

The Jerusalem Council—Salvation Apart from Circumcision (early 49)

Acts 15:3–35

Paul and Barnabas Travel to Jerusalem

3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren.

4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

The Debate is Defined

5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.”

6 The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.

Peter’s Speech

7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe.

8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us;

9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

11 But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”

Paul and Barnabas Tell About Their Missionary Journey

12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

James’ Speech

13 After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, “Brethren, listen to me.

14 “Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.

15 “With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,

16 ‘AFTER THESE THINGS I will return,
AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN,
AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS,
AND I WILL RESTORE IT,

17 SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD,
AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,’

18 SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO. [[Amos 9:11–12](#); cf. [Isa 45:21](#)]

19 Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.

21 For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

The First Official Statement of the Early Church

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren,

23 and they sent this letter by them,

“The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.

24 Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with *their* words, unsettling your souls, [cf. [Acts 15:1–2](#); [Gal 2:11–12](#)]

25 it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of *mouth*.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials:

29 that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.”

Paul and Barnabas Return to Syrian Antioch

30 So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

31 When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

32 Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message.

33 After they had spent time *there*, they were sent away from the brethren in peace to those who had sent them out.

34 [But it seemed good to Silas to remain there.]

35 But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and preaching with many others also, the word of the Lord.