



STARTING IN JERUSALEM

LESSON 10

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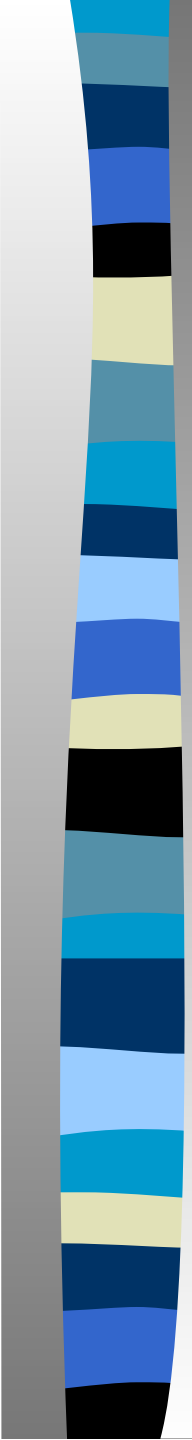
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VERSE FOR THE JOURNEY

- **Acts 1:7-9** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.
 - **AUTHORITY: *EXOUSIA*: the right to act**
 1. given by someone to someone
 2. works within certain specified rules
 3. has established parameters (domain)
 - **POWER: *DUNAMIS*: the ability to act**
- AUTHORITY AND POWER WORK TOGETHER

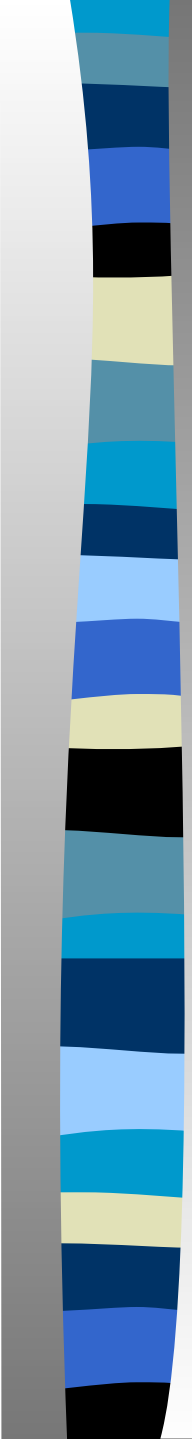
THE PROBLEM

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- Acts 15:1 Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."
 - Where you came from and what you have believed are an integral part of who you are
 - Christianity is defined by how well our faith is integrated into who we are—and how well we are able to remove wrong beliefs from our life in Christ
 - All truth is God's truth---but sometimes we let perspective rule

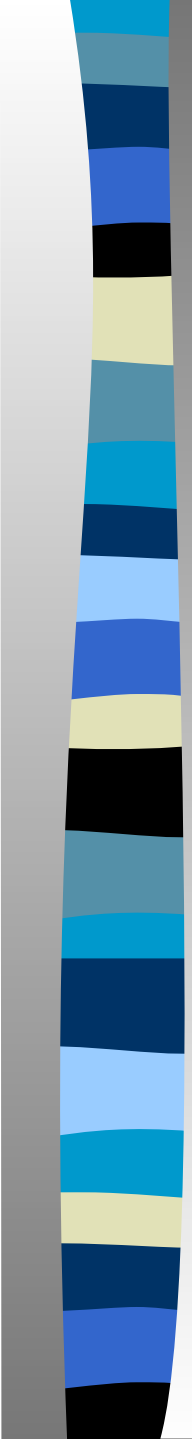
THE JERUSALEM CONVERTS

- It is likely that most of the converts in Jerusalem were Pharisees or Essenes
- Acts 15:2 And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.
- ***Staseos kai zeteseos ouk oliges***
- **A dispute and debate of no little proportion**
- A decision is made to go to the church in Jerusalem for clarification by the leaders

ON THE WAY

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- Acts 15:3-4 Therefore, being sent on their way by the church, they were passing through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and were bringing great joy to all the brethren. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.
 - Acts 15:5 But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses."

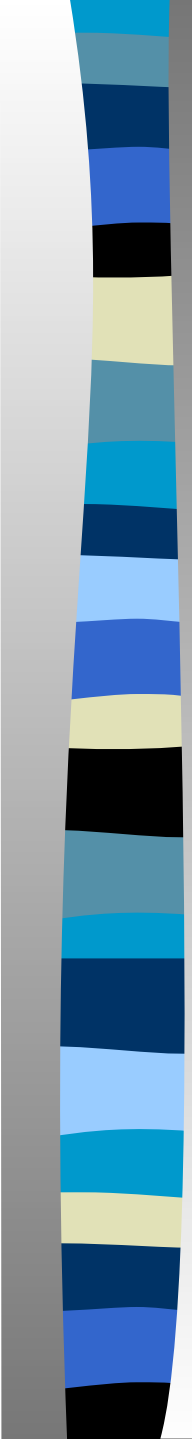
THE SITUATION

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- Everyone is happy that the Gentiles are being saved
 - Everyone doesn't agree on what to do next!
 - The church called a meeting of leaders to resolve the situation
 - There was a lot of debate—difference of opinion
WHICH SIDE OF THE DEBATE WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN ON?
 - It depends on where you're coming from, what you have experienced, and what you have believed

PETER'S POSITION

- Acts 15:7-10 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"

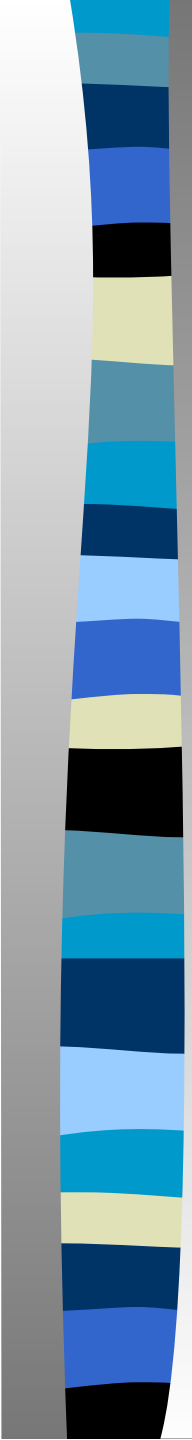
WHAT YOKE?

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- Jewish terminology: Gentiles becoming Jews had long been said to “take up the yoke.”
 - Those born Jewish were said to “take up the yoke” when they made a decision to live the lifestyle required by the Law
 - Peter’s point was that people have never been able to fully keep the Law, which had become a burdensome yoke from which Christ had freed them
 - Acts 15:11 “But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”
 - Grace: *charis*: something good that we don’t deserve

THE YOKE OF CHRIST

- Matthew 11:29-30 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
- **Easy: *chrestos*: better, useful**
- Galatians 4:28-29 And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.
- Galatians 5:1 It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

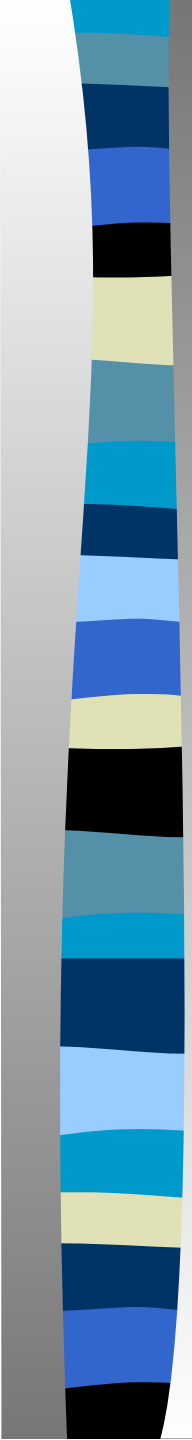
PAUL'S POSITION

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- Acts 15:12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.
 - **Paul could have refuted the Pharisees position from a doctrinal perspective**
 - Paul and Barnabas instead chose an experiential perspective
 - The Pharisees could have argued doctrine all day
 - **It is harder to stand against someone's personal experience with God**

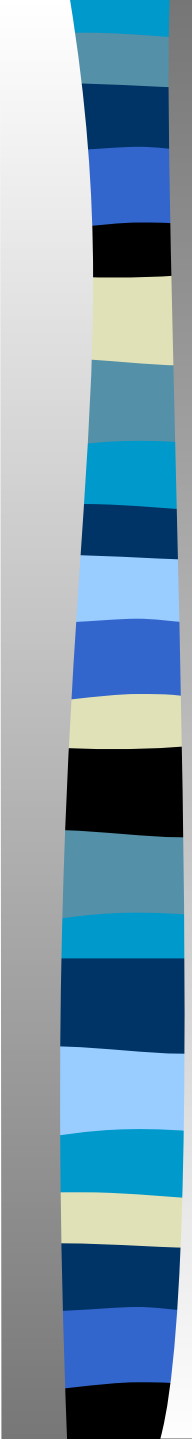
WHO IS JAMES?

- This James is the half-brother of Christ
- James, one of the twelve, had been martyred by Herod Agrippa I by beheading
- This James became the head of the Jerusalem church
- John 7:5 For not even His brothers were believing in Him.
- 1 Corinthians 15:5-8... and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles

JAMES POSITION

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- Acts 15:14-15 "Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written..."
 - Acts 15:19-20 "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood."

THREE PROHIBITIONS

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- Things contaminated by idols: v 21: things sacrificed to idols
 - Fornication: all sorts of sexual immorality
Leviticus 18:6-20
 - Strangled and blood: Leviticus 17:10-14
 - **These are regarded as parts of the ceremonial law**
 - Jewish law was divided into ceremonial (issues of ceremonial worship), civil, (powerless, poverty-stricken) and moral (ie Ten Commandments)
 - The sorts of things forbidden by the church would have been prevalent in idol worship



SENDING PROOF

- **THE LETTER:** Acts 15:20 ...but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.
- **THE WITNESSES:** Acts 15:22-23 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, and they sent this letter by them...

**THE LETTER WAS READ TO
THE ANTIOCH CHURCH**

THE ARGUMENT...

Acts 15:36-41 After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are." Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a **sharp disagreement** that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

***paroxusmos*: contention, dispute**