

Ancient Sources for Acts

Chapter 10

10:1–2

Polybius *Histories* 6.24

The Principes, Hastati, and Triarii, each elect ten centurions according to merit, and then a second ten each. All these sixty have the title of centurion alike, of whom the first man chosen is a member of the council of war. And they in their turn select a rear-rank officer each who is called optio. Next, in conjunction with the centurions, they divide the several orders (omitting the Velites) into ten companies each, and appoint to each company two centurions and two optiones; the Velites are divided equally among all the companies; these companies are called orders (ordines) or maniples (manipuli), or vexilla, and their officers are called centurions or ordinum ductores.¹ Each maniple selects two of their strongest and best born men as standard-bearers (vexillarii). And that each maniple should have two commanding officers is only reasonable; for it being impossible to know what a commander may be doing or what may happen to him, and necessities of war admitting of no parleying, they are anxious that the maniple may never be without a leader and commander. When the two centurions are both on the field, the first elected commands the right of the maniple, the second the left: if both are not there, the one who is commands the whole. And they wish the centurions not to be so much bold and adventurous, as men with a faculty for command, steady, and of a profound rather than a showy spirit; not prone to engage wantonly or be unnecessarily forward in giving battle; but such as in the face of superior numbers and overwhelming pressure will die in defense of their post.

Tobit 12:8

Prayer is good when accompanied by fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with wrongdoing. It is better to give alms than to treasure up gold.

Didache 15.4

But your prayers and alms and all your deeds so do, as you have it in the Gospel of our Lord.

2 Clem 16.4

Good, then, is alms as repentance from sin; better is fasting than prayer, and alms than both; “charity covereth a multitude of sins,” and prayer out of a good conscience delivereth from death. Blessed is every one that shall be found complete in these; for alms lightens the burden of sin.

10:3–8

LXX:

Leviticus 2:2

²and bring it to Aaron's sons the priests. And he shall take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil, with all of its frankincense; and the priest shall burn this as its memorial portion (μνημόσυνον) upon the altar, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

Leviticus 2:9

⁹And the priest shall take from the cereal offering its memorial portion (μνημόσυνον) and burn this on the altar, an offering by fire, a pleasing odor to the LORD.

Leviticus 2:16

¹⁶And the priest shall burn as its memorial portion (μνημόσυνον) part of the crushed grain and of the oil with all of its frankincense; it is an offering by fire to the LORD.

10:9–16

Jubilees 22:16

¹⁶And do thou, my son Jacob, remember my words,

And observe the commandments of Abraham, thy father:

Separate thyself from the nations,

And eat not with them:

And do not according to their works,

And become not their associate;

For their works are unclean,

And all their ways are a pollution and an abomination and uncleanness.

m. Obal 18.7

A. He who buys a field in Syria, near the Land of Israel, if he can enter it in a state of cleanness, it is clean, and it is subject to the laws of tithes and the seventh year. If he cannot enter it in a state of cleanness, it is unclean, but it [still] is liable to the laws of tithes and of the seventh year.

B. Dwelling places of gentiles [in the Land of Israel] are unclean.

C. How long must [the gentiles] remain in them for them to require examination [to determine their status]?

D. And if a slave or an [Israelite] woman was watching over it, it does not require an examination.

Tobit 1:10–11

¹⁰Now when I was carried away captive to Nineveh, all my brethren and my relatives ate the food of the Gentiles; 11 but I kept myself from eating it,

Tacitus, *Hist.* 5.5

This worship, however introduced, is upheld by its antiquity; all their other customs, which are at once perverse and disgusting, owe their strength to their very badness. The most degraded out of other races, scorning their national beliefs, brought to them their contributions and presents. This augmented the wealth of the Jews, as also did the fact, that among themselves they are inflexibly honest and ever ready to shew compassion, though they regard the rest of mankind with all the hatred of enemies. They sit apart at meals, they sleep apart, and though, as a nation, they are singularly prone to lust, they abstain from intercourse with foreign women; among themselves nothing is unlawful. Circumcision was adopted by them as a mark of difference from other men. Those who come over to their religion adopt the practice, and have this lesson first instilled into them, to despise all gods, to disown their country, and set at naught parents, children, and brethren. Still they provide for the increase of their numbers. It is a crime among them to kill any newly-born infant. They hold that the souls of all who perish in battle or by the hands of the executioner are immortal. Hence a passion for propagating their race and a contempt for death. They are wont to bury rather than to burn their dead, following in this the Egyptian custom; they bestow the same care on the dead, and they hold the same belief about the lower world. Quite different is their faith about things divine. The Egyptians worship many animals and images of monstrous form; the Jews have purely mental conceptions of Deity, as one in essence. They call those profane who make representations of God in human shape out of perishable materials. They believe that Being to be supreme and eternal, neither capable of representation, nor of decay. They therefore do not allow any images to stand in their cities, much less in their temples. This flattery is not paid to their kings, nor this honor to our Emperors. From the fact, however, that their priests used to chant to the music of flutes and cymbals, and to wear garlands of ivy, and that a golden vine was found in the temple, some have thought that they worshipped Father Liber, the conqueror of the East, though their institutions do not by any means harmonize with the theory; for Liber established a festive and cheerful worship, while the Jewish religion is tasteless and mean.

10:23b–29

y. *Meg.* 3.1 [74a] (see on 6:5–7)

Meg. 3.1 (see on 6:5–7)

t. *Meg.* 3.1 (see on 6:5–7)

Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 2.20.5 § 570–71

(570) And being conscious to himself that if he communicated part of his power to the great men, he should make them his fast friends; and that he should gain the same favor from the multitude, if he executed his commands by persons of their own country, and with whom they were well acquainted; he chose out seventy of the most prudent men, and those elders in age, and appointed them to be rulers of all Galilee, (571) as he chose seven judges in every city to hear the lesser quarrels; for as to the greater causes, and those wherein life and death were concerned, he enjoined they should be brought to him and the seventy elders.

Ascen. Isa. 7:21

And I fell on my face to worship him, and the angel who led me would not let me, but said to me, “Worship neither throne, nor angel from the six heavens, from where I was sent to lead you, before I tell you in the seventh heaven.

m. Abot 1.1

A. Moses received the Torah at Sinai and handed it on to Joshua, Joshua to the elders, and the elders to prophets.

B. And prophets handed it on to the men of the great assembly.

C. They said three things:

- (1) “Be prudent in judgment.
- (2) “Raise up many disciples.
- (3) “Make a fence for the Torah.”

10:36–38

Joseph and Asenath 17.1–3

And the man said to Aseneth, “Have you observed this?” and she said, “Yes, my lord, I have observed it all.” 2. And the man said, “So shall be the words I have spoken to you.” 3. And the man touched the comb, and fire went up from the table and burnt up the comb; and, as it burned, the comb gave out a refreshing fragrance that filled the room.”

Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. 3.39

1. There are extant five books of Papias, which bear the title Expositions of Oracles of the Lord. Irenaeus makes mention of these as the only works written by him, in the following words “These things are attested by Papias, an ancient man who was a hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp, in his fourth book. For five books have been written by him.” These are the words of Irenaeus.

2. But Papias himself in the preface to his discourses by no means declares that he was himself a hearer and eye-witness of the holy apostles, but he shows by the words which he uses that he received the doctrines of the faith from those who were their friends.

3. He says: “But I shall not hesitate also to put down for you along with my interpretations whatsoever things I have at any time learned carefully from the elders and carefully remembered, guaranteeing their truth. For I did not, like the multitude, take pleasure in those that speak much, but in those that teach the truth; not in those that relate strange commandments, but in those that deliver the commandments given by the Lord to faith, and springing from the truth itself.

4. If, then, any one came, who had been a follower of the elders, I questioned him in regard to the words of the elders,—what Andrew or what Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what things Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I did not think that what was to be gotten from the books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice.”

5. It is worth while observing here that the name John is twice enumerated by him. The first one he mentions in connection with Peter and James and Matthew and the rest of the apostles, clearly meaning the evangelist; but the other John he mentions after an interval, and places him among others outside of the number of the apostles, putting Aristion before him, and he distinctly calls him a presbyter.

6. This shows that the statement of those is true, who say that there were two persons in Asia that bore the same name, and that there were two tombs in Ephesus, each of which, even to the present day, is called John's. It is important to notice this. For it is probable that it was the second, if one is not willing to admit that it was the first that saw the Revelation, which is ascribed by name to John

7. And Papias, of whom we are now speaking, confesses that he received the words of the apostles from those that followed them, but says that he was himself a hearer of Aristion and the presbyter John. At least he mentions them frequently by name, and gives their traditions in his writings. These things we hope, have not been uselessly adduced by us.

8. But it is fitting to subjoin to the words of Papias which have been quoted, other passages from his works in which he relates some other wonderful events which he claims to have received from tradition.

9. That Philip the apostle dwelt at Hierapolis with his daughters has been already stated. But it must be noted here that Papias, their contemporary, says that he heard a wonderful tale from the daughters of Philip. For he relates that in his time one rose from the dead. And he tells another wonderful story of Justus, surnamed Barsabbas: that he drank a deadly poison, and yet, by the grace of the Lord, suffered no harm.

10. The Book of Acts records that the holy apostles after the ascension of the Savior, put forward this Justus, together with Matthias, and prayed that one might be chosen in place of the traitor Judas, to fill up their number. The account is as follows: “And they put forward two, Joseph, called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias; and they prayed and said.”

11. The same writer gives also other accounts which he says came to him through unwritten tradition, certain strange parables and teachings of the Savior, and some other more mythical things.

12. To these belong his statement that there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth. I suppose he got these ideas through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not perceiving that the things said by them were spoken mystically in figures.

13. For he appears to have been of very limited understanding, as one can see from his discourses. but it was due to him that so many of the Church Fathers after him adopted a like opinion, urging in

their own support the antiquity of the man; as for instance Iranaeus and anyone else that may have proclaimed similar views.

14. Papias gives also in his own work other accounts of the words of the Lord on the authority of Aristion who was mentioned above, and traditions as handed down by the presbyter John; to which we refer those who are fond of learning. But now we must add to the words of his which we have already quoted the tradition which he gives in regard to Mark, the author of the Gospel.

15. "This also the presbyter said: Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor followed him, but afterward, as I said, he followed Peter, who adapted his teaching to the needs of his hearers, but with no intention of giving a connected account of the Lord's discourses, so that Mark committed no error while he thus wrote some things as he remembered them. For he was careful of one thing, not to omit any of the things which he had heard, and not to state any of them falsely." These things are related by Papias concerning Mark.

16. But concerning Matthew he writes as follows: "So then Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able." And the same writer uses testimonies from the first Epistle of John and from that of Peter likewise. And he relates another story of a woman, who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews. These things we have thought it necessary to observe in addition to what has been already stated.

Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.9.6 §339

Now there were edifices all along the circular haven, made of the most polished stone, with a certain elevation, whereon was erected a temple, that was seen a great way off by those that were sailing for that haven, and had in it two statues, the one of Rome, the other of Caesar. The city itself was called Cesarea, which was also itself built of fine materials, and was of a fine structure.

Josephus, *Jewish Wars* 1.21.7 §414

Now there were continual edifices joined to the haven, which were also themselves of white stone; and to this haven did the narrow streets of the city lead, and were built at equal distances one from another. And over against the mouth of the haven, upon an elevation, there was a temple for Caesar, which was excellent both in beauty and largeness; and therein was a Colossus of Caesar, not less than that of Jupiter Olympius, which it was made to resemble. The other Colossus of Rome was equal to that of Juno at Argos. So he dedicated the city to the province, and the haven to the sailors there; but the honor of the buildings he ascribed to Caesar, and named it Cesarea accordingly.

Cicero, *Phil.* 1.8.20

And as the night was stormy, and as I had lodged that night in the villa of Publius Valerius, my companion and intimate friend, and as I remained all the next day at his house waiting for a fair wind, many of the citizens of the municipality of Rhegium came to me. And of them there were some who had lately arrived from Rome; from them I first heard of the harangue of Marcus Antonius, with which I was so much pleased that, after I had read it, I began for the first time to think of returning. And not long afterwards the edict of Brutus and Cassius is brought to me; which (perhaps because I love those men, even more for the sake of the republic than of my own

friendship for them) appeared to me, indeed, to be full of equity. They added besides, (for it is a very common thing for those who are desirous of bringing good news to invent something to make the news which they bring seem more joyful,) that parties were coming to an agreement; that the senate was to meet on the first of August; that Antonius having discarded all evil counselors, and having given up the provinces of Gaul, was about to return to submission to the authority of the senate.

Juvenal, *Sat.* 16.7–34

The Immunities of the Military

Who can count up, Gallius, all the prizes of prosperous soldiering? I would myself pray to be a trembling recruit if I could but enter a favored camp under a lucky star: for one moment of benignant fate is of more avail than a letter of commendation to Mars from Venus, or from his mother, who delights in the sandy shore of Samos. Let us first consider the benefits common to all soldiers, of which not the least is this, that no civilian will dare to thrash you; if thrashed himself, he must hold his tongue, and not venture to exhibit to the Praetor the teeth that have been knocked out, or the black and blue lumps upon his face, or the one eye left which the doctor holds out no hope of saving. If he seek redress, he has appointed for him as judge a hob-nailed centurion with a row of jurors with brawny calves sitting before a big bench. For the old camp law and the rule of Camillus still holds good which forbids a soldier to attend court outside the camp, and at a distance from the standards. “Most right and proper it is,” you say, “that a centurion should pass sentence on a soldier; nor shall I fail of satisfaction if I make good my case.” But then the whole cohort will be your enemies; all the maniples will agree as one man in applying a cure to the redress you have received by giving you a thrashing which shall be worse than the first. So, as you possess a pair of legs, you must have a mulish brain worthy of the eloquent Vagellius to provoke so many jack-boots, and all those thousands of hobnails. And besides who would venture so far from the city? Who would be such a Pylades as to go inside the rampart? Better dry your eyes at once, and not importune friends who will but make excuses. When the judge has called for witnesses, let the man, whoever he be, who saw the assault dare to say, “I saw it,” and I will deem him worthy of the beard and long hair of our forefathers. Sooner will you find a false witness against a civilian than one who will tell the truth against the interest and the honor of a soldier. And now let us note other profits and perquisites of the service. If some rascally neighbor have filched from me a dell or a field of my ancestral estate, and have dug up, from the midpoint of my boundary, the hallowed stone which I have honored every year with an offering of flat cake and porridge; or if a debtor refuses to repay the money that he has borrowed, declaring that the signatures are false, and the document null and void: I shall have to wait for the time of year when the whole world begin their suits, and even then there will be a thousand wearisome delays. So often does it happen that when only the benches have been set out—when the eloquent Caecilius is taking off his cloak, and Fuscus has gone out for a moment—though everything is ready, we disperse, and fight our battle after the dilatory fashion of the courts. But the gentlemen who are armed and belted have their cases set down for whatever time they please; nor is their substance worn away by the slow drag-chain of the law. Soldiers alone, again, have the right to make their wills during their fathers' lifetime; for the law ordains that money earned in military service is not to be included in the property which is in the father's sole control. This is why Coranus, who follows the standards and earns soldier's pay, is courted by his own father, though now tottering from old age. The son receives the advancement that is his due, and reaps the recompense for his own good services. And indeed it is the interest of the General that the most brave should also be the most fortunate, and that all should have medals and necklets to be proud of.

