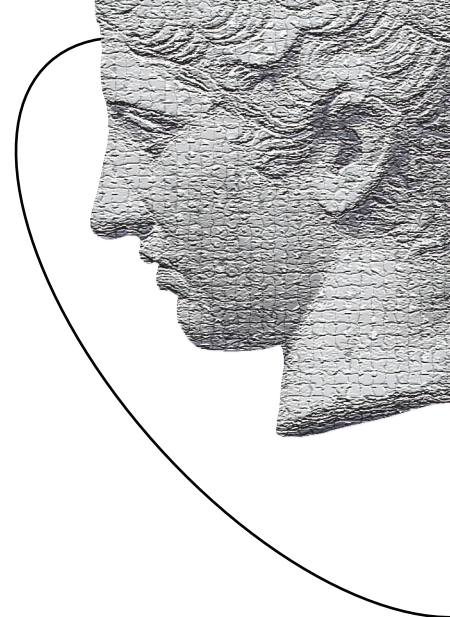




acts.

15



when.

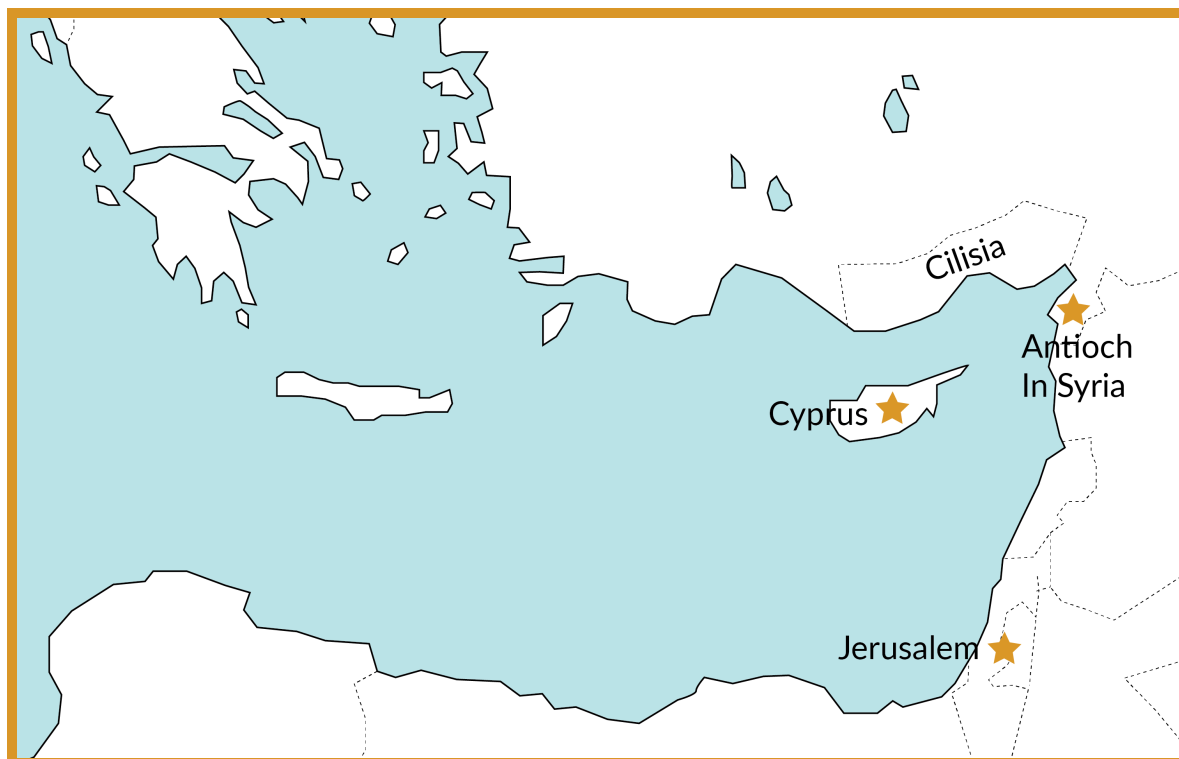
- The council in Jerusalem convened in approximately 48 A.D.
- Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch between approximately 48-49 A.D.

characters.

- **Paul (Saul)** – An Apostle who started churches across the Mediterranean region.
- **Barnabas** – Paul's friend and fellow worker in Antioch.
- **Jews of the Pharisee Party** – Believers who insisted Gentile Christians needed to be circumcised and keep the Old Testament Jewish religious laws.
- **Peter** – One of the original 12 Apostles who visited Cornelius in Acts 10.
- **James** – Most likely the son of Mary, Jesus' brother (Matthew 13:55).

where.

- Chapter 15 opens in Antioch of Syria where Paul and Barnabas were working with the church.
- A council of disciples, elders, and Apostles later gathered in Jerusalem to settle a debate regarding the necessity of circumcision.



acts.

outline.

- A DISAGREEMENT ABOUT CIRCUMCISION IN ANTIOCH OF SYRIA (15:1-21):
 - + Some men from Judea went to the church in Antioch and started teaching that all believers needed to be circumcised, whether Jew or Gentile.
 - + Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, but they could not resolve the issue.
 - + The church sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to seek the council of the Apostles and elders.
 - + When they arrived, the Apostles and elders gathered to consider the matter.
 - + Peter spoke to the council and recounted how God had offered salvation to the Gentiles at Cornelius' house (Acts 10).
 - + He did not want the "yoke" of the Jewish law to be placed on Gentile believers.
 - + Next, Paul and Barnabas recounted their work among the Gentile churches.
 - + Finally, James spoke to the council and told them the Gentiles should not be required to keep the Law of Moses or to be circumcised.
 - + He advised only that the Gentiles should abstain from "things polluted by idols, sexual immorality, things strangled, and from blood."
- THE DECISION IS SENT TO ANTIOCH IN A LETTER (Acts 15:22-35):
 - + The Apostles and elders chose a few good men, Judas and Silas, to accompany Barnabas and Paul back to Antioch with a letter containing their decision.
 - + The letter stated that it seemed good to the Apostles, elders, and Holy Spirit not to burden the Gentiles with the old Jewish religious laws.
 - + When the church in Antioch heard the news, they rejoiced and were encouraged.
 - + Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch teaching and preaching.
- THE RETURN TO THE MISSION FIELD (15:36-41):
 - + After some days, Paul and Barnabas decided to return to the churches they had previously started to check in on their progress.
 - + But they were divided over letting John Mark accompany them, because on their previous trip, he left them in Pamphylia and returned home.
 - + In the end, Barnabas and Paul decided to separate.
 - + Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus.
 - + Paul took Silas and went through Syria and Cilicia "strengthening the churches."

application.

- God doesn't always drop the answers to difficult questions in our laps.
- Even the Apostles had to debate, discuss, and seek wisdom from the Holy Spirit.
- God hasn't given us the answer to every hypothetical question that may arise in the Church.
- But He has given us guidance in His word, which contains the principles needed to make wise decisions that align with His will.

