

# ACTS 15

**FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC**



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J.K. MCKEE



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PROLOGUE.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COMMENTARY ON ACTS 15 .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE APOSTOLIC DECREE AND ACTS 21:17-26.....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>THE REVELANCE OF THE APOSTOLIC DECREE     WITHIN THE PAULINE EPISTLES .....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>COMMENTARY ON ACTS 21:17-26:     THE FALSE RUMOR ABOUT PAUL .....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL AND TODAY'S MESSIANIC MOVEMENT .....</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>EPILOGUE.....</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>ABOUT THE AUTHOR .....</b>	<b>181</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>183</b>



# ABBREVIATION CHART AND SPECIAL TERMS

The following is a chart of abbreviations for reference works and special terms that are used in publications by TNN Press. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

Special terms that may be used have been provided in this chart:

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*  
 AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*  
 ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)  
 Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament  
 Ara: Aramaic  
 ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)  
 b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)  
 B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.  
 BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)  
 BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*  
 BECNT: *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*  
 BKCNT: *Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*  
 C.E.: Common Era or A.D.  
 CEV: Contemporary English Version (1995)  
 CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)  
 CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*  
 CJB: Complete Jewish Bible (1998)  
 DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition  
 DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls  
 ECB: *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*  
 EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*  
 eisegesis: "reading meaning into," or interjecting a preconceived or foreign meaning into a Biblical text  
 EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*  
 ESV: English Standard Version (2001)  
 exegesis: "drawing meaning out of," or the process of trying to understand what a Biblical text means on its own  
 EXP: *Expositor's Bible Commentary*  
 Ger: German  
 GNT: Greek New Testament  
 Grk: Greek  
*halachah*: lit. "the way to walk," how the Torah is lived out in an individual's life or faith community  
 HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)  
 HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible (2004)  
 Heb: Hebrew  
 HNV: Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible  
 ICC: *International Critical Commentary*  
 IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*  
 IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*  
 ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*  
 IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*  
 Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)  
 JBK: New Jerusalem Bible-Koren (2000)  
 JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*  
 KJV: King James Version  
 Lattimore: The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore (1996)  
 LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)  
 LS: *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell & Scott)  
 LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)  
 LXX: Septuagint  
 m. Mishnah  
 MT: Masoretic Text  
 NASB: New American Standard Bible (1977)  
 NASU: New American Standard Update (1995)  
 NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*  
 NEB: New English Bible (1970)  
 Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*  
 NETS: New English Translation of the Septuagint (2007)  
 NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*  
 NIGTC: *New International Greek Testament Commentary*  
 NICNT: *New International Commentary on the New Testament*  
 NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*  
 NIV: New International Version (1984)  
 NJB: New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic (1985)  
 NJPS: Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures (1999)  
 NKJV: New King James Version (1982)  
 NRSV: New Revised Standard Version (1989)  
 NLT: New Living Translation (1996)  
 NT: New Testament  
 orthopraxy: lit. "the right action," how the Bible or one's theology is lived out in the world  
 OT: Old Testament  
 PreachC: *The Preacher's Commentary*  
 REB: Revised English Bible (1989)

RSV: Revised Standard Version (1952)

t. Tosefta

Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament

Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*

TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*

TEV: Today's English Version (1976)

TNIV: Today's New International Version (2005)

TNTC: *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*

TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

UBSHNT: United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew  
New Testament revised edition

v(s). verse(s)

Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*

Vul: Latin Vulgate

WBC: *Word Biblical Commentary*

Yid: Yiddish

YLT: Young's Literal Translation (1862/1898)

# PROLOGUE

When many of our evangelical Christian brothers and sisters read the New Testament, they often struggle with applying it in the Twenty-First Century. The Church of today is not the First Century *ekklesia*, a relatively infant group of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers, trying to determine the eschatological purpose and plan of God, and how all people are to unite as one in the Messiah. Today's Messianic movement, on the other hand, has little difficulty relating to the struggles of the First Century Body of Messiah, because like them we are a steadily-growing group of Jewish and non-Jewish Believers, united in common cause around the salvation of Messiah Yeshua (Christ Jesus), similarly trying to determine the purpose and plan of God. We do, however, have some issues with trying to interpret and properly apply the teachings and rulings of the Apostles, so we can mature into all of the things that the Lord wants us to be.

Today's Messianic movement has a wide variety of competing visions and viewpoints as to what it should become. Many think that the Messianic movement is only to be a group of Jewish Believers in Yeshua, who can be a part of a relatively cultural homogeneous community of Jews who express trust in Israel's Messiah. This group may have some non-Jewish Believers, who have married a Jewish spouse, but not really anyone else, as the rest of the non-Jewish Believers should just remain a part of the greater Christian Church. Many think that the Messianic movement is to be a "Torah movement," where Jewish and non-Jewish Believers are all welcome, but where our primary emphasis is to study and enforce the Law of Moses, perhaps a bit strictly and rigidly. Others think that the Messianic movement is going to bring about the restoration of Israel, and that just about all non-Jewish Believers led into it are part of the scattered Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim. Not enough, given the tenor of the Jerusalem Council, have probably sought the will of the Holy Spirit, which is blind to one's ethnicity, social status, or gender (Acts 15:8-9) — **and is to move forward God's plan at His pace.**

Given all of the competing agendas that are present in the broad Messianic world, it should be no surprise that some people are very confused about how to view the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council. For quite some time I have known that a detailed examination of Acts 15 was going to be necessary. While I am of the conviction that the Torah is relevant instruction for *all* of God's people, I have seen far too many teachers who share this view, haphazardly refer to Acts 15:21 — "For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath" — with very little consideration for the context and the setting of what James says here. Sooner or later I knew I would have to analyze Acts 15 verse-by-verse, not only because of how important the Apostolic Council was to the spread of the gospel among the nations in the First Century, but so the emerging Messianic movement can be effective for God's service in the Twenty-First Century.

We are entering into a new decade of Messianic growth and development, and with this is going to come some redrawing of the map, and some theological

## ACTS 15 FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC

shaking. There are some who once advocated that the Torah was relevant instruction for all of God's people, but are now saying that Jewish people have a more privileged status before God than everyone else, and that non-Jewish Believers *can* follow the Torah if they want to. Like all Messianics, I very much believe in honoring the Jewish people and our faith heritage from the Synagogue (cf. Romans 11:29), but the vision of the Jerusalem Council was not to produce two sub-peoples of God. The Jerusalem Council was intended to meet and fairly address what was to be done with new, non-Jewish Believers, who had been raised in Greco-Roman paganism. Understanding the broad cultural backgrounds, from the First Century Mediterranean, is imperative to properly interpreting not only the Apostolic decree, but also applying it for a Twenty-First Century Messianic movement whose non-Jewish and Jewish members were largely raised in a *significantly different* cultural environment (mostly in North America).

In the past decade, I have witnessed too much of a sub-standard level of engagement on the part of various Messianic Bible teachers and some of our "leaders" in applying the Scriptures. *There has not been enough critical thinking.* This not only includes people who conclude that the Acts 15 Jerusalem Council required the non-Jewish Believers to go to the local synagogue and learn from Moses' Teaching, but also those who conclude that they did not have to learn from it. This is ultimately the reason why in this interesting season we have witnessed some theological flip-flopping. While this Acts 15 study has been planned for almost a year now (since late 2008), current events only intensify its need. I realize that this is a unique study, per the fact that there presently is no *Acts for the Practical Messianic* commentary written (even though this is a long-term goal), but we will still all be able to learn quite much. It would be my hope that we can learn to critically engage not only with the opinions of scholars and interpreters, but make sure that our maturing Messianic movement is really in touch with the will and trajectory that God has laid out in His Word. This will require us, just as the Apostles did, to recognize how the unique work of the Holy Spirit in this post-resurrection era, has changed some of the dynamics (Acts 15:12).

I hope that if you share the same conviction as I—that the Holy Spirit is to write God's Law onto the hearts of all His people (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:25-27)—that it will be confirmed. It is my goal to give you a much more detailed answer to your questions, than those who are not concerned with a socio-historical reading of the text, those who prefer to cut corners with their exegesis, or those who shift their positions because of entangling ministerial alliances.

J.K. McKee  
Editor, TNN Online

# INTRODUCTION

The Book of Acts is certainly monumental for any of us to understand the growth and expansion of the First Century Messianic movement out into the Mediterranean world. Not only did many Jews eagerly embrace the good news that the Messiah had come, but many from the nations were also freed from their sins by hearing that the true Savior of humanity had arrived. But how these two distinct groups of people were to relate to one another, and whether they were to really come together and be united around their common hope of salvation, was a great debate that we are affected by even today. How do we come to a proper balance of recognizing the origins of the gospel in Ancient Israel and First Century Judaism, and also its worldwide implications?

Acts 15:1-35 covers the Jerusalem Council, also known as either the Jerusalem Conference or Apostolic Council, and is considered by many interpreters to be the main transition point within the Book of Acts. The leadership of the *ekklesia* at the home base of Jerusalem, notably including the Apostle Peter (cf. Matthew 16:18) and James the brother of the Lord, came together with Paul and Barnabas, and ruled on what was to take place concerning the nations' salvation. How were the new, non-Jewish Believers to be admitted into the assembly of faith? What were they required to do? Was their salvation something that was a bi-product of the Jews' salvation, or something anticipated in the Hebrew Scriptures all along? Were all Believers equal in the Lord Yeshua, or did God plan on having two sub-peoples? In the estimation of F.F. Bruce, "The Council of Jerusalem is an event to which Luke plainly attaches the highest importance; it is...epoch-making,"<sup>1</sup> especially how it directly related to the mission of the Apostles in the years to come.

It is not difficult to detect how within the Book of Acts itself, up to ch. 15 or so, there is a prime Jewish orientation for the spread of the good news and the working of the Holy Spirit. Following ch. 15, while the Jewish orientation is by no means forgotten, it is certainly expanded among the nations in the Mediterranean basin, so that by ch. 28 we end up with Paul in the center of the Empire at Rome (albeit with him preaching in a Roman synagogue). In about the first half of Acts (chs. 1-12), an Hebraic style of Greek composition consistent with the Septuagint is noticeable, given the primary Jewish orientation of the characters and main events.<sup>2</sup> This does shift, as the places and events become more cosmopolitan in the greater Greek and Roman world.

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<sup>1</sup> F.F. Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 298.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), pp 44-45; C.K. Barrett, *International Critical Commentary: Acts 15-28* (London: T&T Clark, 1998), pp xlv-xlvi; Darrell L. Bock, *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Acts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 13; David G. Peterson, *Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), pp 13-15.

## ACTS 15 FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC

Acts 15 itself, as a significant transition point within Luke's historical record of the First Century *ekklesia*, is a passage of Scripture that is considered to be quite important for many of today's Messianic Believers. (It is because of its importance why I have produced this study, not necessarily waiting to produce a commentary on the entire Book of Acts.) Many of today's Messianic teachers and congregational leaders refer to Acts 15, but they often pull bits and snippets out of this chapter, without enough detailed examination—and most especially without understanding the Jerusalem Council for the role that it played in God's (then-)unfolding plan of salvation history. Acts 15 is often referred to by our "leaders" a bit too frequently for trying to figure out what God's plan was with the nations at large coming to faith: by those who believe that they were to be the equals of the Jewish Believers as a part of the redeemed community of Israel, and by those who think that they were only to be considered some kind of associate participants in Israel. Yet, there is often no verse-by-verse examination as is necessary for an adequate evaluation of what was decided.

Too frequently, we not only forget that we need to place the Jerusalem Council within the much larger series of events that occur within the Book of Acts, but also in conjunction with Luke's previous volume written to Theophilus. For Luke, a main theme of the mission of Yeshua is embodied in His words to those assembled in the synagogue at Capernaum, where the Messiah quoted from Isaiah 61:1:

"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED" (Luke 4:18).

It is notable that this is not a message, from Luke's perspective, solely directed to the Jewish people. The message of the gospel is one that affects all of humanity. In the First Missionary Journey of the Apostle Paul (chs. 13-14), occurring prior to the Jerusalem Council, he proclaimed to the Jews at a synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, "we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers" (13:32). Yet he would also attest, after encountering some resistance from some of the local Jews, "the Lord has commanded us, 'I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES, THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH,'" directly appealing to Isaiah 49:6. The good Jewish Apostle, as a servant and agent of Yeshua, proclaimed the good news to his own brethren first, and then to whomever else would hear (cf. Romans 1:16). These are both controlling rubrics with which we have to understand the themes and emphases of Luke-Acts.

While the Apostle Paul was called by God as His emissary to the nations (Romans 11:13), he was surely not the only one who emphasized the worldwide effects of the good news. In his riveting message declared at *Shavuot*/Pentecost, the Apostle Peter recognized how the Holy Spirit was not discriminatory as to who was to be transformed (2:16-21; cf. Joel 2:28-32). While almost all of the new Believers who heard the good news on this day were Jewish, with some proselytes, Peter's proclamation was that "the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself" (2:39). So serious was this message of Yeshua's salvation, that those who would not heed it would be like those in the Torah who failed to acknowledge the words of a prophet, facing severe consequences (3:22-24; cf. Deuteronomy 18:15-16). While Peter had some personal prejudices to later overcome, per his vision and encounter with the

Roman Cornelius (chs. 10-11), he still recognized the humanity-wide significance of the Messiah event.

While Paul and Peter knew that the good news, while originating in Israel's Scriptures and with their own Jewish people, **would affect the entire world**, there were many Jewish Believers who had difficulty with this. They knew salvation was going to spread beyond their people, but by what manner would this be accomplished? Many from the nations in the First Century had become full-fledged Jewish proselytes, from many diverse places within the ancient world. Yet Yeshua Himself condemned the manner in which much of this took place, chastising the Pharisaical leaders, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel around on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matthew 23:15). The proselyte process may have started out with good intentions, in wanting to expose others to the God of Israel, but by the Apostolic period it had not necessarily achieved what it originally set out to do—often promoting salvation by ethnicity (m.*Sanhedrin* 10:1).

By the time we get to Acts 15, occurring almost two decades since Yeshua's resurrection, was it appropriate to demand that the new, non-Jewish Believers become Jewish proselytes—or was something a little different to take over? Were the non-Jewish Believers to pray "God of your fathers'" (m.*Bikkurim* 1:4),<sup>3</sup> a common occurrence for proselytes, in the presence of Jewish Believers—or recognize the LORD as the same Creator of all humanity? Darrell L. Bock rightly concludes, "Salvation leads to becoming a part of God's new community, composed of both Jew and Gentile, as Acts 15 makes clear."<sup>4</sup> But whether this new community of people was an assembly separate from Israel, or an Israel maximized for God's purposes, **is a significant debate**.

The Book of Acts records the history of the early Messianic *ekklesia*, covering a roughly thirty-year period from the ascension of Yeshua into Heaven to Paul's imprisonment in Rome.<sup>5</sup> Luke, the doctor (Colossians 4:14), is the traditional author of Acts, attested to by a wide variety of early Christian sources.<sup>6</sup> The traditional authorship of Acts went unchallenged until the end of the Eighteenth Century, and while Acts is strictly anonymous from a textual standpoint, most conservatives continue to consider, or label Luke, as the author, given the fact of how both Luke and Acts were written to the patron Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). Luke himself is believed to be an active participant and traveling partner in the many "we" passages that are seen within the Book of Acts.

Little more is actually said of Luke in the Biblical canon, other than him being a physician. We can assume many things from examining Luke-Acts, though, pointing to how he was a very accomplished man. The sheer breadth of both of

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<sup>3</sup> Margaret Wenig Rubenstein and David Weiner, trans., in Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 167.

<sup>4</sup> Bock, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Consult the author's entry for the Book of Acts in *A Survey of the Apostolic Scriptures for the Practical Messianic*.

<sup>6</sup> These include: the Muratorian Canon; Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.1; 3.14.1-4; the anti-Marcionite Prologue; Clement of Alexandria *Stromatias (Miscellanies)* 5.12; Tertullian *Against Marcion* 4.2; Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.4; 3.24.15.

Cf. D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, second edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 291.

## ACTS 15 FOR THE PRACTICAL MESSIANIC

these two compositions within the Apostolic Scriptures, reveal how they could be equally appreciated by both religious Jews and philosophically conscious Greeks and Romans. Because of Luke's excellent knowledge of the Tanach Scriptures, which he does quote throughout his compositions, it is rightly speculated that before hearing the good news he was either some kind of a God-fearer or a Jewish proselyte, associated with the Diaspora Synagogue. Ben Witherington III concurs, "it seems unlikely that the author could have been converted to [Christ] from a purely pagan background. The author's obvious interest about Judaism and Diaspora synagogues comport with either of the two aforementioned possibilities."<sup>7</sup> The only other thought we could surmise is that Luke was so well mentored by the Apostle Paul that he learned the Tanach as well as he, but I think some prior association with the Jewish Synagogue on Luke's part seems necessary. Also, given his detailed approach to writing, some kind of previous training at an ancient classical academy or school, also seems fairly likely.<sup>8</sup>

The Book of Acts forms a major foundation for us understanding much of the background behind the Pauline Epistles, the least of which is ch. 9 and Paul's Damascus Road encounter with the risen Yeshua. Acts 15 itself plays a role for us understanding why a letter like Galatians was (previously) written, which in rather virulent language addressed the issue of non-Jewish inclusion within the covenant community of God on the basis of faith. Acts 15 also helps us to understand why Paul's later letters, which subsequently followed, had a much more calm tenor to them.

A significant feature in the Book of Acts is the movement of the gospel from Judea, into Samaria, and finally out into the nations—just as Yeshua had commanded (1:8). But what was to happen once people from the nations took a hold of Israel's Messiah? *This is why the Jerusalem Council was convened.* As David G. Peterson describes it, "The Jerusalem Council provides the opportunity to reflect on the way God has formed and maintained an international movement consisting of Jews and Gentiles through the preaching of the gospel of grace and the work of the Holy Spirit (15:7-12)."<sup>9</sup> The First Century *ekklesia* certainly experienced some challenges trying to implement this, and they were not unaffected by the currents and eddies of the greater Jewish or Greco-Roman world. Today's Messianic movement should desire to evaluate the gravity of the Jerusalem Council, as many of us feel that the Father has given His people a second chance **to really get it right** before His Son returns.

### WHO WERE THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL?

The Jerusalem Council was convened because of a scene that took place in Antioch, after some Jewish Believers from Jerusalem came and insisted that the non-Jewish Believers be circumcised and keep the Torah to be saved (15:1). Both

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<sup>7</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, 54.

<sup>8</sup> Lorman M. Petersen thinks that Luke was trained at the medical school in Philippi (perhaps even being a native Philippian himself), given his reference in Acts 16:12 to Philippi as "a leading city":

"There is a touch of pride in Luke's description of Philippi as 'the leading city of the district' (Acts 16:12)" ("Philippi," in Merrill C. Tenney, ed., *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987], 781).

<sup>9</sup> Peterson, 95.

Paul and Barnabas, as well as some other representatives from the Antioch congregation, would go to Jerusalem so that this issue could be resolved (15:2).

Those who feature prominently in the meeting of the Jerusalem Council included those who came from Antioch, principally Paul and Barnabas. It also included “some of the sect of the Pharisees” who insisted upon non-Jewish circumcision and Law observance (15:5), but this by no means made up all of the Jewish Believers who were Pharisees (which would have included Paul, as he testified later before the Sanhedrin in 23:6). Also featured in the Jerusalem Council by name are Peter (15:7-11) and James the Just (15:13-21). The rest of those who made up the Jerusalem Council included unnamed “apostles and elders” (15:6), Judas or Barsabbas, and Silas (15:22). Judas and Silas would go back to Antioch to help deliver the Apostolic decree (15:32).

Clearly, the main figures of interest for us in the Jerusalem Council are Paul and Barnabas who arrived from Antioch, who have directly witnessed the work of the gospel out among the nations, and Peter and James from the home base in Jerusalem. Among the unnamed apostles and elders were presumably some of the original Twelve Disciples of Yeshua, as well as other close associates who were taught personally by the Lord.

There is no full agreement on who the specific Pharisees were, demanding the non-Jews to become circumcised as proselytes. Were these the “men from James” Paul alludes to in Galatians 2:12? Were they associates or mentors to the Judaizers/Influencers Paul refutes in his letter to the Galatians? Or were they completely unassociated from the Influencers, their only shared trait being that they insisted upon the new, non-Jewish Believers becoming ethnic Jews for inclusion among God’s people? While those refuted in Galatians may have claimed some kind of approval from the Jerusalem assembly, the Jerusalem Council made it clear to those in Antioch—who had been similarly stirred—that they did not authorize anyone to go and disturb or instruct them (15:24). Paul had been overseeing their discipleship training, for which he had already been approved (Galatians 2:7-9).

## WHEN DID THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL CONVENE?

When the Jerusalem Council actually convened, and then issued its decision about the new, non-Jewish Believers, is no small debate in theological circles. It is most important for us to consider, especially in relation to the composition of Paul’s letters, specifically whether his letter to the Galatians was written immediately prior to the Council, or some time after.

The Book of Acts itself covers a large period of time from the mid 30s C.E. to the early or mid 60s C.E., a history of the expanse of the gospel (cf. Luke 1:1-4). Conservatives generally place the composition of the Book of Acts somewhere in the late 60s C.E. to early 70s C.E., with many convinced of a composition prior to the Jewish Revolt of 70 C.E., but a majority of scholars may actually prefer sometime from 70-85 C.E.<sup>10</sup> D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo argue for a date of composition not long after 62 C.E., when Paul was imprisoned in Rome.<sup>11</sup> This

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), pp 361-362; Witherington, *Acts*, 62; Peterson, pp 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> Carson and Moo, pp 298-300.