

# The Council in Jerusalem

## On New Gentile Believer

### Act 15:1-21 (NASB)

(1) And 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.”

(2) And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

(3) 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.

(4) And 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.

(5) but certain ones 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.”

(6) And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.

(7) And 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 should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

(8) “And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as He also did to us;

(9) and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith.”

(10) “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?”

(11) “But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the LORD Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”

(12) And all the multitude 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.

(13) And after they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, “Brethren, listen to me.”

(14) “Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.”

(15) “And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written,

- (16) ‘AFTER THESE THINGS I WILL RETURN  
AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH  
HAS FALLEN,  
AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS,  
AND I WILL RESTORE IT,
- (17) IN ORDER THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD,  
AND ALL THE GENTILES WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,’
- (18) SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM  
OF OLD.
- (19) “Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who  
are turning to God from among the Gentiles,  
(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.”
- (21) “For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those  
who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every  
Sabbath.”

In the Book of Acts, at the COUNCIL IN JERUSALEM those present *reaffirm* where the **starting point** for Gentiles is for those who were coming to the recognition and worship of Almighty God and the understanding of His Son, Jesus (Yeshua) the Messiah. These individuals had been Pagan Idolaters and now they had begun to turn to the Heavenly Father, the God of Creation. (In the Jewish Community today they are sometimes referred to as someone who was becoming a Noachite.) Yet, this was only a starting point! It was **NOT** ever intended for them to have this as their final goal! How do we know this?

**Deuteronomy 31:12-13 (NASB)**

- (12) “Assemble the people, the men and the women and children  
and the alien (Gentile) who is in your town, in order that they may  
hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to  
observe all the words of the law.”
- (13) “And their children, who have not known, will hear and learn  
to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which  
you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

This shows that it was understood that these former Pagans and their children were expected to develop and grow in their understanding, obedience and devotion to Almighty God. And just as with a newborn Jewish (or Israelite) child, who would have 13 years to grow and develop in their understanding and devotion before their Bar Mitzvah; that these Gentiles, like Abraham would have time to grow and develop in their understanding, love and devotion to God.

It appears from what is said in verse fourteen that Simeon had related to the Council the reminder as how Abraham had grown and developed in his relationship to The Almighty for many years before he chose to be circumcised at ninety nine years of age. It was during this time

when he was still un-circumcised that God had made most of the promises to Abraham. Simeon would have most likely also reminded the Council that it was at this time in his life, when Abraham and many Gentiles throughout history had learned to seek God with all their heart. It was this growth that over time, eventually let them to desire to become circumcised.

By then Abraham and the others were expected to know, understand and adhere to all of their Biblical obligations? This is why they said that even they could not instantly know, understand and adhere to their own obligations, with out first having years of learning and development, to achieve an adequate understanding and devotion. These Gentiles were not expected to remain as what today is sometimes referred to as Noachites. Nor were they expected to rear their children in such a manner. They were expected to develop and grow into a more complete and higher level of worship and devotion to The Almighty God, their Heavenly Father the Creator of the Universe; and in doing so, they would begin to have a more complete understanding of the complexities surrounding Him, as well as developing a more complete understanding of how He sent His Son as the Messiah and Redeemer.

How do we know this? Because we see in Act 15:21 these new converts were expected to attend the local Messianic Synagogue every week. Where they were to learn the rest of the Biblical instructions in order to develop a more Righteous and Holy Life!

**Act 15:20-31 (NASB)**

(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.”

(21) **“For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”**

(22) 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.

(23) and they sent this letter by them,

“The apostles and the brethren who are elders, to the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia who are from the Gentiles, greetings.”

(24) “Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction, have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls,

(25) it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

(26) men who have risked their lives for the name of our LORD Jesus Christ.”

(27) “Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth.”

(28) “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than **these essentials**:

(29) that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.”

(30) So, when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter.

(31) And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.

Notice in verse 28 that these were only the basic essentials for a proper starting point! As was touched on earlier, it took Jewish males 13 years before they were obligated to keep all of God’s Laws (at their Bar Mitzvah). Also we should remember that the blessings and the promises of Abraham were pledged to him before he was circumcised. But it was not until after his circumcision that he received them. The time and place of Abraham’s circumcision was between him and God. No one else mandated it to him. So to, with these New Gentile Believers they were not to be required to start as a spiritual adult! But rather as a spiritual infant! Who would need time to grow in knowledge, understanding and devotion, before they reached, in time, their own equivalent of a spiritual Bar Mitzvah. Just as Abraham did! And choose on their own, to be circumcised, just as Abraham did.

Remembering how Abraham had grown and developed in his relationship to The Almighty for many years before he chose to be circumcised (at the age of ninety nine). It was during this time when he was still un-circumcised that God had made most of the promises to Abraham. It was at this time in his life, before Abraham was circumcised that he, as well as many Gentiles throughout history learned to seek God with all their heart. It was this growth that over time, that eventually led them to desire to become circumcised. Not just in heart but also in the flesh.

Whether these new Believer’s Circumcision is only of their heart (as when Abraham was given his promises), of their flesh or both, it is at that point that they are grafted into the DOMESTIC OLIVE TREE, by God. Thereby become inheritors of both the blessings and the obligations of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Being grafted into the trunk and roots of the DOMESTIC OLIVE TREE (the Children of Israel) whether as a spiritual infant or mature adult, they are now part of the Tree and are obligated to obey all the obligations (to the best of their understanding and development), which God placed on the Children of Israel, and to also receive (as they grew in understand and spiritual maturity) all the blessings of Israel as well.

So that in time, after attending the local Messianic Synagogue, they would learn the rest of what God expected of them, they would eventually become spiritual adults, rather than spiritual infants, who were grafted into the DOMESTIC OLIVE TREE.

These righteous Gentiles needed to continue to grow and develop in their knowledge and devotion before they can become complete converts. To remain as a Noachite (a spiritual infant) means that their attachment (graft) into the Trunk and Roots, of THE DOMESTIC OLIVE TREE was still weak and undeveloped. For to be a Noachite is to have an undeveloped attachment or graft of their WILD OLIVE branch to the DOMESTIC OLIVE trunk and roots. Even though as a New Gentile Believer their newly grafted branch from the Wild Olive Tree may be able to see and recognize the Creator. They are still lacking in the full nutrients and the sustenance, which flow

from the roots and trunk of the DOMESTIC OLIVE TREE, which will only come from the growth of a strong and well developed grafted attachment.

**Romans 11:17-24 (NASB)**

(17) But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree,

(18) do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who support the root, but the root supports you.

(19) You will say then, “Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in.”

(20) Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited. But **fear**; (*be afraid!*)

(21) for if God did not spare the natural branches, **neither will He spare you.**

(22) Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God’s kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also **will be cut off**.

(23) And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.

(24) For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree?

This is what Paul, Barnabas and the others intended for the Gentiles, to whom they had been preaching and were being drawn to the Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus (Yeshua). Paul, Barnabas and the others with them, sought for the Gentiles to eventually become truly part of THE DOMESTIC OLIVE TREE. This is where the Council in Jerusalem expected the New Gentile Believers to eventually end up.

To more fully understand how God expected the Israelites to deal with non-Israelites, both in everyday life as well as theologically, we should take a look at what scripture has to say about the non-Israelites. And depending on which translation of the Bible you are reading the non-Israelites may be referred to as strangers, as aliens, as foreigners, as gentiles or as the nations.

**Exodus 22:21 (NKJV)**

(21) “You shall neither mistreat a **stranger** nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

**Exodus 23:9 (NASB)**

(9) “And you shall not oppress a **stranger**, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

**Leviticus 19:34** (NKJV)

(34) ‘The **stranger** who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

**Leviticus 25:35** (NKJV)

(35) ‘If one of your brethren becomes poor and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a **stranger** or a **sojourner**, that he may live with you.’

**Deuteronomy 10:19** (NKJV)

(19) “Therefore love the **stranger**, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

**Deuteronomy 27:19** (NKJV)

(19) ‘Cursed is the one who perverts the justice due the **stranger**, the fatherless, and widow.’ “And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’”

Gentiles were expected to learn the Laws of God and Keep them! As well as to teach their children to do the same! Remember what we saw earlier in Deuteronomy?

**Deuteronomy 31:12-13** (NASB)

(12) “Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the **alien** (gentile) who is in your town, in order that they may hear and learn and fear the LORD your God, and be careful to observe all the words of the law.”

(13) “And their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

So the Gentiles who turn to the LORD God of Heaven (as well as their children) are expected (by God) to hear, to learn and to observe all the words of His Law, and not to remain at the starting point of a Noachite.

**Psalm 22:27** (NASB)

(27) All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD. And **all the families of the nations** will worship before Thee.

**Psalm 67:1-7** (NIV)

- (1) May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face shine upon us,
- (2) that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among **all nations** (Gentiles).
- (3) May the peoples praise you, O God; may all the peoples praise you.

- (4) May **the nations** (Gentiles) be glad and sing for joy,  
for you rule the peoples justly  
and guide **the nations** (Gentiles) of the earth.  
(5) May the peoples praise you, O God;  
may all the peoples praise you.  
(6) Then the land will yield its harvest,  
and God, our God, will bless us.  
(7) God will bless us,  
and all the ends of the earth will fear Him.

**Psalm 86:9** (NKJV)

- (9) **All nations** (Gentiles) whom You have made shall come and  
worship before You, O LORD, and shall glorify Your name.

**1<sup>st</sup> Kings 8:41-43** (NASB)

- (41) “Also concerning the **foreigner** who is not of Thy people Israel,  
when he comes from a far country for Thy name’s sake  
(42) (for they will hear of Thy great name and Thy mighty hand, and  
of Thine outstretched arm); when he comes and prays toward this house,  
(43) hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place, and do according to all for  
which the **foreigner** calls to Thee, in order that **all the peoples of the earth**  
may know Thy name, to fear Thee, as do Thy people Israel, and that they  
may know that this house which I have built is called by Thy name.

**Isaiah 49:6** (NIV)

- (6) he says: “It is too small a thing for you to be my servant  
to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I  
have kept. I will also make you a light for the **Gentiles**, that  
you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

**Isaiah 56:1-3 and 6-8** (NKJV)

- (1) Thus say the LORD:  
“Keep Justice, and do righteousness,  
For My salvation is about to come,  
And My righteousness to be revealed.  
(2) Blessed is the man who does this,  
And the son of man who lays hold on it;  
Who keep from defiling the Sabbath,  
And keeps his hand from doing any evil.”  
(3) Do not let the son of the **foreigner** (Gentile)  
Who has joined himself to the LORD  
Speak, saying,  
“The LORD has utterly separated me from His people”, ...  
(6) “Also the son of the **foreigner** (Gentile)  
Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him.  
And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants –

(7) Even them I will bring to My house of prayer.  
 Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices  
 Will be accepted on My alter;  
 For My house shall be called a house of prayer  
 For **all nations** (all Gentiles).”

(8) The LORD God, who gathers the outcast of Israel, says,  
 “Yet I will gather to him  
 Others besides those who are gathered to him.”

**Isaiah 14:1** (NASB)

(1) When the LORD will have compassion on Jacob,  
 and again choose Israel, and settle them in their own land,  
 then **strangers** (Gentiles) will join them and attach themselves  
 to the house of Jacob.

**Isaiah 59:20 through 60:3** (NKJV)

(20) “The Redeemer will come to Zion.  
 And those who turn from transgression in Jacob,”  
 Says the LORD.

(21) “As for Me,” says the LORD,  
 “this is My covenant with them:  
 My Spirit who is upon you, and My words  
 which I have put in your mouth shall not depart  
 from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants,  
 nor from the mouth of you descendants’ descendants,”  
 says the LORD, “from this time and forevermore.”

(1) “Arise, Shine;  
 For your light has come!  
 And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.”

(2) “For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth  
 And deep darkness the people;  
 But the LORD will arise over you,  
 And His glory will be seen upon you.”

(3) “The **Gentiles** shall come to your light,  
 And kings to the brightness of you rising.”

Today there is a movement among some in various parts of the Church to expound on the Prayer-Shawl or Tallit; and even to offer Prayer-Shawls or Tallits to their supporters as well as encouraging them to use them, from time to time, in their private times of devotion and prayer. One cannot help but wonder whether or not this may or may not be a prelude to the fulfillment of what was prophesied in the book of Zechariah?

**Zechariah 8:23** (NASB)

(23) “Thus says the LORD of host, ‘In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp **the garment of a Jew** saying, “Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.””

The obvious question is: “In what manner are these Gentiles (who are seeking God) grasping the Garment of a Jew?” Are they, or are they not, grasping this Garment (a Tallit, or Prayer-Shawl) just to tag along and follow them? Or are they grasping hold of a Tallit (Prayer-Shawl, Prayer-Cloth or Mantle) for the purpose of learning to use it in the same manner as observant Jews have for thousands of years, and still do today?

**Hosea 2:23** (NKJV)

(23) “... Then I will say to those who were not My people.  
‘You are My people!’ and they shall say, ‘You are my God!’ ”

**Daniel 7:13-14** (NASB)

(13) “I kept looking in the night visions,  
And behold, with the clouds of heaven  
One like the Son of Man was coming,  
And He came up to the Ancient of Days  
And was presented before Him.

(14) “And to Him was given dominion,  
Glory and a kingdom,  
That **all the peoples, nations, and men of every language**  
Might serve Him.

His dominion is and everlasting dominion  
Which will not pass away;  
And His kingdom is one  
Which will not be destroyed.

THE ANCIENT OF DAYS, ALMIGHTY GOD, THE KING OF THE UNIVERSE, THE KING OF ALL THE ANGELIC HOST throughout all of HEAVEN, will at that time install THE SON OF MAN as KING over the inhabitants of the Earth, over all the peoples, nations and men of every language, who are upon the Earth!