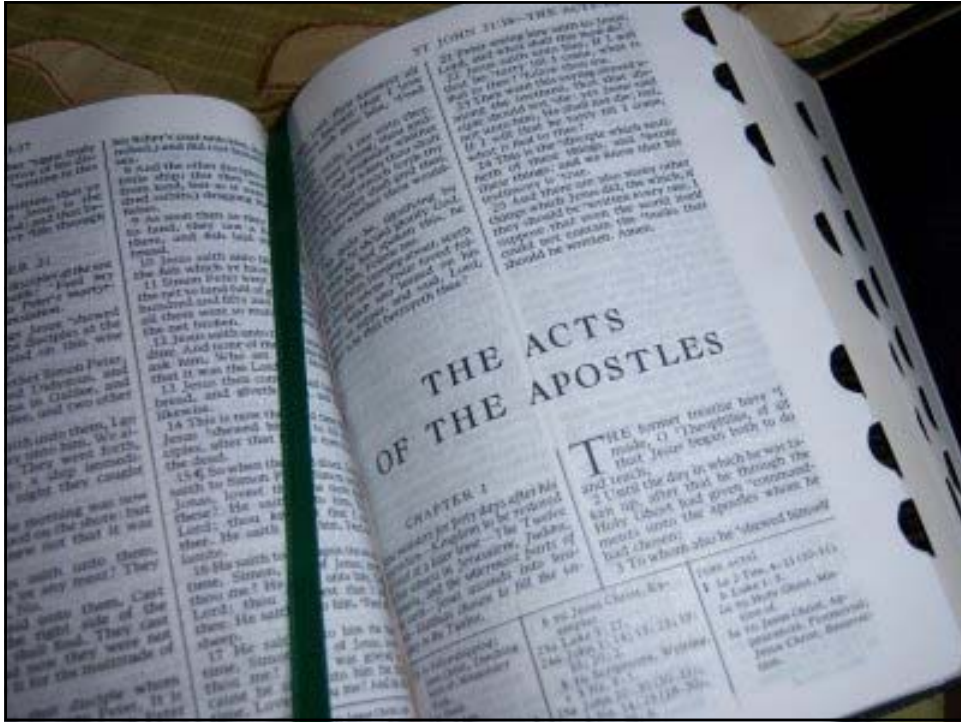




8

WHAT THE  
BIBLE  
Is ABOUT

**Book of Acts**  
Part 6 – Chap. 13-15



KEY THEME

# Jesus offers salvation to everyone.

Acts

## KEY VERSE

<sup>7</sup> And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

<sup>8</sup> But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Acts 1:8

### The book of Acts in two acts

#### THE MINISTRY OF PETER (Chapters 1-12)

- Peter and the Jews, Acts 1—7
- Peter and the Samaritans, Acts 8
- The conversion of Paul, Acts 9
- Peter and the Gentiles, Acts 10—11
- Peter’s arrest and deliverance, Acts 12

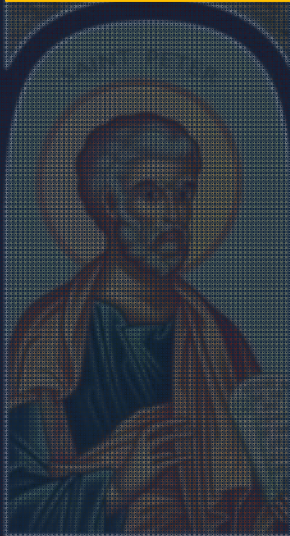
#### THE MINISTRY OF PAUL (Chapter 13-28)

- Paul’s first missionary journey, Acts 13—14
- The Council of Jerusalem, Acts 15
- Paul’s second missionary journey, 16:1—18:22
- Paul’s third missionary journey, 18:23—21:25
- Paul’s arrest and trial in Caesarea, 21:26—26:31
- Paul’s voyage to Rome, Acts 27-28

## Seven Progress Reports

1. ~~“And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).~~
2. ~~“So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly” (Acts 6:7).~~
3. ~~“Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria...was strengthened; and [it was] encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord” (Acts 9:31).~~
4. ~~“But the Word of God continued to increase and spread” (Acts 12:24).~~
5. “So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers” (Acts 16:5).
6. “In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (Acts 19:20).
7. “Paul...welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:30-31).

*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and **unto the uttermost part of the earth.***  
Acts 1:8



## The Acts of Paul 13-28







Giovanni Paolo Pannini, Sermon of St. Paul, 1744

## Paul

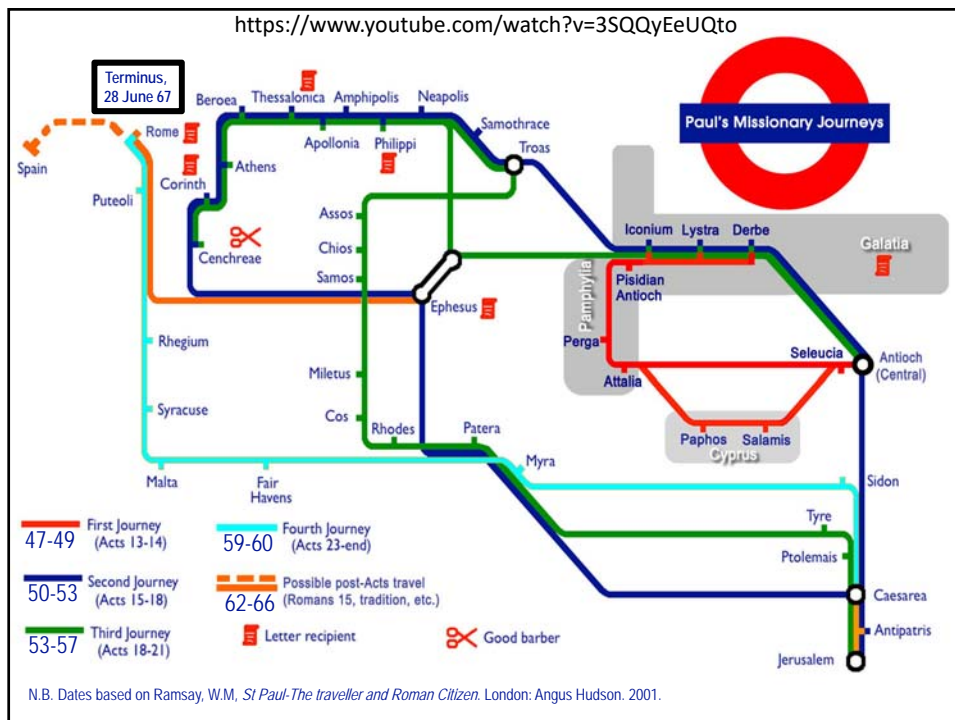
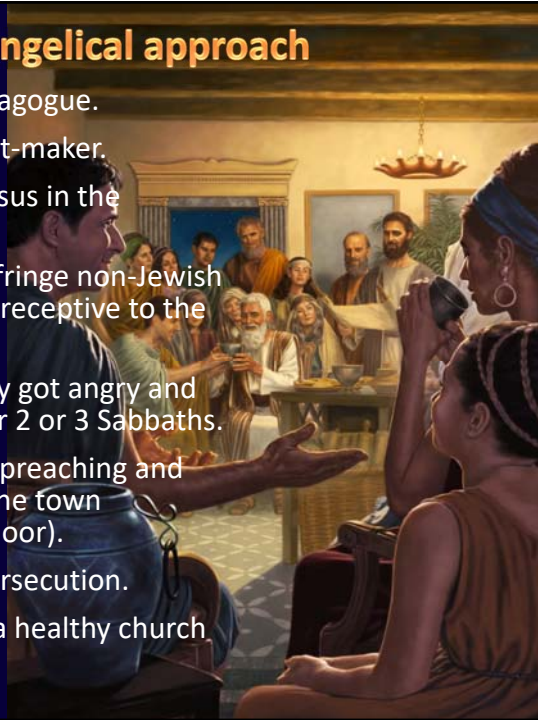
- **Paul** ("the least"), born Saul ("the destroyer") of Tarsus (4BC-c.62–64 AD), a leader of the first generation of Christians.
- His epistles have had enormous influence on Christian theology and comprise half the New Testament.
- As apostle to the Gentiles, Paul played a crucial role in development of Christianity away from its Jewish parent, but retaining its Jewish roots.
- He supported himself as a tent maker, working with leather.
- His Thessalonian epistles are the earliest in the NT, probably written within 20 years of Jesus' crucifixion.



Oldest known Polaroid of Paul (4<sup>th</sup> Century AD)

## Paul's evangelical approach

1. Stop in a city with a synagogue.
2. Work at his trade of tent-maker.
3. Preach the Gospel of Jesus in the synagogue to Jews.
  - a. The "God-fearers" (fringe non-Jewish seekers) were most receptive to the message.
  - b. Jewish elders usually got angry and forced Paul out after 2 or 3 Sabbaths.
4. Paul would continue to preaching and teaching elsewhere in the town (sometimes right next door).
5. Jews would drum up persecution.
6. Paul would leave, with a healthy church left behind.



## Acts 13

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



<sup>2</sup> As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup> Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.



[Cut into the slopes of Mt Staurin (Mountain of the Cross) is a cave church where early Antioch believers met and prayed in secret. Both Peter and Paul almost certainly preached here. In 1098, the First Crusaders constructed the wall at the front and enlarged the church. Water dripping in the corner is said to cure disease.]





### Preaching in Cyprus

<sup>4</sup> So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. <sup>5</sup> And when they arrived in Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had John\* as *their* assistant.



Seleucia on the Sea  
(Port of Antioch, Syria)



Salamis Gymnasium

\* John Mark, Barnabas' cousin, author of *Mark*.



<sup>6</sup> Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, <sup>7</sup> who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man.

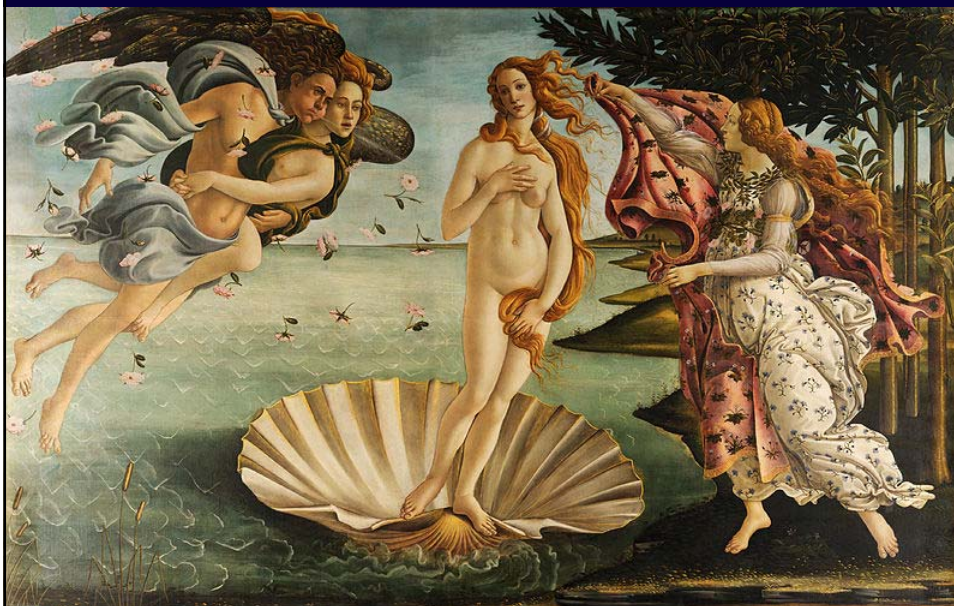
This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.



\*["Bar-Jesus" is Aramaic for "Son of Jesus"]

## Paphos

Paphos was famous in antiquity as the birthplace of Aphrodite (Venus).

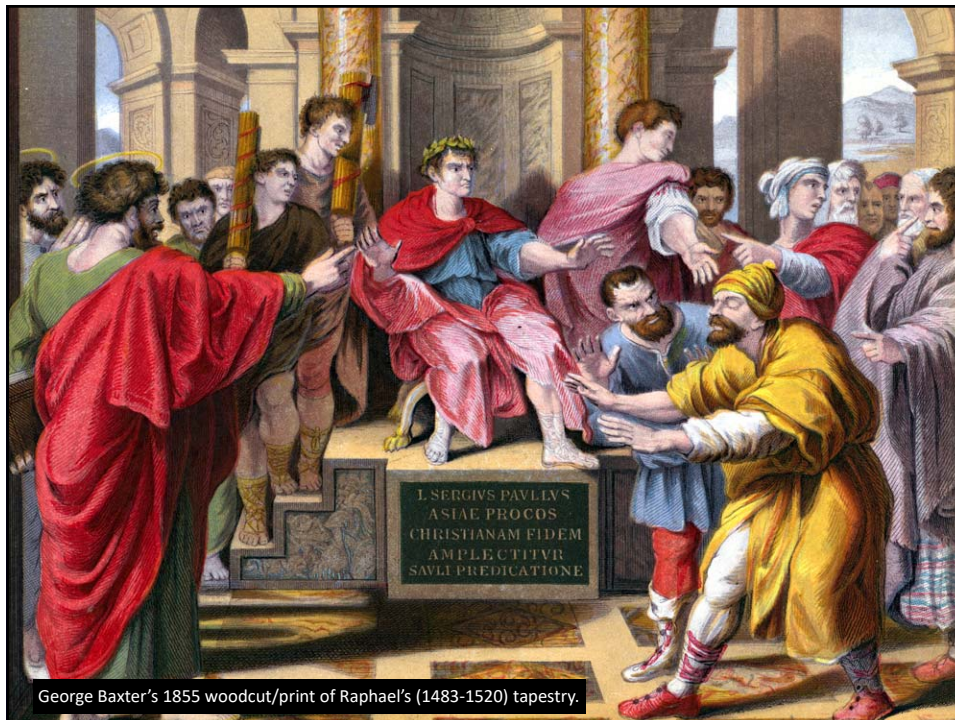


- <sup>8</sup> But Elymas\* the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.
- <sup>9</sup> Then Saul, who also *is called* Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him <sup>10</sup> and said,

“O full of all deceit and all fraud, *you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? <sup>11</sup> And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.”

And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. <sup>12</sup> Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

\*[Elymas is Arabic for “Bar-Jesus”, Aramaic for “Son of Jesus”]



George Baxter's 1855 woodcut/print of Raphael's (1483-1520) tapestry.



### To Antioch in Pisidia

<sup>13</sup> Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. [In Acts 15:37-39, Paul says John Mark deserted.]



Attalia  
(Port of ancient Perga)



Main gates of 5,000 year old Perga  
(prosperous city of the ancient world)

<sup>14</sup> But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down.





<sup>15</sup> And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, “Men *and* brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.”



Great Basilica  
(Church of St. Paul)  
c. 380 AD, 70 x 27 meters.  
Believed built over the  
synagogue of  
Acts 13:14-15.

<sup>16</sup> Then Paul stood up, and motioning with *his* hand said,

“Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen: <sup>17</sup> The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an uplifted arm He brought them out of it.

<sup>18</sup> Now for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. <sup>19</sup> And when He had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, He distributed their land to them by allotment.

<sup>20</sup> “After that He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. <sup>21</sup> And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. <sup>22</sup> And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, ‘I have found David the *son* of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.’

- 23 From this man's seed, according to *the* promise, **God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus**—<sup>24</sup> after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.<sup>25</sup> And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'Who do you think I am? I am not *He*. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'
- 26 Men *and* brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent.<sup>27</sup> For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him*.
- 28 **And though they found no cause for death *in Him*, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death.**<sup>29</sup> Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took *Him* down from the tree and laid *Him* in a tomb.

- 30 But **God raised Him from the dead.**<sup>31</sup> He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people.<sup>32</sup> And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers.<sup>33</sup> God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:
- 'You are My Son,  
Today I have begotten You.'
- 34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus:
- 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'
- 35 Therefore He also says in another *Psalms*:
- 'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'

- <sup>36</sup> “For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and saw corruption; <sup>37</sup> but He whom God raised up saw no corruption.
- <sup>38</sup> Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; <sup>39</sup> and **by Him everyone who believes is justified** from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.
- <sup>40</sup> Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:
- <sup>41</sup> ‘Behold, you despisers,  
Marvel and perish!  
For I work a work in your days,  
**A work which you will by no means believe,  
Though one were to declare it to you.’ ”**

### **Blessing and Conflict at Antioch**

- <sup>42</sup> So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. <sup>43</sup> Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.
- <sup>44</sup> On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. <sup>45</sup> But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with **envy**; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul.
- <sup>46</sup> Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, **we turn to the Gentiles.**



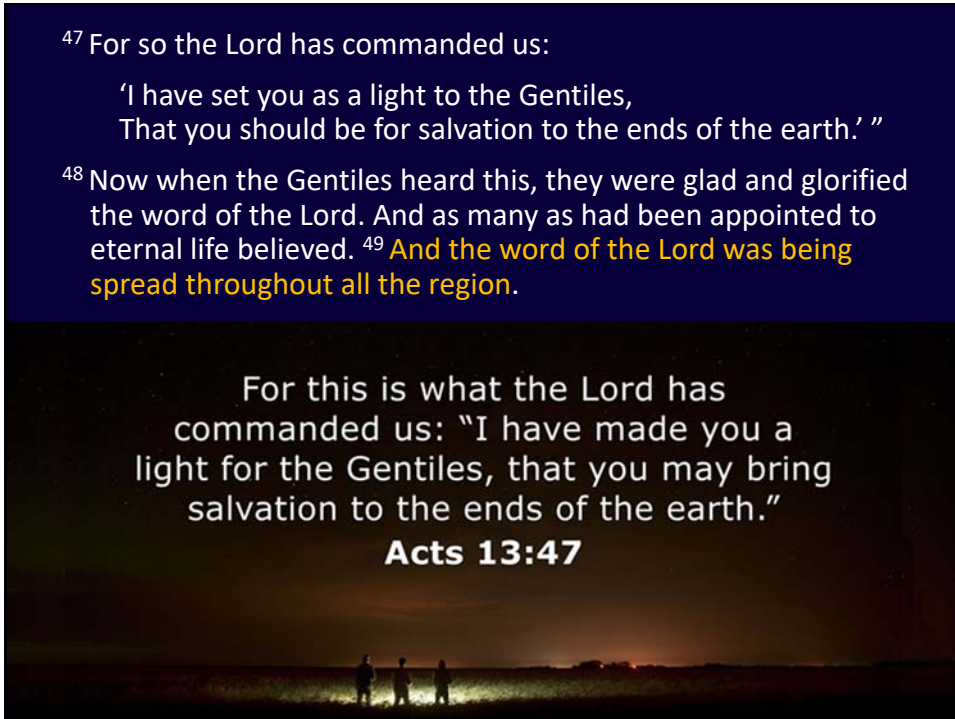
<sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us:

'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,  
That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

<sup>48</sup> Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. <sup>49</sup> And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.

For this is what the Lord has  
commanded us: "I have made you a  
light for the Gentiles, that you may bring  
salvation to the ends of the earth."

**Acts 13:47**



<sup>50</sup> But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

<sup>51</sup> But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. <sup>52</sup> And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

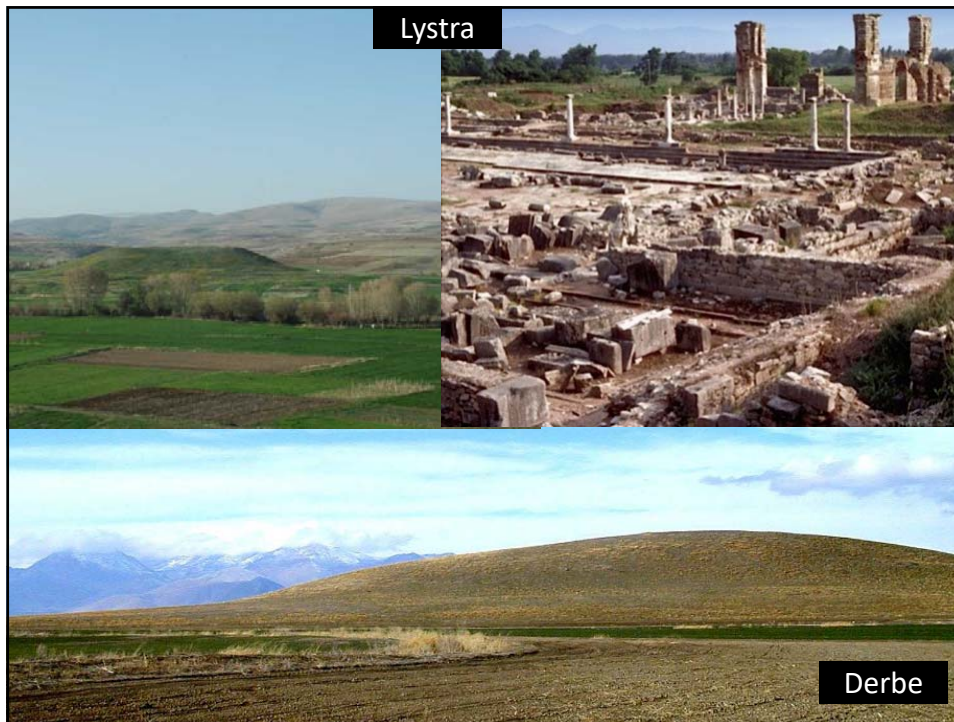


## Acts 14

### At Iconium

- <sup>1</sup> Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.
- <sup>2</sup> But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. <sup>3</sup> Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.
- <sup>4</sup> But the multitude of the city was divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the apostles. <sup>5</sup> And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to abuse and stone them, <sup>6</sup> they became aware of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. <sup>7</sup> And they were preaching the gospel there.





### Idolatry at Lystra

<sup>8</sup> And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. <sup>9</sup> *This* man heard Paul speaking. Paul, observing him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, <sup>10</sup> said with a loud voice,

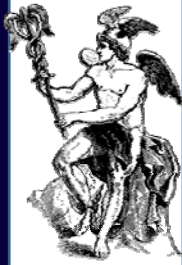
“Stand up straight on your feet!”

And he leaped and walked. <sup>11</sup> Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian *language*, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” <sup>12</sup> And Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

<sup>13</sup> Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.



## Greek and Roman mythology



**Mercury** (Roman)  
**Hermes** (Greek)

- God of financial gain
- Commerce
- Communication
- Luck and trickery
- Thieves
- Guide of souls to the underworld

**Jupiter** (Roman)  
**Zeus** (Greek)

- Father of the gods.
- Regal.
- God of the sky.
- Thunderbolt.
- Tall and dignified.
- Symbol is an eagle.
- Randy.



In Lystra W. M. Ramsay discovered an inscription dedicating a statue to Zeus and Hermes, two deities who were linked in a local cult explained by Ovid. Philemon and Baucis, the legend ran, entertained the two gods unawares with hospitality the rest of the community churlishly withheld. Hence the identification of Paul and Barnabas with the same two deities (Latinized as Jupiter and Mercury). At Isauria, not far away, an inscription has been found to "Zeus before the gate," hence it was probably the location of the proposed ceremony mentioned in Acts 14:13.



<sup>14</sup> But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out <sup>15</sup> and saying,

“Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, <sup>16</sup> who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. <sup>17</sup> Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.”

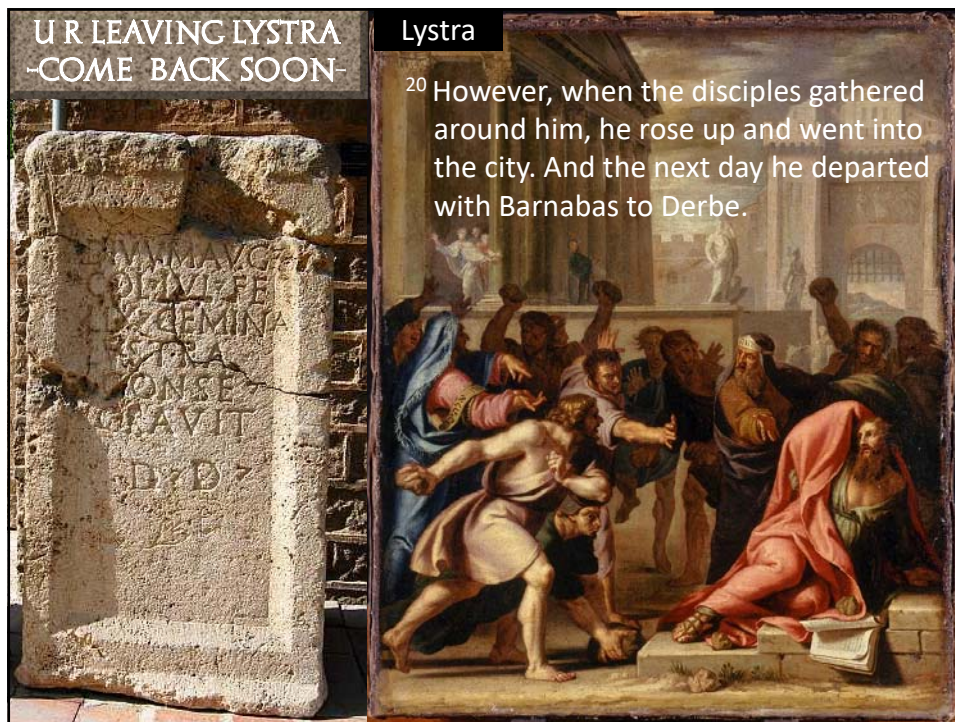
<sup>18</sup> And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

### Stoning, Escape to Derbe

<sup>19</sup> Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be dead.







### Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:2-5:

- <sup>2</sup> “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the third heaven. <sup>3</sup> And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—<sup>4</sup> how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. <sup>5</sup> Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.”



### Strengthening the Converts

<sup>21</sup> And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, <sup>22</sup> strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*,

“We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.”

<sup>23</sup> So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

<sup>24</sup> And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

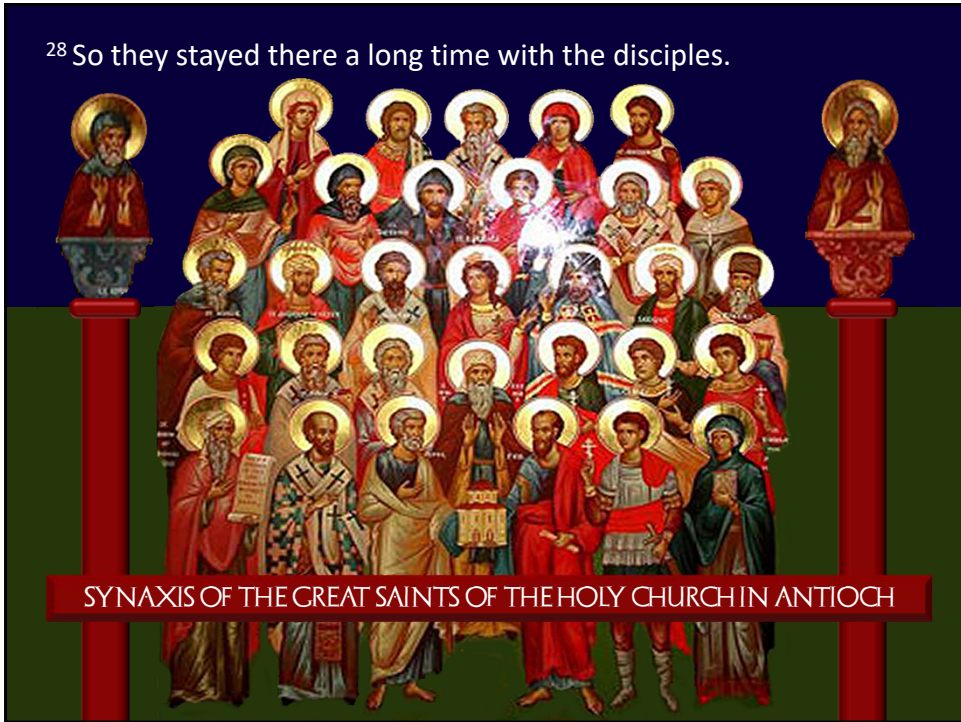
<sup>25</sup> Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

<sup>26</sup> From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

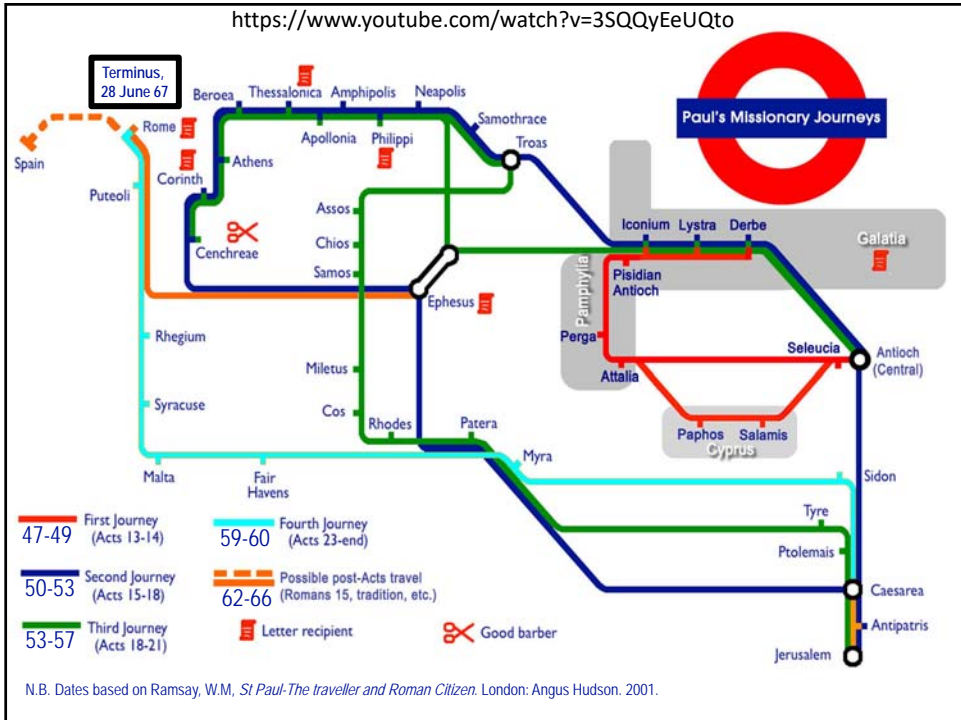


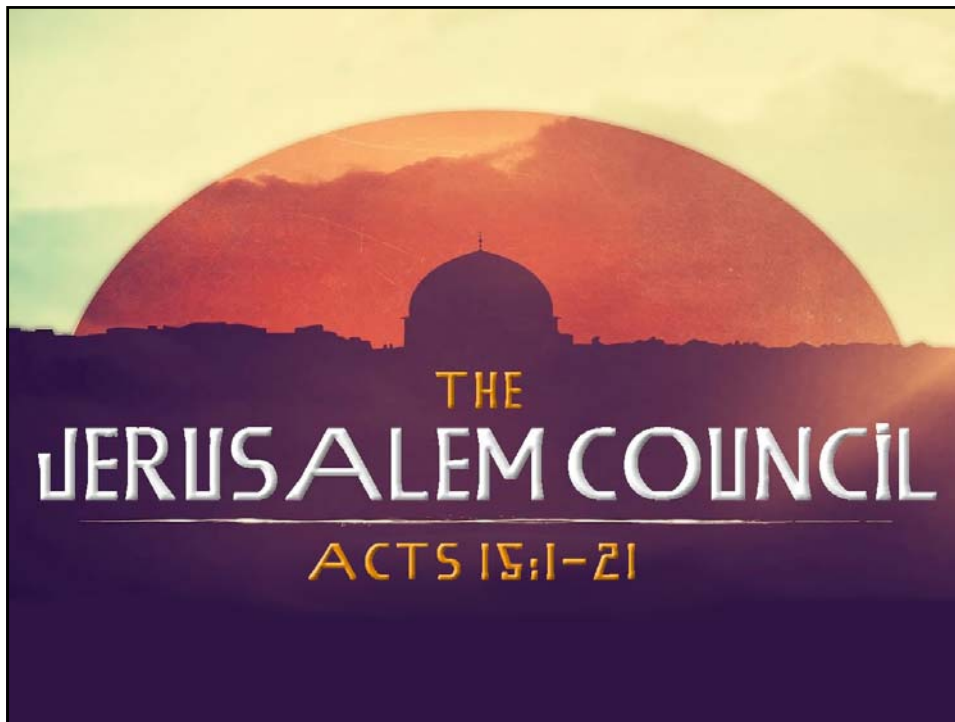
<sup>27</sup> Now when they had come and gathered the church together, they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

28 So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.



SYNAXIS OF THE GREAT SAINTS OF THE HOLY CHURCH IN ANTIOCH





## Acts 15

### Conflict over Circumcision

<sup>1</sup> 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.”



<sup>2</sup> Therefore, 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And 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.

<sup>5</sup> But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, “It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses.”

### The Jerusalem Council

<sup>6</sup> Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. <sup>7</sup> And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them:

“Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. <sup>8</sup> So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, <sup>9</sup> and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. <sup>10</sup> Now 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?** <sup>11</sup> But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner **as they.**”



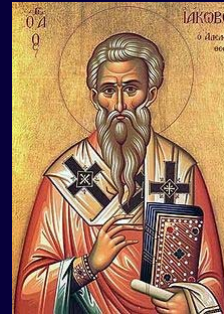
<sup>12</sup> Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.

<sup>13</sup> And after they had become silent, James answered, saying,

“Men *and* brethren, listen to me: <sup>14</sup> Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. <sup>15</sup> And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

<sup>16</sup> ‘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;

<sup>17</sup> 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.’



James the Just  
Brother of Jesus

<sup>18</sup> “Known to God from eternity are all His works.

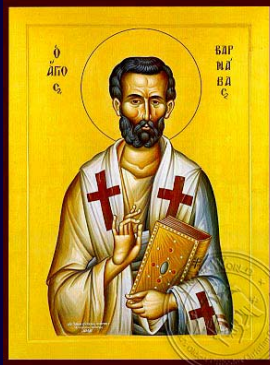
<sup>19</sup> Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, <sup>20</sup> but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, *from* sexual immorality, *from* things strangled, and *from* blood. <sup>21</sup> For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”



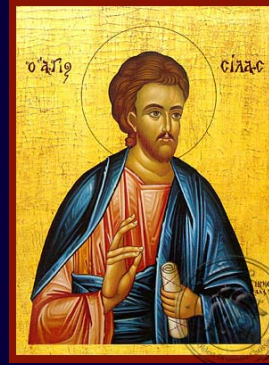
ABSTAIN FROM	
Acts 15:20	Acts 15:29
Things polluted by idols	Things offered to idols
Sexual immorality	Blood
Things strangled	Things strangled
Blood	Sexual immorality

### The Jerusalem Decree

<sup>22</sup> Then 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, and Silas, leading men among the brethren.



Judas  
surnamed  
Barsabas



Silas  
(A Roman  
Citizen)

<sup>23</sup> They 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:

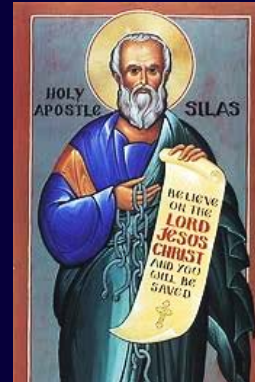
Greetings.

<sup>24</sup> Since 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*”—to whom we gave no *such* commandment— <sup>25</sup> it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, <sup>26</sup> men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>27</sup> We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. <sup>28</sup> For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: <sup>29</sup> that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Farewell.

### Continuing Ministry in Syria

- <sup>30</sup> So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter.
- <sup>31</sup> When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement.
- <sup>32</sup> Now Judas and Silas, themselves being prophets also, exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words.
- <sup>33</sup> And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles.
- <sup>34</sup> However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there.
- <sup>35</sup> Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.



### Division over John Mark

- <sup>36</sup> Then 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."
- <sup>37</sup> Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. <sup>38</sup> But 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.
- <sup>39</sup> Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another.
- And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; <sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. <sup>41</sup> And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.