

## ACTS CHAPTER 15

### *The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-12)*

Some men came down from Judea and *began* teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, *the brethren* determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Syrian Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren. 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.

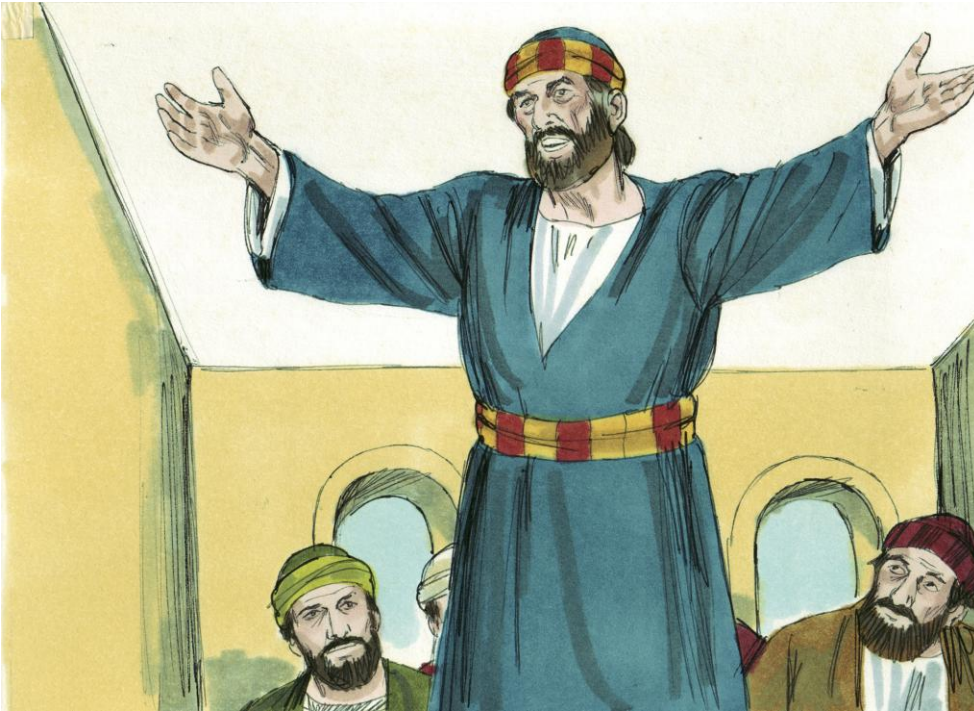


Map 6

Shows the location of Judea, Jerusalem, Syrian Phoenicia and Samaria

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.”

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



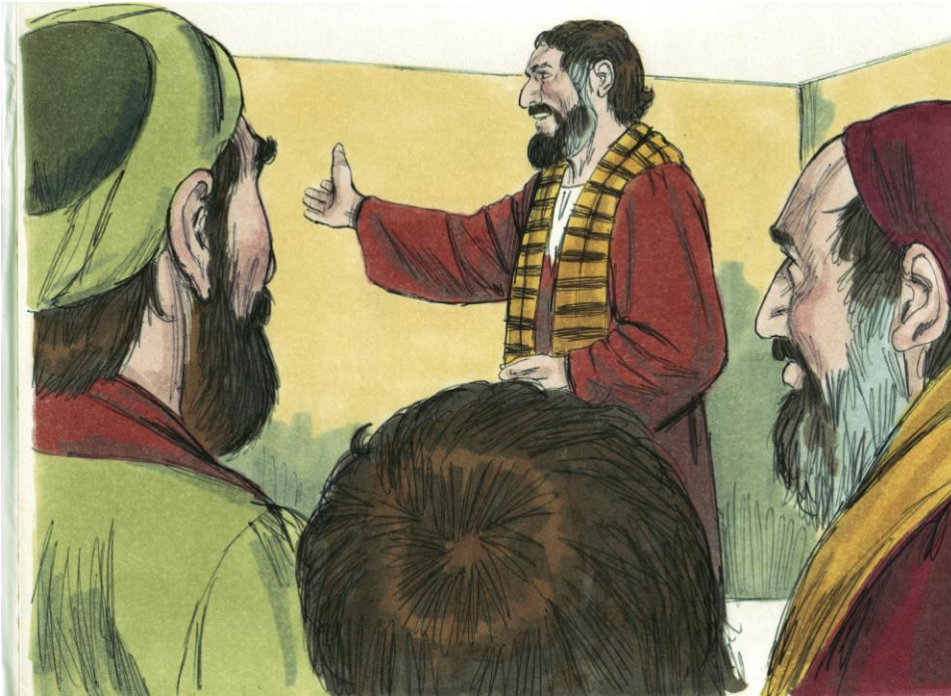
After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 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? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”

*Why should we mark Peter’s words: “my mouth”? Only Peter had preached Christ to Cornelius and his household and as he had proclaimed the necessity of faith in Christ for the remission of sins, his hearers had believed and were saved. At that moment the Spirit had interrupted Peter’s address and had given these Gentiles the Holy Spirit. This is that gift whereby Peter and his friends could know that their salvation apart from circumcision and the law was genuine.*

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's Judgment (Acts 15:13-35)***

After they had stopped speaking, James, the brother of the Lord, answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. "Simeon (the earthly name of Peter) has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. "With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,



'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,  
  
SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD,  
AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,'  
  
SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO.

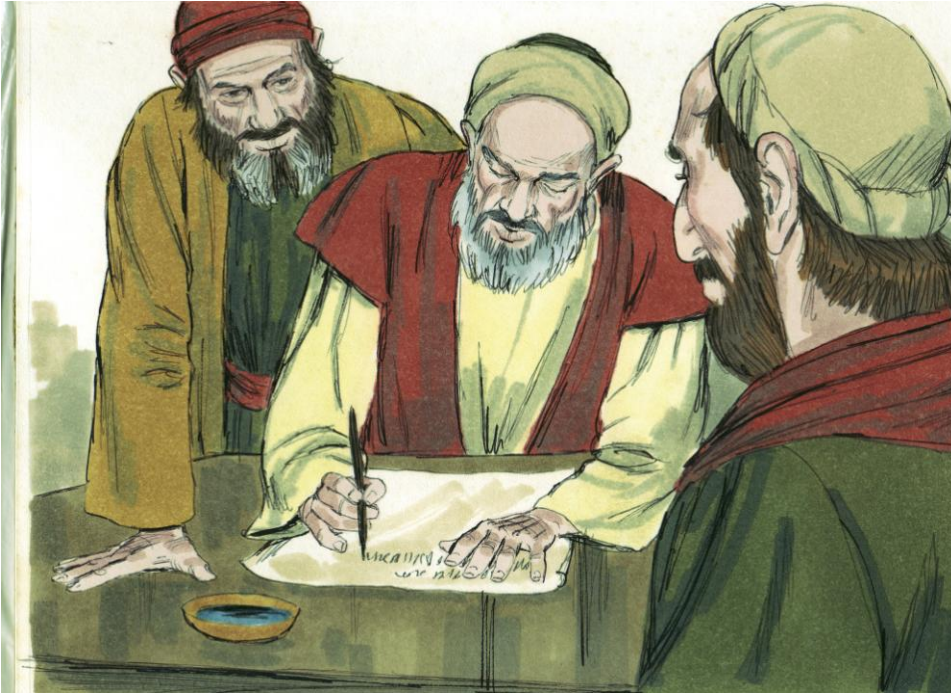
“Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”



*Why did James handed down the final decision as his own? So strong had James position become among the believers of Judea that none seemed to recall the fact that the Lord Himself had trained and commissioned Peter for the work and leadership.*

*Why did the Gentiles had to abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood? These four stipulations were in areas where the Gentiles had particular weaknesses and where the Jews were particularly repulsed by Gentile violations. It would help both the individual and the relationship between Gentile and Jew if these requirements were observed.*

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



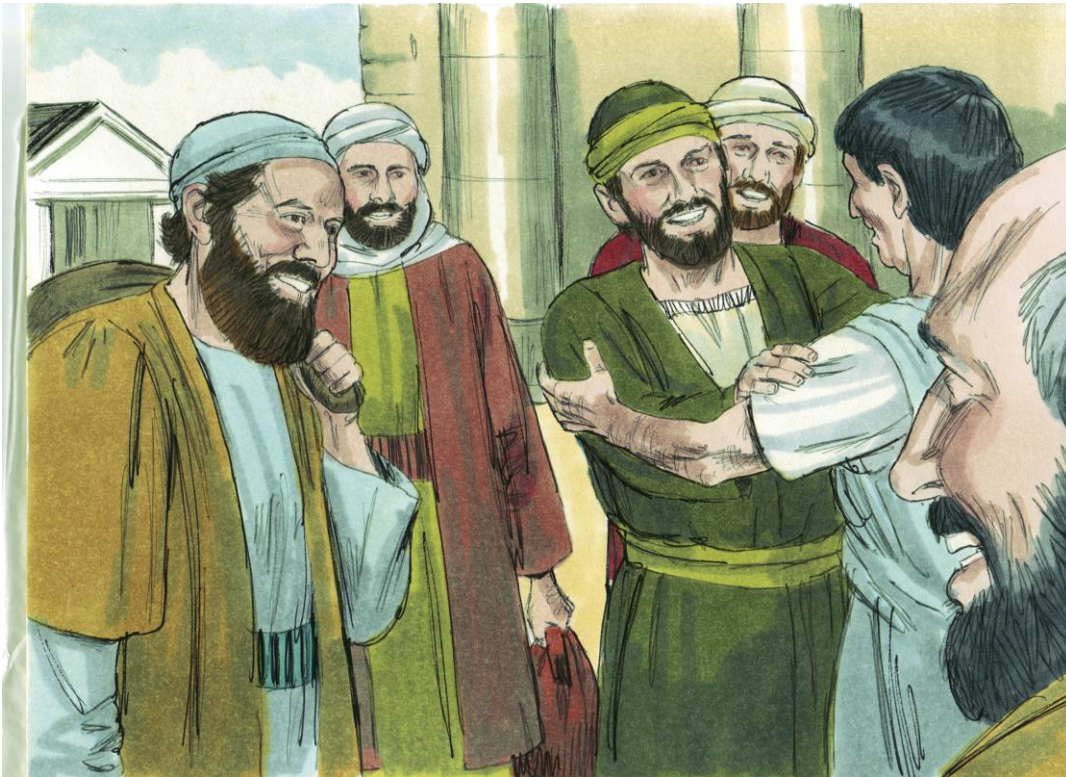
“The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Syrian Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.

“Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with *their* words, unsettling your souls, it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

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



So when they were sent away, they went down to Syrian Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message. After they had spent time *there*, they were sent away from the brethren in peace to the Jerusalem church, to those who had sent them out. [But it seemed good to Silas to remain in Syrian Antioch.] But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Syrian Antioch, teaching and preaching with many others also, the word of the Lord.

## ***Second Apostolic Journey (Acts 15:36-41)***

After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and* see how they are.”



Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, the island of Barnabas’s birthplace.

But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

## **QUESTIONS OF ACTS CHAPTER 15**

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE TEXT OF CHAPTER 15

1. What was necessary to be saved according to some men who came down from Judea?

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2. With whom did these men have great dissension and debate?

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3. Who received Paul and Barnabas and some others when they arrived at Jerusalem?

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4. According to Peter, how did God testify to the Gentiles?

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5. How did James, the brother of the Lord, call Peter?

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6. What was James his judgment to write to the Gentiles?

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7. Who were being sent to Syrian Antioch with Paul and Barnabas?

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8. How did the congregation in Syrian Antioch react when they read the letter?

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9. After the sharp disagreement with Paul, who took Barnabas with him and where did he go?

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10. And who did Paul chose and what did he do traveling through Syria and Cilicia?

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## **ACTS CHAPTER 15 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)**

### ***The Council at Jerusalem***

**1**Some men came down from Judea and *began* teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” **2**And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, *the brethren* determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue. **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. **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. **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.”

**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’s Judgment***

**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.

**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.”

**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,  
**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.”

**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.

### ***Second Missionary Journey***

**36**After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are.” **37**Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. **38**But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. **39**And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. **40**But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. **41**And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

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