

Acts to Revelation
The World of the First Christians

Session 7 – The Jerusalem Council & Paul’s Second Missionary Journey

Session Summary – Paul and Barnabas returned to Syrian Antioch, where they spend a considerable period of time strengthening the church there. After a number of months, they traveled to Jerusalem for a special meeting of church leaders. James and the Jerusalem Council ultimately decided that Gentile believers were not required to follow the Mosaic Law, but should abstain from immoral acts practiced throughout the Roman Empire. After returning to Antioch, Paul and Silas left on a second Missionary journey. This 3-year trek started in Galatia, where Paul revisited the churches he previously launched in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” – Galatians 2:20

“The James Ossuary” is a limestone burial box from Jerusalem, made before 70AD, and inscribed in Aramaic with the phrase, *“James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.”* Although a possible connection to James the Just seemed obvious, an initial team of scholars from Israel claimed that it was a forgery. The artifact then became part of a highly publicized antiquities trial and academic debate, resulting in a number of detailed studies. Eventually, many scholars concluded that the ossuary is authentic. These types of bone boxes were used to bury the dead in an around Jerusalem until 70AD, so they serve as valuable evidence for people of the New Testament period.

Scripture Reading: Acts 15 – 16:10

Discussion Questions:

1. What was the decision of the Jerusalem Council?
2. Name two people that joined Paul on his second Missionary Journey?
3. What were the Cilician Gates?
4. List at least three cities that Paul considered part of the Galatian Church.
5. What were three risks associated with 1st century travel in the Roman Empire?

Scripture for Next Week: Acts 16:11-40, 17:1-9; Philippians; 1 & 2 Thessalonians

