

Audio Transcript of Sermon  
January 16, 2021  
Acts-The Circumcision Controversy

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Paul and Barnabas had returned to Antioch, the cosmopolitan capital of the Roman province of Syria where they were staying with the brethren. While they were there they met men who came from Judea, the area around Jerusalem, who taught that it was necessary to be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas had been teaching that it was through Jesus Christ that we are saved, which is what the church had been teaching. Prior to the death of Jesus the people believed that one had to be a descendant of Abraham conforming to the religious faith to be saved, and these men were claiming this was again the teaching of the church. Today we could use the resources available to us, land lines, cell phones, email, and the internet to quickly connect with others to resolve this issue. Back then, none of these resources were available to them, and it was decided after a heated discussion and debate that Paul and Barnabas should go to Jerusalem with certain others to discuss this matter of circumcision with the apostles and elders. Later we will find out one of these men was Titus. Acts fifteen verse one.

**Acts 15:1-29**

- 1. And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.**
- 2. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.**

On the way to Jerusalem, they stopped by congregations along the way and shared the news of the conversion of the gentiles which caused great joy. They came to Jerusalem where they were well received and also shared the news of the conversion of the gentiles. While there, they became aware there was a group identified as a sect of believing Pharisees who taught there was a need to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses. Verse three.

**3. And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.**

**4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.**

**5. But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.**

For each of us in our calling, we need to be mindful of any prior bias we may have brought with us to the faith. For instance, in 2020, the United States had a contentious Presidential election. We need to be mindful if we have brought liberal or conservative ideals with us in our calling. God is not a liberal God, nor is God a conservative God. God is God and cannot be defined by human limitations. God adheres to no particular party, nor is God limited by the constructs of any religious faith, because God is God and greater than these all. We live in a world based on the knowledge of good and evil. God lives an existence reflecting the tree of life, which transcends good and evil. Beyond politics and religion, wealth, education, where we live, who we live with, and how we earn a living add bias to our viewpoint of life. We cannot allow our bias to impact our faith. Our faith needs to impact our bias. This group of ex-Pharisees allowed their bias to impact what they believed regarding the faith of Jesus, and what they believed was far removed from what should have been believed.

The apostles and elders came together to consider this concern and Peter led the discussion reminding everyone that he knew it was God's intent that the gentiles hear the gospel and believe, and that these same gentiles were given the Holy Spirit. He explained that the gentiles had been purified through faith and like the Jews who were called, would be saved through Jesus and the forgiveness of sins His sacrifice provides. Paul and Barnabas then shared with the group all that they encountered in their recent trip to the gentiles. Verse six.

**6. And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.**

**7. And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among**

**us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.**

**8. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;**

**9. And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.**

**10. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?**

**11. But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.**

**12. Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.**

Next, James spoke and reminded everyone that Simeon saw that God had visited the gentiles to bring them to salvation, as a people for the name of God, and that the tabernacle of David which had fallen down would be rebuilt so that this residue of the children of Israel and the gentiles would seek after God and Jesus. The temple had a court of the gentiles where any person could congregate. The tabernacle referenced here could refer to rebuilding the physical building in Jerusalem, and if this were the case, the gentiles would be limited to this courtyard area of the temple. Through this physical temple, the gentiles could not be saved, nor could any Jew or Christian. We know salvation is through Jesus and through the calling of God the Father can people seek Jesus Christ and God the Father. Verse thirteen.

**13. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:**

**14. Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.**

**15. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,**

**16. After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:**

**17. That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.**

**18. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.**

James suggested to the group that instead of creating a burden for the people that would require adherence to the law of Moses and a painful ritual of circumcision that they instead provide general guidance on how to live their lives as a converted gentile. Gentiles lived in cities where gods, small g, were worshipped with all of the rituals that come with the worship of a pagan god. James suggested that converted gentiles avoid fornication, here likely referencing spiritual fornication, religious idolatry. Gentiles were to be reminded not to mix pagan religious beliefs with their faith in Jesus. The reference to things strangled and blood could be a reference to a type of animal sacrifice where the animal was strangled and boiled whole. The Scythians were known to strangle animals as their method of sacrifice. James concluded that if the Gentiles wanted to learn about the law of Moses, they could go to the synagogue on the Sabbath where they could learn more. Verse nineteen.

**19. Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:**

**20. But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.**

**21. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.**

The group decided to send Judas Barsabas and Silas along with Paul and Barnabas to relay this message to the gentiles at Antioch, in Syria, and Cilicia. Paul and Barnabas were sent because the brethren there knew them, and Silas and Judas Barsabas, identified as prophets later in the chapter, were sent because they represented the voice of Jerusalem. The apostles and elders wanted to present a united response to this concern. Verse twenty-two.

**22. Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:**

**23. And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:**

**24. Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:**

**25. It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,**  
**26. Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.**  
**27. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.**  
**28. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;**  
**29. That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.**

The debate over circumcision would not die with this statement. Paul would have to write about this debate many different times, and one of these times was in his first letter to the Corinthians. It was in one passage that Paul explained that God is able to work with people as God calls them. It doesn't matter if a person is circumcised or uncircumcised to God, because what matters is if the person keeps the commandments of God. As Christians we are to keep the commandments of God. This is very clear from this passage of Paul's writing. Similarly people who are called when poor or people who are called when rich shouldn't see this as anything except that God called them when they were poor or rich. There should be no push to make one's self rich. Everyone should consider themselves to be a servant of Jesus. First Corinthians seven verse seventeen.

#### **1 Corinthians 7:17-24**

**17. But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.**  
**18. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.**  
**19. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.**  
**20. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.**  
**21. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.**  
**22. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.**  
**23. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.**  
**24. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.**

Paul would explain when writing to the churches of Galatia, a region of what today would be Turkey, that our Christian faith is not to be mingled with the law of Moses. Circumcision was required by the law of Moses, and Paul reminded the churches of Galatia that if we held ourselves accountable to the law of Moses and seek salvation through it, there is no purpose for Jesus in our life. It is through Jesus that we are saved, that we are adjudicated as not guilty for any charges of transgression of sin that are brought before the throne of God by Satan and his demons. When we instead choose to be adjudicated through the law of Moses, we are accountable to that law and there is no purpose for Jesus in our life. Galatians five verse one.

#### **Galatians 5:1-15**

- 1. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.**
- 2. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.**
- 3. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.**
- 4. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.**

It is through Jesus that we have this hope of righteousness that comes through faith which is evidenced by love. A focus on trying to adhere to the law of Moses while also being a Christian is not inspired by the Holy Spirit. As Christians we are not to be super-Jews. Instead we are to be Christians, living a life of faith trusting in God, not living a life in the vanity of our minds. Paul reminded them that he was persecuted because he preached about Jesus, not because he preached about the need to be circumcised. Verse five.

- 5. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.**
- 6. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.**
- 7. Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?**
- 8. This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.**
- 9. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.**

- 10. I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be.**
- 11. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.**
- 12. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.**

Paul told the Galatians to use their liberty, freedom from the law of Moses, not for personal gain, not to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but to love our neighbor as ourselves fulfilling the law of God. We know from first Corinthians seven verse nineteen, the law of Moses is not the commandments of God which we are to keep. He warned the Galatians that the legalism that comes with the law of Moses comes with an adversarial approach where brethren will demean each other in order to aggrandize the self. Verse thirteen.

- 13. For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.**
- 14. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.**
- 15. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.**

Earlier in Galatians, Paul reminded them of a time from earlier in his ministry when he went to Jerusalem with Barnabas. This was the same account as what we just studied in Acts and from Paul's writing we know he also took Titus with him. Titus was Greek and not circumcised. After years of reflection, Paul identifies the group from Acts, the sect of the Pharisees which believed, as false brethren who came in to spy on them. He reminded the Galatians that now as then, they gave no place to these people so that the gentiles could continue with the gospel. Galatians two verse one.

### **Galatians 2:1-21**

- 1. Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.**
- 2. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.**

**3. But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:**

**4. And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:**

**5. To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.**

Paul added that these false brethren thought they were important and added that God does not regard the worldly importance of a person. These false brethren came to realize that Peter was chiefly responsible for preaching the gospel to the Jews and Paul was chiefly responsible for preaching the gospel to the gentiles who was given the assistance of Barnabas. The only instruction given to Paul and Barnabas was to remember the poor. Verse six.

**6. But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:**

**7. But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;**

**8. For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)**

**9. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.**

**10. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.**

Paul shared that one time Peter came to Antioch and he confronted Peter over hypocrisy. For all who believe in a church government hierarchy, these next few verses are difficult verses to explain because Paul is lambasting Peter, seen as the chief apostle. In a church hierarchy, this would not be done. He showed how Peter was a hypocrite for eating with gentiles and then not eating with gentiles when Christians came down from Jerusalem, how even Barnabas followed the lead of Peter. Verse eleven.

**11. But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.**



**12. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.**

**13. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.**

**14. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?**

Paul reminded them that they were not justified or condemned because of their heritage and ethnic background, but because of faith in Jesus. It is through Jesus we are justified, or adjudicated as not guilty for sins that we are accused for by Satan and his demons. It is Jesus Christ who forgives our sin, not our ability to follow any law. Verse fifteen.

**15. We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,**

**16. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**

**17. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.**

**18. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.**

**19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.**

**20. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.**

**21. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**

The brethren in Antioch were comforted by what they heard from Paul, Barnabas, Silas, and Judas Barsabas. Silas ended up staying in Antioch for a long time. Judas Barsabas would leave. Paul and Barnabas also stayed in Antioch. Acts fifteen verse thirty.

## **Acts 15:30-41**

**30. So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:**

**31. Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.**

**32. And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.**

**33. And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.**

**34. Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.**

**35. Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.**

After a while, Paul talked with Barnabas about revisiting the brethren they had previously journeyed to see. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark and Paul didn't like this idea because John Mark left them in the middle of their prior trip. This dispute led to irreconcilable differences, and Barnabas and Paul went different ways, with Barnabas taking John Mark returning to Cyprus, and Paul taking Silas with him through Syria and Cilicia. Verse thirty-six.

**36. And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.**

**37. And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.**

**38. But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.**

**39. And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;**

**40. And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.**

**41. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.**

Paul would eventually return to Derbe and Lystra where he encountered Timothy whose mother was a Jew and whose father was a Greek, and after a debate over hypocrisy with Peter about circumcision, what does Paul do with Timothy? He circumcises Timothy. The reason why Timothy was circumcised was not to comply with religious needs and the faith of Christianity. Paul circumcised Timothy

because of the people who lived there, the Jews. Timothy would have been rejected because he was seen as a mixed-race child. If Paul were alive today, perhaps Paul might face an argument from people over not challenging racism. This goes to show the people of God are people, and not perfect like God. We must all strive for perfection, meaning we are not yet perfect. While there in Derbe and Lystra they travelled through other cities and established new congregations. Acts sixteen verse one.

#### **Acts 16:1-40**

- 1. Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:**
- 2. Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.**
- 3. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.**
- 4. And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.**
- 5. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.**

As they travelled the Holy Spirit compelled them to stop their journey in what is today Turkey and were compelled to travel to what is today southeast Europe to preach the gospel there. It was in a dream that Paul saw a man from Macedonia, and in this dream the man told Paul to come on over and help them. It was through this vision Paul understood the need to preach the gospel in Europe. Verse six.

- 6. Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,**
- 7. After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.**
- 8. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.**
- 9. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.**

**10. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.**

The group ended up in Philippi, a major city that had been established four centuries earlier. It lies between the Aegean Sea and sat the base of what is today called Mount Lekani. It was situated near marshes and was also known for mines that added to its wealth. It was in this city, also a Roman colony, that the gospel was first preached in Europe. On the Sabbath with no nearby synagogue, Paul went with Silas to a nearby river to pray, because that was where the locals went to pray. They spoke to Lydia, a seller of purple, a very expensive dye, who was there from Thyatira. She was soon baptized and asked Paul and his group to stay at her house. Verse eleven.

**11. Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;**

**12. And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.**

**13. And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.**

**14. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.**

**15. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.**

As Paul and the group went to prayer a young girl who was possessed followed Paul and Silas and repeatedly said that they were servants of God. After many days, the pattern did not change and Paul commanded the demon to come out of the girl. This was concerning to the men who made money on her possession who brought them civilly before the authorities who accused them of troubling the Roman way of life creating a public disturbance. Verse sixteen.

**16. And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:**

**17. The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.**

**18. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.**

**19. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,**

**20. And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,**

**21. And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.**

The mob became incited and at the order of the judges began to beat Paul and Silas, and then had them tossed in prison, and confined to the stocks. Verse twenty-two.

**22. And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.**

**23. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:**

**24. Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.**

In the middle of the night Paul and Silas began to pray and then they sang praises to God that was heard by the prisoners. Then the earthquake struck and it was so strong that it forced open all the prison doors and loosened all of the prisoner's shackles. The earthquake awoke the prison guard who was ready to kill himself because it initially looked like the prisoners had escaped. Paul told him to do no harm to himself because even though the doors had been opened and the shackles loosened, the prisoners did not leave the prison. This caused the prison guard to understand what had happened was indeed a miracle and the guard asked Paul and Silas what he had to do to be saved. He was soon baptized and they had dinner that night at the guard's house. Verse twenty-five.

**25. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.**

**26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.**

**27. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.**

**28. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.**

**29. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,**

**30. And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**

**31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**

**32. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.**

**33. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.**

**34. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.**

The next day the magistrates sent men advising the prison guard to let Paul and Silas go, and the prison guard was happy to share this news with the men. Paul objected because he knew his civil rights. As Roman citizen, his rights had been violated in a Roman colony, the city of Philippi. He told the guard that the judges would have to come and remove him and Silas from prison themselves.

When the judges found out that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens they were concerned because they knew that they had violated their rights. Part of these rights included the right to have a trial to defend oneself, and the right to appeal court decisions. In the rush to mob judgment, neither of these rights had been given to the men and much trouble could have come to the judges because the judges had violated the law. They could find themselves in legal jeopardy themselves.

Eventually, the judges came to the prison and brought Paul and Silas from the prison urging them to leave the city. Instead, Paul and Silas once again visited Lydia and the brethren before leaving. Verse thirty-five.

**35. And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.**

**36. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.**

**37. But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.**

**38. And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.**

**39. And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.**

**40. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.**

The early church found itself influenced by the bias of the people. In the area near Jerusalem there were those who tried to require circumcision among the gentile brethren, and this caused a huge dispute between the brethren and even escalated between Peter and Paul when Peter visited Antioch.

In Lystra and Derbe, the people were prejudiced against mixed-race children and Timothy, who had a Greek father and Jewish mother was circumcised to appease the people's racism. In Philippi, the people saw Christianity as a threat to the Roman way of life and this led to a violation of civil rights for Paul and Silas.

The church throughout time has always faced bias from people, the people of the church and the people in the community where the members lived. The only bias we are to have it to keep the commandments of God and like God to not show favoritism to people, instead to love others as we love ourselves. Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.