

THE
JERUSALEM COUNCIL

ACTS 15:1-21

KIA IINOI TAATOU | LET US PRAY

God of love, through your gift of grace we are reunited with you and one another. Help us to receive and celebrate this gift by living lives committed to you, your justice, your care, and your Kingdom coming on earth. Amen.



TĪPOKA | SUMMARY

In Acts 15:1–35, the Jerusalem Council is convened to decide whether non-Jewish believers must submit to all the requirements of the law of Moses, and especially circumcision, in order to be accepted as brothers and sisters in Christ.



WELCOME | NAU MAI HAERE MAI

Today:

- Recap(itulation) - week eight
- Acts 15: The Jerusalem Council
 - The issue
 - The argument
 - The resolution





OVERVIEW ACTS 15

What happened

- Challenge to Jewish teaching concerning circumcision

The council's decision

- Peter argued that God had already accepted Gentiles by faith and had given them the Holy Spirit without the law. James then agreed saying the church should not make it hard for Gentiles.

The letter to the churches

- Council composes letter: believers not required to keep the full Law of Moses, but should avoid food sacrificed to idols, blood, meat from strangled animals, and sexual immorality. Much rejoicing.

KEY TERM

CIRCUMCISION (TGC)

The ritual practice of removing the foreskin of an individual, which was commanded for all male Israelites in OT times as a sign of participation in the covenant God established with Abraham (Gen.17:9–14).



GEOGRAPHY

COUNCIL IN JERUSALEM

Do we know where the early church met?

Well, maybe



UPPER ROOM

The image shows the interior of a large, historic stone building, identified as the Upper Room. The architecture features high, pointed stone arches supported by thick, cylindrical columns. The floor is made of large, irregular stone tiles. In the background, a bright light source, possibly a window or an open doorway, illuminates the space. A modern lighting fixture is visible on the right side of the frame.

KEY PEOPLE

Paul — A former persecutor of Christians who became the chief missionary to the Gentiles and defended salvation by grace at the council.

Barnabas — A trusted early church leader and missionary companion of Paul who helped present the Gentile believers' case.

Peter — One of Jesus' twelve apostles, he spoke first in the council and argued that God had already accepted Gentiles by faith.



KEY PEOPLE

James — The brother of Jesus and leading figure in the Jerusalem church, he gave the final ruling that shaped the council's decision.

Judas Barsabbas — A respected believer in Jerusalem chosen to carry the council's letter back to Antioch.

Silas — A leader among the believers in Jerusalem who was sent with the council's letter and later became a missionary partner of Paul.



TORAH – GENESIS 17.9-14

Then God said to Abraham, “Your responsibility is to obey the terms of the covenant. You and all your descendants have this continual responsibility. This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. You must cut off the flesh of your foreskin as a sign of the covenant between me and you. From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. This applies not only to members of your family but also to the servants born in your household and the foreign-born servants whom you have purchased. All must be circumcised. Your bodies will bear the mark of my everlasting covenant. Any male who fails to be circumcised will be cut off from the covenant family for breaking the covenant.”



TORAH – GENESIS 17.9-14

Up to this point in Acts, we have seen how the inclusion of the Gentiles and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon them was an unexpected paradigm shift for many Jewish believers. In Acts 15:7–9, Peter refers to the outpouring of the gospel at the house of Cornelius in Acts 10:34–43. Peter then refers to the manner in which the Gentiles received the Spirit. In Acts 15:7–9, to what does Peter refer? (TGC)





The Holy Spirit fell on them, just as he
fell on us at the beginning. (Acts 11.15)

In Acts 15:9, Peter's reference to God having cleansed the Gentiles' hearts by faith may allude to the content of his vision prior to visiting Cornelius: "What God has made clean, do not call common" (Acts 10:15; 11:9). The faith of the Gentiles at Cornelius's house is only implicit in Acts 10–11, but Peter referred to it explicitly here: they were saved by faith in their hearts, not by circumcision in their flesh.

How does the argument here
recall points made in Acts
11:15–17? (TGC)

GRACE ALONE - SOLA GRATIA

Sola gratia means “grace alone” — the belief that salvation is God’s gift, not something we earn.

- Ephesians 2:8–9 — “By grace you have been saved through faith... not a result of works.”
- Romans 11:6 — “If it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works.”
- Romans 3:24 — We are “justified freely by his grace.”
- Titus 3:5 — “He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness.”



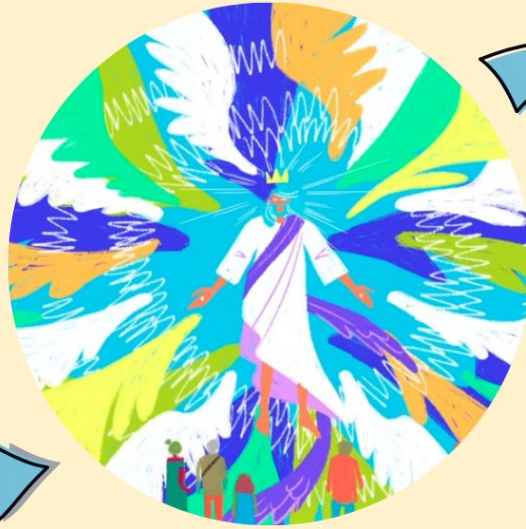
WHAT IS SALVATION?

- From *salvus*, meaning "safe," and *salus*, meaning "health, well-being, or safety"
- To 'save' or 'make safe'
- God's plan is to save God's people from their sins, and to bring them fully and finally to Godself (TGC)

When does it happen?



SEPARATION TO ATONEMENT



SALVATION (TGC)

Christians experience salvation in this life in both a past and present sense, and we anticipate salvation in a future sense. We Christians have been saved from the penalty of our sins; we are currently being saved from the power of sin; and one day, when God's plan of salvation is completed and we are with Christ, we shall be like him, and we shall be saved from the presence of sin. This is God's plan of salvation.



NEXT WEEK

Week 10: Paul's Second and Third Missionary Journeys (Acts 15:36 –21:16)

