kissing her, but at the same time also being afraid of her
overpowering emotion, said: Thecla, my betrothed, why dost thou sit thus? and what sort of feeling
holds thee overpowered? Turn round to thy Thamyris, and be ashamed. Moreover also her mother
said the same things: Why dost thou sit thus looking down, my child, and answering nothing, but
like a mad woman? And they wept fearfully, Thamyris indeed for the loss of a wife, and Theocleia
of a child, and the maidservants of a mistress: there was accordingly much confusion in the house



2112 Comp. 1 Cor. vii. 29.

2113 Comp. Luke xx. 36.

2114 Matt. v. 7.

2115 Some mss. add the following beatitudes: Blessed are they that tremble at the words of God, for they shall be comforted:
blessed are they that have received the wisdom of Jesus Christ, for they shall be called the sons of the Most High: blessed are
they that through love of Christ have come out from conformity with the world, for they shall judge the angels, and shall be
blessed at the right hand of the Father.

of mourning.²¹¹⁶ And while these things were thus going on, Thecla did not turn round, but kept attending earnestly to the word of Paul.

And Thamyris starting up, went forth into the street, and kept watching those going in to him and coming out. And he saw two men bitterly contending with each other; and he said: Men, tell me who this is among you, leading astray the souls of young men, and deceiving virgins, so that they do not marry, but remain as they are. I promise, therefore, to give you money enough if you tell me about him; for I am the first man²¹¹⁷ of the city. And Demas and Ermogenes said to him: Who this is, indeed, we do not know; but he deprives young men of wives, and maidens of husbands, saying, There is for you a resurrection in no other way, unless you remain chaste, and pollute not the flesh, but keep it chaste. And Thamyris said to them: Come into my house, and rest yourselves. And they went to a sumptuous dinner, and much wine, and great wealth, and a splendid table; and Thamyris made them drink, from his love to Thecla, and his wish to get her as his wife. And Thamyris said during the dinner: Ye men, what is his teaching, tell me, that I also may know; for I am no little distressed about Thecla, because she thus loves the stranger, and I am prevented from marrying.

Demas and Ermogenes said: Bring him before the governor Castelios on the charge of persuading the multitudes to embrace the new teaching of the Christians, and he will speedily destroy him, and thou shalt have Thecla as thy wife. And we shall teach thee that the resurrection of which this man speaks has taken place, because it has already taken place in the children which we have;²¹¹⁸ and we rose again when we came to the knowledge of the true God.

And Thamyris, hearing these things, being filled with anger and rage, rising up early, went to the house of Onesiphorus with archons and public officers, and a great crowd with batons, saying: Thou hast corrupted the city of the Iconians, and her that was betrothed to me, so that she will not have me: let us go to the governor Castelios. And all the multitude said: Away with the magician; for he has corrupted all our wives, and the multitudes have been persuaded *to change their opinions*.

And Thamyris, standing before the tribunal, said with a great shout: O proconsul, this man, who he is we know not, who makes virgins averse to marriage; let him say before thee on what²¹¹⁹ account he teaches these things. And Demas and Ermogenes said to Thamyris: Say that he is a Christian, and thus thou wilt do away with him. But the proconsul stayed his intention, and called Paul, saying: Who art thou, and what dost thou teach? for they bring no small charges against thee. And Paul lifted up his voice, saying: Since I am this day examined as to what I teach, listen, O proconsul: A living God, a God of retributions, a jealous God, a God in need of nothing, consulting for the salvation of men, has sent me that I may reclaim them from corruption and uncleanness, and from all pleasure, and from death, that they may not sin. Wherefore God sent His own Son,

2116 Or, a great outpouring of lamentation in the house.

2117 Or, a chief man.

2118 i.e., we rise again in our children.

2119 Or, whose.

whom I preach, and in whom I teach men to rest their hope, who alone has had compassion upon a world led astray, that they may be no longer under judgment, O proconsul, but may have faith, and the fear of God, and the knowledge of holiness, and the love of truth. If, therefore, I teach what has been revealed to me by God, wherein do I do wrong? And the proconsul having heard, ordered Paul to be bound, and sent to prison, until, said he, I, being at leisure, shall hear him more attentively.

And Thecla by night having taken off her bracelets, gave them to the gatekeeper; and the door having been opened to her, she went into the prison; and having given the jailor a silver mirror, she went in beside Paul, and, sitting at his feet, she heard the great things of God. And Paul was afraid of nothing, but ordered his life in the confidence of God. And her faith also was increased, and she kissed his bonds.

And when Thecla was sought for by her friends, and Thamyris, as if she had been lost, was running up and down the streets, one of the gatekeeper's fellow-slaves informed him that she had gone out by night. And having gone out, they examined the gatekeeper; and he said to them: She has gone to the foreigner into the prison. And having gone, they found her, as it were, enchained by affection. And having gone forth thence, they drew the multitudes together, and informed the governor of the circumstance. And he ordered Paul to be brought to the tribunal; but Thecla was wallowing on the ground²¹²⁰ in the place where he sat and taught her in the prison; and he ordered her too to be brought to the tribunal. And she came, exulting with joy. And the crowd, when Paul had been brought, vehemently cried out: He is a magician! away with him! But the proconsul gladly heard Paul upon the holy works of Christ. And having called a council, he summoned Thecla, and said to her: Why dost thou not obey Thamyris, according to the law of the Iconians? But she stood looking earnestly at Paul. And when she gave no answer, her mother cried out, saying: Burn the wicked *wretch*; burn in the midst of the theatre her that will not marry, in order that all the women that have been taught by this man may be afraid.

And the governor was greatly moved; and having scourged Paul, he cast him out of the city, and condemned Thecla to be burned. And immediately the governor went away to the theatre, and all the crowd went forth to the spectacle of Thecla. But as a lamb in the wilderness looks round for the shepherd, so she kept searching for Paul. And having looked upon the crowd, she saw the Lord sitting in the likeness of Paul, and said: As I am unable to endure my lot, Paul has come to see me. And she gazed upon him with great earnestness, and he went up into heaven. But the maid-servants²¹²¹ and virgins brought the faggots, in order that Thecla might be burned. And when she came in naked, the governor wept, and wondered at the power²¹²² that was in her. And the public executioners arranged the faggots for her to go up on the pile. And she, having made the sign of the cross, went up on the faggots; and they lighted them. And though a great fire was blazing, it did not touch her; for God, having compassion upon her, made an underground rumbling,

2120 i. e., in sign of grief.

2121 One ms. has, boys.

2122 Or, virtue.

and a cloud overshadowed them from above, full of water and hail; and all that was in the cavity of it was poured out, so that many were in danger of death. And the fire was put out, and Thecla saved.

And Paul was fasting with Onesiphorus and his wife, and his children, in a new tomb, as they were going from Iconium to Daphne. And when many days were past, the fasting children said to Paul: We are hungry, and we cannot buy loaves; for Onesiphorus had left the things of the world, and followed Paul, with all his house. And Paul, having taken off his cloak, said: Go, my child, buy more loaves, and bring them. And when the child was buying, he saw Thecla their neighbour, and was astonished, and said: Thecla, whither art thou going? And she said: I have been saved from the fire, and am following Paul. And the boy said: Come, I shall take thee to him; for he is distressed about thee, and is praying six days. And she stood beside the tomb where Paul was with bended knees, and praying, and saying: O Saviour Christ, let not the fire touch Thecla, but stand by her, for she is Thine. And she, standing behind him, cried out: O Father, who hast made the heaven and the earth, the Father of Thy holy Son, I bless Thee that Thou hast saved me that I may see Paul. And Paul, rising up, saw her, and said: O God, that knowest the heart, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I bless Thee that Thou, having heard me, hast done quickly what I wished.

And they had five loaves, and herbs, and water; and they rejoiced in the holy works of Christ. And Thecla said to Paul: I shall cut my hair, and follow thee whithersoever thou mayst go. And he said: It is a shameless age, and thou art beautiful. I am afraid lest another temptation come upon thee worse than the first, and that thou withstand it not, but be cowardly. And Thecla said: Only give me the seal²¹²³ in Christ, and temptation shall not touch me. And Paul said: Thecla, wait with patience, and thou shalt receive the water.

And Paul sent away Onesiphorus and all his house to Iconium; and thus, having taken Thecla, he went into Antioch. And as they were going in, a certain Syriarch, Alexander by name, seeing Thecla, became enamoured of her, and tried to gain over Paul by gifts and presents. But Paul said: I know not the woman whom thou speakest of, nor is she mine. But he, being of great power, himself embraced her in the street. But she would not endure it, but looked about for Paul. And she cried out bitterly, saying: Do not force the stranger; do not force the servant of God. I am one of the chief persons of the Iconians; and because I would not have Thamyris, I have been cast out of the city. And taking hold of Alexander, she tore his cloak, and pulled off his crown, and made him a laughing-stock. And he, at the same time loving her, and at the same time ashamed of what had happened, led her before the governor; and when she had confessed that she had done these things, he condemned her to the wild beasts. And the women were struck with astonishment, and cried out beside the tribunal: Evil judgment! impious judgment! And she asked the governor, that, said she, I may remain pure until I shall fight with the wild beasts. And a certain Tryphæna,²¹²⁴ whose daughter was dead, took her into keeping, and had her for a consolation.



2123 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 13, iv. 30.

2124 Some mss. add: A widow, very rich.

And when the beasts were exhibited, they bound her to a fierce lioness; and Tryphæna accompanied her. But the lioness, with Thecla sitting upon her, licked her feet; and all the multitude was astonished. And the charge on her inscription was: Sacrilegious. And the women cried out from above: An impious sentence has been passed in this city! And after the exhibition, Tryphæna again receives her. For her daughter Falconilla had died, and said to her in a dream: Mother, thou shalt have this stranger Thecla in my place, in order that she may pray concerning me, and that I may be transferred to the place of the just.

And when, after the exhibition, Tryphæna received her, at the same time indeed she grieved that she had to fight with the wild beasts on the day following; and at the same time, loving her as much as her daughter Falconilla, she said: My second child Thecla, come and pray for my child, that she may live for ever; for this I saw in my sleep. And she, nothing hesitating, lifted up her voice, and said: God most high,²¹²⁵ grant to this woman according to her wish, that her daughter Falconilla may live for ever. And when Thecla had thus spoken, Tryphæna lamented, considering so much beauty thrown to the wild beasts.

And when it was dawn, Alexander came to take her, for it was he that gave the hunt,²¹²⁶ saying: The governor is sitting, and the crowd is in uproar against us. Allow me to take away her that is to fight with the wild beasts. And Tryphæna cried aloud, so that he even fled, saying: A second mourning for my Falconilla has come upon my house and there is no one to help; neither child, for she is dead, nor kinsman, for I am a widow. God of Thecla, help her!

And immediately the governor sends an order that Thecla should be brought. And Tryphæna, taking her by the hand, said: My daughter Falconilla, indeed, I took away to the tomb; and thee, Thecla, I am taking to the wild-beast fight. And Thecla wept bitterly, saying: O Lord, the God in whom I believe, to whom I have fled for refuge, who deliveredst me from the fire, do Thou grant a recompense to Tryphæna, who has had compassion on Thy servant, and because she has kept me pure. Then a tumult arose, and a cry of the people, and the women sitting together, the one saying: Away with the sacrilegious person! the others saying: Let the city be raised²¹²⁷ against this wickedness. Take off all of us, O proconsul! Cruel sight! evil sentence!

And Thecla, having been taken out of the hand of Tryphæna, was stripped, and received a girdle,²¹²⁸ and was thrown into the arena, and lions and bears and a fierce lioness were let loose upon her; and the lioness having run up to her feet, lay down; and the multitude of the women cried aloud. And a bear ran upon her; but the lioness, meeting the bear, tore her to pieces. And again a lion that had been trained against men, which belonged to Alexander, ran upon her; and she, *the*

2125 One ms. has: God of our fathers, Son of the Most High. Another: O Lord God, who has made the heaven and the earth, Son of the Most High, Lord Jesus Christ.

2126 i.e., the exhibition of wild beasts.

2127 Or, be taken off, i.e., put to death.

2128 Or, drawers.

lioness, encountering the lion, was killed along with him. And the women made great lamentation, since also the lioness, her protector, was dead.

Then they send in many wild beasts, she standing and stretching forth her hands, and praying. And when she had finished her prayer, she turned and saw a ditch full of water, and said: Now it is time to wash myself. And she threw herself in, saying: In the name of Jesus Christ I am baptized on my last day. And the women seeing, and the multitude, wept, saying: Do not throw thyself into the water; so that also the governor shed tears, because the seals were going to devour such beauty. She then threw herself *in* in the name of Jesus Christ; but the seals having seen the glare of the fire of lightning, floated about dead. And there was round her, as she was naked, a cloud of fire; so that neither could the wild beasts touch her, nor could she be seen naked.

And the women, when other wild beasts were being thrown in, wailed. And some threw sweet-smelling herbs, others nard, others cassia, others amomum, so that there was abundance of perfumes. And all the wild beasts that had been thrown in, as if they had been withheld by sleep, did not touch her; so that Alexander said to the governor: I have bulls exceedingly terrible; let us bind to them her that is to fight with the beasts. And the governor, looking gloomy, turned, and said: Do what thou wilt. And they bound her by the feet between them, and put red-hot irons under the privy parts of the bulls, so that they, being rendered more furious, might kill her. They rushed about, therefore; but the burning flame consumed the ropes, and she was as if she had not been bound. But Tryphæna fainted standing beside the arena, so that the crowd said: Queen Tryphæna is dead. And the governor put a stop to the games, and the city was in dismay. And Alexander entreated the governor, saying: Have mercy both on me and the city, and release this woman. For if Cæsar hear of these things, he will speedily destroy the city also along with us, because his kinswoman Queen Tryphæna has died beside the Abaci.²¹²⁹

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And the governor summoned Thecla out of the midst of the wild beasts, and said to her: Who art thou? and what is there about thee, that not one of the wild beasts touches thee? And she said: I indeed am a servant of the living God; and as to what there is about me, I have believed in the Son of God, in whom He is well pleased; wherefore not one of the beasts has touched me. For He alone is the end²¹³⁰ of salvation, and the basis of immortal life; for He is a refuge to the tempest-tossed, a solace to the afflicted, a shelter to the despairing; and, once for all, whoever shall not believe on Him, shall not live for ever.

And the governor having heard this, ordered her garments to be brought, and to be put on. And Thecla said: He that clothed me naked among the wild beasts, will in the day of judgment clothe thee with salvation. And taking the garments, she put them on. The governor therefore immediately issued an edict, saying: I release to you the God-fearing Thecla, the servant of God. And the women shouted aloud, and with one mouth returned thanks to God, saying: There is one God, *the God of Thecla*; so that the foundations of the theatre were shaken by their voice. And Tryphæna

²¹²⁹ A part of the ancient theatres on or near the stage.

²¹³⁰ Or, way.

having received the good news, went to meet the holy Thecla, and said: Now I believe that the dead are raised: now I believe that my child lives. Come within, and I shall assign to thee all that is mine. She therefore went in along with her, and rested eight days, having instructed her in the word of God, so that most even of the maid-servants believed. And there was great joy in the house.

And Thecla kept seeking Paul; and it was told her that he was in Myra of Lycia. And taking young men and maidens, she girded herself; and having sewed the tunic so as to make a man's cloak, she came to Myra, and found Paul speaking the word of God. And Paul was astonished at seeing her, and the crowd with her, thinking that some new trial was coming upon her. And when she saw him, she said: I have received the baptism, Paul; for He that wrought along with thee for the Gospel has wrought in me also for baptism. And Paul, taking her, led her to the house of Hermæus, and hears everything from her, so that those that heard greatly wondered, and were comforted, and prayed over Tryphæna. And she rose up, and said: I am going to Iconium. And Paul said: Go, and teach the word of God. And Tryphæna sent her much clothing and gold, so that she left to Paul many things for the service of the poor.

And she went to Iconium. And she goes into the house of Onesiphorus, and fell upon the pavement where Paul used to sit and teach her, and wept, saying: God of myself and of this house, where Thou didst make the light to shine upon me, O Christ Jesus, the Son of the living God, my help in the fire, my help among the wild beasts, Thou art glorified for ever. Amen. And she found Thamyris dead, but her mother alive. And having sent for her mother, she said: Theocleia, my mother, canst thou believe that the Lord liveth in the heavens? For whether thou desirest wealth, God gives it to thee through me; or thy child, I am standing beside thee. And having thus testified, she departed to Seleucia, and dwelt in a cave seventy-two years, living upon herbs and water. And she enlightened many by the word of God.

And certain men of the city, being Greeks by religion, and physicians by profession, sent to her insolent young men to destroy²¹³¹ her. For they said: She is a virgin, and serves Artemis, and from this she has virtue in healing. And by the providence of God she entered into the rock alive, and went under ground. And she departed to Rome to see Paul, and found that he had fallen asleep.²¹³² And after staying there no long time, she rested in a glorious sleep; and she is buried about two or three stadia from the tomb of her master Paul.

She was cast, then, into the fire when seventeen years old, and among the wild beasts when eighteen. And she was an ascetic in the cave, as has been said, seventy-two years, so that all the years of her life were ninety. And having accomplished many cures, she rests in the place of the saints, having fallen asleep on the twenty-fourth of the month of September in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory and strength for ever and ever. Amen.

²¹³¹ Or, corrupt.

²¹³² i.e., that he was dead.