

Acts 14:19 Paul's stoning

- Many believe Paul died from this stoning in Derbe and it was at this time that he went up into the third heaven.
 - 1 Corinthians 12:2—4** ²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago--whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows--such a man was caught up to the third heaven. ³And I know how such a man--whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows-- ⁴was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.
- There are many indications that he did die but Scripture does not tell us for sure.
- Since this happened some 14 years earlier than the time of writing 1 Corinthians, it may have happened before Paul was in Derbe, possibly while Paul was in Cilicia before Barnabas went to bring him to Antioch.
- In any case, his visit to heaven was an important event in Paul's life to show him that there is nothing to hold onto on this earth. Paul's focus was only on Christ and his hope of glory.

Acts 14:21—28 The return trip to Antioch

- After Paul came to after his stoning, he walked back into Derbe then left the next day and they retraced their steps encouraging the new believers as they headed back to Antioch.
- They told the leaders there about how God had opened a door to the Gentiles.
- Paul and Barnabas spent a long time (1+ years?) with their disciples in Antioch.

Acts 15:1—5 Events leading to the Council of Jerusalem (Almost 10 years after Cornelius)

Note: it is with the beginning of this chapter that we start seeing Paul listed before Barnabas. We can see a progression—Paul is becoming the leader of the Grace message.

- While Paul and Barnabas were working on teaching the disciples in the church at Antioch, those from the area of Jerusalem came up to correct their teaching saying that all believers needed to be circumcised and follow the Mosaic Law.
 - You would think that Paul, the devout Pharisee, would be inclined to have the Gentiles follow the Mosaic Law but obviously, Paul never put the Gentiles under these restrictions. He must have been following the teachings of Jesus Christ given to him possibly while Paul was in Arabia or later when Jesus Christ did some additional training (see Acts 26:16).
 - I don't believe these were false teachers but true Jewish believers who truly were concerned about the spiritual condition of the Gentile believers.
 - At this point, God had not yet told the Jewish believers that they could set aside the Mosaic Law. Even as later as Acts 21:20 they were still (rightfully) under the Law.
- It was decided that they needed to go to Jerusalem and determine what was the proper thing to do with these Gentile believers.
 - Galatians 2:2 seems to be referring to the Council Jerusalem and says they were to go there because of a revelation from God.
- At Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas told the council of all that God was doing among the Gentiles. The thought is if God is blessing their ministry then God is doing it apart from the Law.
- On the other hand there were believing Pharisees who that it was proper to put the Gentiles under the restraints of the Mosaic Law.
 - These were Pharisees who have put their full trust in Jesus Christ and as believers were required to be circumcised and obey the Mosaic Law. They were saved under the Gospel of the Kingdom
 - Matthew 5:19** "Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 8:4 And Jesus said to him, " See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

John 14:15, 21 ¹⁴ " If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. ²¹ " He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."

John 15:10 " If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

- Paul came to an understanding that the Law produced death and was not one of the displays of faith necessary for Kingdom saints.

Romans 7:6—10 ⁶But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound, so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter. ⁷What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."⁸But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. ⁹I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; ¹⁰and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;

Acts 15:6—12 Peter's speech

- Peter stands and retells his experience with Cornelius.
 - It was God who told him to meet Cornelius and show him the way to Christ. It was also God who gave them the Holy Spirit in the same manner as what they experienced at Pentecost.
- It was with Cornelius that God made no distinction between the Jewish and Gentile believers. This is not speaking of the middle wall of partition coming down. They are the same in that both groups need to come to Christ by faith. The Jewish believers were saved under the Kingdom gospel and it seems they will stay there (12 out).
- The Law has been a burdensome yoke upon the neck of Jewish believers and it would be against what God was revealing to them to put this yoke on the Gentile believers.
- Peter's statement in verse 11 "We are saved...in the same way as they also are" shows a change in program. Just as the Gentiles can come to God in faith without the Law, so do the Jews. Salvation is of the heart, not through doing works of righteousness.
- The signs and wonders were again proof for Israel that these works among the Gentiles were of God.
- This is the last we hear of Peter in the book of Acts which I believe shows the diminishing of God's dealing with Israel.

Acts 15:13—20 James' speech

- James is now in charge of the church in Jerusalem and is the one who decides what needs to be done.
- He quotes Amos 9 with a prophesy that harmonizes Scripture with Gentile conversions. All these events do not conflict with Scripture even though the Gentiles were to come to God and be blessed through Israel instead of in spite of Israel.
 - Notice how he goes right to Scripture for an answer. The Holy Spirit certainly could have miraculously given them an answer but as the sign gifts are fading, they need to rely on the quit work of the Holy Spirit and with what God has already written.
- James declares that a letter needs to be sent from the leaders at Jerusalem outlining what the Gentiles are to observe.
 1. Stay away from things contaminated by idols.
 2. Stay sexually pure.
 3. Do not eat the blood of an animal.

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