

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

Acts 15:3–35

Paul and Barnabas Travel to Jerusalem

3 So they were sent on their way by the church, *and* passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, telling in detail the conversion of the Gentiles and bringing great joy to all the brothers.

4 And *when they* arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and reported all that God had done with them.

The Debate is Defined

5 But some of those who had believed from the party of the Pharisees stood up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to command *them* to observe the law of Moses!”

6 Both the apostles and the elders assembled to deliberate concerning this matter.

Peter’s Speech

7 And *after* there was much debate, Peter stood up *and* said to them, “Men *and* brothers, you know that in the early days God chose among you through my mouth *that* the Gentiles should hear the message of the gospel and believe.

8 And God, who knows the heart, testified to them *by* 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 So now *why* are you putting God to the test *by* placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

11 But we believe *we* will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in the same way those also *are*.”

Paul and Barnabas Tell About Their Missionary Journey

12 And the whole group became silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul describing all the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

James’ Speech

13 And after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, “Men *and* brothers, listen to me!

14 Simeon has described how God first concerned himself to take from among the Gentiles a people for his name.

15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

16 ‘After these *things* I will return
and build up again the tent of David that has fallen,
and the *parts* of it that had been torn down I will build up again
and will restore it,

17 so that the rest of humanity may seek the Lord,
even all the Gentiles who are called by my name,
says the Lord, who makes these *things* 18 known from of old.’ [[Amos 9:11–12](#); cf. [Isa 45:21](#)]

19 Therefore I conclude we should not cause difficulty for those from among the Gentiles who turn to God,

20 but we should write a letter to them to abstain from the pollution of idols and from sexual immorality and from what has been strangled and from blood.

21 For Moses has those who proclaim him in every city from ancient generations, *because he* is read aloud in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”

The First Official Statement of the Early Church

22 Then it seemed best to the apostles and the elders, together with the whole church, to send men chosen from among them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—Judas who was called Barsabbas and Silas, men *who were* leaders among the brothers—

23 writing *this letter* to be delivered by them:

The apostles and the elders, brothers.

To the brothers *who are* from among the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.

Greetings!

24 Because we have heard that some have gone out from among us—to whom we gave no orders—*and* have thrown you into confusion by words upsetting your minds, [cf. [Acts 15:1–2](#); [Gal 2:11–12](#)]

25 it seemed best to us, having reached a unanimous decision, *and* having chosen men,
to send *them* to you together with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul,

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

27 Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, and they will report the same *things* by word of mouth.
 28 For it seemed best to the Holy Spirit and to us to place on you no greater burden except these necessary things:
 29 *that you* abstain from food sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. *If you* keep yourselves from these things you will do well.
 Farewell.

30 So *when* they were sent off, they came down to Antioch, and *after* calling together the community, they delivered the letter.
 31 And *when they* read it aloud, they rejoiced at the encouragement.
 32 Both Judas and Silas, who were also prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brothers by a long message.
 33 And *after* spending *some* time, they were sent away in peace from the brothers to those who had sent them.
 34 [*not in earliest mss*]
 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch teaching and proclaiming the word of the Lord with many others also.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey—A Strained Beginning (Spring 49)

Acts 15:36–41

36 And after some days, Paul said to Barnabas, "Come then, *let us* return *and* visit the brothers in every town in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *to see* how they are *doing*."
 37 Now Barnabas wanted to take John who was called Mark along also,
 38 but Paul held the opinion they should not take this one along, who departed from them in Pamphylia and did not accompany them in the work.
 39 And a sharp disagreement took place, so that they separated from one another. And Barnabas took along Mark *and* sailed away to Cyprus,
 40 but Paul chose Silas *and* departed, *after* being commended to the grace of the Lord by the brothers.
 41 And he traveled through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey—Return to the Galatian Churches (Summer 49)

Acts 16:1–5

1 And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman but of a Greek father,
 2 who was well spoken of by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium.
 3 Paul wanted this one to go with him, and he took *him and* circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for *they* all knew that his father was Greek.
 4 And as they went through the towns, they passed on to them to observe the rules that had been decided by the apostles and elders *who were* in Jerusalem.
 5 So the churches were being strengthened in the faith and were growing in number every day.

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