
Journey with Paul

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Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14-15)

Paul and Barnabas in Iconium

14 The same thing occurred in Iconium, where Paul and Barnabas went into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks became believers. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 So they remained for a long time speaking boldly for the Lord, who testified to the word of his grace by granting signs and wonders to be done through them. 4 But the residents of the city were divided: some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. 5 And when an attempt was made by both gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, 6 the apostles learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region, 7 and there they continued proclaiming the good news.

Paul and Barnabas in Lystra and Derbe

8 In Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet and had never walked, for he had been lame from birth. 9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. And Paul, looking at him intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed, 10 said in a loud voice, “Stand upright on your feet.” And the man sprang up and began to walk. 11 When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, “The gods have come down to us in human form!” 12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. 13 The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates; he and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice. 14 When the apostles Barnabas

and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting,
15 “People, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you
good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who
made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. 16 In past
generations he allowed all peoples to follow their own ways, 17 yet he has not left
himself without a witness in doing good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful
seasons and filling you with food and your hearts with joy.” 18 Even with these
words, they scarcely restrained the crowds from offering sacrifice to them.

19 But Jews came there from Antioch and Iconium and won over the crowds.
Then they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead.
20 But when the disciples surrounded him, he got up and went into the city. The
next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

21 After they had proclaimed the good news to that city and had made many
disciples, they returned to Lystra, then on to Iconium and Antioch. 22 There they
strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the
faith, saying, “It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of
God.” 23 And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer
and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

24 Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. 25 When they had
spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. 26 From there they sailed back
to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that
they had completed. 27 When they arrived, they called the church together and
related all that God had done with them and how he had opened a door of faith for
the gentiles. 28 And they stayed there with the disciples for some time.

The Council at Jerusalem

15 Then certain individuals came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to discuss this question with the apostles and the elders. 3 So they were sent on their way by the church, and as they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, they reported the conversion of the gentiles and brought great joy to all the brothers and sisters. 4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them. 5 But some believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and said, “It is necessary for them to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses.”

6 The apostles and the elders met together to consider this matter. 7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “My brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that I should be the one through whom the gentiles would hear the message of the good news and become believers. 8 And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us, 9 and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. 10 Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing on the neck of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.”

12 The whole assembly kept silence and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the gentiles. 13 After they finished speaking, James replied, “My brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. 15 This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written,

16 ‘After this I will return,

and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen;
from its ruins I will rebuild it,
and I will set it up,
17 so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—
even all the gentiles over whom my name has been called.

Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things 18 known from long ago.’

19 “Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those gentiles who are turning to God, 20 but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from sexual immorality and from whatever has been strangled and from blood. 21 For in every city, for generations past, Moses has had those who proclaim him, for he has been read aloud every Sabbath in the synagogues.”

The Council’s Letter to Gentile Believers

22 Then the apostles and the elders, with the consent of the whole church, decided to choose men from among them and to send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brothers, 23 with the following letter: “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers and sisters of gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. 24 Since we have heard that certain persons who have gone out from us, though with no instructions from us, have said things to disturb you and have unsettled your minds,*, 25 we have decided unanimously to choose men and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to impose on you no further burden than these essentials: 29 that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood

and from what is strangled and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

30 So they were sent off and went down to Antioch. When they gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. 31 When they read it, they rejoiced at the exhortation. 32 Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers and sisters. 33 After they had been there for some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers and sisters to those who had sent them.,* 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, and there, with many others, they taught and proclaimed the word of the Lord.

Paul and Barnabas Separate

36 After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Come, let us return and visit the brothers and sisters in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” 37 Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. 39 The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. 40 But Paul chose Silas and set out, the brothers and sisters commending him to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.