

First Missionary Journey and Jerusalem Council

Acts 11-15:35

In the Book of Acts we see the Lord transitioning His program for man from Law to Grace. The second part of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12:2-3: ***and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed***) is being fulfilled.

In Acts 11 Peter reports to Jerusalem all that happened with the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10). Those disciples who were scattered because of the persecution of Stephen made their way to Antioch and the surrounding areas (Acts 11:19) and the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26).

1. First Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14).

- A. The Church at Antioch is independent from the Church at Jerusalem (vs.2-4). The Holy Spirit is at work in this local church. There is no hierarchy.
- B. First stop Cyprus (vs.4-13).
- C. Paul at Antioch in Pisidia (Galatia). Note his modus operandi (vs.14-37). Paul's Gospel Message (vs.38-39). Paul turns to the Gentiles (vs. 44-50).
- D. Paul at Iconium (13:51-14:5). Many believe but again the Jewish Leaders stir up trouble.
- E. Paul at Lystra (14:6-25).
 - Paul heals a man crippled from birth.
 - An attempt is made by the crowd to worship Paul and Barnabas. Paul refuses the honor and is stoned and left for dead.
 - Upon being supernaturally raised he continues preaching in Lystra and surrounding cities.

F. The team returns to Antioch in Syria with a report how God opened a door of faith to the Gentiles (vs. 26-28). It is possible Paul wrote Galatians, his first New Testament book from Antioch at this time.

2. Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1-35).

- A. The Problem: Should Gentile converts be forced to submit to the Jewish rite of circumcision(vs. 1-3)?
- B. The Sessions: First Public (vs.4-5), then Private (vs.6).
- C. Peter's Report (vs.7-11).
- D. Paul and Barnabas' Report (vs.12).
- E. James' Report (vs.13-21).
- F. The Decision (vs.19-20).
- G. The Letter. The Decision was put into letter form and delivered by Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas to the various churches (vs. 22-35).

This final decision was made by James, the pastor of the Jerusalem Church and was directed by the Holy Spirit (v. 28). It showed great wisdom in that it avoided unnecessary offending of the unsaved Jew.