

ACTS 10–15

Acts 10:9–16. Precedent 23: Revelations on New Food and Purity Laws

The establishment of new food laws for the Christians is probably the best-known event that occurred in Caesarea, the capital of the Roman province of Judea. However, the application of the new food laws reached much further afield in that it allowed the Jewish converts, wherever they lived, to teach Gentiles without concerns about impurity. The change Peter made through revelation replaced the food laws outlined in Leviticus 11:2–47, at least for those who had accepted Christ and His Apostles. This was a huge change for the Jewish followers of Christ, and it came through Peter, the chief Apostle and holder of the keys of the laws and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Strict Jews had been forbidden to eat in a gentile location or even with Gentiles, and the actual food consumed was subject to definitive laws as to what was clean and what was unclean. An example of the importance of these laws occurred when Judea was ruled by the Seleucid Empire. Under the restrictions of King Antiochus IV, which prohibited Jews from keeping their dietary laws, devout Jews died rather than eat unclean food (1 Maccabees 1:62–63). With this type of history surrounding food laws, changing those laws would have required divine intervention for a devout leader like Peter.

In Jaffa, Peter was staying in the home of Simon the Tanner. Under Jewish practice, tanning was considered to be a despised trade, presumably because it involved contact with the bloody skins of slaughtered animals. While Peter was on a rooftop, the heavens were opened, and Peter had a vision in which he saw himself being offered food that was unclean according to Jewish law. A sheet full of all kinds of animals was lowered from heaven to earth, and Peter was encouraged to “rise, kill, and eat.” He may have wondered at first if his devotion were being tested, but he soon understood that Jesus was the source of the vision. He replied, “Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean” (10:14).

He was told immediately that “what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common [or ordinary]” (10:15). This vision occurred three times, correcting Peter and assuring him that it was no illusion.

Very detailed documentation is provided because of the crucial change for future Christian behavior. The Christian community (at this time comprised mainly of people of Jewish origin) was now, by extension, allowed to eat with *uncircumcised* Gentiles without contracting impurity. This event not only indicated that food-impurity concerns were no longer in effect, which changed the daily lives of Christian Jews enormously, but also opened the way for Christians to teach and associate with Gentiles.

Acts 10:1–8, 17–48; 11:1–21. Precedent 24: Fellowship with People Who Are Not Jews

The day before Peter had his vision, a centurion stationed up the coast in Caesarea also had a daytime visit from an angel of God who told him to contact Peter. The centurion’s name, Cornelius, makes it clear that he was a Roman. Additionally, his military unit was identified as the “Italian band,” which implied that he was born in Italy as opposed to having been conscripted from the provinces. The record describes Cornelius as an orderly and dutiful man who feared God, prayed, gave alms, and was well respected and trusted by the Jews. He dispatched two servants and a soldier to Joppa (Jaffa) to bring Peter, as instructed. As the men, clearly Gentiles, arrived at Peter’s lodging the next day, Peter had received and was still meditating about the implications of the change in the food laws.

When Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius, in a Roman environment, he expressed his initial trepidation at breaking the Jewish laws and pointed out that normally (or previously) it had not been legally acceptable for a Jew to keep company or associate with people of another nation. He explained the change in the law that would allow him to enter freely and teach the many people there whom Cornelius had invited and were eagerly wanting to hear Peter’s message. Peter had accepted the new law and its application to teaching non-Jews: “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34–35).

As Peter taught “the good news of peace by Jesus Christ,” the influence of the Holy Ghost provided divine endorsement that the Romans were ready for baptism, causing astonishment among the six men “of the circumcision” who had traveled to Caesarea with Peter, “because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God” (Acts 10:45–46). This confirmed to those seven (Peter and the six others) that the converted Gentiles were eligible and ready for baptism.

This was yet another significant change that had come from divine revelation and confirmation. Peter and his companions were provided with powerful evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence in support of this case. Later, Peter gained the full endorsement for this Churchwide change by the approval of the apostolic council in Jerusalem (see Acts 15:1–35), where he described the event and defended the change in policy.

In that account, he clearly stated the spiritual reality establishing this precedent for receiving Gentiles by baptism into the Church. Peter explained: “Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost (Mark 1:8). Forasmuch then as God gave them [these Gentiles] the like gift as he had given unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God” by not allowing those who had received the witness of the Holy Ghost to be baptized? (Acts 11:6–17).

Acts 11:21–26. Precedent 25: Naming the Church

The central governing leaders of the Church, who resided in Jerusalem, sent Barnabas from Jerusalem north to Antioch. After working there for a time, Barnabas went northwest to Tarsus (Paul’s childhood home and the capital city of Cilicia), presumably with instructions “to seek Saul” and to bring him back to Antioch (the capital city of the Roman province of Syria). The record immediately following Paul’s arrival back in Antioch declared that members of the Church there were “called Christians” for the first time. Interestingly, the text uses the Greek term *chrēmatisai*, which is translated in the King James Version as “called” in stating that “they were first *called* Christians” (11:26). But this term was often used in a special legal sense, meaning to take on or to bear an official name, decree, or ordinance made by a sovereign or public authority. By specifying the particular location and time of this development, Acts 11:26 strongly suggests that Paul had been deliberately brought back to Antioch to register the Christian Church as a legitimate organization in accordance with Roman law. His Roman citizenship and his legal knowledge of the Roman system made it possible for him to obtain formal Roman registration for the Church—an important organizational step. Acts 11:26 says that more than just people casually calling the followers of Jesus *Christians*, the name of the Church was officially registered, allowing, among other things, free travel of Church members from province to province and the transfer of contributions from one place to another.

In fact, Rome required all organizations to register officially, not because they were religious organizations but because they were corporate bodies, having responsible organizers and leaders. The Roman control of such groups and organizations was tight, particularly so that the Romans could stifle any potential conspiracies or anti-Roman conduct. For example, any group that met at night and conducted ceremonies behind closed doors was particularly suspect. Suspicions may have arisen especially regarding Christian groups who did not reverence Roman gods. Thus, all Church efforts could have been impeded throughout the Roman world if the Church was considered an illegal, unregistered organization. It should be noted that the Greeks had no such laws and were very casual about the formation of all kinds of associations. Even today, in most countries and for various reasons, the registration of churches is legally required.

Acts 11:27–28. Precedent 26: Distinguishing True Prophets

This next incident in Acts established a precedent for validating true prophecy. Agabus, a prophet from Jerusalem, had correctly prophesied drought and famine that occurred in the days of the Roman emperor Claudius (Acts 11:28). Deuteronomy 18:21 asks how one may know a true prophet from a false one: “And if thou say in thine heart, how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?” The key for knowing was then provided: “When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follows not, nor comes to pass, that is a thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously,” and you shall take no notice of it or revere him (Deuteronomy 13:22). In the case of Agabus, it was acceptable to count him as a true prophet. This was in harmony with the teaching of Jesus that prophets should be judged by their fruits.

Christians should thus “beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit” (Matthew 7:15–17). Christians were to view the gift of prophecy as alive, encompassing more than just the prophecies about the Messiah. The new community of Christians were to continue to seek the gifts of the Spirit, separating authentic prophecy and appropriate spiritual gifts from information or inappropriate assertions that derived from unacceptable sources.

This note on Agabus was not an isolated incident. He reappeared in Caesarea as Paul arrived there on his way up to the temple in Jerusalem with his gentile converts (Acts 21:8–14). Upon meeting Paul, Agabus prophesied again by the Holy Spirit. He used Paul’s belt to bind his own hands and feet to emphasize his point (like Jeremiah, who often used props and allegories to convey his revelations). Agabus correctly prophesied that the owner of the belt would be arrested and delivered to the Romans. In response Paul said he was willing not only to be bound but to die in Jerusalem.

Acts 11:29–30. Precedent 27: Contributing Money to Church Headquarters in Jerusalem

When the famine prophesied by Agabus did occur “in the days of Claudius Caesar” (Acts 11:28), the Christians in Antioch were ready to respond charitably, sending relief according to their ability to the Church in Jerusalem (11:29). The severity of famine or drought in that area is confirmed by Josephus’s reporting of the famed generosity of Helena, Queen of Adiabene, who was a convert to Judaism. She sent wheat from Egypt and dried figs from Cyprus to aid in hunger relief. This all set a precedent for sending funds to the Church leadership in Jerusalem and counting welfare contributions toward the donor’s righteousness.

As well as setting a foundation for the humanitarian work of the Church, which continues in Christian churches today as an essential element of Christian behavior, this case provided a legal precedent for

redirecting the annual temple tax. Referring to the time after the temple was no more, the Talmud, Baba Bathra 9a, reads:

R. Eleazar further said: When the Temple was still in existence, a man would pay his shekel, and thus obtain atonement. Now that the Temple no longer exists, if one gives to charity, well and good, but if not, heathens come and take (it) from them forcibly. And even so it will be reckoned to them as if they had given charity, as it is written, [I will make] thine exactors righteousness (Isa 60:17).

Acts 12:1–25. Precedent 28: God Will Avenge the Wrongs of the Proud and Wicked

Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, executed James the brother of John, and when he saw that it had pleased the Jewish leaders, he also arrested Peter during Passover—the same time of year when Jesus had been arrested and crucified (Acts 12:1–4). Herod placed Peter under guard in prison, intending to “bring him forth” for trial when the festivities were over, but Peter was rescued by an angel and the iron gates of the prison opened of their own accord. Peter declared that God had “delivered him” (*exeilato*) out of bondage as He had delivered the Israelites from Egypt and David from the hand of Saul, accounts that contain close parallels to Peter’s language.¹ Peter then made his way to the house of Mary the mother of John, where he told the disciples to tell James that he was free, but Peter went elsewhere to hide from Herod. When Herod could not find Peter, he questioned the guards and had them killed (12:12–19).

Herod Agrippa then went to Caesarea, where on the second day of a major event, Herod came dressed for his speech in “royal apparel” (12:21). Josephus reports that his robe was made “wholly of silver” and that when the sun shone on it, it was so splendid that his admirers, who wanted to gain his favor, shouted out, “It is the voice of a god and not a man” (12:22). Josephus added, “Upon this the king did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery.”² While seated on his throne, Herod was struck down by a destroying angel for failing to give God the glory (12:20–23). Herod died a grueling death five days later. His death was viewed by the Christian community as a talionic death sentence (letting the punishment fit the crime) avenging the deaths of James and of Herod Agrippa’s own guards. This divine punishment also served as a reminder for the Christians to honor God and avoid arrogance.

Acts 13:1–4. Precedent 29: Setting Apart Barnabas and Paul as Missionaries

This short episode establishes the importance of fasting in calling and setting apart people to serve in Church assignments. In Antioch were five prophets and teachers—namely, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Paul. As they ministered and fasted, they were inspired by the Holy Ghost to “separate,”

or “call,” Barnabas and Paul to a new assignment (Acts 13:2). Having fasted and prayed, they laid their hands upon them and sent them forth by the Holy Ghost (Acts 13:3–4).

The ordinance of setting apart by the laying on of hands was previously used in calling the seven men to take care of the widows (Acts 6:6). This was a part of ancient ordinations, used as far back as in calling Joshua to succeed Moses and in ordaining priests and elders among the Nephites.³

These leaders in Acts 13 also fasted and prayed before extending this holy calling to Paul and Barnabas. Fasting had been used in biblical times by Moses, Elijah, and Jesus, who fasted for extended periods in preparing to receive revelation from God. Thus, the five here may have been seeking inspiration on whom to call and where to send them. In past times, fasting was mostly used during times of mourning, tragedy, or seeking forgiveness on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:27, 29). But Jesus had made it clear that He wanted His disciples to fast once He was no longer in their presence and that when they did so, they were to anoint their heads with oil, wash their faces, and fast in a private or sacred place—not to be seen publicly—so that the Lord could bless, inspire, and strengthen them (Matthew 6:17–18; Luke 5:35). Today, fasting is similarly used extensively in the restored Church of Jesus Christ for blessing, in healing the sick, in asking for guidance from the Holy Ghost, in extending and accepting callings, in giving ordinations, and much more.

Acts 13:4–12. Precedent 30: The Magician Elymas Bar-Jesus Is Discredited

On their own and guided by the Lord, Paul and Barnabas went first to Cyprus. Recall that Barnabas was a Levite of Cyprus who had sold his land and given the proceeds to the Apostles (Acts 4:36–37). So, he probably had respectable connections there. On the island of Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas were summoned by Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul. Paul’s reputation as a Roman citizen would have been something the governor would have taken note of. Moreover, he “desired to hear the word of God.” However, he had with him a sorcerer or diviner named Bar-Jesus, also known as Elymas, a Jew who aimed to prevent Sergius Paulus from hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ (13:6). The magician’s interactions with the proconsul, while uncertain, raise several possible legal concerns.

First, multiple Roman laws dealt with magicians. Magicians, sorcerers, and fortune tellers had been a persistent problem for many years in Rome, judging by the number of incidents reported and the legislation that later developed. Rome did not avoid the use of divination; no battles were fought nor were major decisions made before the auguries had been examined. However, when there was any chance that prophecies and divinations might disrupt the order of the state, such activities were strictly controlled. Exposing a derelict soothsayer was considered a great service to Rome.

Second, one wonders how and why Sergius Paulus was using a soothsayer, especially one of Jewish origin. Most Romans, both the leaders and the general population, believed in and were fascinated by the mystic arts. Thus, the ruling parties were particularly concerned about limiting their use only to trusted

officials. These officials would be allowed to practice divination only in strictly controlled situations. A few years later, the Roman writer Pliny commented on the prevalence of soothsayers of Jewish origin that flourished in Cyprus, so the situation there may have been complicated.⁴

Third, to a devout Jew, the practice of black arts was illegal, though culturally Jewish mystics had been around at least since the days of Moses (Leviticus 19:31; 20:6). For Elymas, an appointment as a magician to a proconsul of the Roman Empire may have been a promising career path. Moreover, seeking to turn Sergius Paulus away from the Christian faith may have been a natural inclination among Jewish people (Acts 13:8).

Fourth, in terms of evidence, in proving Bar-Jesus to be a false prophet, Paul caused him to be temporarily blind (13:6). Blindness, a well-known metaphor for lack of understanding, was used frequently in the scriptures as a talionic effect from God for those who did not “see” or understand the error of their ways. The temporary blindness inflicted on Elymas (and earlier upon Paul himself) served more as a teaching tool than as a final punishment. Paul’s success led the proconsul to believe and admire the doctrines of Jesus.

Coincidentally, in this episode dealing with Sergius Paulus, Luke states that “Saul is also called Paulus” (13:9), the name by which the Apostle Paul will be known throughout the rest of the New Testament.

Acts 13:13–52. Precedent 31: Expulsion from Antioch

Paul and Barnabas moved on to Antioch of Pisidia—a different Antioch from the one in Syria from which Paul and Barnabas had departed on this missionary journey. Paul and Barnabas attended the synagogue, where after reading the prescribed scriptures for the week, the leaders of the synagogue invited Paul and Barnabas to offer any “words of exhortation” they might wish to add. Here, a legal conflict arose with Jewish leaders over Paul’s interpretation of the law (Acts 13:13–52). Paul made two legally significant arguments.

First, he claimed that Jesus was condemned by the rulers of Jerusalem even though no cause of death was found against him (13:28). As Peter did in Jerusalem (see 3:17), Paul conceded that they did so ignorantly: “They knew him not” (13:27).

Second, he then taught that all believers are justified by Jesus in all things, something that the law of Moses could not do (13:39), and hence there was no further need for animal sacrifices. (Hebrews 9:12, 14 similarly explains this detail.) This was the first time that it was taught explicitly that animal sacrifice was no longer useful let alone necessary. Paul’s instruction here came to serve as an important point in Christian doctrine. Paul defined justification as the “sure mercies of David,” quoting Isaiah 55:3, which uses this phrase as a clarification of “the everlasting covenant” (Acts 13:34). Also, Paul connected the life of Christ with the promises and teachings of the Jewish heritage.

The next Sabbath day, “almost the whole city,” it says, “came together to hear him,” but not at the synagogue. Paul and Barnabas’s arguments convinced many Jews and even more Gentiles, which drew the envy of the leaders of the synagogue. They stirred up persecution among some powerful women

and the city's rulers, who expelled Paul and Barnabas from the city (13:50). Following the instruction of Jesus as they left, Paul and Barnabas shook the dust off their feet as an indictment against the Jewish leaders in Antioch.⁵ Paul's opportunistic uses of scripture, logic, and testimony became important models among the growing Christian community, as did his departure to avoid further conflict and perhaps even premature martyrdom.

Acts 14:1–7. Precedent 32: Evading Assault in Iconium

Although Paul and Barnabas remained in Iconium for some time and a “great multitude” composed of both Jews and Greeks had accepted the word (Acts 14:1), the people of the city were divided. Some of the residents and converts supported Paul and Barnabas, while others supported the Jewish leadership. But in Iconium, the Jewish population was a minority, and the missionaries were destabilizing the cooperation with the local Gentiles. Thus, both Jews and Gentiles who had not accepted the message were hostile, raising the stakes considerably. The unbelieving Jews who did not accept the teaching, perhaps like those in Antioch, resented this disruption and stirred up the Gentiles in hate against the believers. The term used for unbelievers (*apeitheō*) also means “to be disobedient, or to refuse to comply.”

There is a possibility that the “unbelieving Jews” not only were those who had never believed the teachings of their Jewish ancestors but also were some who had once believed but had become disaffected, perhaps having accepted Hellenistic ideas, and who had backed away from standard Jewish principles and thus rejected Christian doctrines on philosophical grounds. Of course, several levels of observance existed among the Jews, as did various degrees of reception or rejection of Jewish tradition in general. Those differences would have produced various reactions to the fledging and already somewhat diverse Christian movement itself.

Unlike in Antioch, where the city leaders had simply expelled Paul and Barnabas, in Iconium the Jews with their leaders and the unconverted Gentiles came together and planned to assault and stone the two Apostles. The Greek word *hybrizō* (translated in the King James Version as “assault”) refers to behaviors including anything from “running riot” to the legal sense of “committing physical outrage on people,” as well as less formal, mob-style behaviors. In the end, stoning was a formal type of Jewish punishment or banishment. The two missionaries sensed or were warned of danger and fled to Lystra and Derbe. The Greek implies that they escaped and fled to take refuge.

Acts 14:8–28. Precedent 33: Surviving Stoning in Lystra and Converting Many

After escaping the first attempted stoning in Iconium, Paul and Barnabas fled south to Lystra, where they healed a faithful lame man (Acts 14:8). This is the first recorded instance of Paul performing a miracle. The local population was so impressed that they accepted the miracle as a divine manifestation of a higher

power even within their own religious system, and they concluded that Barnabas and Paul were literally their own pagan gods—they thought that Zeus and Hermes had come down in the forms of Paul and Barnabas (14:12). So they initiated a festival in honor of Paul and Barnabas. The priest brought garlands and oxen for a sacrifice, which raised a legal issue for the two missionaries since according to their traditional Jewish laws, participation in any pagan worship and eating meat from pagan sacrifices were strictly forbidden. As will be seen in the next chapter, this rule was soon reinforced for Christians of all backgrounds in the Council in Jerusalem (15:20).

But now Paul, a former Pharisee, and Barnabas, a Levite, were now in danger of being worshipped as false deities or at least participating in the worship of other gods, which was also entirely illegal according to Hebrew law.⁶ To correct the wrong impression and prevent setting a bad example, the two elders ran among the people tearing their clothes. This was a sign of mourning, sorrow, repentance, and turning to the Lord. Obviously, Jewish laws against participating in pagan ceremonies and festivals were not to be relaxed for Christians.

Ironically, Paul and Barnabas were spared that problem by the arrival of angry Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who had followed the pair to Lystra, determined to prevent the Christian message from spreading. They soon convinced the local leaders that Paul was worthy of death, and they took him and stoned him. Assuming that he was dead, the people dragged him out of the city to leave him for dead. (Apparently, stoning within city limits was acceptable in the diaspora, though not in Judea.) Whether by a miracle of divine healing or by an official priesthood blessing given by “the disciples [who] stood round about him” (14:20) or by his own sheer determination, Paul arose, walked back into the city, and waited until the next day to leave. Having taught many, Barnabas and Paul retraced their steps back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, giving them a second chance to accept the gospel of Jesus Christ (14:21). They taught that faith and enduring tribulation would be necessary, and they converted many, ordained elders with fasting and prayer, and recommended them to the Lord (14:22–23). Here, the followers of Christ had evidence that God would preserve them, whether in this life or the next.

Acts 15:1–41. Important Actions Adopted by the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem

In this chapter, we see the apostolic council in Jerusalem functioning as a deliberating body issuing binding rules. The missionary successes of Paul, Barnabas, and others among the Gentiles triggered important questions regarding baptized converts of non-Jewish origin, such as (a) how much of the law of Moses did they need to keep, or had all the practices of the law been fulfilled? and (b) were they required to be circumcised, following a commandment that went back beyond Moses to the time of Abraham? (Genesis 17:10). The early Christian Apostles were building new precedents based on the teachings of Jesus. He reinforced the moral issues and codes of conduct standing behind the Ten Commandments and other laws. However, many other previous practices had yet to be addressed. And when Paul and Barnabas arrived

back at the city of Antioch in Syria, where they had originally been set apart for their missionary work, some Jewish members of the Church from Jerusalem were preaching there that gentile converts still needed to be circumcised (Acts 15:1). Though they were conscious that Jesus had fulfilled the law, they did not see that as abolishing all its practices; they saw it as important to obey every “jot and tittle” of the law, as Jesus had instructed (Matthew 5:17), but now just with more purpose and spirit. A second group, which included Paul, believed that many of the practical matters of the law of Moses were now fulfilled and should no longer be observed. These divergent views caused no small disputation (Acts 15:2), so Paul and Barnabas and others brought the issues before the apostolic council in Jerusalem.

The existence and authority of the leaders in Jerusalem reflects a precedent in and of itself. Barnabas, for example, had been sent as a missionary from “the church that was in Jerusalem” (11:22). The more formal council that assembled for this purpose was fairly sizeable, involving Apostles and elders (15:4). The basis for adapting and abandoning some of the Jewish practices had been laid by Peter’s vision in Capernaum, in which the food laws were clearly revoked and baptizing Gentiles had been formally accepted (10; 15:7–11). Paul and Barnabas testified of the miracles and wonders occurring among their gentile converts (15:12).

With the council apparently unified in their decision, James, who appeared to be conducting the meeting, proposed that the Apostles write an order to deliver their official decision to the troubled parts of the Church explaining that circumcision was not necessary for gentile converts, “for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things” (15:28). However, the decision went on to provide that those converts, like the Jews, must continue to obey the most ancient core of the laws pertaining to eating unclean meat and essential purity—namely, those laws stemming from the days of Noah that prohibited pollution by contact with idols, fornication, consumption of strangled meats, and impure contacts with blood (15:20, 29; compare Genesis 8:20–9:27). Regarding any requirement of circumcision, the council affirmed that they had given “no such commandment” (Acts 15:24), apparently leaving that as a personal option but not a requirement (Paul would take Timothy to be circumcised in Acts 16:3).

The precedential significance of the council included not only that they formed a formal committee and made these decisions but also that they developed a formal manner of resolving these issues within the early Church and established a method for sharing them with the members in writing (15:23). Judas and Silas spoke with the spirit of prophecy, bearing testimony and exhorting the brethren (15:32). Thus, here we have almost a handbook of how they went about handling and publishing their decisions.

When the council was dismissed, everyone was in agreement on the issues that had been discussed and resolved. Paul and Barnabas stayed in Syria for a while but then parted ways. Barnabas chose to take John Mark with him as his companion back to his homeland of Cyprus, and Paul took Silas with him to his hometown in the province of Cilicia (15:39).

Notes

- 1 Acts 12:11; compare Exodus 3:8; 2 Samuel 22:1.
- 2 Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 19.343–351.
- 3 Numbers 27:23; Deuteronomy 34:9; Alma 6:1; Moroni 2:1–3.
- 4 Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, 30.2.
- 5 Acts 13:51; see Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5.
- 6 Exodus 20:3–6; 22:20; Leviticus 19:4; Deuteronomy 17:2–5.

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