

**ACTS AT A GLANCE**  
***An Overview of the Book of Acts***

<b>Lesson Eight – Chapters 13-15</b>
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**1. Introduction**

- 1.1. **At his conversion the Lord said to Paul,** *“I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee ... to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me”* (Acts 26:16-17).
- 1.2. And of that charge Paul later said, *“I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision”* (Acts 26:19).
- 1.3. Now as we start chapter 13, the Holy Spirit *“separated”* and *“sent out”* Paul (with Barnabas) for *“the work to which I have called them”* (Acts 13:2-3).

**2. The First Missionary Journey of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:1 – 14:28)**

- 2.1. Barnabas and Saul Commissioned for Their First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:1-5)
  - a. Remember that after the start of the church in Antioch the Church at Jerusalem sent down Barnabas to work with them. Barnabas, in turn, went to Tarsus and got Saul to come help him in this work (Acts 11:22-26). On a trip to Jerusalem to take a collection for the needy saints in Judea, Barnabas and Saul met a young man named John Mark. They brought him back to Antioch to work with them (Acts 12:25). John Mark’s mother was a member of the church in Jerusalem and the members sometimes assembled at her house (Acts 12:12).
  - b. The Lord determined that the time had come for the gospel to be preached outside Judea and Samaria so He said through His Spirit, *“Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them”* (Acts 13:2). This *“work”* is commonly labeled the ‘first missionary journey.’ Note that this was God’s work and that He was the one who planned and initiated it.
  - c. The inspired prophets and teachers mentioned in verse one (and perhaps others) *“fasted and prayed, ... laid hands on them, [and] sent them away.”* (Acts 13:3).
  - d. Barnabas and Saul took John Mark with them to be their assistant (Acts 13:5). They traveled a short distance to the port city of Saleucia then set sail over the Great Sea to the island nation of Cyprus (Acts 13:4-5). This territory would have been very familiar to Barnabas since he was originally from Cyprus (Acts 4:36).
- 2.2. Preaching at Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12)
  - a. The ship arrived at the city of Salamis on the eastern side of Cyprus where Barnabas and Saul began to preach in the Jewish synagogues. They then traveled

all the way across the island to the city of Paphos on the western coast (Acts 13: 5-6).

- b. Note that at this time the name and the status of Saul changed. From this point on he is called Paul – a Greek/Roman name, rather than his old name of Saul – a Hebrew name (Acts 13:9). Also, the pattern up to this point was to address this group as *“Barnabas and Saul”* but from now on it will be *“Paul’s party”* (Acts 13:13) and *“Paul and Barnabas”* (Acts 13:43). Luke’s focus changes, at this point from Barnabas and other preachers to primarily Paul.
- c. At Paphos, they met two men. One was Elymas, a sorcerer and false prophet. The other was Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man and proconsul of the area (Acts 13:6-7).
- d. Elymus opposed the truth and tried to prevent the proconsul from believing it. Paul soundly rebuked him and he was stricken blind for a time (Acts 13:9-11).
- e. As a result of this miracle and the teaching of Paul, Sergius Paulus believed. Luke does not elaborate further (Acts 13:12). The tenor of this account suggests, however, that this believer obeyed the words that had *“astonished”* him.
- f. Paul and his party then sailed from Paphos to Perga in the Roman district of Pamphylia in Asia Minor (Acts 13:13).

### 2.3. Preaching at Perga in Pamphylia (Acts 13:13)

- a. At this point John Mark *“departing from them, returned to Jerusalem”* (Acts 13:13). Luke provided no explanation as to why this happened. Later as preparations were made for the second missionary journey, Luke records that, *“Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. 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.”* (Acts 15:37-38). Paul seemed to judge John Mark’s early departure as evidence he was not ready in ability or character to do the difficult work of foreign evangelism.

### 2.4. Preaching at Antioch of Pisida (Acts 13:13-50)

- a. Paul Preaches on the First Sabbath (Acts 13:14-43) – Upon arriving at Antioch of Pisida, Paul and Barnabas went into a synagogue on the Sabbath Day. The rulers of the synagogue gave Paul an opportunity to speak to the assembled worshippers and he delivered this sermon:
  - First, Paul introduced Jesus (Acts 13:16-23)
    - He rehearsed the history of the Jews up to the time of David.
    - Then he recounted the promise that the Messiah would arise from the seed of David
    - And affirmed that Jesus was this promised One

- Paul reminded them that John the Baptist denied being the Messiah but pointed forward to another One (Acts 13:24-25)
  - *“To you,”* Paul said, *“the word of this salvation has been sent”* (Acts 13:26).
  - Those in Jerusalem murdered this Messiah and in doing so fulfilled the words of the prophets. (Ironically, they did not know or understand the words of these prophecies yet, at the same time, they fulfilled them.) In doing so, they wickedly murdered an innocent Man. (Acts 13:27-28).
  - But God raised Him from the dead! (Acts 13:28-37)
    - This happened just as prophesied (Acts 13:29-37)
    - And there were witnesses to His resurrection (Acts 13:31).
  - *“Therefore let it be known to you ...”* (Acts 13:38-39)
    - Through Jesus *“is preached the forgiveness of sins”* (Acts 13:38)
    - *“By Him everyone who believes is justified ...”* (Acts 13:39).
    - And this is something that did not happen as a result of keeping the law of Moses (Acts 13:39)
  - THEREFORE, don’t be like those the prophets spoke of – men who saw great works of God yet refused to believe. (Acts 13:40-41).
  - This sermon made a favorable impact on many. Some of the Gentiles wanted to hear more and some of the Jews and Jewish proselytes were converted to Christ (Acts 13:42-43).
- b.** Paul Preaches on the Second Sabbath (Acts 13:24-49)
- *“On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God”* (Acts 13:44).
  - The size of the crowd moved the Jews to envy and they began to *“oppose the things spoken by Paul”* (Acts 13:45).
  - Paul responded, *“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”* Acts 13:46).
  - This was certainly good news to the Gentiles. Some glorified God, believed His word, and became part of a growing church in that area (Acts 13:48-49).
- c.** Persecution and Expulsion (Acts 13:50) – But the envious Jews did not give up. *They “raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from their region”* (Acts 13:50).
- d.** Paul and Barnabas *“shook off the dust from the feet”* just as Jesus had commanded them (Matt 10:14) and traveled on to Iconium (Acts 13:51).
- e.** *“And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 13:52)

## 2.5. Preaching at Iconium (Acts 13:51-14:5)

- a. As was their practice, Paul and Barnabas went into a Jewish synagogue to preach. Then, *“a great multitude of both the Jews and the Greeks believed”* (Acts 14:1).
- b. Not everyone believed, of course, and the unbelievers embittered the others against the brethren (Acts 14:2)
- c. Paul and Barnabas did not give up on Iconium but instead *“stayed there a long time speaking boldly ...”* (Acts 14:3). The city was quite polarized with part of them believing the words the Paul and Barnabas and part resisting bitterly.
- d. Eventually the opposition became so violent that the brethren left and moved on to Lystra, Derbe, and other cities in the region of Lycaonia (Acts 14:6)

## 2.6. Preaching at Lystra (Acts 14:6-20)

- a. While preaching there they met a man who had been lame all his life. Paul saw *“that he had faith to be healed”* and he healed the man (Acts 14:6-10). In the scriptures, healing is not usually contingent on the faith of the one being healed (e.g., Acts 9:40). Perhaps in this context Luke is just commenting that, due to past exposure to the apostles, their miracles, and their teaching, this man believed that Peter and John could heal him.
- b. Those observing this miracle proclaimed, *“The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!”* (Acts 14:11). They then sought to offer sacrifices to them (Acts 14:11-18).
- c. Paul and Barnabas were greatly distressed at this display of idolatry and immediately attempted to turn their minds to the true God. Peter said, *“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”* (Acts 14:15).
- d. In support of such an assertion, Paul could not use Old Testament prophecies the way he did with Jewish audiences. It would have meant nothing to these Gentiles. Instead, he appealed to logic and to their personal observations saying, *“...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”* (Acts 14:17). Let us be reminded of several other similar passages:
  - *“...What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse”* (Rom 1:19-20).
  - *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard”* (Psalms 119:1-3).

- e. Paul was attempting to persuade the Lycaonians that the idols they worshipped were “*vain*” but, by contrast, the true God of heaven is living and active – manifesting Himself in wonderful blessings for His creation. But long-held beliefs are not easily changed and Paul’s words made only a marginal impact on the crowd (Acts 14:18).
  - f. The bitter aggression of Paul’s foes never seems to let up. Jewish adversaries of the gospel came to Lycaonium from Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia to persecute him. There they stirred up the people against him. “*They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, supposing him to be dead*”. By the grace of God he survived this violent attack and went on to Derbe (Acts 14:19-20).
  - g. This is a great example of the fickleness of men and how easily they change their minds. On one day many in the city are trying to worship Paul and Barnabas as gods. Then, just a little later they try to murder him. Such radical shifts are more likely when one’s beliefs are not carefully reasoned out and based on evidence.
- 2.7. Upon leaving Iconium, they came to Derbe, preached there, and “*made many disciples*” (Acts 14:20-21)
- 2.8. Preaching on the Way Back Home (Acts 14:21-25) – On their way home from their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas used every opportunity to establish and strengthen the new converts.
- a. These babes in Christ faced persecution from both Jews and Gentiles. Also, the temptations of a past life in immorality and idolatry would trouble some of them.
  - b. The Lord did not expect these new brethren to be born into Christ as mature and full-grown Christians. But He expected them to grow toward maturity. To this end Peter later wrote, “*As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby*” (1 Pet 2:2) and “*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet 3:18).
  - c. Notice from the above passage that “*the word*” is an essential tool for growth. And that is exactly what was provided to these brethren through the inspired words of Paul and Barnabas. They strengthened their souls by encouraging them to remain faithful and by warning them of future tribulation. But by ploughing on through such tribulation without giving up, they would eventually enter the glorious kingdom of God – e.g., heaven (Acts 14:21-22).
- 2.9. Appointing “elders in every church” (Acts 14:23) – On their homeward journey, Paul and Barnabas passed through the cities where churches had been established and appointed “*elders in every church.*”
- a. This at least included the churches at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (Acts 14:21) – and perhaps others. Regardless of the specific congregations involved, the language makes it clear that there were no exceptions. Elders were appointed in “*every*” church.

- b. This is amazing to the ears of 21<sup>st</sup> century Christians since those churches had, at that point, probably existed no more than a few weeks or months. Today there are many congregations that are decades old yet have no elders.
- c. Why the difference? (a) Because inspired apostles facilitated the process? (b) Because these churches were blessed with especially mature men at their inception? (c) Because miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were given to these new elders to empower them with knowledge and wisdom? (d) Or because their interpretation of the qualifications were more accurate and less restrictive than that often taken today? Rather than to offer an opinion on this matter, I will leave it to the personal study and meditation of students.
- d. Regardless of how the appointment of elders happened so quickly, the important thing was that it did happen.
  - Through inspiration Paul knew that elders were needed if these congregations were to withstand the coming tribulation and grow to spiritual maturity. Later he wrote Titus, *“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you”* (Titus 1:5). The churches at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch would have certainly been *“lacking”* without elders.
  - Remember Paul’s word’s to the Ephesians, *“And He Himself gave some to be ... pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”* (Eph 4:11-13).

2.10. Report on the First Missionary Journey (Acts 14:26-28). After passing through Pisidia and Pamphylia they came to Perga where they *“preached the word”* (Acts 14:25). Then they came to Attalia on the seacoast and sailed back to Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 14:26).

- a. *“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.”* (Acts 14:27). Note the humility and sense of common fellowship exhibited. The great apostle Paul had no problem giving a report – not just to the leadership, but also to the *“whole church.”* Paul, Barnabas, the elders, and all members were fellow laborers in God’s vineyard. There is no room for elitists or prima donnas in the church and when they crop up, there will be trouble.
- b. *“So they stayed there a long time with the brethren”* (Acts 14:28).

### 3. **Debate Over Gentiles Keeping the Law of Moses** (Acts 15:1-35)

3.1. The Origin of the Disagreement (Acts 15:1-5)

- a. It was now some 14 years after Paul’s conversion – perhaps about A.D. 47-48 (Gal 2:1). Over this time the church had grown greatly – even in the face of growing persecution from both Jews and Gentiles. But there was in the background a pernicious heresy that threatened churches throughout the first century world.

- [Note that there is considerable controversy over whether the trip to Jerusalem described in Gal 2 is the same as the one in Acts 15. For the purposes of this study, I will accept the argument that they are the same and will use information from Gal 2 in this lesson.]
- b. By this time the Lord had clearly demonstrated His impartiality by the inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom when Cornelius and his household were converted (Acts 10) and by the charge to Paul to minister to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). But not all Jewish Christians were ready to accept Gentiles as full partners in the faith. They were steeped in the Jewish arrogance and were unable or unwilling to see Gentiles as worthy of the kingdom. And this was in spite of many Old Testament prophecies regarding the inclusion of Gentiles (e.g., see Rom Psalms 117; Isaiah 11:10).
- c. Other Jews accepted the idea that Gentiles could be saved but thought this could happen only if they accepted circumcision and the other requirements of the Law of Moses. They wanted Gentile Christians to also be proselytes to traditional Judaism. This mistaken understanding of the gospel was preached by its adherents throughout the early church and was a major problem.
- d. A number of New Testament books deal with the error being spread by these Judaizing teachers. For example:
  - Acts – Chapter 10 addresses a council in Jerusalem to consider this matter.
  - Romans – The first eight chapters argue that justification is not based on keeping the Law of Moses but on the grace of God.
  - 2 Corinthians – In Paul’s second epistle to the Corinthians he is forced to defend himself against lying charges from these false teachers (e.g., 1 Cor 11-12).
  - Galatians – The churches of Galatia were nearly destroyed by Jews who were supposedly Christians and who preached a salvation based on acts of the old Law. In his epistle to them, Paul used extraordinary firmness in refuting this error. He wrote, *“You who attempt to be justified by law, you are fallen from grace”* (Gal 5:4).
  - Philippians – Paul warned the Philippians about the very same problem; saying in Phil 3:9: *“Not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith.”*
  - Colossians – Paul wrote to those at Colosse that the Christians circumcision was a spiritual circumcision *“made without hands”* and that the old law was *“nailed to the cross.”* Those requirements done away with included dietary restriction and observance of feast days and Sabbaths (Col 2:11-17).
  - Titus – Perhaps Paul is speaking of the same false teachers when he warns Titus, *“For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers,*

*especially those of the circumcision, whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain” (Titus 1:10-11).*

- e. So this was a truly significant issue for the early churches. It started with the conversion of Cornelius, intensified with the ministry of Paul among the Gentiles, and continued for years.
- f. The matter came to a head when *“certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved’”* (Acts 15:1). This was very troubling to the Gentile Christians in the area and unsettled their souls (Acts 15:24).
- g. Paul and Barnabas were godly men and Paul, at least, was inspired so they quickly recognized these men as being false teachers. Consequently *“they had no small dissension and dispute with them”* (Acts 15:2). But it was all to no avail – these men were not persuaded. Perhaps this rigorous debate resulted in confusion among Christians there. Both sides argued with zeal. Who was right?
- h. As a result *“they”* (members of the church) determined to send Paul, Barnabas, and other to Jerusalem *“about this question”* (Acts 15:2). One of the *“certain others”* was Titus (Gal 2:1-3).
  - Since it was a *“question,”* the members of the church had apparently not been persuaded by Paul’s words.
  - Those who came down from Jerusalem had claimed to have the approval of the apostles and other church leaders there (Acts 15:24). But was that really so? What was the position of those revered men on this topic?
  - But Paul knew that he was right. He described the conversion of the Gentiles to other churches even as he went on his way up to Jerusalem (Acts 15:3). He had reason to be confident because he was inspired in this (and other) matters. He told the Galatians, *“And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles”* (Gal 2:2). Perhaps without such divine guidance he would have objected to this trip since he was himself an apostle and had no need to appeal to other for the truth.
- i. *“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.*
- j. *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’”* (Acts 15:4-5). Paul’s assessment of the character of some of these supposed Christians was low. He described them to the Galatians as, *“false brethren secretly brought in; who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage”* (Gal 2:4).



### 3.2. Peter Speaks of the Significance of Cornelius' Conversion (Acts 15:6-11)

- a. After an initial report by Paul and the others to the church and perhaps a private meeting between Paul and the church leaders (Gal 2:2), *"the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter"* (Acts 15:6). There with them were Paul and his companions as well as the Pharisee 'Christians.'
- b. As both Paul and the Judaizing teachers presented their position, *"there was much dispute"* (Acts 15:7). Then the meeting took a more orderly turn as various respected leaders spoke on the subject. The first to speak was Peter.
- c. Peter reminded the assembly in Acts 15:6-11 that:
  - God had sent him first to the Gentiles – to Cornelius and his household.
  - God knew well the hearts of Cornelius' household yet he accepted them.
  - Their acceptance was based, not on meritorious law keeping by rather on faith *"through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ."*
  - God's acceptance of the Gentiles was miraculously confirmed by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in a way like that at Pentecost.
  - To impose the burden of 'salvation through Old Testament works' on these Gentile Christians would *"test God."* The Jews themselves never perfectly obey the Law of Moses so as to be justified so why expect that the Gentiles could do any better?

### 3.3. Barnabas and Paul Speak About their Ministry Among the Gentiles (Acts 15:12)

- a. The words of Peter caused the assembly to grow quiet and listen more carefully to the report of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:12).
- b. As they reported, Paul and Barnabas emphasized the *"many miracles and wonders that God had worked through them among the Gentiles"* (Acts 15:12). Such miracles would, of course, provide further evidence that God had indeed accepted the Gentiles and, had done so separate and apart from works of the Old Law (Acts 15:12).

### 3.4. James Uses OT Prophecy to Affirm God's Inclusion of Gentiles (Acts 15:13-21)

- a. James added yet another dimension to the proof of God's intention regarding the Gentiles. And that was Old Testament prophecy. (Note that this was James the brother of Jesus and not James the apostle whom Herod had killed earlier.)
- b. He said, *"Simon [Peter] has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 'After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David ... 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'"* (Acts 15:14-17).
- c. By this Old Testament prophecy, he proved that what Peter had reported was just what the Lord had said was going to happen.

- d. James saw the combination of personal testimony from Peter and Paul, miracles among the Gentiles, and Old Testament prophecies to provide adequate information to conclude the matter. So he said, *“Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God”* (Acts 15:19). To *“not trouble”* the new Gentile Christians meant to not impose the Law of Moses on them (e.g., circumcision).
- e. So when James and the others *“saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me [Paul], as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter ... they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised”* (Gal 2:7, 9).

### 3.5. Official Letter is Written (Acts 15:22-29)

- a. *“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”* (Acts 15:22) and they sent a letter from the church with them.
- b. This letter was from *“the apostles, the elders, and the brethren”* at Jerusalem and was addressed to *“the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia”* (Acts 15:23).
- c. Some might wonder whether this action violated the autonomy of local congregations with Jerusalem serving as the ruling ‘mother church.’ It does not.
  - One factor to consider is that the letter was not just the opinion of one church addressed to another church. It was the inspired direction of the Lord. Notice verse 28: *“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit ... to lay on you no greater burden than these necessary things.”*
  - Also, the church was correcting misconceptions about its own practices. The letter acknowledged, *“some went out from among us”* and *“have troubled you with words”* that they claim were commandments from the leadership of the Jerusalem church. These false teachers credited the Jerusalem elders and apostles as the source of their false doctrine. This was not true and the letter states regarding those men and their doctrine, *“...to whom we gave no such commandment”* (Acts 15:24).
- d. The contents of the letter were as follows:
  - The purpose of the letter is clearly stated in verse 24. It is to refute false doctrine – doctrine that supposedly originated with the Jerusalem leadership and had their approval.
  - The specific doctrine being refuted was that Gentile converts to Christianity must *“be circumcised and keep the law”* (Acts 15:24). This doctrine was false and it did not come from the Jerusalem leadership.
  - In response, the letter said, *“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things”* (Acts

15:28). The imposition of works of the Old Law on Gentiles would have been a terrible burden – a burden that even the Jews could not bear (Acts 15:10).

- The “*necessary things*” included “*abstaining from things offered to idols*” and “*sexual immorality*”; both of which were an especially troublesome for those exposed long-term to the typical Gentile culture (Acts 15:29). These things were not ‘burdens’ from the Old Law but rather were essential doctrine for the gospel of Christ.
  - The “*necessary things*” also included “*abstaining from blood [and] from things strangled*” (Acts 15:29). This, of course was a requirement of the Patriarchal Law (Gen 9:4) and the Law of Moses (Lev 17:10-14). Its inclusion in this letter may mean that it was also a part of the New Testament gospel or that it was a practice commonly associated with Gentile idolatry.
  - The unity of the church in this response was emphasized. The apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem agreed. The much respected Paul and Barnabas agreed. They were all “*in one accord*” (Acts 15:22-23, 25).
- e. Then a sizable group left Jerusalem to deliver the letter to Antioch and other recipients. This group included Paul, Barnabas, representatives from the Antioch church, Judas, Silas, and also perhaps John Mark and Titus (Acts 15:2, 22, 37; Gal 2:1).

### 3.6. Barnabas and Paul Report Back to the Brethren at Antioch (Acts 15:30-35)

- a. Upon arriving at Antioch the whole church was gathered together and the letter was read (Acts 15:30). This reading was done in the presence of men from both Antioch and Jerusalem who could personally testify that the letter genuinely originated with the Jerusalem church leadership.
- b. The response was joy and encouragement. Now they could really know that, “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” (Gal 3:28). They did not have to become Jewish proselytes and obey the Law of Moses in order to be saved.
- c. The Jerusalem representatives were prophets and they exhorted and edified the brethren at Antioch (Acts 15:32). Then Judas left to return to Jerusalem while Silas remained there with Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:34-35).

### 3.7. Contention About John Mark (Acts 15:36-41) – In time Paul determined to go back to those brethren visited on the first missionary journey. Barnabas agreed but “was determined” to take John Mark with them again. Paul was just as determined that John Mark not go with them – “*the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.*” (Acts 15:38).

- a. They could not resolve their disagreement so Barnabas took John and departed for Cyprus – the place he was raised and the first point of the first missionary journey (Acts 15:39, 4:36, 13:4). Perhaps Barnabas’ actions in this matter are related to his assigned name, “*Son of Encouragement*” (Acts 4:36). Also,

remember that Barnabas was one of the first to believe in the newly converted Saul (Acts 9:27).

- b. Paul took Silas (the prophet from Jerusalem) and “went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:40-41).



**ACTS AT A GLANCE**  
***An Overview of the Book of Acts***

<b>Questions on Lesson Eight</b>
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1. Where was Paul at the start of the first missionary journey? \_\_\_\_\_. Who initiated this preaching trip? \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 13:4). Who was with Paul? \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 13:2, 4).
2. Let's tie some things together – Where did Paul meet his new “assistant?” \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_. And what occasioned Paul to be at this location? \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 11:29, 12:12, 25). Why was Paul at Antioch as this chapter starts? \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 11:25-26).
3. What was the first stop on this trip? \_\_\_\_\_. What connection did Barnabas have with this location (Acts 4:36)? \_\_\_\_\_.
4. There they met \_\_\_\_\_, a false prophet and Sergius Paulus, the proconsul. What did the false prophet do? \_\_\_\_\_. What happened to him (Acts 13:8, 11)? \_\_\_\_\_.
5. At this miracle, Sergius Paulus “believed” and “was astonished” (Acts 13:12). What did he believe and what was he astonished about? \_\_\_\_\_.
6. What was the first preaching location when the group reached Asia Minor? \_\_\_\_\_. What happened there and why? (Acts 13:13, 15:37-38) \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The next stop was \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 13:14). What was the day and place of Paul's first recorded preaching there? \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Regarding Paul's sermon:
  - 8.1. What “promise” is under consideration in Acts 13:23? \_\_\_\_\_. According to Paul, who fulfilled that promise? \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 8.2. Paul reminded his audience that \_\_\_\_\_ pointed forward to Jesus as the Christ (Acts 13:24-25).

- 8.3. The One raised from the seed of David was to be a \_\_\_\_\_ (v 23). And the “\_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_” has been sent to \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 13:26-NKJV).
- 8.4. The irony of verse 27: The Jews were ignorant of what? \_\_\_\_\_.  
But in spite of their ignorance they “\_\_\_\_\_” the prophecies. How was their appeal to Pilate to kill Jesus and example of this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8.5. What evidence to the resurrection of Jesus is cited? (Acts 13:31) \_\_\_\_\_.  
The fact that God raised Jesus from the dead proved that He was the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 13:36; Psa 16:10).
- 8.6. Through Jesus is preached to you the “\_\_\_\_\_” (Acts 13:38).  
Everyone who \_\_\_\_\_ is justified (Acts 13:39). Such justification was not possible under \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 13:39).
- 8.7. Since all of this was true, what were the Jews to be careful to avoid (Acts 13:40-41)?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What was the reaction to this sermon (Acts 13:42-43)?
- 9.1. Among the Jews? \_\_\_\_\_.
- 9.2. Among the Greeks? \_\_\_\_\_.
- 9.3. Among “*many of the Jews and devout proselytes*?” \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The next Sabbath, how many people came together to hear Paul? \_\_\_\_\_.  
How did the Jews react? \_\_\_\_\_.
11. The persecution became so severe that Paul and his companions were expelled from the city (Acts 13:50). So would you describe his work at Antioch of Pisida a success or failure?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Explain (Acts 13:43, 48-49) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
12. The next recorded preaching stop was \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 14:1).
13. Some believed but some did not; and that in spite of the Lord was “*bearing witness to the word of His grace*” (Acts 14:3). What witness? \_\_\_\_\_.
14. T/F: The apostles soon lost patience with the wickedness of this city and left (v3): \_\_\_\_\_.

15. Next they preached the gospel in the area of what two cities? (Acts 14:6) \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_. What miracle was performed there? (Acts 14:8-10)  
\_\_\_\_\_.
16. What was the reaction of the Lyconians to the miracle? Acts 13:11-13) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
17. When Paul introduced them to the true God, he said that that should know this true God  
because (Acts 13:17): \_\_\_\_\_.
18. What abuse did Paul suffer at the hand of the Jews from Antioch and Iconium? (Acts 14:19-  
20) \_\_\_\_\_. In spite of that abuse, what was the ultimate  
result of the work in that area? (Acts 14:21). \_\_\_\_\_.
19. What two things did they do on the way home? (Acts 14:22-23)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
How were they able to appoint elders so soon after the establishment of these  
congregations? \_\_\_\_\_.
20. What happened when they arrived home at Antioch? \_\_\_\_\_.
21. Chapter 15 mentions certain false teachers who came from \_\_\_\_\_ down  
to \_\_\_\_\_ and taught that \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 15:1). What sect were they? (Acts 15:5) \_\_\_\_\_.  
Were these false teachers Christians? \_\_\_\_\_. Why were they teaching such an erroneous  
doctrine? (Gal 6:12-13) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
22. How did Paul react to this false teaching? (Acts 15:2) \_\_\_\_\_.  
How much weight should his input on the matter have counted and why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
Whose argument carried the day there at Antioch? \_\_\_\_\_. What possible  
motivation for Paul's trip to Jerusalem is suggested by Gal 2:2? \_\_\_\_\_.
23. Why do you think this matter was referred to leadership of the Jerusalem church for  
resolution? \_\_\_\_\_.

- 24.** Who came together to consider this matter? (Acts 15:6). \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Who spoke (a) First \_\_\_\_\_, (b) Second, \_\_\_\_\_  
 and (b) Third? \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 15:7, 12-13)
- 25.** What event did Peter remind the multitude of? (Acts 15:6-11) \_\_\_\_\_.  
 How did he describe the burden of Old Testament regulations? \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Christians are saved by \_\_\_\_\_ and not by \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Is there any difference between the Jew and the Gentile in this regard? \_\_\_\_\_.
- 26.** What did Paul and Barnabas cite as further evidence of God's acceptance of the Gentiles  
 who were not proselytes? (Acts 15:12) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 27.** James was the brother of \_\_\_\_\_ (Gal 1:9), was an \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 21:18),  
 and was reputed to be a \_\_\_\_\_ of the church in Jerusalem (Gal 2:9).
- 28.** How did James add to the weight of evidence that the Lord accepted Gentiles as His  
 people? (Acts 15:13-18) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 29.** Who stated the final verdict of the 'summit?' (Acts 15:19) \_\_\_\_\_. Who 'assisted'  
 him? (Acts 15:28) \_\_\_\_\_
- 30.** When Paul returned to Antioch and reported the results of the meeting, how did the  
 Gentile Christians react and why? (Acts 15:31) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_.
- 31.** Who returned to Antioch with Paul? (Acts 15:2) \_\_\_\_\_,  
 (Acts 15:22) \_\_\_\_\_. Describe Judas and Silas (Acts 15:30,  
 32) \_\_\_\_\_.  
 When Judas returned to Jerusalem, what did Silas do? (Acts 15:34) \_\_\_\_\_.
- 32.** As Paul and Barnabas planned their second missionary journey, what issue arose? (Acts  
 15:36-38) \_\_\_\_\_.  
 How was it resolved? \_\_\_\_\_.