

- Acts 15:20 “...abstain from things polluted by idols...fornication....what is strangled.....blood..”
- Gentiles did not have to convert to Jews
- The 4 rules were derived from the Law of Moses Lev. 17 & 18
- New gentile Believers given just a few commands to start with
- Over time they would grow and advance in knowing and obeying the Torah

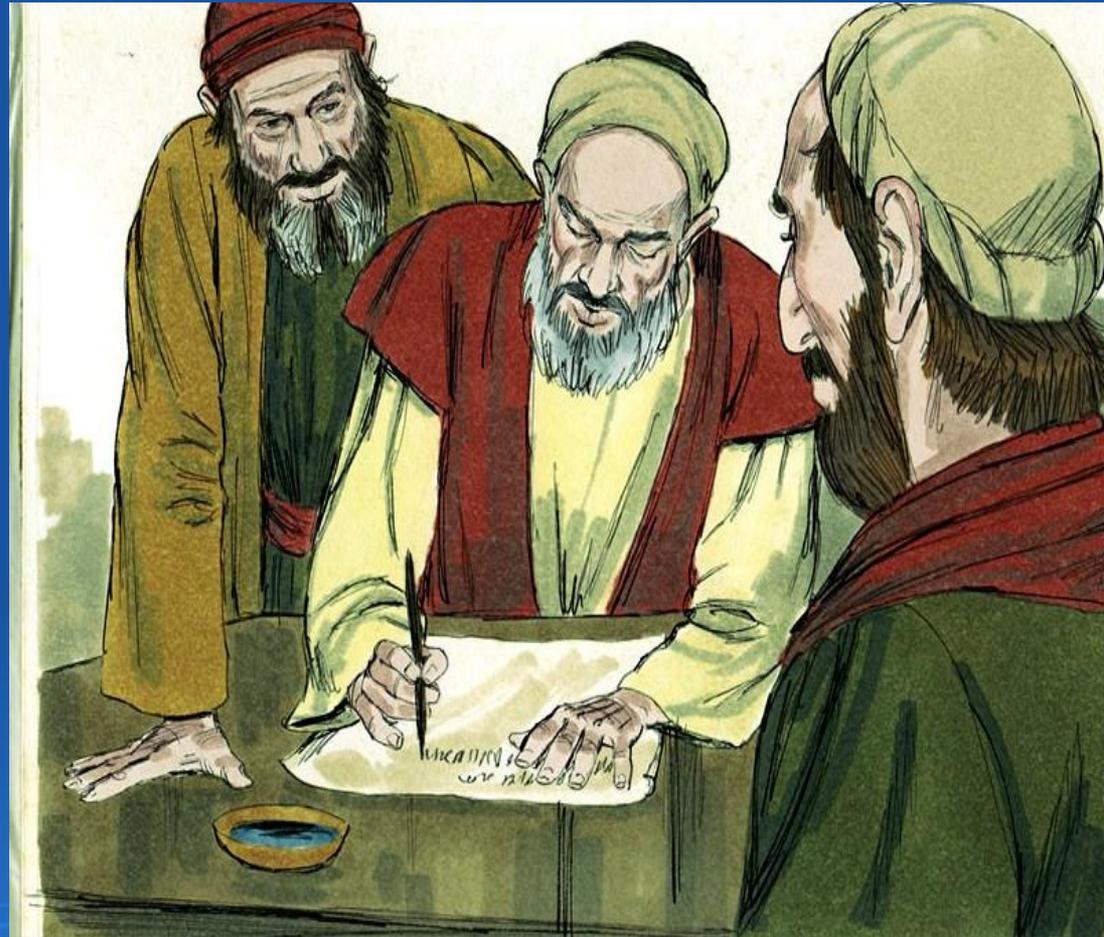
# GRADUAL SPIRITUAL GROWTH

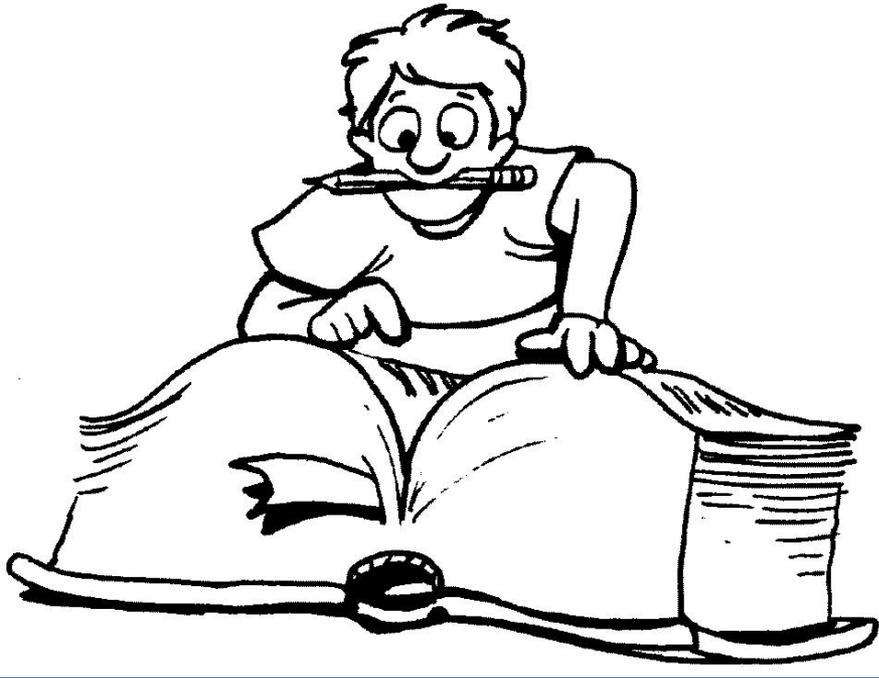


- People who have just come to Christ are like toddlers
- They can't be expected to do too much, or know too much, too soon
- Behavior will not change overnight
- Sin is not excused; but many sins may be due to ignorance of God's ways
- Maturing is a long process that takes nurturing, time and patience

# LETTER TO ANTIOCH

- Y'hudah = Bar-Sabba
- Sila
- Chosen to go with Paul back to Antioch
- Because the group of the Circumcision faction had claimed authority, proof was needed that the letter was authentic
- Prohibition about idols pertains not only to food





# MOSTLY ABOUT FOOD

- Fornication = immoral sexual activity
- Many laws work together to define sexual morality
- Definitions are outlined in the Torah
- Many laws work together to define how to kill food animals
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> rules mainly about food
- 3 of the 4 rules of Acts 15 are about food and diet



# THE ISSUE WITH BLOOD



- “Blood” is a Jewish shorthand term
- Animal and human blood are sacred
- Is this about murder, or food, or is it both?
- The laws of blood involve several Torah laws
- The 4 laws are actually **CATEGORIES** that includes dozens of laws
- Without the Torah these 4 rules can't be defined

- The Jerusalem Council distances itself from the words of the Circumcision faction
- Yet, it is made clear that the Circumcision faction is part of The Way in Jerusalem
- Paul questions the faith of the Circumcision faction, James does not
- Circumcision is nowhere mentioned in the letter
- By following the 4 rules, the gentile Believers will be “doing the right thing”



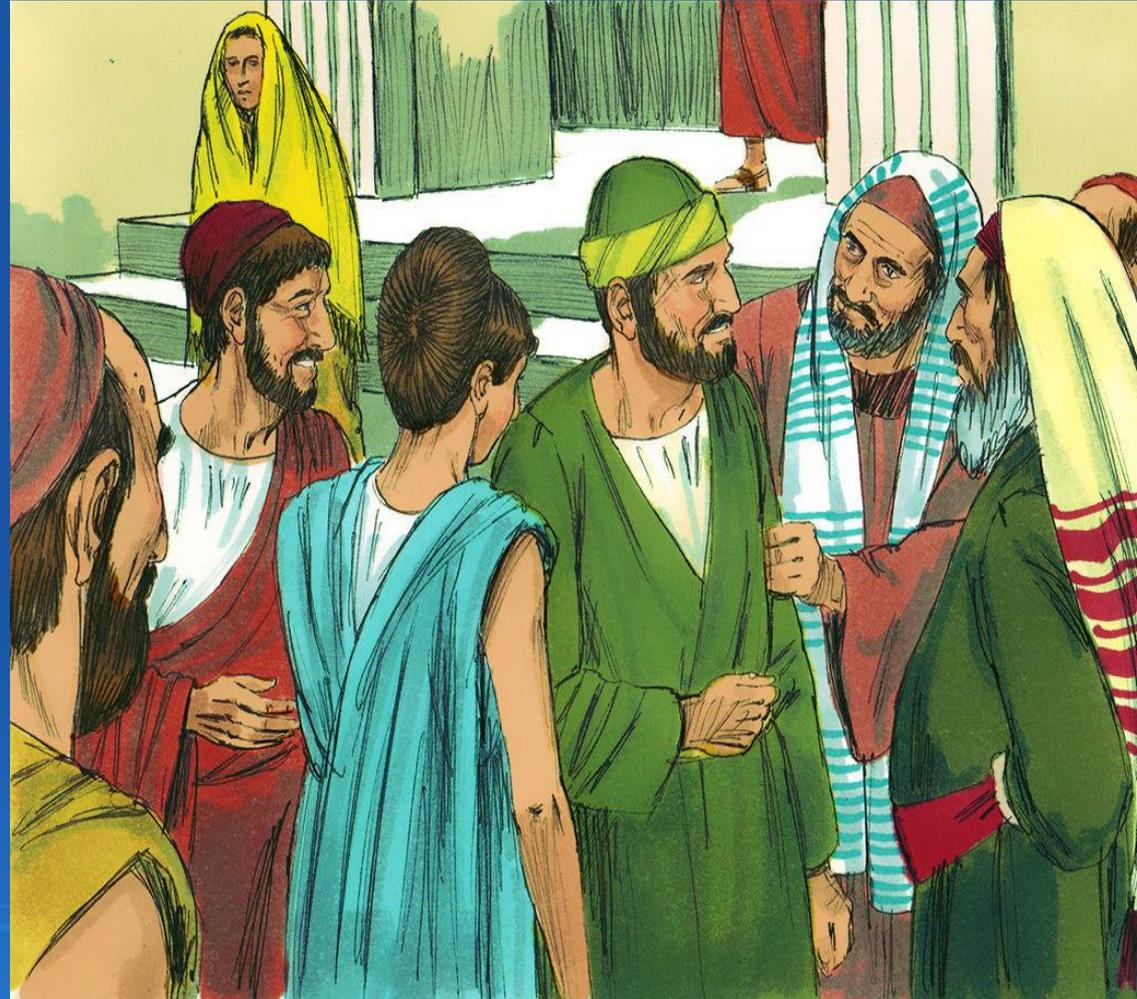
# LAW ABOLISHED BY JAMES?



- No implication that gentiles should only obey 4 rules and shun all others
- But this idea has been read into the passages by Christianity to be separate from Jews
- If the Law has been abolished, then necessarily so have the 4 rules (that are derived from the Law) and the 10 Commandments
- Halal = Muslim “kosher”
- Muslim cleric dedicates meat to Allah
- For a Believer to eat halal meat violates Acts 15 to not eat things dedicated to idols
- Idols = depictions of false gods

# NO CIRCUMCISION REQUIRED !!

- Letter is read to the Antioch congregation; they are relieved and delighted
- Gentiles could stay gentiles and worship Yeshua
- For Jews, if the gentiles practice the 4 rules, issues of ritual purity are solved
- Judah and Sila are called Prophets
- The term Prophets now means men who teach God's Word, not people who predict the future



# PAUL AND BARNABAS SPLIT OVER JOHN MARK

- Paul & Barnabas have a bond with the synagogue in Antioch
- Barnabas wants his nephew John Mark to go with him and Paul on their next journey
- Paul doesn't trust John Mark
- Paul has a different agenda than the Jerusalem leadership
- Disagreements over the nuances of doctrine are reflected when we compare James', Peter's, and Paul's Epistles





# NO ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

- It takes different approaches to evangelize different people
- Israeli Jews don't want to hear much from Christians
- It's hard for structured Americans to operate in chaotic Israel
- It takes believing Israeli Jews to evangelize other Israeli Jews
- Need to have a common cultural experience and speak a common language (Hebrew)
- Our Israel ministries need much freedom to do what is needed to reach Israeli Jews, because methods are different than for evangelizing Westerners

# ONE TEAM BECOMES TWO

- Underlying tensions between Paul and Believers operating out of Jerusalem
- Another underlying tension between Paul and Barnabas over family matters
- Paul's Pharisee background makes him rigid and unbending concerning doctrines
- The decision to not require circumcision for gentile Believers gave Paul what he needed to take the Good News to the gentile world
- God used the acrimonious parting of Paul and Barnabas for good

