



ACTS

Of All the Apostles

**You Will Be
My Witnesses:**

Running the Race

Lesson 28



Back to Antioch

Acts 14:24-15:35

Supplemental Scripture

Hebrews 12:1-3
Galatians 2-3
Galatians 5:6-7
Romans 2:28-29

Memory Verse

I have hidden your word in
my heart so that I won't
sin against you.
Psalm 119:11 (NIRV)

Lesson Goals

Understand that there are
those who will try to mis-
lead you concerning the
truth of God

Understand that Jesus is
the only way to God

Understand that salvation
is for all who believe—
nothing more, nothing less

NOTE: Familiarize yourself with this story. Study the supplemental Scripture and make notes on, but do NOT read from, these pages. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

Have you watched someone run a clean race and win, but thought that they shouldn't have won because of a tiny technicality? Something like that happened in the early church. Let's see how they resolved it.

"After going through Pisidia, Paul and Barnabas came into Pamphylia. They preached the word in Perga. Then they went to Attalia. From there they sailed back to Antioch. That was where they had been committed to God's grace. They had now completed the work God had given them to do." (Acts 14:24-26 NIRV) The first thing they did in Antioch was to call the church together. They wanted to share everything that had happened on their journey over the past couple of years. They shared how God had opened the way for Gentiles (non-Jews) to believe in Him. Paul and Barnabas stayed there in Antioch for a while.

But some people had come to Antioch from Judea "and started teaching the Lord's followers that they could not be saved, unless they were circumcised as Moses had taught." (Acts 15:1 CEV) Circumcision is a practice for Jewish boys that began when God spoke to Abraham (Genesis 17). It was a way to set them apart from all the other nations. But these people who came down from Judea were trying to add to what Jesus had taught when He walked with some of these same men. Do you remember some of the things Jesus taught about salvation? What did Jesus tell Nicodemus? Jesus told Nicodemus that God loved the world so much that He sent His One and Only Son [Jesus] so that whoever **believes in Him** can have eternal life (John 3). Think a little past that to what Jesus told His disciples the night before His death. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except **through Me.**" (John 14:6) Faith in Jesus that leads us to entrust our lives to Him is sufficient for salvation.

Paul and Barnabas didn't agree with what these people from Judea were teaching. In fact, they argued. Paul and Barnabas had taught these believers what they needed to know and now someone else was trying to add to what they had taught, but not only that, they were trying to add to what Jesus had taught.

So, Paul and Barnabas, and some of the other believers, went to Jerusalem to ask the apostles and elders about what the Judeans were teach-

Application

Like the church in Antioch, many are waiting for a message of hope. Maybe they have been taught things that aren't true and they don't understand salvation. Are you willing to go and tell them? Are you willing to stay home and tell them? Maybe your friends at school don't understand that Jesus is the only way to God. Will you stand up for what is right and tell people the truth? It is important that you know God's Word and that you teach it correctly.

Maybe you realize that you are not so sure about the message of hope we are talking about. You are a sinner who deserves death. You may already be aware of that and it doesn't sound very hopeful. Even though you are a sinner, God loves you. He sent His Son to die the death you deserve so that you can live with Him forever. Will you place your confidence and trust in Him and follow Him?

ing. As they traveled, they continued to share about how those who weren't Jews had come to know God. And "when they arrived in Jerusalem, the church welcomed them. The apostles and elders welcomed them, too. Then Paul and Barnabas reported everything God had done through them." (Acts 15:4 NlrV) Some of the believers in Jerusalem also said that these Gentile believers should be circumcised. But "the apostles and elders met to consider this question." (Acts 15:6 NlrV) These were wise leaders who knew God's Word. Their response was this, "God knows the human heart. He has given the Holy Spirit to Jews and non-Jews. By doing this, He has shown His acceptance. He did the same thing for them as He did for us. So don't pile a heavy burden on them that even we couldn't carry. The law was simply like a tutor to point us to God's grace. 'We believe we are saved through the grace of our Lord Jesus. Those who aren't Jews are saved in the same way (Acts 15:11 NlrV).' God has chosen these Gentiles to be His very own people as well!"

Then, Judas Barsabbas and Silas, two leaders, went to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas when they returned. They took a letter to the Gentiles (non-Jews) in that area and signed it from "the apostles and elders, your brothers." (Acts 15:23 NlrV) When they arrived in Antioch "they gathered the church together. They gave the letter to them. The people read it." (Acts 15:30 NlrV) The letter encouraged the non-Jewish believers. It said that the apostles and elders had not sent the Judean men to Antioch. The letter also gave a few basic rules. And the church was glad to hear its message of hope. Judas and Silas "said many things to give strength and hope to the believers." (Acts 15:32 NlrV) They stayed in Antioch for a while, but Paul and Barnabas remained there. "There they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord." (Acts 15:35 NlrV)

Review

1. What happened in Antioch when Paul and Barnabas returned? (They shared all that they had done. Judeans came and taught that circumcision must accompany faith in salvation.)
2. What did Paul and Barnabas do? (They argued with the Judeans, then they went to Jerusalem to talk to the apostles and elders.)
3. What was the decision from Jerusalem? (Faith is sufficient for salvation. The apostles and elders sent a letter of encouragement.)

Next Week
Second Journey
Acts 15:36-16:5

Preschool Lesson

After traveling to many places, Paul and Barnabas sailed back to Antioch. The first thing they did in Antioch was to call the church together. They wanted to share everything that had happened on their journey over the past couple of years. They shared how God had opened the way for Gentiles (non-Jews) to believe in Him. Paul and Barnabas stayed there in Antioch for a while.

But some people had come to Antioch from Judea and started teaching things that weren't true. These people who came down from Judea were trying to add to what Jesus had taught when He walked on the earth. Do you remember some of the things Jesus taught about being saved? What did Jesus tell Nicodemus? Jesus told Nicodemus that God loved the world so much that He sent His One and Only Son [Jesus] so that whoever **believes in Him** can have eternal life (John 3). Think a little past that to what Jesus told His disciples the night before His death. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except **through Me.**" (John 14:6) Faith in Jesus that leads us to follow Him is enough for salvation.

Paul and Barnabas didn't agree with what these people from Judea were teaching. In fact, they argued. Paul and Barnabas had taught these believers what they needed to know and now someone else was trying to add to what they had taught, but not only that, they were trying to add to what Jesus had taught.

So, Paul and Barnabas, and some of the other believers, went to Jerusalem to ask the apostles and elders about what the Judeans were teaching. As they traveled, they continued to share about how those who weren't Jews had come to know God. And when they got to Jerusalem they were welcomed and they talked about everything God had done through them. "The apostles and elders met to consider this question." (Acts 15:6 NlrV) These were wise leaders who knew God's Word. Their answer was this, "God knows the human heart. He has given the Holy Spirit to Jews and non-Jews. By doing this, He has shown that He accepts them, too. He did the same thing for them as He did for us. So don't make it hard on them. It is not all of the rules that save us, they just point us to God's grace. That is how we come to know God."

Then two of the leaders went to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They took a letter to the Gentiles (non-Jews) in that area and signed it "your brothers." (Acts 15:23 NlrV) When they arrived in Antioch "they gathered the church together. They gave the letter to them. The people read it." (Acts 15:30 NlrV) The letter encouraged the non-Jewish believers. And the church was glad to hear its message of hope. Paul and Barnabas stayed there in Antioch. "There they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord." (Acts 15:35 NlrV)

Activities

Memory Verse Activity - Make Chinese paper lanterns. Print the memory verse around the bottom of the lantern.

Sing “Trust and Obey,” “Ancient Words,” “Thy Word,” etc.

Provide a map for each student or make a wall-sized map. Trace Paul and Barnabas’ first missionary journey from Antioch back to Antioch. Trace the first journey all in one color and save the map for use with the second and third journeys.

Follow the example of the apostles and leaders and write a letter to encourage someone you know who is struggling.

Discuss the need for wise leaders and knowing God’s Word.

For older students and adults: Look at Genesis 17 and discuss the practice of circumcision. Then read and discuss 1 Corinthians 7:19 and Galatians 2-3.

As you continue memorizing Hebrews 12:1-3, discuss its connections with the story.



I have hidden
your word in my heart
so that I won't sin
against you.

Psalm 119:11

Racing Riddles

The message of the leaders as well as the letter sent from Jerusalem gave hope to the church in Antioch. Think of as many words as you can, that begin with the letters in “hope,” to describe what hope is.

H-

O-

P-

E-

Word Search

s a l v a e k j u d e a n s s
u t c i c o n i r o a t o c h
r s a v i a m e e i f a i t h
p a r h r h t c b l s r t r o
y b i e c r k a r l c i a t i
c a m i u a t l e u n i v n t
i n y g o a h s m a e t l o n
l r r p a d g c c o p m a l e
o a s s e n i b f h t i s f s
n b c o i s l a n a i d i s p
p y e h i v l n e e p a u l i
d d r o w r u o y a r i m s d
r n n h n u a a l i g h a u i
c o i t o a p b i d i s p a s
p c j y l c h a i c t i i f p

Paul

Barnabas

Judeans

circumcision

salvation

faith

Your Word

lamp

light

Word Search

s a l v a e k j u d e a n s s
u t c i c o n i r o a t o c h
r s a v i a m e e i f a i t h
p a r h r h t c b l s r t r o
y b i e c r k a r l c i a t i
c a m i u a t l e u n i v n t
i n y g o a h s m a e t l o n
l r r p a d g c c o p m a l e
o a s s e n i b f h t i s f s
n b c o i s l a n a i d i s p
p y e h i v l n e e p a u l i
d d r o w r u o y a r i m s d
r n n h n u a a l i g h a u i
c o i t o a p b i d i s p a s
p c j y l c h a i c t i i f p

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