



The Acts of Pa'al and Thecla

Edited by Noel Joshua Hadley



As Pa'al was going up to Iconium after the flight from Antioch, his fellow-travelers were Demas and Ermogenes, full of hypocrisy; and they were importunate with Pa'al, as if they loved him. But Pa'al, looking only to the goodness of Ha'Mashiach, did them no harm, but loved them exceedingly, so that he made the oracles of Adonai 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 Ha'Mashiach, how He had been revealed to him.

And a certain man, by name Onesiphorus, hearing that Pa'al 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 Pa'al 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 passersby according to the description of Titus. And he saw Pa'al coming, a man small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, well-built, 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 Pa'al, seeing Onesiphorus, smiled; and Onesiphorus said: Hail, O servant of the blessed Elohiym! And he said: Grace be with you and your house. And Demas and Ermogenes were jealous, and showed greater hypocrisy; so that Demas said: Are not we of the blessed Elohiym, that you have 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 Pa'al having gone into the house of Onesiphorus, there was great joy, and bending of knees, and breaking of bread, and the word of Elohiym about self-control and the resurrection; Pa'al saying: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see Elohiym: blessed are they that have kept the flesh chaste, for they shall become a temple of Elohiym: 1 Corinthians 6:18-19 blessed are they that control themselves, for Elohiym shall speak with them: blessed are they that have kept aloof from this world, for they shall be called upright: blessed are they that have wives as not having them, for they shall receive Elohiym for their portion: blessed are they that have the fear of Elohiym, for they shall become angels of Elohiym: 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, and shall not see the bitter day of judgment: blessed are the bodies of the virgins, for they shall be well pleasing to Elohiym, 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.

And while Pa'al 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 Pa'al, she also had an eager desire to be deemed worthy to stand in the presence of Pa'al, and to hear the word of Ha'Mashiach; 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 you, 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 your Thecla as well, besides; for all the women and the young men go in beside him, being taught to fear Elohiym and to live in chastity. Moreover, also my daughter, tied to the window like a spider, lays hold of what is said by Pa'al with a strange eagerness and awful emotion; for the virgin looks eagerly at what is said by him, and has been captivated. But go near and speak to her, for she has been betrothed to you.

And Thamyris going near, and kissing her, but at the same time also being afraid of her overpowering emotion, said: Thecla, my betrothed, why do you sit thus? And what sort of feeling holds you overpowered? Turn round to your Thamyris and be ashamed. Moreover, also her mother said the same things: Why do you 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 of mourning. And while these things were thus going on, Thecla did not turn round, but kept attending earnestly to the word of Pa'al.

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 man 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: You 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 you shall have Thecla as your wife. And we shall teach you that the resurrection of which this man speaks has taken place, because it has already taken place in the children which we have; and we rose again when we came to the knowledge of the true Elohiym.

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: You have 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 you on what account he teaches these things. And Demas and Ermogenes said to Thamyris: Say that he is a Christian, and thus you will do away with him. But the proconsul stayed his intention, and called Pa'al, saying: Who are you, and what do you teach? For they bring no small charges against you. And Pa'al lifted up his voice, saying: Since I am this day examined as to what I teach, listen, O proconsul: A living Elohiym, a Elohiym of retributions, a jealous Elohiym, a Elohiym 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 Elohiym sent His own Son, 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 Elohiym, and the knowledge of holiness, and the love of truth. If, therefore, I teach what has been revealed to me by Elohiym, wherein do I do wrong? And the proconsul having heard, ordered Pa'al 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 Pa'al, and, sitting at his feet, she heard the great things of Elohiym. And Pa'al was afraid of nothing but ordered his life in the confidence of Elohiym. 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 Pa'al to be brought to the tribunal; but Thecla was wallowing on the ground 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 Pa'al had been brought, vehemently cried out: He is a magician! Away with him! But the proconsul gladly heard Pa'al upon the holy works of Ha'Mashiach. And having called a council, he summoned Thecla, and said to her: Why do you not obey Thamyris, according to the law of the Iconians? But she stood looking earnestly at Pa'al. 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 Pa'al, 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 Pa'al. And having looked upon the crowd, she saw Adonai sitting in the likeness of Pa'al, and said: As I am unable to endure my lot, Pa'al has come to see me. And she gazed upon him with great earnestness, and he went up into heaven. But the maidservants 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 power 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 Elohiym, having compassion upon her, made an underground rumbling, 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 Pa'al 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 Pa'al: We are hungry, and we cannot buy loaves; for Onesiphorus had left the things of the world, and followed Pa'al, with all his house. And Pa'al, 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 neighbor, and was astonished, and said: Thecla, whither are you going? And she said: I have been saved from the fire and am following Pa'al. And the boy said: Come, I shall take you to him; for he is distressed about you and is praying six days. And she stood beside the tomb where Pa'al was with bended knees, and praying, and saying: O Savior Ha'Mashiach, let not the fire touch Thecla, but stand by her, for she is Yours. And she, standing behind him, cried out: O Father, who hast made the heaven and the earth, the Father of Your holy Son, I bless You that You have saved me that I may see Pa'al. And Pa'al, rising up, saw her, and said: O Elohiym, that know the heart, the Father of our Adonai Yahusha Ha'Mashiach, I bless You that You, having heard me, have done quickly what I wished.

And they had five loaves, and herbs, and water; and they rejoiced in the holy works of Ha'Mashiach. And Thecla said to Pa'al: I shall cut my hair and follow you wherever you may go. And he said: It is a shameless age, and you are beautiful. I am afraid lest another temptation come upon you worse than the first, and that you withstand it not, but be cowardly. And Thecla said: Only give me the seal in Ha'Mashiach, and temptation shall not touch me. And Pa'al said: Thecla, wait with patience, and you shall receive the water.

And Pa'al 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 enamored of her, and tried to gain over Pa'al by gifts and presents. But Pa'al said: I

know not the woman whom you speak 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 Pa'al. And she cried out bitterly, saying: Do not force the stranger; do not force the servant of Elohiym. 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 laughingstock. 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, whose daughter was dead, took her into keeping, and had her for a consolation.

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, you shall 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 forever; for this I saw in my sleep. And she, nothing hesitating, lifted up her voice, and said: Elohiym most high, grant to this woman according to her wish, that her daughter Falconilla may live forever. 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, 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. Elohiym 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 you, Thecla, I am taking to the wild-beast fight. And Thecla wept bitterly, saying: O Adonai, the Elohiym in whom I believe, to whom I have fled for refuge, who delivered me from the fire, grant a recompense to Tryphæna, who has had compassion on Your 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 raised 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, 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 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 Yahusha Ha'Mashiach I am baptized on my last day. And the women seeing, and the multitude, wept, saying: Do not throw yourself 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 Yahusha Ha'Mashiach; 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 you will. 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.

And the governor summoned Thecla out of the midst of the wild beasts, and said to her: Who are you? And what is there about you, that not one of the wild beasts touches you? And she said: I indeed am a servant of the living Elohiym; and as to what there is about me, I have believed in the Son of Elohiym, in whom He is well pleased; wherefore not one of the beasts has touched me. For He alone is the end 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 in Him, shall not live forever.

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 you with salvation. And taking the garments, she put them on. The governor therefore immediately issued an edict, saying: I release to you the Elohiym-fearing Thecla, the servant of Elohiym. And the women shouted aloud, and with one mouth returned thanks to Elohiym, saying: There is one Elohiym, the Elohiym of Thecla; so that the foundations of the theatre were shaken by their voice. And Tryphæna 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 you all that

is mine. She therefore went in along with her, and rested eight days, having instructed her in the word of Elohiym, so that most even of the maidservants believed. And there was great joy in the house.

And Thecla kept seeking Pa'al; 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 Pa'al speaking the word of Elohiym. And Pa'al 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, Pa'al; for He that wrought along with you for the Gospel has wrought in me also for baptism. And Pa'al, 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 Pa'al said: Go and teach the word of Elohiym. And Tryphæna sent her much clothing and gold, so that she left to Pa'al 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 Pa'al used to sit and teach her, and wept, saying: Elohiym of myself and of this house, where you made the light to shine upon me, O Ha'Mashiach Yahusha, the Son of the living Elohiym, my help in the fire, my help among the wild beasts, You are glorified forever. Amen. And she found Thamyris dead, but her mother alive. And having sent for her mother, she said: Theocleia, my mother, can you believe that Adonai lives in the heavens? For whether you desire wealth, Elohiym gives it to you through me; or your child, I am standing beside you. 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 Elohiym.

And certain men of the city, being Greeks by religion, and physicians by profession, sent to her insolent young men to destroy her. For they said: She is a virgin, and serves Artemis, and from this she has virtue in healing. And by the providence of Elohiym she entered into the rock alive, and went underground. And she departed to Rome to see Pa'al and found that he had fallen asleep. 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 Pa'al.

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 Ha'Mashiach Yahusha our Adonai, to whom be glory and strength for ever and ever. Amen.

Instead of the last two sections, the ms. which Dr. Grabe used has the following:—

And a cloud of light guided her. And having come into Seleucia, she went forth outside of the city one stadium. And she was afraid of them also, for they worshipped idols. And it guided her to the mountain called Calamon or Rhodeon; and having there found a cave, she went into it. And she was there many years, and underwent many and grievous trials by the devil, and bore them nobly, being assisted by Ha'Mashiach.

And some of the well-born women, having learned about the virgin Thecla, went to her, and learned the oracles of Elohiym. And many of them bade adieu to the world and lived an ascetic life with her. And a good report was spread everywhere concerning her, and cures were done by her. All the city, therefore, and country round, having known this, brought their sick to the mountain; and before they came near the door they were speedily released from whatever disease they were afflicted by; and the unclean spirits went out shrieking, and all received their own in health, glorifying Elohiym, who had given such grace to the virgin Thecla.

The physicians, therefore, of the city of the Seleucians were thought nothing of, having lost their trade, and no one any longer had regard to them; and being filled with envy and hatred, they plotted against the servant of Ha'Mashiach, what they should do to her. The devil then suggests to them a wicked device; and one day, being assembled, and having taken counsel, they consult with each other, saying: This virgin is a priestess of the great elohiym Artemis; and if she asks anything of her, she hears her as being a virgin, and all the elohiym love her. Come, then, let us take men of disorderly lives, and make them drunk with much wine, and let us give them much gold, and say to them, If you can corrupt and defile her, we shall give you even more money.

The physicians therefore said to themselves, that if they should be able to defile her, neither the Elohiym nor Artemis would listen to her in the case of the sick. They therefore did so. And the wicked men, having gone to the mountain, and rushed upon the cave like lions, knocked at the door. And the holy martyr Thecla opened, emboldened by the Elohiym in whom she believed; for she knew of their plot beforehand. And she says to them: What do you want, my children? And they said: Is there one here called Thecla? And she said: What do you want with her? They say to her: We want to sleep with her. The blessed Thecla says to them: I am a humble old woman, but the servant of my Adonai Yahusha Ha'Mashiach; and even though you want to do something to me out of place, you cannot.

They say to her: It is impossible for us not to do to you what we want. And having said this, they laid fast hold of her, and wished to insult her. And she says to them with mildness: Wait, my children, that you may see the glory of Adonai. And being laid hold of by them, she looked up into heaven, and said: Elohiym, terrible and incomparable, and glorious to Your adversaries, who delivered me out of the fire, who did not give me up to Thamyris, who did not give me up to Alexander, who delivered me from the wild beasts, who saved me in the abyss, who hast everywhere worked with me, and glorified Your name in me, now also deliver me from these lawless men, and let me not insult my virginity, which through Your name I have preserved till now, because I love You, and desire You, and adore You, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost forever.
Amen.

And there came a voice out of the heaven, saying: Fear not, Thecla, my true servant, for I am with you. Look and see where an opening has been made before you, for there shall be for you an everlasting house, and there you shall obtain shelter. And the blessed Thecla regarding it, saw the rock opened as far as to allow a man to enter, and did according to what had been said to her: and nobly fleeing from the lawless ones entered into the rock; and the rock was straightway shut together, so that not even a joining appeared. And they, beholding the extraordinary wonder, became as it were distracted; and they were not able to detain the servant of Elohiym, but only caught hold of her veil, and were able to tear off a certain part; and that by the permission of Elohiym for the faith of those seeing the venerable place, and for a blessing in the generations afterwards

to those that believe in our Adonai Yahusha Ha'Mashiach out of a pure heart.

Thus, then, suffered the first martyr of Elohiym, and apostle, and virgin, Thecla, who came from Iconium at eighteen years old; and with the journeying, and the going round, and the retirement in the mountain, she lived other seventy-two years. And when Adonai took her, she was ninety years old. *Amen.*

