

## 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 as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they were relating at length the conversion of the Gentiles and bringing great joy to all the brothers.

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

### The Debate is Defined

5 But some from the religious party of the Pharisees who had believed stood up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise the Gentiles and to order them to observe the law of Moses.”

6 Both the apostles and the elders met together to deliberate about this matter.

### Peter’s Speech

7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that some time ago God chose me to preach to the Gentiles so they would hear the message of the gospel and believe.

8 And God, who knows the heart, has testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us,

9 and he made no distinction between them and us, 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 ancestors nor we have been able to bear?

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

### Paul and Barnabas Tell About Their Missionary Journey

12 The whole group kept quiet and listened to Barnabas and Paul while they explained all the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

### James’ Speech

13 After they stopped speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me.

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

15 The words of the prophets agree with this, as it is written,

16 *‘After this I will return,  
and I will rebuild the fallen tent of David;  
I will rebuild its ruins and restore it,*

17 *so that the rest of humanity may seek the Lord,  
namely, all the Gentiles I have called to be my own,’ says the Lord,  
who makes these things 18 known from long ago. [Amos 9:11–12; cf. Isa 45:21]*

19 “Therefore I conclude that we should not cause extra difficulty for those among the Gentiles who are turning to God,

20 but that we should write them a letter telling them to abstain from things defiled by idols and from sexual immorality and from what has been strangled and from blood.

21 For Moses has had those who proclaim him in every town from ancient times, because he is read aloud in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

### The First Official Statement of the Early Church

22 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to send men chosen from among them, Judas called Barsabbas and Silas, leaders among the brothers, to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas.

23 They sent this letter with them:

From the apostles and elders, your brothers, to the Gentile brothers and sisters in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, greetings!

24 Since we have heard that some have gone out from among us with no orders from us and have confused you, upsetting your minds by what they said, [cf. Acts 15:1–2; Gal 2:11–12]

25 we have unanimously decided to choose men to send to you along with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul,

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

27 Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas who will tell you these things themselves in person.

28 For it seemed best to the Holy Spirit and to us not to place any greater burden on you than these necessary rules:

29 that you abstain from meat that has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what has been strangled and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from doing these things, you will do well. Farewell.

**Paul and Barnabas Return to Syrian Antioch**

30 So when they were dismissed, they went down to Antioch, and after gathering the entire group together, they delivered the letter.

31 When they read it aloud, the people rejoiced at its encouragement.

32 Both Judas and Silas, who were prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with a long speech.

33 After they had spent some time there, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them.

34 [*not in earliest mss*]

35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and proclaiming (along with many others) the word of the Lord.

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

Acts 15:36–41

36 After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's return and visit the brothers in every town where we proclaimed the word of the Lord to see how they are doing."

37 Barnabas wanted to bring John called Mark along with them too,

38 but Paul insisted that they should not take along this one who had left them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work.

39 They had a sharp disagreement, so that they parted company. Barnabas took along Mark and sailed away to Cyprus,

40 but Paul chose Silas and set out, commended to the grace of the Lord by the brothers and sisters.

41 He passed through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

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

Acts 16:1–5

1 He also came to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple named Timothy was there, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but whose father was a Greek.

2 The brothers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.

3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany 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 As they went through the towns, they passed on the decrees that had been decided on by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the Gentile believers to obey.

5 So the churches were being strengthened in the faith and were increasing in number every day.

*Scripture quoted by permission. All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the NET Bible® copyright ©1996–2006 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. <http://bible.org> All rights reserved. This material is available in its entirety as a free download or online web use at <http://netbible.org/>.*