The Story of Paul the Apostle

From Persecutor to Pioneer of the Early Church



EARLY LIFE AND BACKGROUND

- **Heritage & Citizenship:** Born a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin in Tarsus; held Roman citizenship by birth and was fluent in Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic.
- **Pharisaic Training:** Moved to Jerusalem and trained under the renowned Rabbi Gamaliel, becoming a strict Pharisee devoted to the Jewish Law.
- **Persecutor of the Church:** Strongly opposed early followers of Jesus, approving the stoning of Stephen and leading efforts to hunt down believers.



THE DAMASCUS ROAD CONVERSION

- **The Heavenly Encounter:** While traveling to Damascus to arrest Christians, Saul was blinded by a brilliant light and confronted by the voice of Jesus.
- **Absolute Transformation:** Led blind into the city, his sight was restored three days later by Ananias, a disciple of Jesus.
- **A New Mission:** He was baptized, **adopted his Roman name (Paul),** and immediately began preaching that Jesus is the Son of God.



MISSIONARY JOURNEYS AND MINISTRY

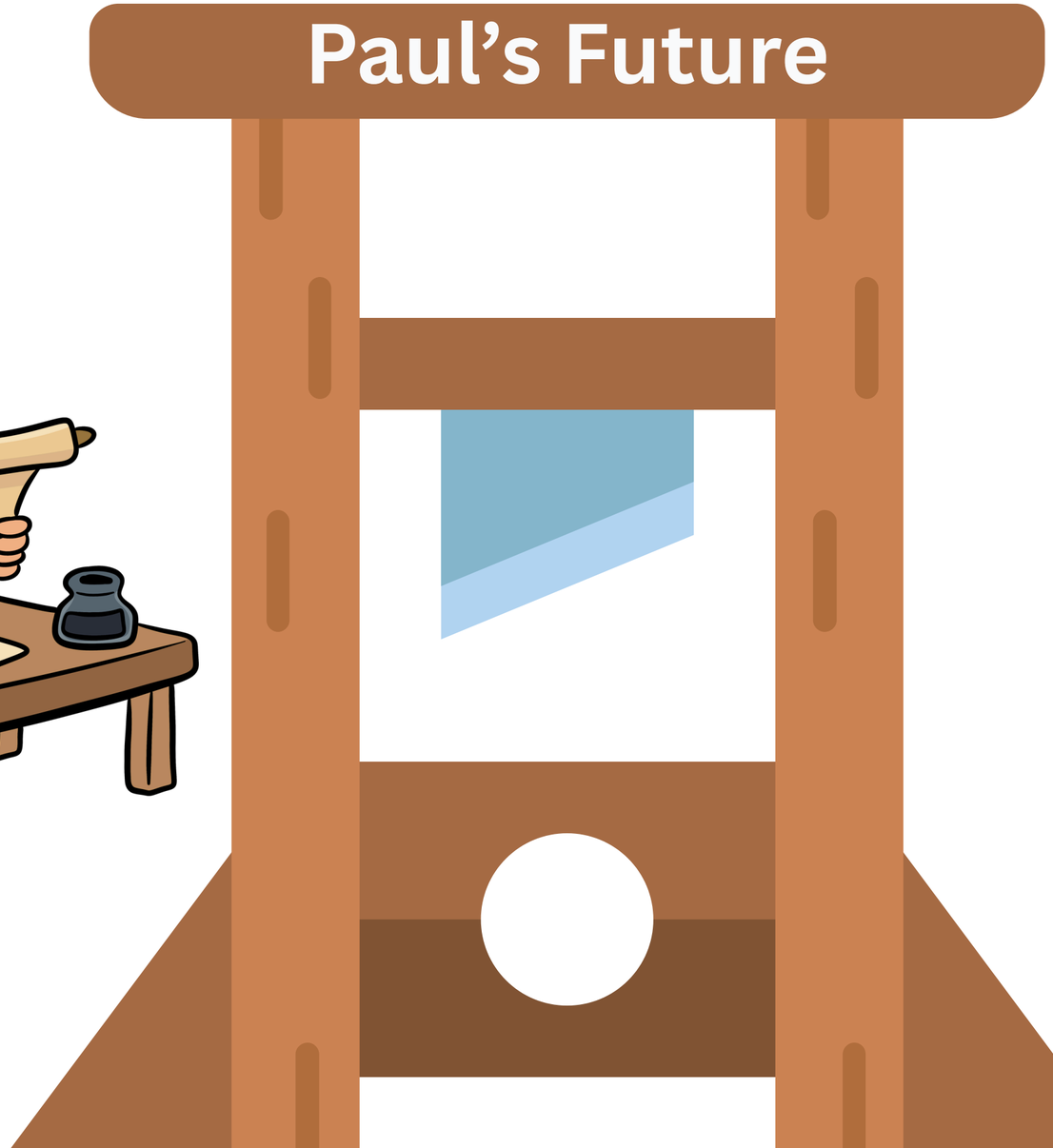
- **Preaching to Gentiles:** Paul embarked on three extensive journeys spanning Asia Minor, Greece, and across the Roman Empire.
- **Church Planting:** Established numerous early Christian communities and wrote pastoral letters (epistles) to support their development.
- **Core Theology:** Championed the doctrine of justification by grace through faith, opening salvation to both Jews and Gentiles.



TRIALS, IMPRISONMENT, AND LEGACY

- **Enduring Hardships:** Faced intense opposition, including floggings, stoning, shipwrecks, and multiple lengthy imprisonments.
- **New Testament Writings:** Authored 13 of the 27 books in the New Testament, creating foundational theology in letters like Romans and Corinthians.
- **Final Martyrdom:** Sent to Rome for trial and was ultimately martyred (beheaded) around 64–67 AD during the reign of Emperor Nero.





The Jerusalem Council Controversy

Why Did Paul Agree to the Apostolic Decree in Acts 15?





1. The Non-Negotiable Victory: Circumcision





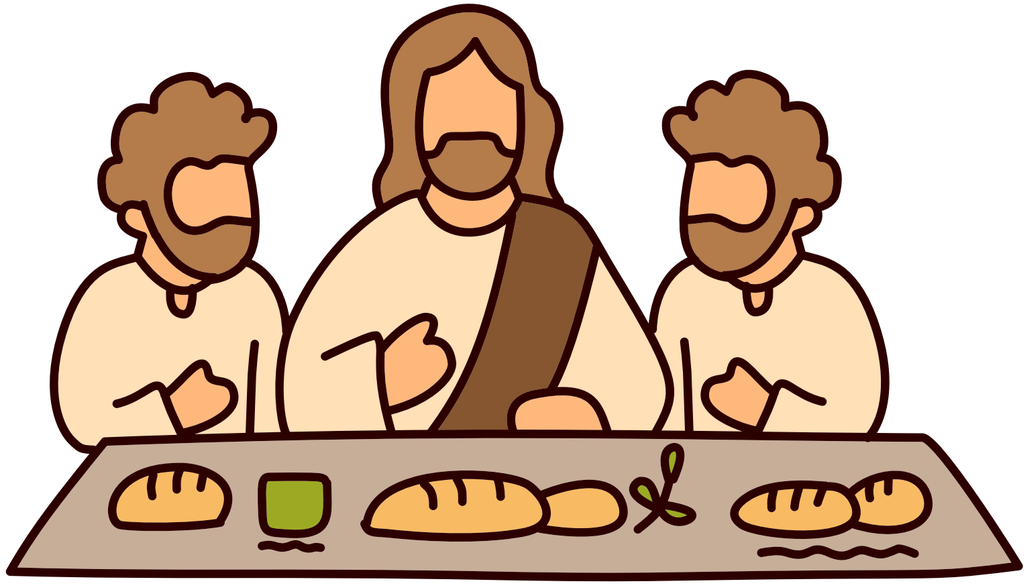
- **The Ultimate Stake:** Judean traditionalists claimed Gentiles *must* be circumcised to be saved.
- **Paul's Line in the Sand:** *Total rejection of physical law* keeping as a requirement for salvation.
- **The Decision:** The Council firmly ruled that circumcision was NOT mandatory for Gentile converts.
- **Why Paul Agreed:** He won his primary theological battle. The core gospel of justification by faith alone was officially preserved.





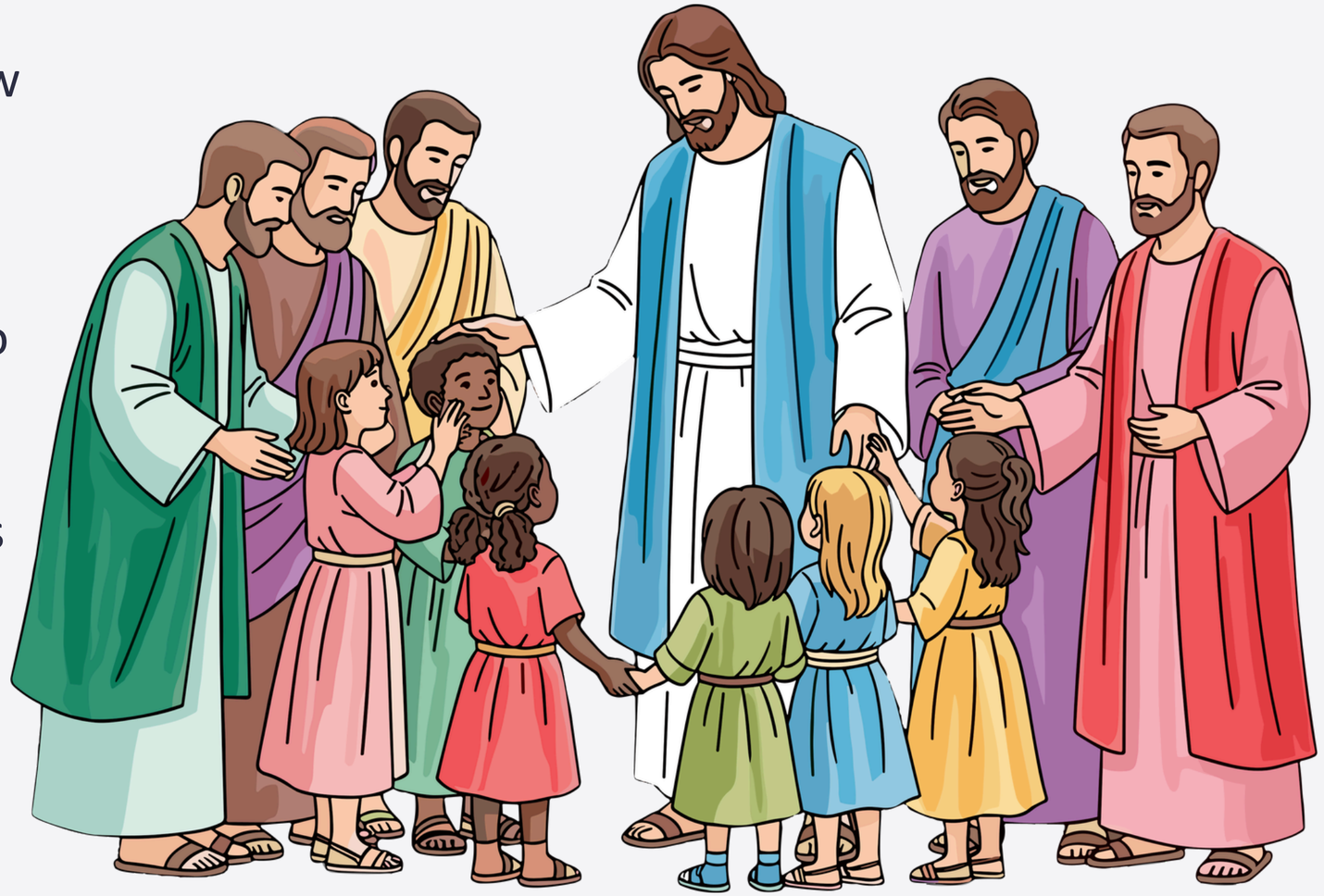
2. Practical Compromise for 'Table Fellowship'

- **The Social Barrier:** Early churches were cross-cultural. Strict Jewish believers could not eat with Gentiles without risking ritual defilement.
- **The Levitical Link:** The 4 restrictions mirror Leviticus 17-18 guidelines for Gentiles living alongside Israel.
- **The Purpose:** Not a condition for eternal salvation, but a blueprint for local church harmony.
- **Why Paul Agreed:** It allowed immediate, frictionless community interaction and mutual respect over shared meals.



3. Theology in Practice: The Law of Love

- **Freedom Restrained:** Paul's own letters (e.g., 1 Corinthians 10) show he believed food rules have no inherent spiritual power.
- **Protecting the Weak:** He consistently instructed believers to willingly drop their rights to avoid stumbling others.
- **Separation of Realities:** Food rules are earthly customs, not eternal salvific requirements.
- **Why Paul Agreed:** Restricting personal freedom out of love for a brother's conscience aligned perfectly with his core ethics.



4. The Timeline Puzzle: Galatians 2

- **The Incident:** Paul publicly rebuked Peter in Antioch because Peter withdrew from eating with Gentiles when a legalistic faction arrived.
- **Scenario A (Post-Council):** If this happened *after* Acts 15, the decree failed immediately. Peter succumbed to pressure, violating the agreement.
- **Scenario B (Pre-Council):** If this happened *before* Acts 15, this very conflict was the catalyst that made Paul seek a definitive ruling in Jerusalem.
- **Why It Matters:** The timeline changes how we view the authority, stability, and immediate impact of the Council's decree.



The Jerusalem Council & The Noahide Laws Today

Tracking an Ancient Theological Pivot to Modern Global Discourses



The Academic & Theological Overlap

- **The Acts 15 Core:** The Council chose four specific restrictions for Gentiles: avoiding idols, blood, strangled meat, and sexual immorality.

- **Levitican Blueprint:** New Testament scholars widely trace these four distinct boundaries directly back to the Leviticus 17-18 guidelines for foreign resident aliens living inside Israel.

- **The Shared Logic:** Both frameworks establish a coordinated 'two-track' structure—the full Mosaic Torah for Jews, and universal moral minimums for the remainder of humanity.

The Modern Inter-Faith Movement

- **Global Outreach Efforts:** Modern Orthodox Jewish organizations (such as Chabad-Lubavitch) actively promote the Seven Laws of Noah as a universal moral code for non-Jews.

- **A Bridge of Accord:** Acts 15 is regularly referenced in Jewish-Christian interfaith dialogue to emphasize deep, historic mutual respect for distinct tracks of faith.

- **No Conversion Required:** It affirms an established, complete path to God for Gentiles that explicitly bypasses the requirement of formal conversion to Judaism.

The Internet 'Agenda' & End-Times Controversy

- **The Idolatry Friction Point:** Strict, classical rabbinic definitions of idolatry classify worshiping a man as divine to be foreign worship, raising viral fears among Trinitarian Christians.

- **Geopolitical Suspicion:** Alternative online commentary frequently frames the promotion of a universal Noahide framework as the foundation for a centralized, deceptive one-world religion.

- **Legal & Historic Precedents:** Critics highlight moments of official civil recognition—like the US Congressional authorization of Education Day—as proof of an underlying shift.

Theological Rebuttal & Conclusion

- **Natively Rooted in Christianity:** Mainstream Christian ministries argue that basic moral boundaries and Noahic parameters are fundamentally rooted inside native New Testament history.

- **Debunking the Digital Panic:** Acts 15 explicitly demonstrates that Paul, Peter, and James actively embraced a customized subset of these laws without compromising the deity of Christ.

- **Summary of the Conflict:** The modern intersection remains a dual phenomenon: a legitimate academic study of history alongside an explosive web of geopolitical anxiety.

NAR’s Role in This

- **Working with President of United States:** Main New Apostolic Reformation leaders are working with the Zionist leaders, alongside the **Orthodox Jews (Noahide Laws)**

- **Pushing Hebrew Roots:** They have actively been causing the church to abandon the name of Jesus, give up Christian holidays, take Christians back to the Law, causing them to totally abandon the history of Christendom, etc.

- **Taking over Media:** They have taken over mainstream Christian television and pushing their Judeo-Christian values to the mass Christendom.

- **Using Council of Jerusalem against Church:** We have seen where they are saying that it justifies them being ecumenical and working with all the religions due to Acts 15!



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and most importantly...

Called of God to be a Watchman

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