

the book of

ACTS

The account of the growth of the Church

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The apostles performed many signs
and wonders among the people.

And all the believers used to meet
together in Solomon's Colonnade.

Acts 5:12



Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.¹⁸ They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.

Acts 5:17-19



The God of our ancestors raised
Jesus from the dead—whom you
killed by hanging him on a cross.

Acts 5:30



Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail.³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.” Acts 5:38,39



Now Stephen, a man full of God's
grace and power, did great wonders
and miraculous signs among the
people.

Acts 6:8





¹⁷“As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had greatly increased. ¹⁸Then ‘a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.’ ¹⁹He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our ancestors by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die. **Acts 7:17-19**

“This is the Moses who told the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.’ [Acts 7:37](#)

Our ancestors refused to obey (Moses). Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. ⁴⁰They told Aaron, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don’t know what has happened to him!’⁴¹ That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and reveled in what their own hands had made.

Acts 7:39-41

⁵¹“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵²Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— ⁵³you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

Acts 7:51-53

⁵⁴When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

Acts 7:54-56

⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” [Acts 7:56](#)

⁵³ ...you who have received the law
that was given through angels but
have not obeyed it." *Acts 7:53*

52 Was there ever a prophet your
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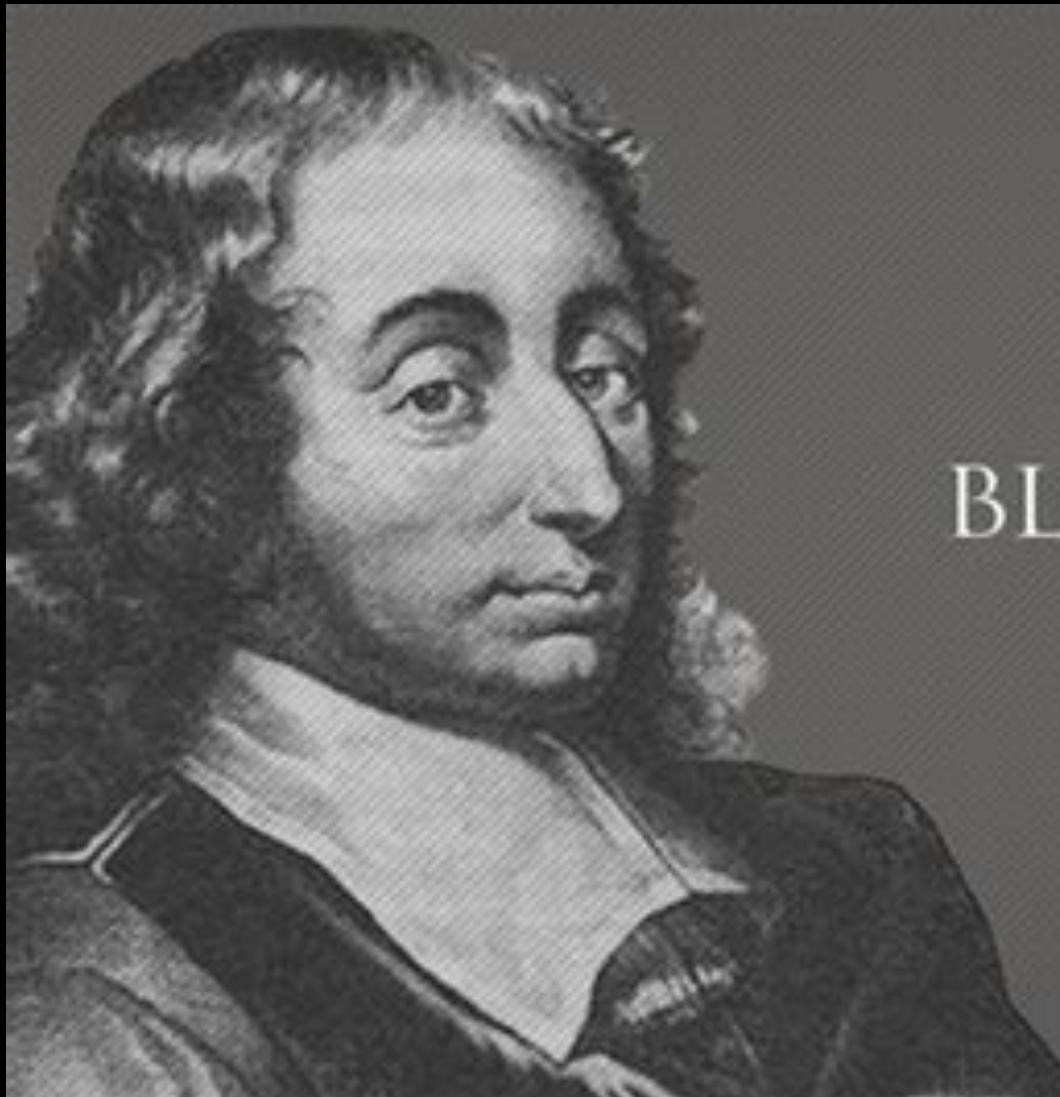
For we have already made the charge
that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under
the power of sin.¹⁰ As it is written:
“There is no one righteous, not even
one;¹¹ there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.¹² All
have turned away, they have together
become worthless; there is no one who
does good, not even one.”

Romans 3:9-12



But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Romans 3:9-12



A black and white engraving of Blaise Pascal, showing him from the chest up. He has dark, wavy hair and is wearing a dark coat over a white cravat and a patterned waistcoat.

BLAISE PASCAL

1623–1662



BLAISE PASCAL

1623–1662

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. H. DODGE

"Every religion comes up and says, 'Strive to be like this, and if you try hard, even though you may fail, if you're one of the best, you can make it.' "



BLAISE PASCAL

1623–1662

“But if you feel you have strived to obey the standard, that will give you confidence, but you’re going to have a tremendous problem with superiority toward others.”



BLAISE PASCAL

1623–1662

“On the other hand, if you feel like you’ve failed to reach the law and the standard, that will make you humble, but you’re going to be filled with guilt and despair.”



BLAISE PASCAL

1623–1662

“What Christianity shows you is
that the law has to be totally
fulfilled, and no human is capable,
which destroys your pride.”



BLAISE PASCAL

1623–1662

“Then Christianity shows you a Savior who has totally fulfilled it, and by receiving his work on your behalf, you get rid of your despair.”



“I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God.”

Luke 12:8



⁵⁶“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

Acts 7:56-58

⁵⁹ While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 7:59,60



N.T. Wright

Stephen just laid a pretty ferocious charge against the Jewish leaders in his speech. But in his death, he shouts a prayer at the top of his voice as the rocks are flying and his body is being smashed and crushed asking God not to hold this sin against them.



N.T. Wright

If we knew nothing more about Christianity except the fact that their martyrs called down blessings and forgiveness instead of curses and judgement..., we would have a central though no doubt puzzling, insight into the whole business of Christianity.



¹On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. ²Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. ³But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

Acts 8:1-3

¹² I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. ¹³ Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. ¹⁴ The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 1:12-14



¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

1 Timothy 1:15



Augustine of Hippo the early church Father wrote:

“The Church owes Paul to the prayer of Stephen.”

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