

# The Asians Believe

## Acts 13–15

### ▶ Before we begin

1. Describe a “quirk” that you have which remained after you became a Christian.

In this study we will be looking at two main stories: Paul's first missionary journey to Asia Minor and the Council in Jerusalem.

### ▶ Set apart

In 13:1–3 we see the Holy Spirit declaring to the Antioch congregation that Saul and Barnabas have been set apart for a particular “work” (v. 2). We will look briefly at what this work is.

2. Skim through chapter 13 and 14 and trace out Paul and Barnabas' journey on the map provided.
3. As Paul and Barnabas visited each city, they followed the same pattern, and encountered the same response, almost every time. What is the pattern?
4. Looking back at your answer to question 3, what's different about Lystra?

It appears that there is no synagogue in Lystra. There, Paul and Barnabas encountered a rather fickle crowd of pagans. They were first convinced that the missionaries were gods, then later were led by the Jews to end up stoning Paul. Nevertheless, some of these believed, and the gospel has truly reached the pagan population.

Thus the progress of the gospel can be summarised in the following diagram.



### ▶ No small dissension

The rapid progression of the gospel among Jews and Gentiles introduced a new problem.

Read 15:1–35.

5. What is the issue here? Why do you think it attracted so much attention?
6. How did each of the following people contribute to the argument at the Council?
  1. Peter
  2. Barnabas and Paul
  3. James

7. The Council, having agreed to the conclusion, nevertheless gave some instructions. Why do you think the instructions were given? Do you think they are appropriate? Why or why not?

The Council addressed a fundamental question: does a Gentile have to become a Jew before becoming a Christian? Some said yes, while others said no. Peter summed up the conclusion well in 15:11: "We believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will".

► **Where the rubber hits the road**

8. What do we learn about Jesus and the gospel in these chapters?
9. If we are saved by Jesus' grace and not through who we are, why can't we continue in our past practices?
10. In what ways do we place unnecessary obstacles that hinder others from becoming Christians?

