

# First and Second Barcelonians



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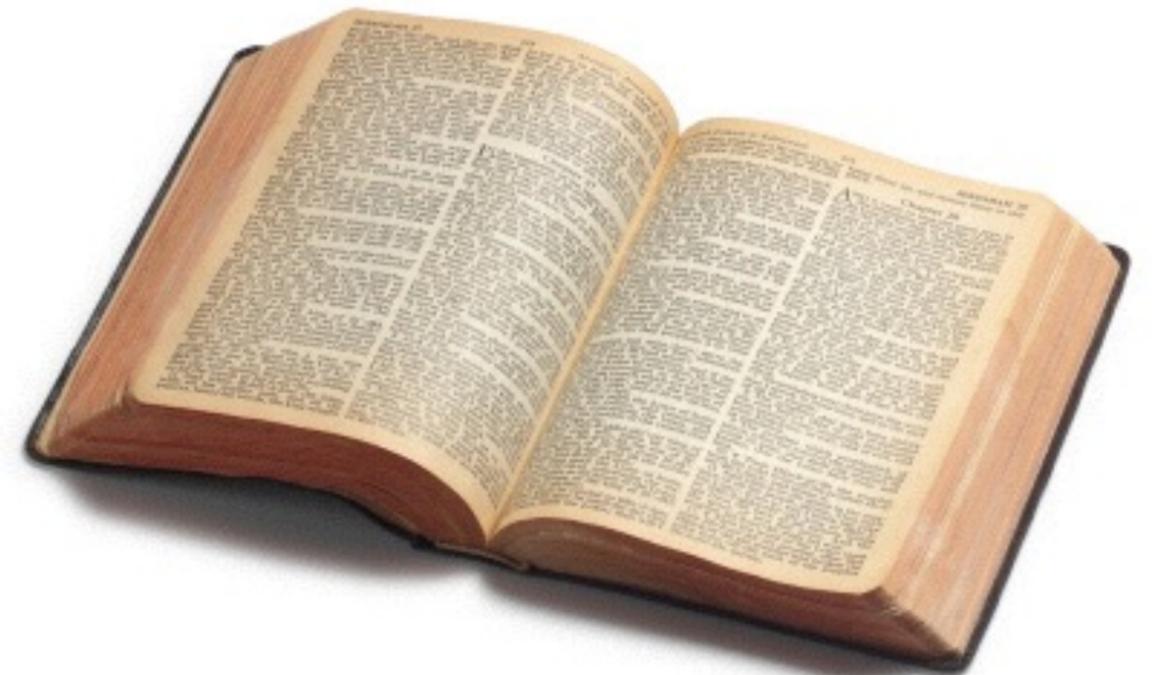
Could someone be circumcised if they so chose? Yes.

Should someone be circumcised? It depends on the situation.

## Paul's Pragmatism: Getting Paid for Gospel Ministry

If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

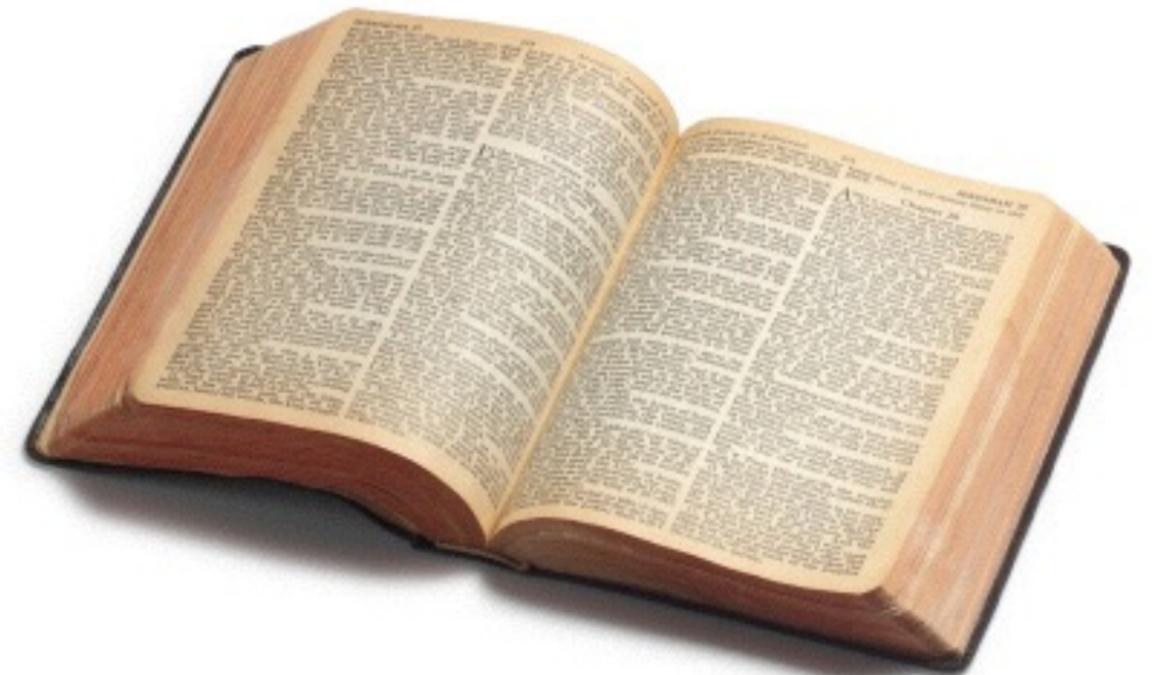
1 Corinthians 9:11, 12



## Paul's Pragmatism: Circumcising Converts

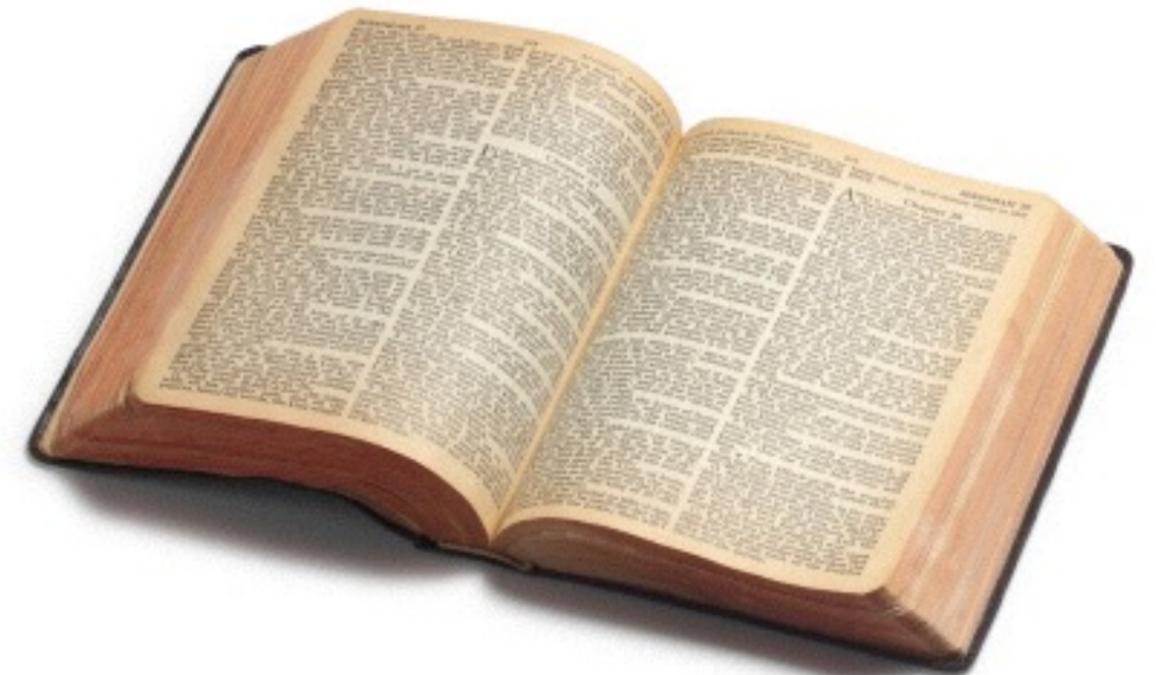
Paul wanted to have [Timothy] go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.

Acts 16:3



## Harassment On the Way to Spain

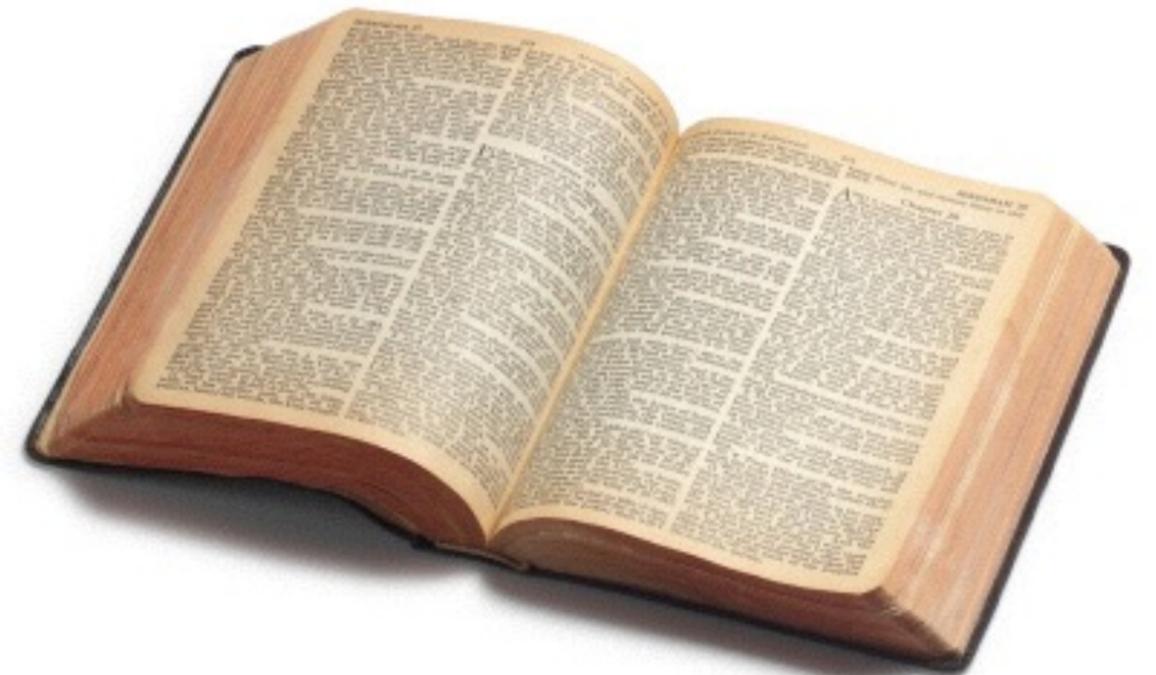
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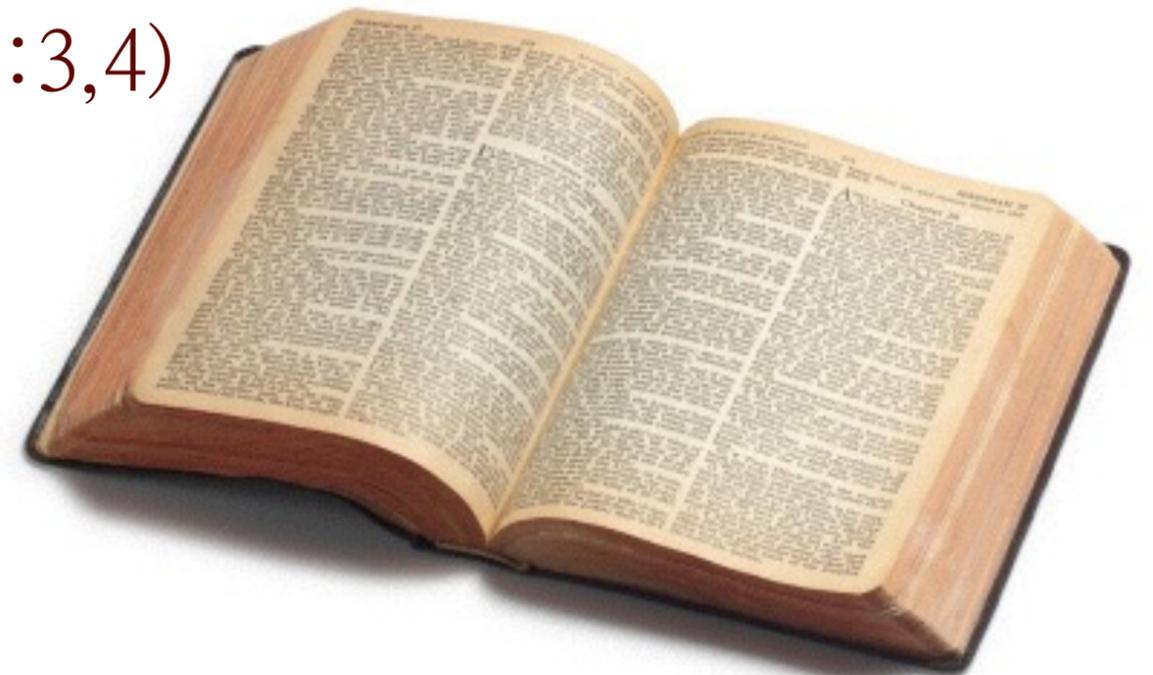


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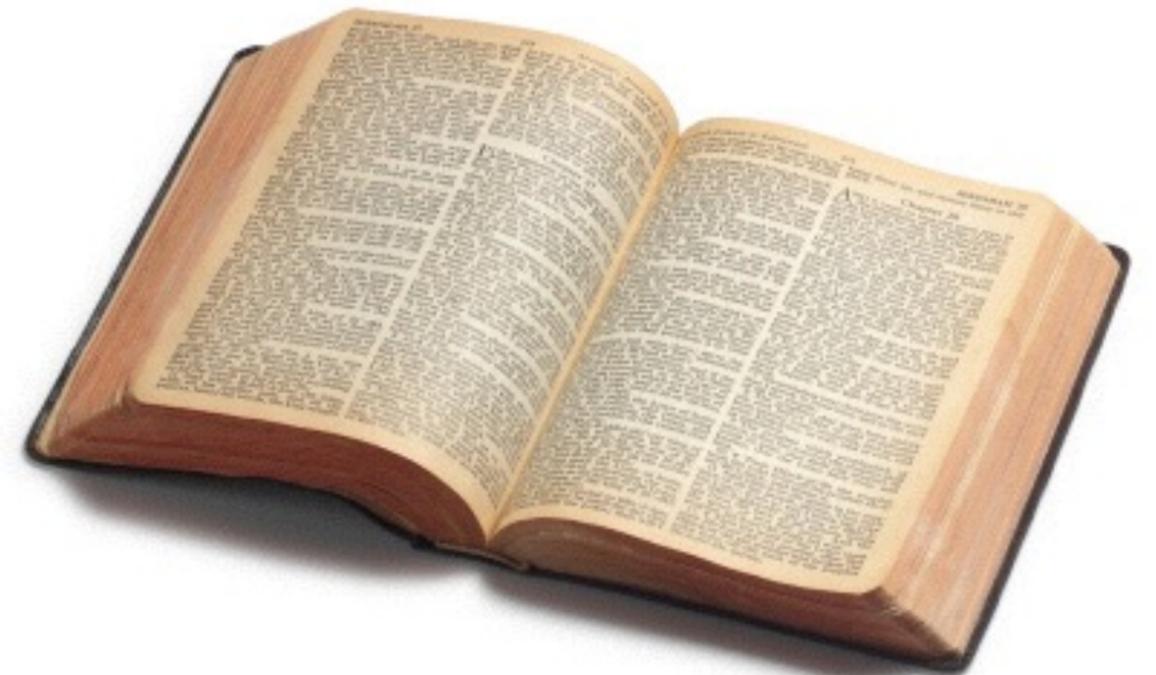
Jews plotted against Paul in Greece (Acts 20:3,4)



## Harassment On the Way to Spain

When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, “After I have been there, I must also see Rome.”

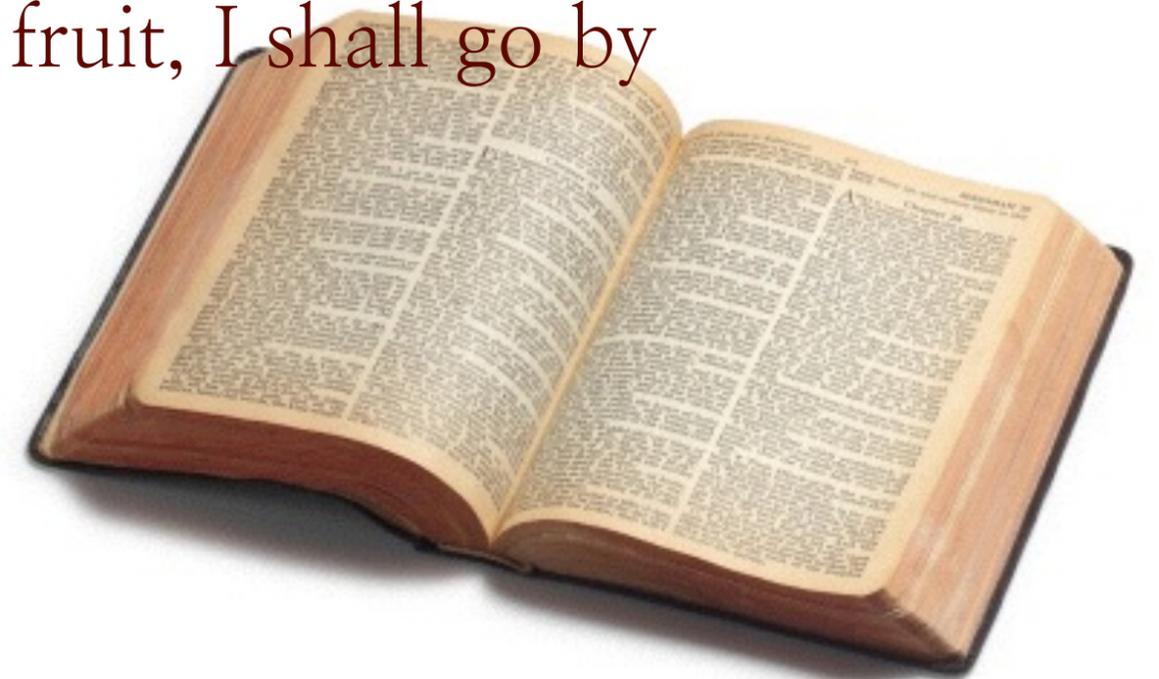
Acts 19:21



## Harassment On the Way to Spain

But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while. But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints... Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain.

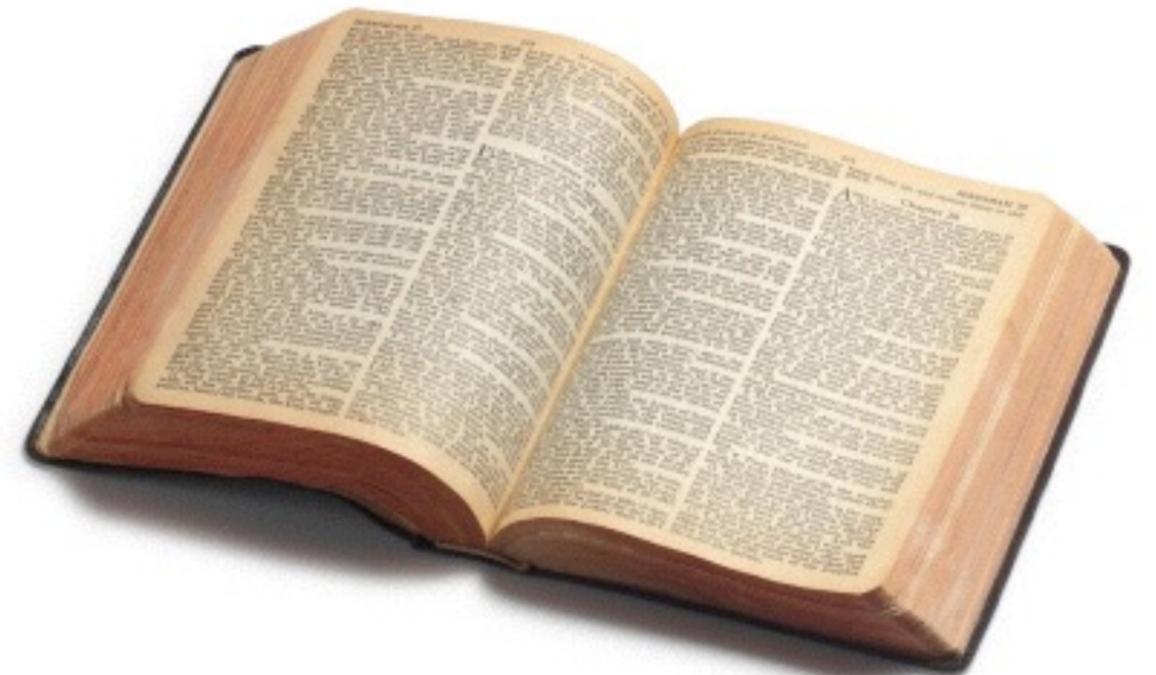
Romans 15:23–28



## Warnings Against Going to Jerusalem

And finding disciples, we stayed there (Tyre) seven days. They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.

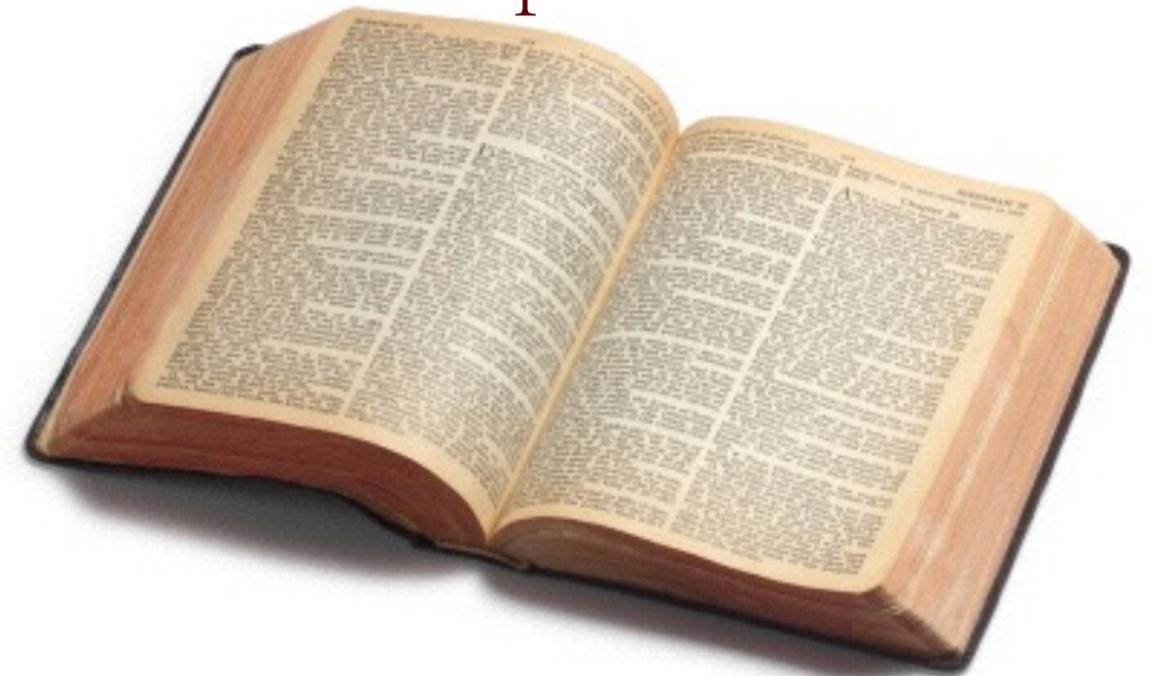
Acts 21:4



## Warnings Against Going to Jerusalem

And as we stayed many days (Caesarea), a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem.

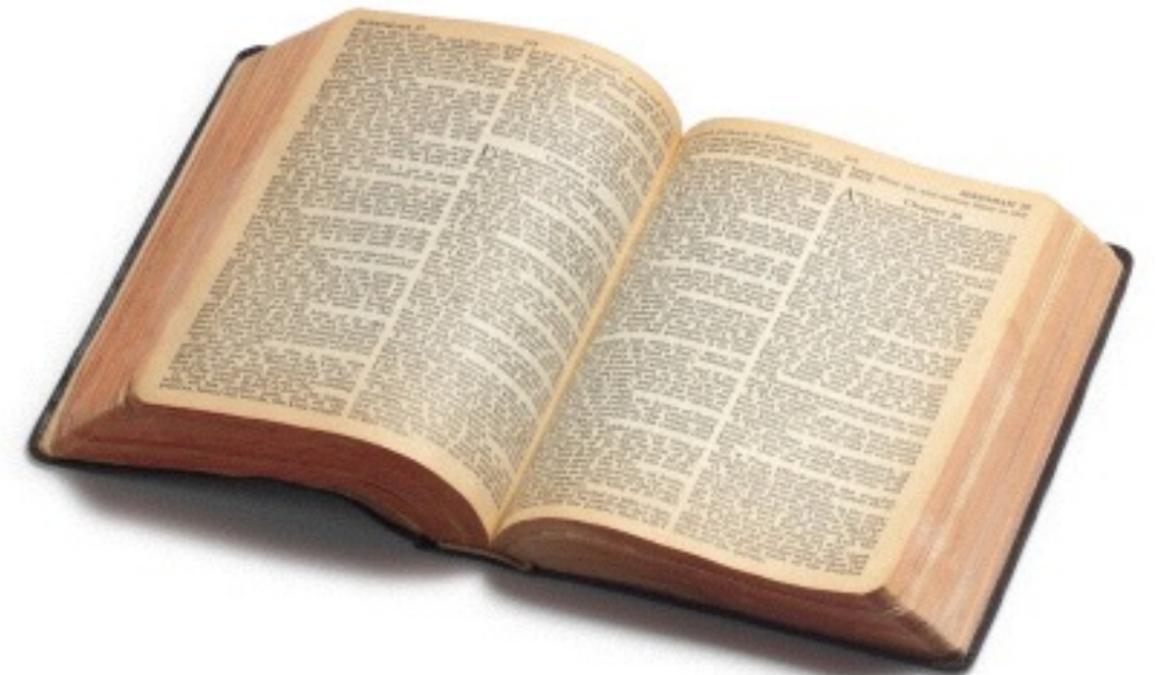
Acts 21:10–12



## Warnings Against Going to Jerusalem

Then Paul answered, “What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, “The will of the Lord be done.”

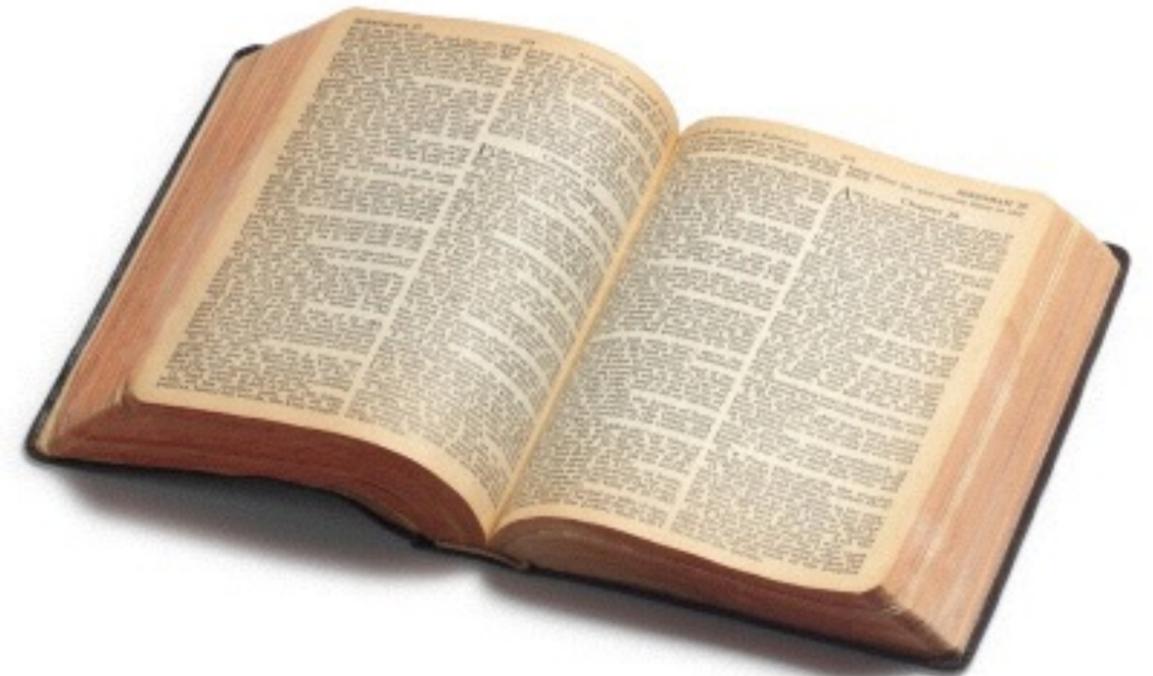
Acts 21:13, 14



## The Brethren in Jerusalem

And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

Acts 21:17–19



It was before the same audience at the apostolic council years before, that he related his experience in his conversion, and the great work which God had wrought through him among the Gentiles. The Spirit of the Lord then witnessed to the word spoken, and under its influence the council yielded their prejudices, and expressed themselves as in harmony with the position of the apostle, and sent an address to the churches to that effect. But the same battle was again to be fought, the same prejudices once more to be met.

Sketches from the Life of Paul, p. 209



Afterward, when it became apparent that the converts among the Gentiles were increasing rapidly, there were a few of the leading brethren at Jerusalem who began to cherish anew their former prejudices against the methods of Paul and his associates. These prejudices strengthened with the passing of the years, until some of the leaders determined that the work of preaching the gospel must henceforth be conducted in accordance with their own ideas. If Paul would conform his methods to certain policies which they advocated they would acknowledge and sustain his work; otherwise they could no longer look upon it with favor or grant it their support.

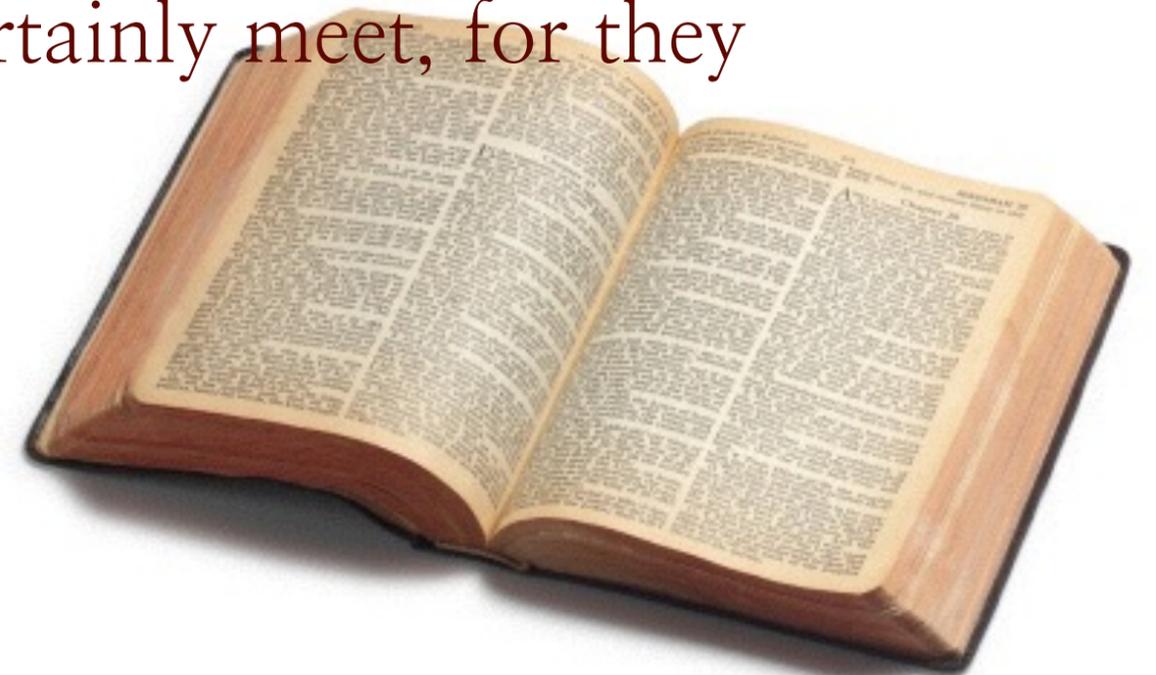
Acts of the Apostles, p. 401



## The Proposal

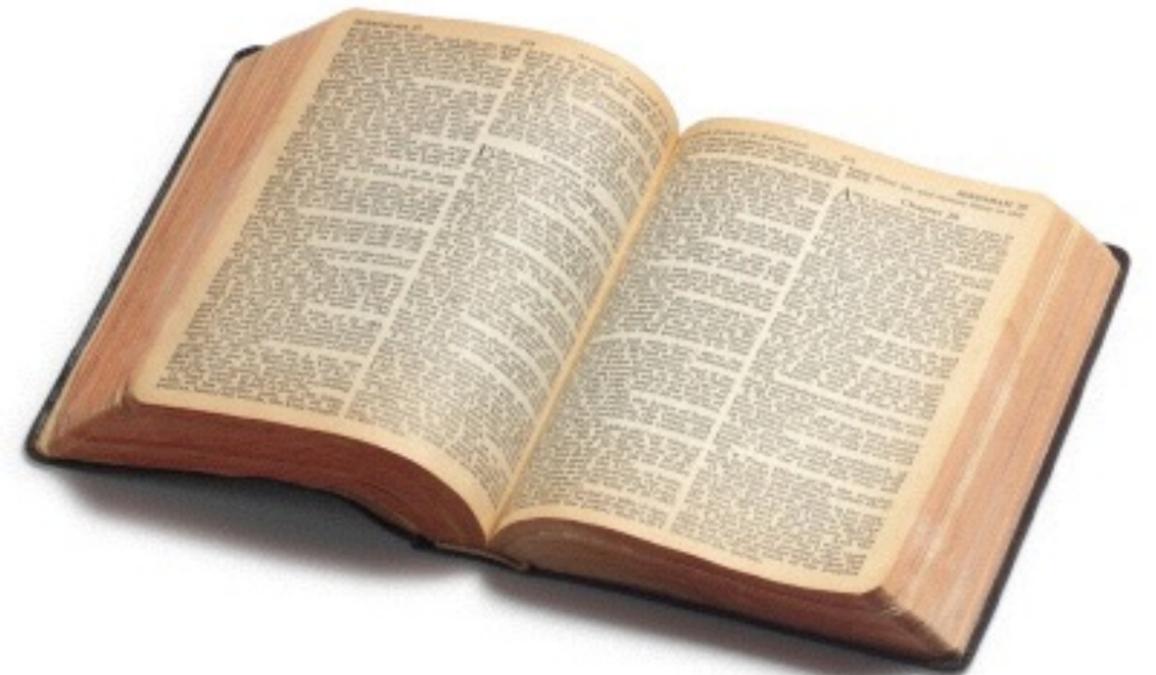
And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, “You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come.

Acts 21:20–22



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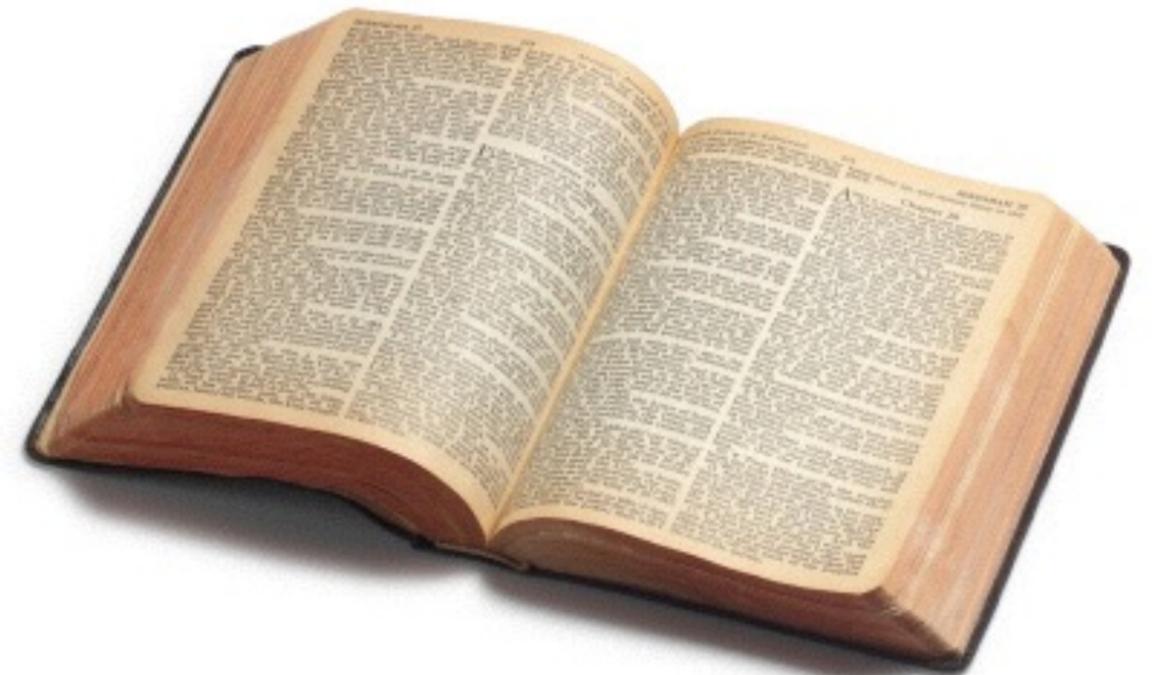
Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.



## The Proposal

But concerning the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.”

Acts 21:23–25



The brethren hoped that by this act Paul might give a decisive contradiction of the false reports concerning him. But while James assured Paul that the decision of the former council (Acts 15) concerning the Gentile converts and the ceremonial law still held good, the advice given was not consistent with that decision which had also been sanctioned by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God did not prompt this advice. It was the fruit of cowardice.

Sketches from the Life of Paul, p. 212



The disciples themselves yet cherished a regard for the ceremonial law, and were too willing to make concessions, hoping by so doing to gain the confidence of their countrymen, remove their prejudice, and win them to faith in Christ as the world's Redeemer... [Paul] felt that if he could by any lawful concession on his part win them to the truth, he would remove a very great obstacle to the success of the gospel in other places. But he was not authorized of God to concede so much as they had asked. This concession was not in harmony with his teachings, nor with the firm integrity of his character.



Sketches from the Life of Paul, p. 213

When we consider Paul's great desire to be in harmony with his brethren, his tenderness of spirit toward the weak in faith, his reverence for the apostles who had been with Christ, and for James, the brother of the Lord, and his purpose to become all things to all men as far as he could do this and not sacrifice principle,—when we consider all this, it is less surprising that he was constrained to deviate from his firm, decided course of action.



But instead of accomplishing the desired object, these efforts for conciliation only precipitated the crisis, hastened the predicted sufferings of Paul, separated him from his brethren in his labors, deprived the church of one of its strongest pillars, and brought sorrow to Christian hearts in every land.



Sketches from the Life of Paul, p. 214

## Concluding Thoughts

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But why didn't the Lord perform a miracle and save Paul's life like He had for Peter?

Because the brethren didn't rally to his aid and commit themselves to prayer for Paul like they had for Peter.

## Concluding Thoughts

Had the leaders in the church fully surrendered their feelings of bitterness toward the apostle, and accepted him as one specially called of God to bear the gospel to the Gentiles, the Lord would have spared him to them to still labor for the salvation of souls.



## Concluding Thoughts

He who sees the end from the beginning, and who understands the hearts of all, saw what would be the result of the envy and jealousy cherished toward Paul. God had not in his providence ordained that Paul's labors should so soon end; but he did not work a miracle to counteract the train of circumstances to which their own course gave rise.



## Concluding Thoughts

The same spirit is still leading to the same results. A neglect to appreciate and improve the provisions of divine grace, has deprived the church of many a blessing. How often would the Lord have prolonged the life of some faithful minister, had his labors been appreciated.



## Concluding Thoughts

But if the church permit the enemy of souls to pervert their understanding, so that they misrepresent and misinterpret the words and acts of the servant of Christ; if they allow themselves to stand in his way and hinder his usefulness, the Lord removes from them the blessing which he gave.



Sketches from the Life of Paul, p. 231

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- Be kind in your demeanor and clear in your convictions
- Be unique without being obnoxious
- Be in the world but not of the world

## Concluding Thoughts

2. Always hold up in prayer those through whom God is working.

Even if you don't understand why they are doing or even disagree with the way they're doing it, pray for your struggling co-laborers in the Three Angels Messages. Satan desires nothing more than to see God's church splinter and divide. Don't let it happen!

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Imagine what God wants to do through us today!