

Files available for download

Sermon recordings in mp3 format

Torah study audio in mp3 format

Torah study presentation notes in pdf format

Coming soon: links to files from Baruch Haba web site

www.baruchhaba.org

How to get files from the Web Site.

For today: Go to the following url exactly as written

public.me.com/ironmtky

Password: oWyhe3mt

It is case sensitive

The Jerusalem Council

Acts 15

Major issue was one of how the Gentiles can be a part of the community. Do they have to become Jews? That was the big question.

The answer was clearly no.

The incoming Gentiles were foreseen by Amos and this is in accord with Torah. Amos 9:11-12. Peter makes this clear that G-d had originally planned the Gentiles to take part in the Kingdom.

Yet, they were not to be forced to take upon themselves all of the Mosaic constraints of Israel. The so-called boundary markers. Gentiles were not to be forced to convert, but were expected to become a part of the Jewish community. The big question then was how to do this?

The four constraints dealt with communal issues. Jerusalem saw a single community where the Gentiles were a part of the Jewish community, not the other way around. These are not (in my opinion) to be misconstrued as the Noach Laws invented by Judaism

Paul and Barnabas, and Judah and Silas were to be sent to Antioch and surroundings with this message. This set the stage for Paul's second journey. The purpose was to deliver the message of the Jerusalem council. (Acts 15:25 - 30).

Paul's Second Journey Acts 15 - 18

Task was to bring letters from Jerusalem concerning the Gentiles' participation in the synagogue.

Paul parts from Barnabas and John Mark.

Barnabas goes to Cyprus to revisit the congregations from the first journey

Paul and Silas go to Asia Minor then on to Greece.

Syria, Silicia, then Berbe, Lystra where Timothy, whose mother was Jewish and a believer lived. Timothy went with him and Silas.

They were delivering the letters and decrees from Jerusalem (Acts 15) This was a message for Jewish communities to incorporate Gentiles, Not to Gentile Churches with no more Jewish contacts. (Acts 16:4)

Phrygia and Galatia were next. Not allowed to go to Asia.

Mysia, to Troas.

Philippi, Worshipped on the Sabbath. (16:13) Met a woman, Lydia a G-d Fearer at the river.

They were jailed for ruining a female slave who was a diviner (by casting out the spirit).

Went to Thessalonica. Another synagogue, another message to Gentiles and leading women of the city. From there to Berea, and then to Athens

Athens: In the synagogue (17:17) both Jews and Gentiles also in marketplace
Invited to the Aeropagus. Message is about knowing the true G-d.

Athens and Corinth

Athens: Much made of Paul using a different approach. This encounter has often been used to justify friendliness to pagan forms of worship in order to attract pagans.

But this is why he was invited:

(Ac 17:16-17) Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.

17 So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.

Paul was not happy about all the idols, and was speaking to the congregations. On the hill he spoke essentially against idol worship and encouraged them to know the true G-d. I cannot imagine from this picture that one could adduce that Paul was trying to ingratiate himself by looking like a pagan idol worshipper. The sense is that he was provoked by the idol worship and wanted them to turn from it.

Corinth. Paul met Jews from Rome, and joined an existing synagogue. Lived there two years

(Ac 18:4) And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

When he was removed from the synagogue he moved in with a G-d fearer who lived next to the synagogue. Crispus though was a believer and leader of the synagogue.

After 18 months Jewish leaders complained he was teaching Jews contrary to law. (18:12)

Paul's third trip. Acts 18:23 - 20:3

Acts 18: From Corinth to Ephesus. Another synagogue with teaching Jews and Gentiles. It is here we learn Paul kept Jewish vows for he cut his hair before coming to Ephesus. (18:18)

Finally, Paul ends up in Caesarea and then on to Antioch, close to home.

The Third Trip

Apollos. An eloquent Jew from Egypt, speaking of Yeshua in the synagogues. Aquila and Priscilla heard him there in Ephesus. They were apparently not in church, but in synagogue. After dissension in synagogue he went to a yeshiva? Of Tyrannus. Both Jews and Greeks heard the Word while Paul was there. Paul only left the synagogue due to excessive dissension. If there was a non-Jewish church established earlier in Ephesus, why did Paul not go there instead of the synagogue? The text does not speak of a separate “Christian”, non-Jewish church. In all cases so far, there is no explicit, or even implicit mention, or allusion to, a completely separate, non-Jewish “church” The only possible exception is the incident at Troas which we have seen was a night meeting and was a special meeting due to Paul's imminent departure.

Observations: The pagans were upset that Paul was leading them away from their worship. The Jews were upset because they were polluting their worship. The believers were leaving the pagans and becoming a part of the Jewish community. There is no sense here that Paul was encouraging any kind of blending of custom to make people comfortable in their practices. (Acts 19:24-29)

Conclusion of Trip, Destination: Jerusalem

Acts 20:4 - 21:15

To Philippi with a number of colleagues, both Jew and Gentile (Tychicus and Trophimus)
He celebrated Passover at Philippi (Acts 20:6)

Remained at Troas a week. Spoke “on the first day”

Believers having dinner (break bread) Not a religious connotation here.

Meeting was at night. (20:7-8) Eutychus fell asleep at night.

Paul spoke until daybreak, then left (This would be Sunday morning)

Remember: Jewish time begins new day at sunset, not midnight.

Jewish observance called Havdalah was likely the gathering. Last meal of Shabbat, and say goodbye to Shabbat.

Paul wanted to hurry to Jerusalem in time for Shavuot (20:16)

Stopped at Ephesus knowing that there would be trouble for him in Jerusalem

Landed at Tyre. Disciples told Paul not to go to Jerusalem for he was in danger there.

Similar message at Caesarea. Was it a warning to not go, or was it fear of the brethren? (Acts 21:10-14)