

Acts 15

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Review of Acts 15

Paul and Barnabas were describing their successful missionary journey when some men came down from Jerusalem demanding the Gentile converts be circumcised and live Kosher

After much discussion the Church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to discuss this matter with the Apostles and elders

On their way through Phoenicia and Samaria they related their success in attracting many Gentiles to the Church

They were well received by the Jerusalem Church until members of the party of the Pharisees challenged them again

Review of Acts 15 (Cont)

During the heated debate Peter again presents his beliefs as related to the conversion of Cornelius

Paul and Barnabas then present their successes among the Gentiles whom they had baptized

The elderly James, Bishop of Jerusalem:

- Agrees with Peter, Paul and Barnabas

- Reminds the council that the coming of the Gentiles into the kingdom was prophesied by many prophets

- Quotes from the Prophet Amos

Review of Acts 15 (Cont)

*James provided the solution by quoting from the “Holiness Code” from **Leviticus** stating that the Gentiles could be baptized into the Church so long as they abstained from:*

What has been sacrificed to idols

Blood

What has been strangled

Pornea

The council agreed

Paul, Barnabas Judas (called Barsabbas), and Silas were instructed to take a letter containing this decision and read it to the Church in Antioch

St. Barnabas

Also called Joseph

Styled an Apostle in Holy Scripture and, like Paul, is ranked with the Twelve, though not one of them

May have been one of the 70 disciples of Jesus or may have converted to Christianity shortly after Pentecost (29 or 30 A.D.)

Born of Jewish parents in the Island of Cyprus at about the beginning of the Christian Era

St. Barnabas (Cont)

A Levite

Appears to have settled in Jerusalem where his relatives, the family of Mark the Evangelist, had their home

Immediately sold his property and devoted the proceeds to the Church

A successful preacher and placed among the prophets and doctors of Antioch who surnamed him Barnabas meaning “son of exhortation”

Judas (called Barsabbas)

Judas was a leader in the Jerusalem church and chosen to deliver the decree of the Council to Antioch

Joseph (Barsabbas also known as Justus) was nearly chosen to replace Judas Iscariot as one of the 12 Apostles but the lot fell to Matthias

The name Barsabbas can be seen as a festal name, given to someone who was born of the Sabbath

Others believe that Joseph and Judas were brothers and their father was called “Sabba”

Some speculate that they were given that last name by Jesus or the apostles (like James and John called *Boanerges*)

Silas

Traditionally assumed to be the Silvanus mentioned in four epistles

May have been one of the 70 disciples of Jesus

Silas and Timothy are listed as coauthors of the two letters to the Thessalonians

Second Corinthians mentions him as having preached with Paul and Timothy to the church in Corinth

Peter's first epistles lists him as a faithful brother

Paul selects him to go on his Second Missionary Journey

Acts 15 (Cont)

Acts 15:36 *“And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Come, let us return and visit the brethren in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.’”*

The plan is to resume their mission of spreading the “gospel” to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8)

Paul proposes that they begin by checking on the churches that they had established in Asia-Minor

Acts 15 (Cont)

Acts 15:37-38 *“And Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.”*

Barnabas wants John Mark to return to the mission

Remember that John Mark had bailed out of the 1st journey

Why did Barnabas want to do this?

Because John Mark was his cousin and they were both from Cyprus

Paul appears not to have forgiven John Mark for leaving the earlier mission and would not allow him to return on this one

Acts 15 (Cont)

Acts 15:39-41 *“And there arose a sharp contention, so that they separated from each other; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”*

Because Paul does not agree, they separate

Paul takes Silas with him and they will be joined by Timothy on the second missionary journey

Barnabas takes John Mark with him to Cyprus

Remember that they went to Cyprus first when Paul and Barnabas were together and John Mark was with them

Paul and Silas head north into Asia-Minor

Early Heresies

Judaizers – stated that one had to be a Jew to be a Christian

Gnostics – secret knowledge

Dualism – two gods: one good, one bad

Montanism – end of the world was imminent

Manicheism – two equal gods run everything

Arianism – Jesus was not divine

Nestorianism – Mary was not the mother of God

Apollinarianism – Jesus had an incomplete human nature

Early Councils

Jerusalem – 50 A.D. - *Gentiles can become Christians without becoming Jews – rejected Judaizers*

Nicaea – 325 A.D. - *Christ is the same as God – rejected Arianism*

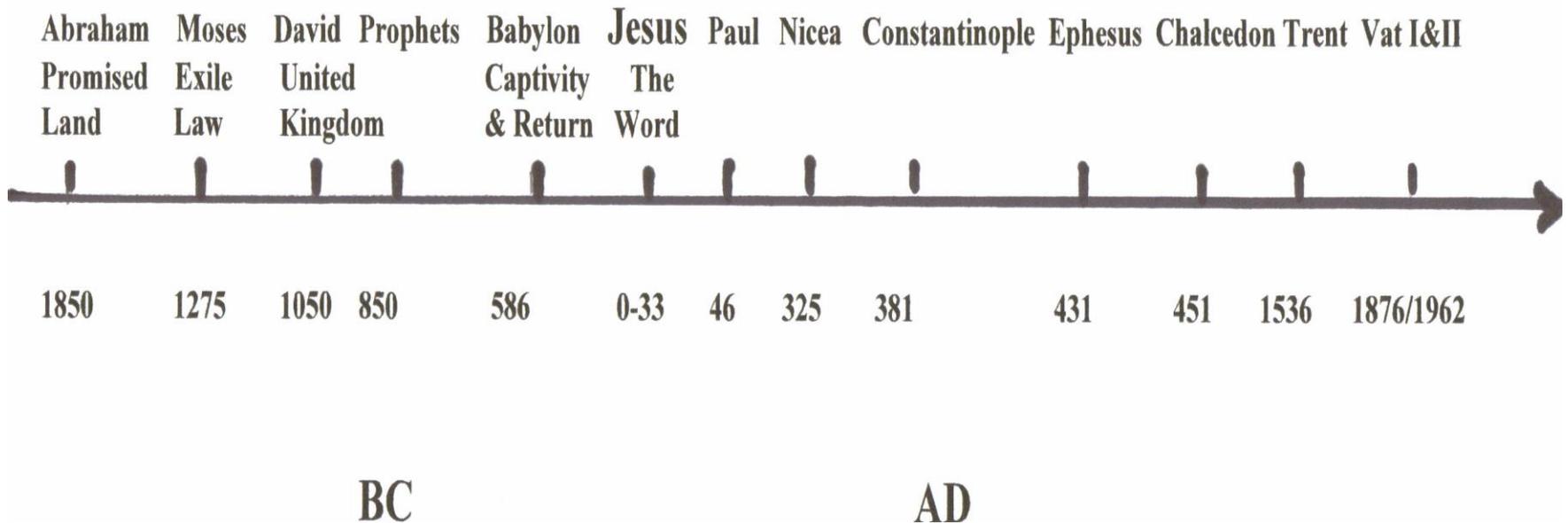
Constantinople – 381 A.D. – *HS is the same as God and Jesus – rejected revised Arianism*

Ephesus – 431 A.D. – *Blessed Mother was the Mother of God – rejected Nestorianism*

Chalcedon – 451 A.D. – *Christ possessed two natures: human and divine – rejected Apollinarianism*

God's Divine Plan

God's Divine Plan of Salvation History – (*Economia*)



Two Creeds summarizing the tenants of the Faith

Apostles – faith of the Church expressed privately – Attributed to the 12 Apostles

Nicene/Constantinople – faith of the Church expressed publicly – resulting for the decisions of the early councils

Acts 15 (Cont)

Next we will turn to **Acts 16** and the beginning of Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Acts 16

Early Christian Time Line (Cont)

41-44 Herod Agrippa I reigns

42 Paul in Antioch

44 Famine in Jerusalem

45-49 Paul's 1st missionary journey

Spring of 45 they sail for Cyprus

Fall of 45 they sail for Asia Minor and arrive at Antioch of Pisidia

Fall of 46 they arrive at Iconian

They may have remained 1 year in Derbe before returning to Antioch in Syria

48 was their triumphal journey to Jerusalem

49 was the Council of Jerusalem

50 Council of Jerusalem

*49-52 Paul's 2nd missionary journey

Acts 16

Acts 16:1 *“And he came also to the Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek.”*

This time Paul and Silas go from *Antioch in Syria*, through his hometown of *Tarsus*, and on to *Derbe* which was the last place where he established a church on this 1st missionary journey, via the fastest route through the *Cilician Gates*

Then they proceed to *Lystra* where they collect Timothy

Again, disciple means a Christian

Paul decides to take Timothy with him on the rest of his second journey

St Timothy

Born at *Lystra, Lycaenia*

Son of a Greek father and *Eunice*, a converted Jewess

Joined Paul when he preached at *Lystra* on his second missionary journey

- A brethren, meaning a full-fledged Christian

- A speaker, teacher and preacher of the gospel

- Well-educated in the scriptures of Israel from his childhood

- Not circumcised

Replaced Barnabas and became Paul's close friend and confidant

St Timothy (Cont)

Was called to be circumcised by Paul

Remained in Berea after Paul was forced out by the Jews

Was later sent to Thessalonica to report on the conditions of the Christians there which led to Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians after he joined Paul at Corinth

Acts 16 (Cont)

Acts 16: 3 *“Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those places, for they all know that his father was a Greek.”*

This is often a confusing passage for most people

Why does Paul decide to circumcise Timothy?

It was not to “save him”

But it was to make him acceptable to the Jews in those areas who knew that his father was a Greek

Otherwise he would not have been permitted to:

Enter into their synagogues with Paul

Eat in the homes of the synagogue ruler’s house

Eat Kosher with them

Acts 16 (Cont)

He would have been considered “unclean” and if he interacted with the Jews without circumcision his presence would have made their synagogue and their entire household “unclean”

Thus his circumcision was so that Timothy could be all things to all men and not to “save him”

But remember, Paul had not required *Titus* who was from Gentile parents and was a Gentile to be circumcised!

Acts 16 (Cont)

Acts 16: 4-5 *“As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem. So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily”*

You should highlight this passage

The purpose of Paul's second missionary journey was to:

Go and check on the churches he established in Asia-Minor

Deliver a copy of the letter from the Council to each church

Imagine that after he arrives at *Derbe* they make a handwritten copy of the letter and he explains what happened at the Council

Acts 16 (Cont)

He would tell them that if anyone shows up in the future and tells them that they must be circumcised and practice the Kosher they were to show them this letter from the Council

Think of how relieved the Gentiles were with this information

This was great news for them

After *Derbe* Paul and Timothy go on the *Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia*

This will become very important for Paul's 3rd journey

Also highlight the fact that Paul had risked his life in establishing these churches during the four years of his 1st journey

Acts 16 (Cont)

According to this message all they had to do was comply with the four provisions of the “Holiness Code” which would result in keeping the peace in the church

This will work fine as long as Moses is read in the synagogue as a final part of the declaration of the Council (**Acts 15:21**)

The reason that we are not required to live by these laws today is that because we Christians are no longer in the synagogues as the Christians were at that time

As a result of Paul delivering this message there was peace and the faith was strengthened and Christians increased in number

Acts 16 (Cont)

Acts 16:5 *“So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.”*

This chapter tells a great deal about how the councils will function in the future of the Church

Here we see that the Church was growing stronger in faith as it grew in numbers

Acts 16 (Cont)

Acts 16:6 “And they went through the region of *Phrygia* and *Galatia*, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.”

As we saw with Phillip’s ministry here we see the guidance of the Holy Spirit influencing what is going on

Looking at the map we see *Phrygia* in the South and *Galatia* in the North

They went through Phrygia to get to the Churches in *Galatia* which are located at *Antioch of Pisidia*, *Lystra*, *Iconium* and *Derbe*

These will be the churches Paul will write to in his letters to the *Galatians*

It is important to understand this in order to understand the content of his letters to the *Galatians*

They could have headed north from there but they did not

Acts 16 (Cont)

Acts 16:7-10 *“And when **they** had come opposite **Mysia**, **they** attempted to go into **Bithynia**, but the **Spirit of Jesus** did not allow them; so, passing by **Mysia**, **they** went down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of **Macedonia** was standing beseeching him and saying “Come over to Macedonia and help us. And when he had seen the vision, immediately **we** sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God has called us to preach the gospel to them.”*

Highlight the word “they”

This is the only time we see “the Spirit of Jesus” mentioned in Acts
Macedonia is on the other side of the Aegean Sea – Greece

This is one of those “we” passages of which there are many in Acts

Acts 16 (Cont)

This is the first of the “we” statements and it sounds like Luke has joined the missionary group

It seems as though Luke will be a companion of Paul’s from here on out

Paul will mention Luke by name in his letters as well as refer to him as his “faithful companion”

Luke will be considered as one of Paul’s favorite disciples if not his greatest disciple

In many ways you could call Luke’s gospel the gospel of Paul as it is heavily influenced by their relationship

For the first time in history a Christian missionary enters Europe

Acts 16 (Cont)

Acts 16:11-12 *“Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is the leading city of the district of Macedonia, and a **Roman colony.**”*

Philippi was a major Roman city founded by retired Roman Army veterans

All those born in a “Roman Colony” were by birth Roman citizens

The Romans gave this distinction to certain powerful, cosmopolitan, and influential cities which they considered to be great cities because the people paid their taxes and were very wealthy

The Roman empire wanted to keep these people happy because if they didn't the people of a city like Philippi could lead a rebellion within that city or within the entire region

Acts 16 (Cont)

By giving the people of these cities Roman citizenship the Empire could perceive them as being Roman cities

This gave the people of a city like *Philippi* great power and influence within the Empire

The City of *Tarsus* was also a Roman colony

Acts 16 (Cont)

Acts 16:12-13 *“We remained in this city some days; and on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the woman who had come together.”*

Again they waited until the Sabbath to meet the Jews

In this case there was not a synagogue in the city because

It was a Roman city

There were not enough Jewish men living in the city to warrant the building of a Synagogue (There had to be at least 10 Jewish men in the community to warrant a synagogue)

Paul asked around the marketplace and found that a group of Jewish women met on the Sabbath at the riverside

They would go there and speak the gospel to the gathered women

Acts 16 (Cont)

Acts 16:14-15 *“One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God.” The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul. And when she was baptize, **with her household,...**”*

Lydia was a worshiper of God, an obvious believer but we don't know her exact status

She may have been a God-fearer or perhaps only a Gentile

Most likely she was a widow

She was from Thyatira in Asia Minor

Acts 16 (Cont)

She was a worshiper of God, an obvious believer but we don't know her exact status

She may have been a God-fearer or perhaps only a Gentile

Most likely she was a widow

She was from Thyatira in Asia Minor

She was a dealer in purple cloth which was made with a dye produced from the shells of murex snails that live in the Mediterranean

Clothing made with this dye was very expensive as it grew darker with age rather than fading

It was usually associated with royalty

She and her entire household were baptized

Acts 16 (Cont)

Acts 16:15-18 *“she besought us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ And she prevailed upon us. As we were going to the place of prayer, we were **met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination** and brought her owners much gain by soothsaying.... And it came out that very hour.”*

We are not sure why Paul said this

This fortune-telling girl is a source of handsome profit to her owners

Paul recognizes this as a demonic spirit

If so, why is the demon trying to befriend Paul when he knows that one does not mess with, make friends with or partner with such a spirit?