

The Jerusalem Conference

Acts 15:1-35
50 A.D.

- This was a meeting of the apostles, elders, and church. (Acts 15:4, 12, 22).
- It followed Paul's 1st missionary journey, 45-49 A.D. See Acts 13 & 14.
- It appears to be at the time Paul made his third trip to Jerusalem following his conversion. See Galatians 2. (1) **First Trip** (Acts 9:23-27; Gal. 1:18). (2) **Second Trip** (Acts 11:27-30). (3) **Third Trip** (Acts 15 & Galatians 2).

Paul After His Conversion

- I. Vision and Mission (Acts 9:1-4; 23:13-18).
- II. Paul went to Damascus and stayed with Judas 3 days. (Acts 9:8-11).
- III. Ananias restored his sight and baptized him. (Acts 9:15-18).
- IV. Paul began to preach in Damascus (Acts 9:19-20).
 - A. During his stay in Damascus he went to Arabia and returned to Damascus. (Gal. 1:17).
 - B. Luke did not record the trip in Acts.
- V. After 3 years (Luke "many days") in Damascus and Arabia Paul went to Jerusalem. (Acts 9:23-27; Gal. 1:18). It is assumed this occurred in the late thirties. **First Trip**
- VI. The Grecian Jews plotted to slay Paul so the Lord told him to depart from Jerusalem. (Acts 9:29; 22:17, 18).
- VII. Paul went through the region of Syria to Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia. (Acts 9:30; Gal. 1:21).
- VIII. Barnabas went to seek Paul in Tarsus and brought him to Antioch. (Acts 11:25, 26).
- IX. Paul and Barnabas made a brief trip to Jerusalem to bring alms (Acts 11:27-30) and returned to Antioch. **Second Trip**
 - A. This brief trip is omitted by Paul in Galatians likely because of brevity of trip and his lack of contact with church leadership. (Acts 11:30).
 - B. It was time of persecution. (Acts 12:1-2, 5).
 - C. The date was around 43 or 44 A.D..
 - D. Titus is not mentioned during this visit in Acts.
 1. Titus was a common Latin name.
 2. The Grecized form of the name was "Titos."
 3. He was a fellow laborer of Paul.
 4. There is no mention of Titus in Acts, and information about him must draw from other parts of the New Testament. See 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Titus, and 2 Timothy.
 5. If, as seems probable, the journey mentioned in Galatians 2:1, 3 is the same as that recorded in Acts 15,

then Titus was closely associated with Paul at Antioch and accompanied him and Barnabas from there to Jerusalem. **See Unger Bible Dictionary.**

X. Paul and Barnabas embarked from Antioch on first missionary trip. (Acts 13:1-3). **A.D. 45**

XI. Fourteen years after first trip (or after conversion), Paul, Barnabas and Titus went to Jerusalem. (Gal. 1:18; 2:1; Acts 15:1,2). **Third Trip**

- A. This was about 49 or 50 A.D..
- B. It was prior to Paul's second missionary journey, 50-52 A.D..
- C. The 14 years may involve or exclude the three years after his conversion.
- D. It is possible Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile [Gal. 2:3], served as a test case for the council or the apostles.
- E. If the matter of circumcision had been settled by the time of the famine visit, the council would not have had to convene. (Acts 11 & 15).
- F. In Galatians Paul notes he went to Jerusalem to put before the apostles the gospel he had preached and to check its accuracy. (Gal. 2:2, 6-7).
 - 1. This remark fits better in a context after the 1st missionary journey. Acts 13, 14.
 - 2. It does not fit the context of Paul and Barnabas going to Judea with famine relief from Antioch. (Acts 11:27-30; 12:25).
 - 3. There is no mention of Titus or meetings with apostles on second visit.
- G. Paul and Barnabas met with the reputed pillars of the church [Peter, James, John]. (Gal. 2:9).
 - 1. At the Jerusalem conference, Peter and James were present with the other apostles and elders. (Acts 15:4, 6-7, 13).
 - 2. But in his description of the famine visit, Luke recognizes only the elders. (Acts 11:30).
- H. It is not certain why Paul in his letter to the Galatians does not refer to the decisions of the council.
 - 1. He may have previously delivered these decisions to the church at Galatia. (Acts 16:4).

ACT 16:4 Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees, which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.

ACT 16:5 So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

ACT 16:6 And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;

- 2. In Galatians Paul is affirming his knowledge was not dependent on the apostles.

GAL 1:16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

GAL 1:17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

GAL 1:18 Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.

GAL 1:19 But I did not see any other of the apostles except James, the Lord's brother.

I. It is likely Paul and Barnabas met privately with Peter, James, and John during the third trip to Jerusalem.

J. This means Peter was very hypocritical in his withdrawing from eating with Gentiles. (Gal. 2:11-14).

GAL 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

GAL 2:12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

GAL 2:13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

GAL 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

- The words “when Cephas came to Antioch” seem to refer to a time after the Jerusalem conference.
- It seems Peter, James, Barnabas and “the rest of Jews” all sinned.

Notes:

1. Some scholars place Paul’s conversion in about 32-34 A.D.
 - a. Some make the 3 years and 14 years concurrent.
 - b. This would make the visit in Galatians 2 about 46 or 47 A.D.. This appear to be too early.
 - c. Some would associate this with the famine visit - second Jerusalem visit. (Acts 11:27-30). Approximately 43 or 44 A.D.
2. Other scholars place Paul’s conversion in about 32-34 A.D., but they make the two visits successive.
 - a. This would make Galatians 2 about 49 or 50 A.D..
 - b. They would associate this visit with Acts 15 and the Jerusalem conference.
3. Other scholars place Paul’s conversion in about 36 A.D..
 - a. They make the two visits concurrent.
 - b. They would associate this visit with Acts 15.

Galatians 2 and Acts 15

1. Paul and Barnabas attend the council together. (Acts 15:2; Gal. 2:1).
2. They travel from Syria (Acts 14:26-28; Gal. 1:21) to Jerusalem (Acts 15:2-4; Gal. 1:21). They had made a previous trip to Jerusalem, but had returned. (Acts 11:27-30; 12:25).
3. They are accompanied by others. (Acts 15:2; Gal. 2:1).
 - a. Acts does not mention Titus at all by name.
 - b. Galatians does.
4. Prominent parts are taken by Peter (Acts 15:7-11, 14; Gal. 2:7-9) and James (Acts 15:13-21; Gal. 2:9).
5. Paul report on his mission to Gentiles and defends it. (Acts 15:4, 12; Gal. 2:2).
6. Much discussion ensues. (Acts 15:6, 7; Gal. 2:6, 7).
7. Finally the council works out a compromise. (Acts 15:13-29, Gal. 2:7-9, 10).
8. Paul and Barnabas are permitted to continue their work. (Acts 15:22-29; Gal. 2:7-9).

9. Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch. (Acts 15:30; Gal. 2:11-13).

The Question Of Circumcision Raised

Acts 15:1-5

ACT 15:1 And some men came down from Judea and {began} teaching the brethren [at Antioch of Syria], "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

1. These had not been sent by James. (Acts 15:24), but probably were from the believing Pharisees. (Acts 15:5).
2. "Some men" were likely Jewish Christians who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. (Acts 15:5).
3. They had come without the authority of the apostles.
4. **They were saying one must first become a Jewish proselyte and then a Christian.**
5. "Brethren" - Acts 15:3, 22, 32; Acts 15:2.

A Great Dissension And Debate

Antiochean Church

ACT 15:2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great [sharp] dissension and debate with them, {the brethren} determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem [from Antioch of Syria] to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

1. Titus may have been included in the words "certain others." (Gal. 2:1).
2. He is never mentioned by name in Acts.
3. He is mention in 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Titus, and 2 Timothy.

Paul And Barnabas Visited The Churches Of Phoenicia And Samaria On The Way To Jerusalem

Acts 15:3

ACT 15:3 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia [modern Lebanon] and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren [brothers].

1. They declared "the conversion of the Gentiles."
2. The believers rejoiced, and did not object to the success Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles.
3. The brethren of those places were themselves planted by Hellenists. (Acts 8:5ff. 11:9).

Arrival At Jerusalem

Acts 15:4

First Meeting

ACT 15:4 And when they [15:2] arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the [eleven] apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

1. Paul and Barnabas and "certain others" welcomed. (Acts 15:2).
2. God is given the credit for the conversion of the Gentiles. (1 Cor. 3:6).

3. Peter, James, and John were present in Jerusalem. (Gal. 2:9).

Note: James the son of Zebedee had been killed by Herod. (Acts 12:1,2).

ACT 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king laid hands on some who belonged to the church, in order to mistreat them.

ACT 12:2 And he had James the brother of John put to death with a sword.

- James was the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom, being slain with a sword at the command of Herod (Acts 12:2), A.D. 44.

Affirmation Of Believing Pharisees

Acts 15:5

ACT 15:5 But certain ones of the sect [party] of the Pharisees who had believed [in Christ], stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

1. Some Pharisees had accepted Christ. Some priest had accepted Him. (Acts 6:7).

ACT 6:7 And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

2. The believing Pharisees affirmed that one must be circumcised and obey the law of Moses to be saved.

3. Acts 15:1 - "Some men came down" - These probably sent by these believing Pharisees.

4. Before his conversion Paul belonged to the party of the Pharisees. (Acts 23:16; 26:5; Phil. 3:5).

Peter's Speech At The Council

Acts 15:6-11

Appears To Be Another (a second) Meeting

Acts 15:6

- First meeting. (Acts 15:4,5).
- This second meeting was not for the purpose of bringing about agreement among the apostles (Acts 15:4), but for the purpose of bringing churches in agreement with themselves.

ACT 15:6 And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter [question]. See Acts 15:5.

1. Paul and Barnabas were present. (Acts 15:12).

2. Barnabas is call an apostle, but not one of the twelve.

ACT 14:14 But **when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul**, heard of it, they tore their robes and rushed out into the crowd, crying out

3. "All the multitude" [whole assembly] were present. (Acts 15:12).

Peter's Speech To The Apostles And Elders

God Saved Gentiles Apart From Mosaical Law

ACT 15:7 And after there had been much debate [discussion] Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren [brothers], you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth [lips] the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. Acts 10:1-48

ACT 15:8 "And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them [the Gentiles, Cornelius, friends, relatives], giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us;

1. Acts 10:43-48.

ACT 10:43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

ACT 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

ACT 10:45 And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also.

ACT 10:46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,

ACT 10:47 "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?"

ACT 10:48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

2. Acts 1:5, 8; 2:1-4

No Distinction

ACT 15:9 and He made no distinction between us [Jews] and them [Gentiles], cleansing their hearts by faith.

1. Acts 10:34, 35.
2. "cleansing their hearts by faith" - All men are saved by faith. (Jn.3:16, 34; Rom. 1:16).

ACT 15:10 "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?"

1. No one was able to keep the law of Moses.
2. By it no flesh was justified. (Gal. 3:11)

GAL 3:11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith."

Jews And Gentiles Saved By Grace

ACT 15:11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."

1. All men are saved by grace. (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:5, 8-9; Tit. 2:11).
2. This is last appearance of Peter in the book of Acts.
3. Paul becomes the principal character in the rest of the book.

Barnabas And Paul's Report

Acts 15:12

ACT 15:12 And all the multitude [whole assembly] 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.

1. The argument seems to be that God would not have blessed their preaching with confirming miracles had they not been preaching a full gospel.

2. They were evidently very persuasive.
3. **It is so great to hear of good news. We need to report it and spread it.**

The Speech Of James, The Lord's Brother

Acts 15:13-21

1. This James is James the Lord's brother. (Gal. 1:19).
2. He was an apostle and a pillar in the church. (Gal. 2:9).

GAL 2:9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we might go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised.

Introduction Of Speech

Acts 15:13,14

ACT 15:13 And after they had stopped [finished] speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren [brothers], listen to me.

1. James was a leader in early church.
2. This was earlier manifested before the Jerusalem conference.

ACT 12:17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, "Report these things to James and the brethren." And he departed and went to another place.

James Agree With Peter

ACT 15:14 "Simeon [Peter] has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name [Himself].

Words Of The Prophets

Acts 15:15-18

ACT 15:15 "And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,

**Amos 9:11-12 - Septuagint comes close to this quotation.
Amos - 8th century prophet of Israel**

- «A´MOS» (a_´mos; "burden").. One of the twelve minor prophets and a native of Tekoa, a town about six miles S of Bethlehem. He belonged to the shepherds there and was not trained in any school of the prophets. Yet, without dedicating himself to the calling of a prophet, he was called by the Lord to prophesy concerning Israel in the reigns of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam, king of Israel, c. 786-746 B.C., two years before the earthquake (AMO 1:1), about 763 B.C.
- The exact date of his appearing, or the length of his ministry, cannot be given. The two kingdoms were at the summit of their prosperity. Idleness, luxury, and oppression were general, and idolatry prevalent. It was at such a time as this that the plain shepherd of Tekoa was sent into Israel and prophesied at Bethel.
- This is almost a solitary instance of a prophet's being sent from Judah into Israel and, doubtless, attracted considerable attention. His prophetic utterances were directed against Judah as well as Israel, and closed with promises of divine mercy and returning favor to the chosen race.
- He was charged with a conspiracy against Jeroboam, the king, and threatened by Amaziah, the high priest of Bethel. After fulfilling his mission he probably returned to Judah. The time and manner of his death are

unknown. **Unger's Bible Dictionary.**

ACT 15:16 '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,

1. "The tent of David" is a prophetic reference to the temple of the Lord to which all nations go to worship God. (Isa. 2:2-4).
2. The prophets predicted that both Jews and Gentiles would worship God together.
3. Amos predicted the "tent" or "temple" in Jerusalem would be destroyed.

ACT 15:17 In order that the rest [remnant] of mankind [the Gentiles] may seek the Lord, And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,'

ACT 15:18 Says the Lord, who makes these things known from of old.

1. James is supporting Peter's report that God makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles in regard to salvation.
2. He insists this was made known by God long ago.

Inspired Stipulations (Acts 15:25, 28).
Acts 15:19-21

ACT 15:19 "Therefore it is my [inspired] judgment [Acts 15:28] that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles,

1. They should rejoice that Gentiles are turning to God. (Acts 14:15; 26:20).
2. Gentile conversions were common and a time for rejoicing rather than discouraging them by putting an unnecessary yoke or burden on them.

Four Things Gentiles Should Abstain From
Acts 15:20

ACT 15:20 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. Gen. 9:4

1. They must "abstain from things contaminated by idols."
 - a. Paul later permitted the eating of meat offered to idols under some conditions.
 - b. It was forbidden under some conditions. (1 Cor. 8:8,9,13; 10:25, 26,32,33).
2. They must abstain "from fornication." (1 Cor. 6:9, 18; Gal. 5:19).
3. They must abstain from things "strangled."
 - a. "Strangled" comes from the Greek "pniktou" and means "without shedding the blood."
 - b. Animals strangled had the blood left in the body, and in eating flesh one would eat the blood.
4. They must abstain "from blood." (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10, 13, 14).
 - a. Blood was the life and was for atonement.

- b. It has never been for consumption.

GEN 9:4 "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.

LEV 3:17 'It is a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall not eat any fat or any blood.' "

LEV 7:26 'And you are not to eat any blood, either of bird or animal, in any of your dwellings.

LEV 17:10 And any man from the house of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

LEV 17:13 "So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth.

LEV 17:14 "For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.'

- a. See Acts 21:25

ACT 21:25 "But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication."

- b. The forbidding of idolatrous worship and fornication are later incorporated into Paul's teachings; the other two prohibitions are not mentioned after this "what is strangled" and "blood"
- c. There is no evidence they have been rescinded.

ACT 15:21 "For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

1. The Law was given in about 1446 A.D. to Moses on Mt. Sinai.

2. Large numbers of Jews still remained in Judaism.

3. They still met in the synagogues and respected the law of Moses.

4. Today we are under a new and better covenant. (Heb. 8:1-13; 9:15-17).

- **Note:** In comparison with the freedom won this "burden" is light and not to be regarded as a compromise in spite of the arguments of Lightfoot and Ramsay.
- It was such a concession as any converted Gentile would be glad to make even if "things strangled" be included. This "necessity" was not a matter of salvation but only for fellowship between Jews and Gentiles. The Judaizers made the law of Moses essential to salvation (#15:16). {It shall be well with you} (\(\epsilon\upsilon\ \text{praxete}\)). Ye shall fare well. A classical idiom used here effectively.
- The peace and concord in the fellowship of Jews and Gentiles will justify any slight concession on the part of the Gentiles.
- This letter is not laid down as a law, but it is the judgment of the Jerusalem Christians for the guidance of the Gentiles (#16:4) and it had afine effect at once (#15:30-35). **RWP**

1. This may be possible, but there is no evidence that this was a mere concession.

2. This speculation is not based on scripture.

3. There is no evidence that this was a mere suggestion to the Gentiles, or that it was later to be rescinded.

The Letter Of Apostolic Decrees

Acts 15:22-29

ACT 15:22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church [assembly], to choose men from among them to send to Antioch [of Syria] with Paul and Barnabas-- Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren [brothers],

1. "It seems good" (Acts 15:22, 25, 28).
2. The reason for the sending of the messengers is stated in verse 27.
3. There would be no mistaking the message which came by both trusted messengers and letter.
4. They were responsible for reporting orally the proceedings of the council and explaining the wording of the letter.

Letter To The Gentiles In The Church In Antioch Of Syria

ACT 15:23 and they sent this letter by them, "The apostles and the brethren [brothers] who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch [of Syria] and [in the provinces of] Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.

1. "This letter" is called "decrees" in Acts 16:4 and was delivered by Paul and Silas to the churches of southern Galatia.

«CILICIA» (si-lish-a). The southeasterly province of Asia Minor along the Mediterranean Sea, with Tarsus, the birthplace of Paul, its capital. A Roman province, 67 B.C. The Jews of Cilicia had a synagogue at Jerusalem (ACT 6:9). Paul learned his trade of tent making here, and visited it soon after his conversion (GAL 1:21; ACT 9:30). It was famous for its goats' hair. Cicero was once consul of it. Its climate was pleasant and attracted Greek residents (ACT 15:41; 21:39).

2. Although many Jewish Christians were member of the Antiochean church, the senders addressed to Gentile brothers.

ACT 15:24 "Since we [15:22] have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you [Gentiles] with {their} words, unsettling your souls,

1. Those who had disturbed them had no apostolic authority.
2. They had likely come from the believing Pharisees. (Acts 15:5).
3. They had troubled, upset their "souls."
 - a. They were stressed out spiritually because of the burdens being imposed on them.
 - b. They were likely stressed because of the strife and division.

ACT 15:25 it seemed good to us [Acts 15:22], having become of one mind, to select men [15:23] to send to you [Gentiles] with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

1. The church has now come to agreement as apostles had done earlier.
2. These at the conference were "of one mind."

ACT 15:26 men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The words "who have risked their lives" describe Barnabas, Paul, Barsabbas, and Silas.
2. These men were willing to put their lives on the line for Christ. See Acts 9:23-25; 14:19; 1 Cor. 15:50.

Judas And Silas Confirm Conclusion Of Conference And Contents Of Letter

ACT 15:27 "Therefore we [15:22] have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report [explain] the same things by word {of mouth}.

1. No further identification is given of these men accompanying the missionaries except that they were "prophets." (Acts 15:32). It is mentioned they were "leading men among the brethren." (Acts 15:22).
2. They could explain anything in written document which might appear to anyone obscure and could report orally the proceedings of the council.
3. It is possible they may have been known to the church at Antioch, but this is not revealed.

The Decision Is From Holy Spirit

ACT 15:28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us [Acts 15:25] to lay upon you [Gentiles] no greater burden than these essentials:

1. The Spirit revealed what the leaders of the church should bind and not bind.
2. Circumcision and the keeping of the Mosaical law were not be bound on Gentiles.
3. "These essentials" are described in 15:29.

ACT 15:29 that you [Gentiles] abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication [sexual immorality]; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.
" Acts 15:22

1. The words "you will do well" are a description of those who avoid the 4 things prohibited here.
2. Abiding by these restrictions (1) pleases God, (2) keeps harmony in church between Jews and Gentiles, (3) and would enable them to remain true to the Lord.

Note: The Sabbath and circumcision were not made essential.

Reception Of The Letters At Antioch Of Syria

Acts 15:30-35

ACT 15:30 So, when they [Paul, Silas, Judas (Barsabbas), Barnabas] were sent away, they went down to Antioch [of Syria]; and having gathered the congregation [assembly] together, they delivered the letter. Acts 15:23

ACT 15:31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

1. This letter made clear what was binding.
2. They had no objections to the four stipulations of the council; although some of them would not have violated their consciences.
3. This likely restored peace and joy to the church. (Acts 15:1,2).
4. It likely ended much stress and confusion created by those who came from the believing Pharisees.

ACT 15:32 And Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren [brothers] with a lengthy message.

1. Brevity is not always best. There are times "a lengthy message" is needed.

2. Judas [Barsabbas]. (Acts 15:22).
3. “Silas” became the travel companion of Paul. (Acts 15:41).
 - a. A prophet (Acts 15:32).
 - b. Among leading men (Acts 15:22).
4. Judas and Silas spoke Greek fluently and were able to address Gentile Christians in that language.
5. They were also “prophets.”

Judas And Silas Spent Time In Antioch

ACT 15:33 And after they [Judas and Silas] had spent time {there}, they were sent away from the brethren [brothers] in peace to those [in Jerusalem] who had sent them out.

ACT 15:34 [But it seemed good to Silas to remain there.]

1. This verse is omitted by p74, N, A, B, P.
2. It is almost certain it was not a part of the original.

Note:

- It is conjectured that because Silas is present in Antioch when Paul begins his 2nd journey that copyists in later centuries added explanatory notes that were at some point in time incorporated into the text.
- One Greek texts reads, “However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.” (NKJV).

ACT 15:35 But Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch [of Syria], teaching and preaching, with many others also, the word of the Lord.

1. “With many others” indicates other teachers were also involved in the teaching at Antioch.
2. “The word of the Lord” was taught.
 - a. Acts 2:42; 5:42
 - b. Acts 20:20, 27.

Closing Observations

1. It is clear that the Law of Moses was not to be bound on the Gentiles.
2. It is clear that the Gentiles were to be accepted into full fellowship by the church by observing the four stipulations of the letter.
3. It is clear that the Holy Spirit controlled the decision that was made.
4. It is clear that even churches with inspired teachers can have conflicts.
5. It is clear that these conflicts can greatly harm the church unless they are resolved.
6. It is clear that good can come out of conflict if the church seeks to prayerfully and scripturally resolve the issues.
7. It is clear that the word of God, not traditions or feelings or the creeds of men, must be used to resolved the issues that arise.

8. It is clear that brotherly love must be exercised, not sarcasm and ridicule.
9. It is clear that brothers and sisters should be made aware of decisions made by leaders and given the opportunity to ask questions or differ if the word of God is used as the authority.
10. It is clear that a church at peace will be more interested and better able to do mission work, especially as we study the work of the Antioch church.

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Acts 15:36-18:23
50-52 A.D.

ACT 15:36 And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren [brothers] in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, {and see} how they are."

1. Paul and Barnabas determine to make a second missionary trip.
2. It was vital that they check on the new Christians and provide the teaching and encouragement needed.

The Beginning of the Second Missionary Tour

Acts 15:36-41

Controversy Over John Mark

ACT 15:37 And Barnabas [Joseph] was desirous of taking John, called Mark, along with them also.

Barnabas

ACT 4:36 And Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means, Son of Encouragement),

ACT 9:27 But Barnabas took hold of him [Saul] and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

ACT 11:22 And the news about them reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas off to Antioch.

ACT 11:30 And this they did, sending it in charge of Barnabas and Saul to the elders.

ACT 12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark.

ACT 13:1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

ACT 13:2 And while they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

John Mark

1. Mark was the son of a certain Mary in Jerusalem and a cousin or relative of Barnabas. (Col. 4:10).
2. John was his Greek name and Mark his Roman name.
 - a. He was called "John" by his Jewish friends.
 - b. He was know as Markos (Mark) in the Gentile world. "Markos" or Marcus was a very common name in the Roman world.
 - c. Luke stresses the double name. (Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37).
3. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first journey. (Acts 12:25; 13:5).

4. Mark had deserted Paul and Barnabas at Perga and returned to Jerusalem. (Acts 13:13).

- a. The reason is not stated, but Paul did not believe he had a good reason.
- b. He had not accompanied them to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe.

6. He is believed to be the author of the gospel of Mark..

- The gospel circulated early among Christians. By the middle of the second century it was included by Tatian in his Diatessaron, or "Harmony of the Four Gospels" (c. A.D. 168). It is quoted by Irenaeus in the last quarter of the second century as being Mark's. Others before him, such as Papias, assert that Mark was both Peter's disciple and interpreter.
- Mark's close association with Peter is corroborated by numerous details of internal evidence, suggesting eyewitness testimony. But Mark evidently used other sources besides Peter. Quite a bit of material reveals Aramaic coloring. Rome is fixed by tradition as the place where the gospel was written by Mark. If so, it must be dated around A.D. 65-68, but if Luke's gospel was written before A.D. 63, Mark must be dated still earlier.

Unger's Bible Dictionary

Paul and John Mark

1. From Paul's letter we know reconciliation took place and Paul even recommended Mark to the church at Colosse. (Col. 4:10). He was with Paul during his 1st imprisonment at Rome. (Col. 4:10; Phile. 34).

COL 4:10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas' cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him);

PHM 1:24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

2. At the end of Paul's life he requests that Mark come to his prison cell in Rome.

- a. He adds that Mark had been helpful to him in his ministry. (2 Tim. 4:11).

2TI 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

- b. He seems to have been with Timothy at Ephesus when Paul wrote to him during his second imprisonment and urged him to bring Mark to Rome (2 Tim. 4:11), 66 A.D..

Note:

- He was with Peter at Babylon and united with Peter in the salutation. (1 Pet. 5:13).
- Peter calls him his son. (1 Pet. 5:13).
- He may have been converted under Peter's ministry or at least had come under the strong influence of Peter.

ACT 15:38 But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in [in Perga in] Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work.

1. John Mark "had deserted them in Pamphylia."

2. The words "had not gone with them to the work" explain the words "who had deserted them."

A Sharp Contention Barnabas And John Mark Sail To Cyprus

ACT 15:39 And there arose such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to [Island of] Cyprus [the home of Barnabas].

1. It appears both were very strong headed.
2. They did not divide the church, but committed themselves to the work of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas (15:39)

1. He later words of appreciation for Barnabas. (1 Cor. 9:6).

1CO 9:6 Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working?

2. He mentions him in Galatians 2:13 in an unfavorable way.

GAL 2:13 And the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

Paul And Silas Traveling Through Syria And Cilicia

ACT 15:40 But Paul chose Silas and departed, being committed by the brethren [brothers] to the grace of the Lord.

1. Paul had become acquainted with Silas at the Jerusalem Council. (Acts 15:22).
2. He had traveled with him to Antioch of Syria.
3. With his ability to preach (Acts 15:32) and his status as a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37), Silas was an excellent choice to accompany Paul on his second missionary journey.

ACT 15:41 And he [Paul] was traveling through [the provinces of] Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

1. It is vital that brothers and sisters be regularly encouraged.
2. This can be done by teaching, fellowship, and good news.

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