**Truth Sowers Life Group**

February 3, 2013

**Who Was the Apostle Paul?**

**The Jerusalem Council**

**Introduction:**

Paul and Barnabus had been ministering in what is now Turkey. Paul was stoned in Lystra but had finished their ministry in Lyconia. They heard that people were beginning to teach that, in order to be saved, you must be circumcised. They were very upset about this and travelled to Jerusalem to take the issue on.

Our key scripture for this study is:

**1 Thess 5:12, 13**

*12And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, 13and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves.*

1. Paul and Barnabus have just finished their First Missionary Journey and have returned to Antioch where it started.
	1. Men from Judea come to Antioch and began to preach that men MUST be circumcised to be saved.
	2. Paul and Barnabus GREATLY opposed them in this teaching.
	3. So the Church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabus to Jerusalem to straighten this matter out.
	4. They met with James, the half brother of Jesus, the pastor at Jerusalem and Peter and Christian Pharisees who believed in circumcision and other believers.

**Acts 15:1-5**

*And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had* ***no small dissension******and dispute*** *with them, they* ***determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.*** *3***Tradition says that Cerinthus was leader of the law-party and strove hard to unite the law and the gospel, and make the salvation promised by the gospel dependent upon the ceremonies of the law.** *So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. 4And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. 5But some of the sect of the* ***Pharisees who believed******At this time, Christianity was still practiced in the Jewish Synagogues and was still just a sect of the Jewish faith*** *rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”*

### The Jerusalem Council James was the half brother of Jesus and he was the pastor of the church at Jerusalem. He was the head of the meeting that took place.

*6Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. 7And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: “Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago* ***About 10 to 12 Years before this that the gospel was taken to the Gentiles*** *God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us,****The vision of the sheet with the unclean birds and the house of Cornelius in Acts 10.*** *9and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.****The Gentiles at Cornelius’ house heard the Word of the Lord and were saved and then they were baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues just like the Jewish believers. There was no difference. This was the first time the gospel had been taken to Gentiles.***  *10Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a* ***yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?******None of us can live by the Law. It makes our lives so much easier when we realize that we cannot do it without Jesus Christ. Do we continue in sin so that Grace may abound? NO! But we Can’t do it alone.*** *11But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ[*[*a*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27454a)*] we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”*

*12Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. 13And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, “Men and brethren, listen to me: 14Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:*

*~~16~~~~‘After this I will return
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;
I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will set it up;~~~~17~~~~So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,
Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,
Says the Lord who does all these things.’~~~~[~~*[*~~b~~*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27460b)*~~]~~*

*~~18~~~~“Known to God from eternity are all His works.~~~~[~~*[*~~c~~*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27461c)*~~]~~ 19Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, 20but that we write to them to* ***abstain from things polluted by idols****,* ***from sexual immorality****,[*[*d*](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27463d)*]* ***from things strangled****, and* ***from blood.*** *21For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”*

### The Jerusalem Decree

*22Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely,* ***Judas who was also named Barsabas,[[e](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15&version=NKJV" \l "fen-NKJV-27465e" \o "See footnote e)] and Silas, leading men among the brethren.***

*23They wrote this letter by them:*

*The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,*

*To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:*

***Greetings.***

***24Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, “You must be circumcised and keep the law”[***[***f***](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27467f)***] —to whom we gave no such commandment— 25it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. 28For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.[[g](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15&version=NKJV" \l "fen-NKJV-27472g" \o "See footnote g)] If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.***

***Farewell.***

**There was even a time that Peter and Barnabus along with the Galatians fell for Circumcision and works. The whole book of Galatians is written about works versus grace.**

**Galatians 2:11-21**

11But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. 12When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn’t eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. 13As a result, other Jewish Christians followed Peter’s hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

**14When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, “Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?**

**15“You and I are Jews by birth, not ‘sinners’ like the Gentiles. 16Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.”[**[**d**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%202&version=NLT#fen-NLT-29058d)**]**

**17But suppose we seek to be made right with God through faith in Christ and then we are found guilty because we have abandoned the law. Would that mean Christ has led us into sin? Absolutely not! 18Rather, I am a sinner if I rebuild the old system of law I already tore down. 19For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God. 20My old self has been crucified with Christ.[[e](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%202&version=NLT" \l "fen-NLT-29062e" \o "See footnote e)] It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21I do not treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die.**

### Continuing Ministry in Syria

30So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. 31When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. 32**Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren** with many words. 33And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.[[h](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15&version=NKJV" \l "fen-NKJV-27476h" \o "See footnote h)]

34However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.[[i](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+15&version=NKJV" \l "fen-NKJV-27477i" \o "See footnote i)] 35Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

### Division over John Mark

36Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing.” 37Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 38But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39**Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another**. **I really don’t think that Paul and Barnabus left in anger. Two believers can have a sharp disagreement but still walk in love. Barnabus disappears to history from this moment on. Later on we see Paul comment about John Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11**

*Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.*

And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; 40but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. 41And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

###  Acts 16

New King James Version (NKJV)

### Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

16 Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, *the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. 2He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, **Many think that Paul circumcised Timothy because the Jews would not have listened to him if he would not have been circumcised. Timothy may have scribed Galatians and Hebrews for Paul.** for they all knew that his father was Greek. 4And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. 5So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

### The Macedonian Call

6Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were **forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.** 7After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, **but the Spirit[**[**a**](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+16&version=NKJV#fen-NKJV-27491a)**] did not permit them**. 8**Most of the time, God leads us by RED LIGHTS!!!** So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” 10Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

### Lydia Baptized at Philippi

11Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* came to Neapolis, 12and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. 13And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there.* 14Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us.* She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us,* saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” So she persuaded us.

**Paul's Second Missionary Journey**

1. From Antioch, through Syria and Cilicia to Derbe, Lycaonia ([Acts 15:41](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+15%3A41) -- [Acts 16:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A1))

2. Lystra, Lycaonia ([Acts 16:1](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A1))

3. Iconium, Lycaonia ([Acts 16:2-4](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A2-4))

4. Through Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia to Troas ([Acts 16:6-8](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A6-8))

5. Across the Aegean Sea to Samothracia and Neapolis ([Acts 16:11](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A11))

6. Philippi, Macedonia ([Acts 16:12-40](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+16%3A12-40))

7. Through Amphipolis, Apollonia, to Thessalonica, Macedonia ([Acts 17:1-9](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+17%3A1-9))

8. Berea, Macedonia ([Acts 17:10-14](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+17%3A10-14))

9. Athens, Greece ([Acts 17:15-34](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+17%3A15-34))

10. Corinth, Greece ([Acts 18:1-17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+18%3A1-17))

11. Cenchrea, Greece ([Acts 18:18](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+18%3A18))

12. Back across the Aegean Sea to Ephesus, Asia Minor ([Acts 18:19-21](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+18%3A19-21))

13. Caesarea, Samaria ([Acts 18:21-22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+18%3A21-22))

14. Jerusalem ([Acts 18:22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+18%3A22))

15. Back to Antioch, Syria ([Acts 18:22](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=Ac+18%3A22))