

The Jerusalem Council

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Acts 15

STORY POINT:

Jesus is all we need to be saved from sin.

BIBLE VERSE:

“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God’s plan to save people through Jesus.

LEADER Bible Study

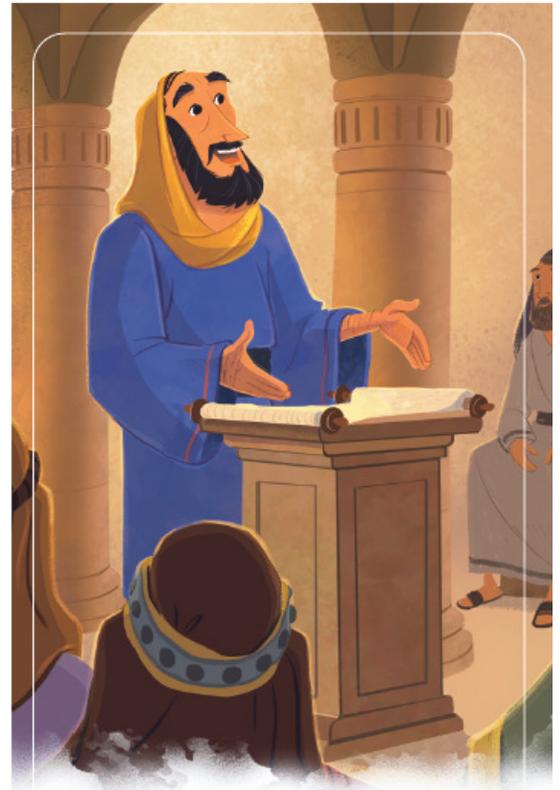
The church in Antioch praised God for His grace to Paul on his first missionary journey. Though Paul and Barnabas were strongly opposed in some places, many people heard the gospel and believed. Paul and Barnabas took the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. But a problem arose when some Christians began saying that the new followers of Jesus—the Gentile believers—needed to obey the Law of Moses in order to be right with God.

Paul and Barnabas debated this issue with other church leaders in Jerusalem. They met together to answer a tough question: Can a person be saved by faith alone or was something more needed? When Paul addressed the council, he insisted that God saves Gentiles the same way He saves Jews: through the grace of the Lord Jesus.

Paul testified to the things God had done among the Gentiles. God had given Gentiles the Holy Spirit. James cited the prophets Amos and Isaiah in support. The group agreed that because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, He alone is all we need to be saved. They also agreed that they should not make salvation more difficult for Gentiles by adding unnecessary rules.

The church chose two men—Judas and Silas—to go with Paul and Barnabas to the church at Antioch. They wrote a letter for the Gentile believers there, encouraging them and giving them instructions for how to live as followers of Christ.

The message for the Gentile believers was important: Whether Jew or Gentile, salvation comes only through faith in Christ. No one is saved by the law but by grace alone. Emphasize to the preschoolers you teach that, while the Bible does give us plenty of instruction for how to live, sinners are made right with God only by the grace of Jesus. Salvation is a gift. To receive this gift, Jesus is all we need.



The Jerusalem Council

Acts 15

The **BIBLE** Story

The Jerusalem Council

Acts 15

Paul and Barnabas had been teaching people—Jews and Gentiles, or non-Jews,—about Jesus. Many people believed, and God’s church was growing.

But some of the people in the church began saying that Gentiles could only be saved if they first followed the same rules as the Jews.

Paul and Barnabas knew this was wrong. They had a meeting with other church leaders to talk about what was true. Peter stood up and told the leaders about the Gentiles, the non-Jews, who had believed the good news about Jesus. God had given them the Holy Spirit!

Peter said that Jews could not obey God’s law perfectly, so why should they tell non-Jews to obey perfectly? Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same way: by God’s grace.

Everyone listened as Paul and Barnabas talked about how they had seen God save Jews and Gentiles too. Then James showed how the words of the prophets showed that God wanted to save both Jews and Gentiles. This was God’s plan all along.

So the church leaders decided to write a letter to the Gentile believers. The letter told the believers what they should not do now that they were believers.

Paul and Barnabas delivered the letter with Judas and Silas, and the believers were encouraged.

Christ Connection: The church leaders met to answer a hard question: Can someone be saved by faith alone? Yes! The early church agreed that Jesus is all we need. Anyone who trusts in Him will be saved.

Bible Storytelling Tips

Meet in a group: Tell the children you all are meeting in a group today. Pretend you are talking to them as part of the Jerusalem council as you tell the story.

Draw it: Draw a church on a large sheet of paper or dry erase board. Write a *J* for Jews and a *G* for Gentiles inside the church. Point to each letter as you say the word while telling the Bible story. Emphasize God’s plan that both be part of the church.

9:00 Service

INTRODUCE THE STORY

Youth Directed

Play a follow the rules game

gift bags, 2
small pieces of paper

Invite the children to take turns pulling a paper out of each bag. Guide them to “follow the rules” and move to that place and back in the way described.

EXPERIENCE THE STORY

READ THE BIBLE STORY

Pull out the bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

Read the Bible Story while holding a bible

Build church buildings

“Places of Worship” printable
blocks

Set out the “Places of Worship” cards. Invite the children to sort the pictures into places of worship from today and Bible times. Comment that in today’s Bible story, churches were just beginning.

Set out a variety of blocks. Encourage children to work together to build a church building. Pray, thanking God for your church and other Bible-believing churches in your area.

Say • God’s church was growing. God was adding both Jewish and Gentile believers to His church. Churches were meeting together in many different places. The church leaders came together in the city of Jerusalem to talk about what was true. **Jesus is all we need to be saved from sin.** That was true then, and it is still true today. God’s church is still growing, and churches meet together in all kinds of different places all around the world.

REVIEW THE STORY

BIG PICTURE REVIEW

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

- What are people who are not Jews called? (*Gentiles*)
- Whom did Paul and Barnabas meet with to talk about what was true? (*Other church leaders*)
- What were some people saying the Gentile believers needed to do? (*follow the same rules as the Jews*)
- How are Jesus and Gentiles saved? (*by God's grace*)

What is the Bible about? The Bible is about God's plan to save people through Jesus.

Practice the bible verse

“There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

Say • People in the church began to say that the Gentiles could only be saved if they followed the same rules as the Jews. Our bible verse reminds us that we are saved when we believe in Jesus. Only Jesus can save us because He never sinned and He died for us. Anyone who believes in Him will be saved.

Pray

God, thank You for our church leaders who help us remember what is true. Thank You that Jesus is all we need to be saved from sin. Thank You that anyone who trusts in Jesus will be saved. Help us tell others this good news. Amen.

Play

Decide the rules

Silly face & Smiling face on paper

White mavalous tape (found In metal Sunday school cabinet)

Rules:

Silly rules: Wear your shirt backwards on Thursdays. Do not eat cookies if your name starts with J. Jump three times before talking.

Post the faces on opposite sides of the room. Tell the children that you will say a rule. If they think the rule is silly, they should move to the silly face. If they think the rule is wise, they should move to the smiling face. Use the rules in the margin or create your own.

Say • Some people in the church were saying people could only be saved if they followed certain rules. Rules can be wise and rules can be silly, but no one can be saved by keeping the rules. The church leaders met and agreed **Jesus is all we need to be saved from sin.** Anyone who trusts in Him will be saved.