

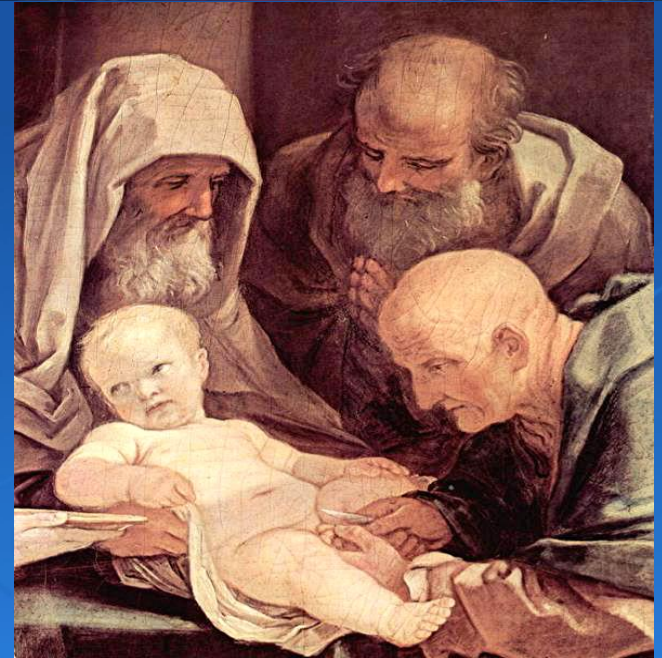
IT'S COMPLICATED

- Chapter 15 is at the physical and literary center of the Book of Acts
- All about the question of gentile involvement in the Yeshua movement
- Circumcision was at the heart of the matter
- Conversion was at the heart of circumcision
- Ritual purity was at the heart of conversion



THE SIGN OF CIRCUMCISION

- The sign that a person wanted to be part of the Abrahamic Covenant
- Abrahamic Covenant:
 - 1) Divided the world into two groups: Hebrews and gentiles
 - 2) Set apart a special land
 - 3) Set up a special relationship between God and the Hebrews
 - 4) Through Abraham's descendants all the families of the earth will be blessed
- Genesis 17:1 - 14



CONVERSION AND PURITY

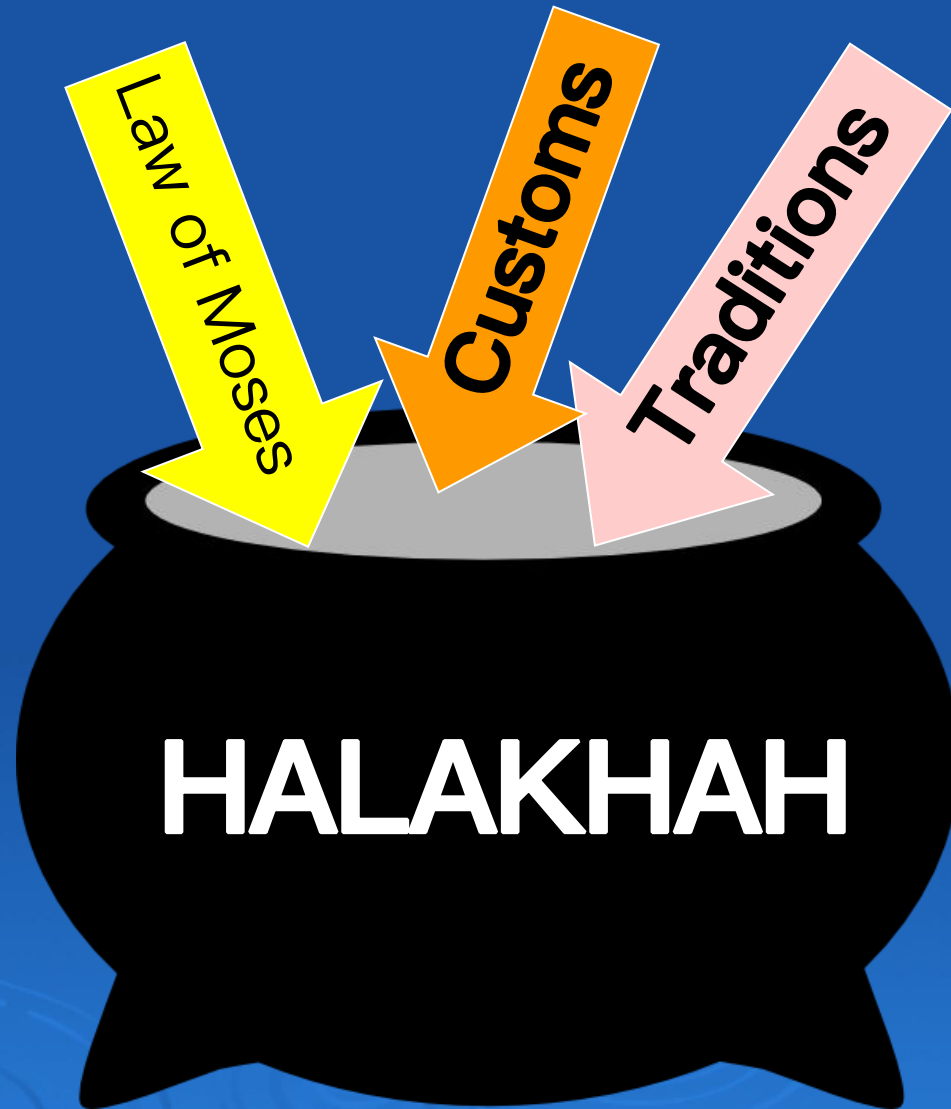


- The act of conversion moves a person from one group to another group
- Circumcision signifies the conversion from gentile to Hebrew
- Ritual purity = clean or unclean
- Jews believed gentiles were inherently unclean
- Uncleanness can be transmitted through contact
- Dealing with gentiles then involves a high risk

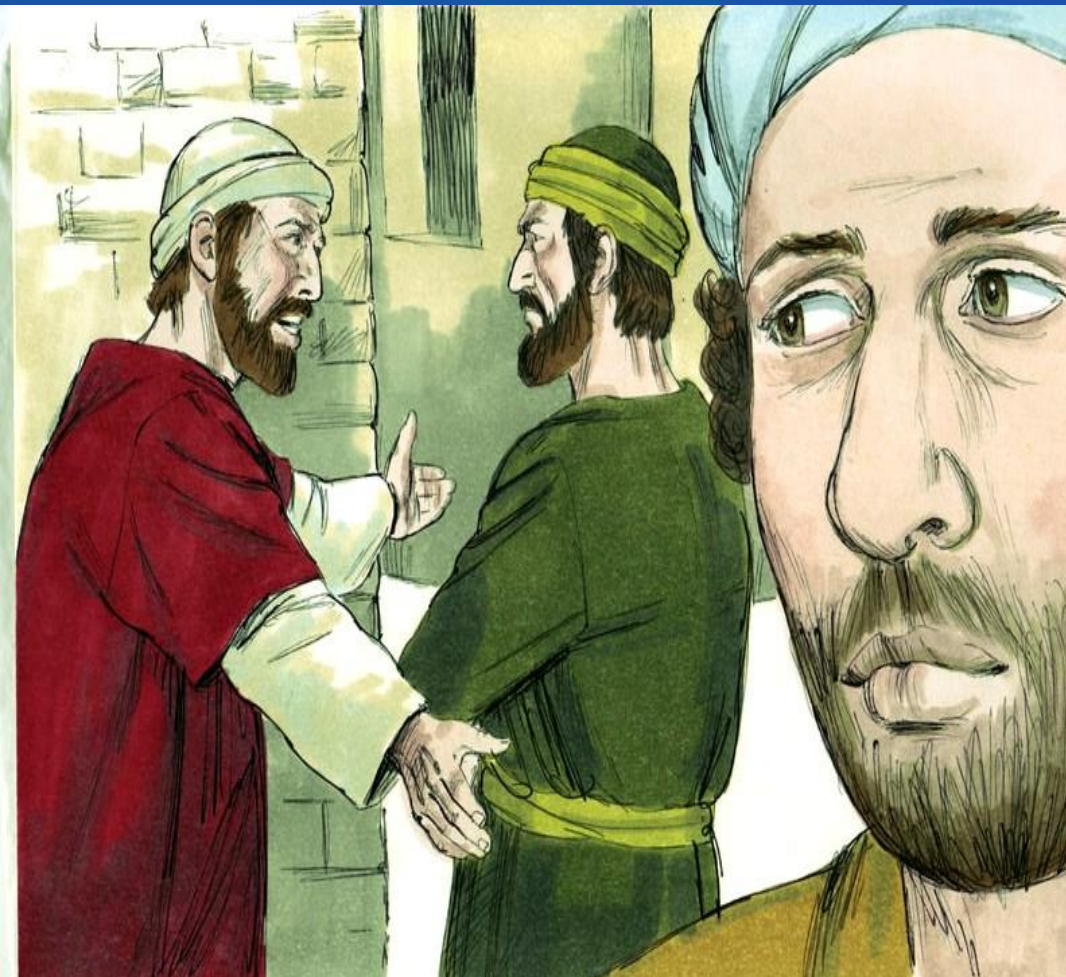


HALAKHAH DICTATED RITUAL PURITY

- Law of Moses = the Biblical Torah
- Traditions = doctrines that ruled behavior
- Customs = ancient cultural practices
- Many intricate laws created about ritual purity
- Rabbi Eliezer vs. Rabbi Joshua on the subject of gentile status
- In the NT, “law” usually means Halakhah

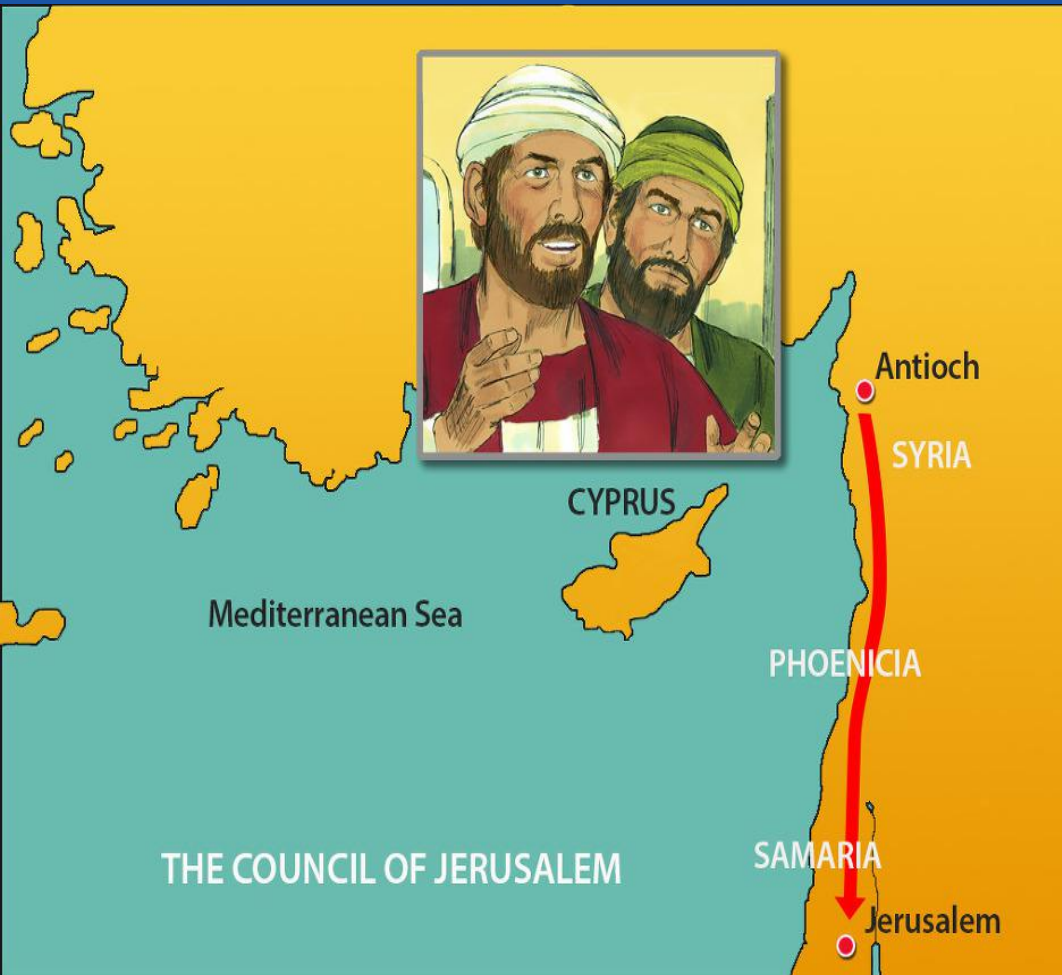


THE CONFLICT OVER CIRCUMCISION



- Jewish Believers came from Judea to Antioch
- Demanded that the gentiles were circumcised
- Process of salvation couldn't be completed without circumcision
- This was NOT the Pretenders vs. the true Believers
- Disciples were in process of creating what would 150 years later become the writings and doctrines of the New Testament

PAUL & BARNABAS GO TO JERUSALEM



- Halakhah was used as the resource for most doctrinal decisions
- The incident with Peter's vision didn't settle every matter of gentile inclusion
- The Jerusalem Council was a common way of settling Halakhic matters
- 350 mile journey from Antioch to Jerusalem

PHARISEES NOT THE BAD GUYS

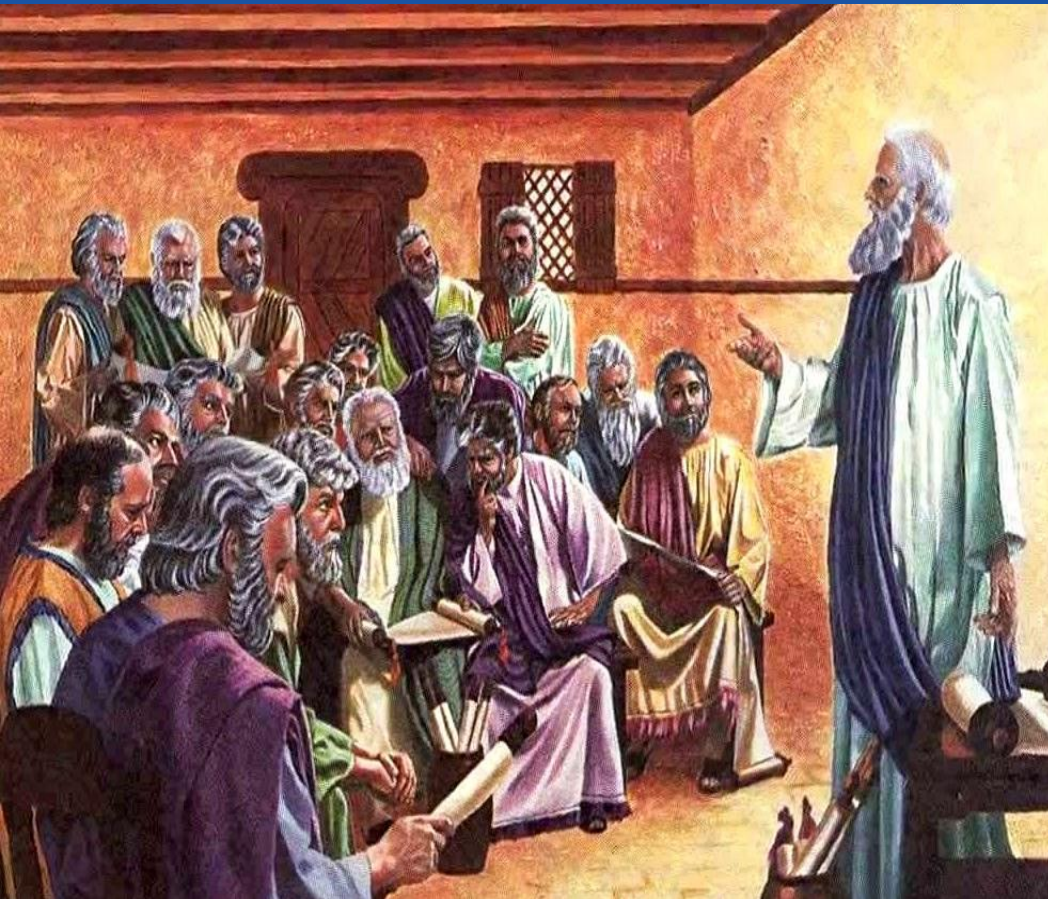
- Paul and Barnabas greeted enthusiastically
- Some Pharisees spoke for circumcision of the gentile Believers
- Pharisee and Believer not mutually exclusive
- Pharisees known for upholding the highest ideals of Judaism
- 7 well defined types of Pharisees
- In Christianity and Judaism, it is traditions and doctrines that define HOW to follow the Bible



The Pharisee

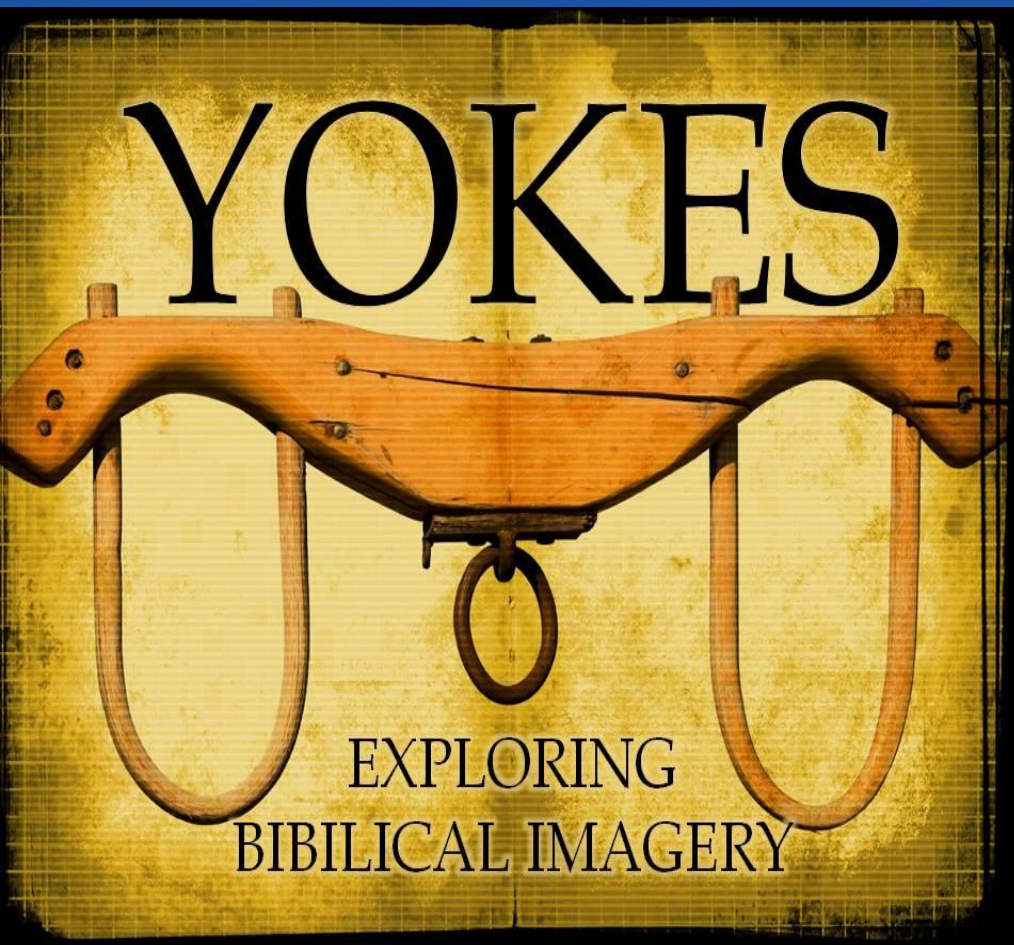


PETER SPEAKS-UP AT THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL



- This was an issue of Halakhah for Messianics!
- Peter, Paul and Barnabas on one side, Pharisees on the other
- James moderator
- Peter says when it comes to salvation, no distinction between Jews and gentiles
- Paul in Romans says it in his own way
- Romans 3:1, 2

THE JEWISH PERCEPTION OF YOKES



- Yoke = *ol*
- Due to Western slavery, yoke is seen as oppressive, back breaking
- For a Jew, a Yoke connects and directs
- A person who is yoked to the Torah is connected and directed by the Torah, not oppressed by the Torah
- Matt. 11 “My yoke is easy....”
- Yeshua employing a standard Jewish metaphor
- Yeshua says to connect to Him and be directed by Him and this will give you rest

THE JOY OF TORAH!

- Christianity has created a false image of Torah observance as primitive, ugly, oppressive
- The “burden” Peter does not want to place on the new gentile Believers is to give them too much too soon
- Most were pagans who know nothing of the God of Israel
- ONLY through Yeshua is salvation possible
- Tractate Yevamoth
- Judaism says that Proselytes should not be given too much; just a few laws and later, when more mature, more instruction can come

