

One question comes in mind was Timothy father gentile a believer? in scripture nothing was mentioned about him, enlightened in Messianic lens , cjb style

No, Scripture indicates that Timothy's father was not a believer, and from a Messianic perspective, he remained outside the *Covenant* community.

In the Complete Jewish Bible (CJB) style, the primary text addressing his parentage reads:

"Sha'ul came down to Derbe and on to Lystra. A talmid named Timotheos lived there; he was the son of a Jewish woman who had come to trust in Yeshua, but his father was a Greek." — Acts 16:1 (CJB Style)

A Messianic Lens on Timotheos' Father

- **"But his father was a Greek":** In the language of the First-Century *Messianic* community (the Nazarenes), when Luke records that someone's father "was a Greek" (*Hellen*), it is a cultural and religious designation. If he had become a

Geryeshab (God-fearer) or a believer in Yeshua, Luke would have noted his faith, just as he explicitly did for Timotheos' mother, Eunice (*Evnike*).

- **The Household Lack of Torah:** In 2 Timothy 1:5, Sha'ul praises the "*sincere faith*" that dwelt first in Timotheos' grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice. The father is completely bypassed in the spiritual lineage. Furthermore, 2 Timothy 3:15 notes that Timotheos knew the *Sacred Scriptures* (the *Tanakh*) from infancy—a training that came strictly from the maternal side of his home.
- **The Uncircumcised State:** The definitive proof that his father was an unbelieving Gentile is that **Timotheos was uncircumcised** until adulthood. In Jewish law and custom, a father is strictly obligated to perform or arrange the *brit*

milah (circumcision) on the eighth day. Because his Greek father refused or blocked this covenant sign, Timotheos grew up technically Jewish by maternal descent (according to later rabbinic tradition) but *covenantally incomplete* in the eyes of the local Jewish community.

Sha'ul later circumcised Timotheos in **Acts 16:3** not for salvation, but for *halakhic* utility—so that Timotheos could freely enter synagogues and minister alongside him to the Jewish people without causing unnecessary offense (*chillul Hashem*) over his father's Gentile status.

From a Messianic perspective using the language of David Stern's *Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)*, Sha'ul's (Paul's) decision to circumcise Timotheos (Timothy) in **Acts 16:3** is completely consistent with the

Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) Council rulings of Acts 15.

The text in Acts explicitly links the two events, noting that as they traveled, *"they delivered to the people the decisions reached by the emissaries and the elders in Yerushalayim for them to observe"* (**Acts 16:4**). Sha'ul was not violating the Council's decrees; he was executing them with precise *halakhic* (legal/practical) distinction.

1.1. Distinction of Identity: Gentile vs. Jew

The Yerushalayim Council dealt strictly with **Goyim (Gentiles)** turning to God. The faction from the *Pharisees* argued, *"You can't be saved unless you undergo b'rit-milah [circumcision] in the manner prescribed by Moshe"* (**Acts 15:1, 5**).

The Council's historic ruling was that **Goyim do not need to convert to Judaism (*undergo b'rit-milah*) for salvation**. They are saved by grace alone through faith.

- **Titos (Titus) was a pure Gentile:** When Sha'ul went to Yerushalayim, he fiercely refused to let Titos be circumcised (Galatians 2:3) because doing so would imply that a Gentile *must* become a Jew to be saved.
- **Timotheos was a son of Israel:** Timotheos was **not** a Gentile. He was the son of a Jewish woman (**Acts 16:1**). By covenant lineage, he belonged to the seed of Abraham, but his Greek father had left him in a state of covenantal neglect.

1.2. The Purpose: Salvation vs. Halakhic Utility

The Council rejected circumcision *for the purpose of salvation*. Sha'ul's circumcision of Timotheos had nothing to do with salvation.

"Sha'ul wanted Timothy to accompany him; so he took him and did a b'rit-milah, because of the Jews living in those areas; for they all knew that his father had been a Greek." — Acts 16:3 (CJB)

In Messianic terms, Sha'ul performed this act for **Halakhah (community conduct) and ministry utility**:

- **Avoiding Chillul Hashem (Profanation of God's Name):** An uncircumcised maternal Jew was considered a boundary violator in the local community. If Sha'ul traveled into synagogues with an uncircumcised Jew, it would cause unnecessary scandal and close the doors to the *Besoras HaGeulah* (Good News).
- **Preserving Jewish Identity:** Sha'ul did not preach against Jewish people keeping the Torah customs. By circumcising

Timotheos, Sha'ul proved he was not teaching Jews to apostatize from the covenant of Abraham.

1.3. Summary of the Council Alignment

Dimension	The Yerushalayim Council (Acts 15)	Sha'ul's Action (Acts 16)
Target Audience	Goyim (Gentiles)	Timotheos (Maternal Jew)
The Core Issue	Circumcision for Salvation	Circumcision for Ministry & Fellowship
The Verdict	Do not burden the Gentiles	Do not cause the Jewish community to stumble

By executing the *b'rit-milah* on Timotheos, Sha'ul beautifully demonstrated the dual reality of the early Messianic movement: Gentiles are fully included without becoming Jews, and Jews remain covenantally responsible to honor their heritage for the sake of the kingdom.

From a Messianic perspective and in the spirit of first-century *halakhah* (Torah application), the fact that Timotheos' father was a Greek (Goy) created a serious legal and domestic deadlock.

Because a *Goy* had no part in the Abrahamic covenant, a Gentile father could not—and would not—administer the *b'rit-milah* (circumcision). Under normal circumstances, the commandment to circumcise a son falls squarely on the father. If the father refuses or is a Gentile, the **Beit Din (the community's religious court)** or a surrogate spiritual authority must step in to fulfill the obligation. Sha'ul's (Paul's) "right approach" perfectly resolved this status dilemma through three distinct actions:

1.1. Act on the Mother's Lineage (Identity)

Even though the father was Greek, Timotheos' mother, Eunice (*Evnikē*), and grandmother Lois (*Lo'is*) were faithful daughters of Israel. In first-century Jewish understanding (which later formalized into strict matrilineal descent), a child born to a

Jewish mother was ethnically and intrinsically part of the house of Israel. Therefore, the right approach was **not** to treat Timotheos as a Gentile convert, but as a Jewish son whose covenantal education was incomplete due to a pagan household head.

1.2. Sha'ul Stepped in as the Spiritual Father (Authority)

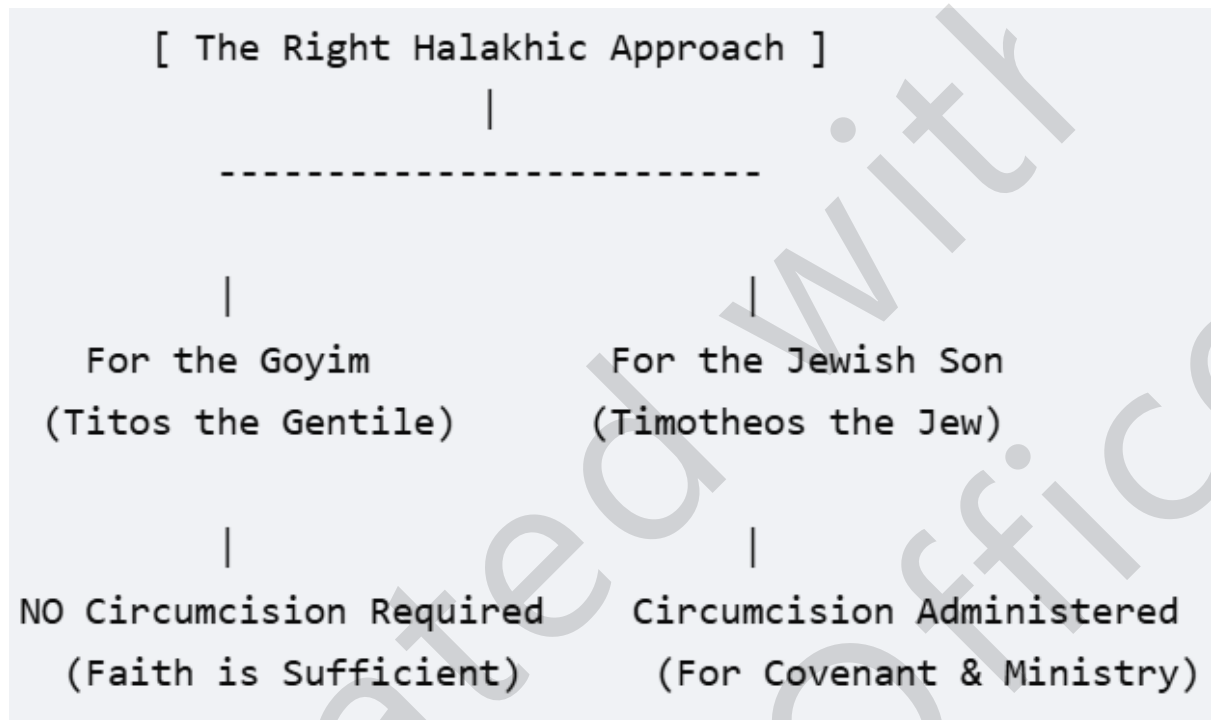
Since the biological father was spiritually disqualified and unwilling, **Sha'ul acted as the legal and spiritual guardian**. In Acts 16:3, Sha'ul took the initiative:

"Sha'ul wanted this man to accompany him; so he took him and did a b'rit-milah..."

By doing this, Sha'ul fulfilled the community's obligation to bring an uncircumcised Israeli son into the physical sign of the covenant.

1.3. Maintain the Messianic Rule (Distinction)

The right approach carefully balanced two distinct rules established at the Yerushalayim Council:



For pure Gentiles (like Titos): The right approach was to **refuse** circumcision, protecting the truth that Gentiles are saved by grace alone without changing their identity.

- **For a maternal Jew (like Timotheos):** The right approach was to **administer** the *b'rit-milah* so he could function blamelessly within the standard of the

Jewish community, preventing a *chillul Hashem* (desecration of God's name) when entering the synagogues.

Through this approach, Sha'ul demonstrated that faith in Yeshua does not erase Jewish identity; rather, it restores what was neglected, allowing Timotheos to walk in the fullness of his heritage while proclaiming the *Besoras HaGeulah* (Good News).

During the **Second Temple period**, the local Jewish community in regions like Lystra and Anatolia viewed a "maternal Jew" whose father was a Greek with **deep social ambiguity and severe covenantal suspicion**.

From a Messianic perspective using David Stern's *Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)* style, this situation did not represent a tidy, modern legal category. Instead, it was a profound family breakdown that placed the young

talmid (disciple) Timotheos in a painful communal limbo.

1.1. The Legal Ambiguity: An Emerging Halakhah

During the first century C.E., Jewish identity was in a transitional phase:

- **The Biblical Weight:** Historically and tribally, Israelite lineage (*yichus*) was tracked **patrilineally** through the father for inheritance, tribal identity, and priesthood. Because Timotheos' father was a Greek, the local *synagogue* community would not view him as belonging to a specific tribe or having an honorable paternal lineage.
- **The Matrilineal Shift:** Triggered by the reforms of Ezra and later codified by the *Chachamim* (Sages) in the *Mishnah*, the

understanding was taking root that a child born to a Jewish woman was intrinsically part of the house of Israel. Luke affirms this by calling Eunice "*a Jewish woman who had come to trust in Yeshua*" (Acts 16:1).

Thus, the local community recognized Timotheos' **ethnic attachment** to Israel through his mother, but they utterly rejected his **covenantal standing** because of his father.

1.2. The Community's Verdict: A Son of Covenantal Neglect

To the local *Yehudim* (Jews) in Lystra and Iconium, Timotheos was viewed through a lens of compromise:

- **The Mark of a Pagan Household:** A Greek father held absolute authority (*pater familias*) over his household. By blocking his son's *b'rit-milah* (circumcision), the

father explicitly kept Timotheos outside the physical boundaries of the Abrahamic Covenant.

- **Social Ostracization:** In the eyes of strict local communities, an uncircumcised person of Jewish descent was functionally an outsider. He could not eat at a kosher table, his presence inside the formal parts of the synagogue would cause an immediate uproar, and he was viewed as a product of an illicit intermarriage that violated the purity of Israel.

The text hints at this heavy communal knowledge: *"Sha'ul took him and did a b'rit-milah, because of the Jews living in those areas; for they all knew that his father had been a Greek"* (Acts 16:3). The townspeople did not just see a young man; they saw the scandalous reality of his father's pagan dominance over a daughter of Israel.

1.3. The Messianic Resolution of the Limbo

In First-Century *halakhah*, an uncircumcised maternal Jew was a fractured identity. Sha'ul (Paul) recognized that this community stigma would permanently cripple Timotheos' ability to preach the *Besoras HaGeulah* (Good News).

[The Social Reality of Timotheos]

└— **Paternally:** Outside the Tribe (Greek Father) -> Blocked from Covenant Sign

└— **Maternally:** Inside the Nation (Jewish Mother) -> Possesses Israelite Identity

└— **Synagogue Status:** A Cause of Stumbling (Scandalous Inter-marriage)

By circumcising Timotheos, Sha'ul did not change his heritage; **he repaired his status** in the eyes of the local Jewish community. He brought the physical reality of Timotheos' flesh into perfect alignment with the *sincere faith* taught by his mother and grandmother, transforming him from a community scandal into a legitimate, blameless emissary to the Jewish world.

In the first century C.E., prominent Jewish-Hellenistic writers like Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus described the legal and social status of children born from mixed marriages with severe theological gravity. Their writings reflect a Second Temple Jewish world that viewed these unions not as modern "multicultural families," but as dangerous breaches of covenantal boundaries.

When read alongside the accounts of Timotheos, their works reveal exactly how the first-century Mediterranean world viewed a child with a Jewish mother and a Greek father.

1.1. The Legal Status: Spurious Lineage and "Bastardy"

During the first century, the transition from biblical patrilineal descent to the rabbinic matrilineal principle was actively developing. Both Philo and Josephus operated in a world heavily influenced by Roman and Greek legal concepts, where **legitimate citizenship and religious standing required two legally wedded parents of the same class or nation.**

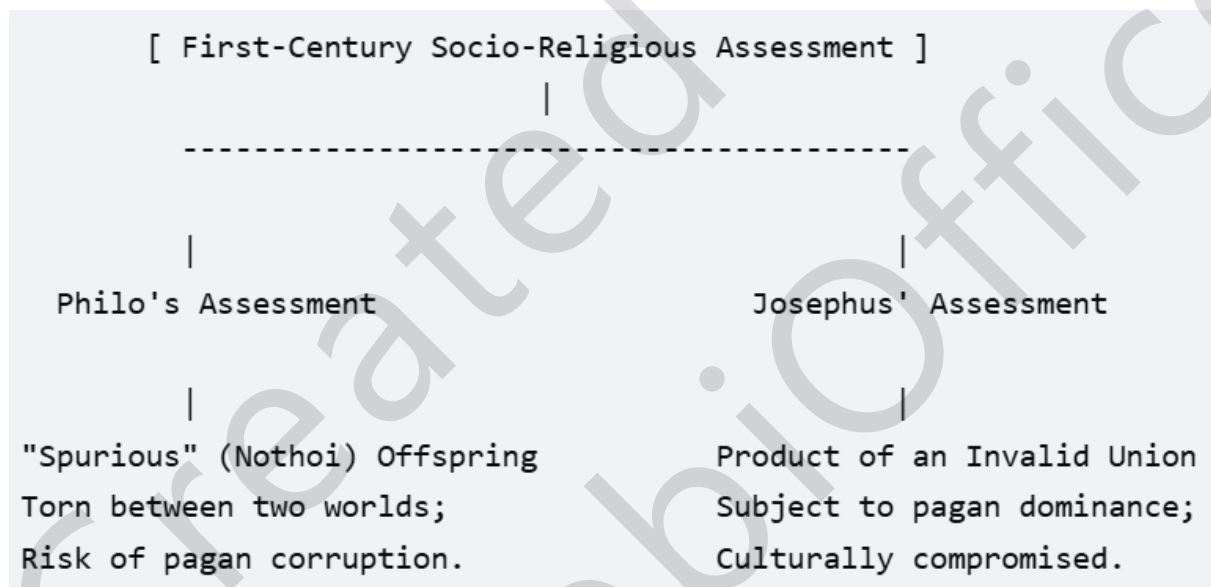
- **Philo's View (The Illegitimacy of the Offspring):** In his treatise *On Special Laws* (*De Specialibus Legibus*), Philo comments extensively on the prohibition against marrying outsiders. He explicitly states that children born from an illicit union between a Jew and an unconverted Gentile are **spurious** (*nothoi*—bastards). Philo argues that a child cannot inherit the full status of the covenant nation if one parent belongs to a pagan nation, because

the foreign parent pollutes the purity of the household identity.

- **Josephus' View (The Nullity of the Marriage Law):** In *Antiquities of the Jews* and *Contra Apionem*, Josephus stresses that **Jewish law strictly forbids intermarriage**. He notes that the Torah demands Jews only marry within their own nation to preserve their heritage. Because Jewish law did not recognize a marriage contract (*ketubah*) between a Jew and an unconverted Gentile, **the marriage itself was legally null and void** in the eyes of the community. The children of such unions were viewed as products of a legally non-existent marriage, severely damaging their social standing and inheritance rights within Jewish society.

1.2. The Social Status: Religious Traitors and Stumbling Blocks

For Philo and Josephus, the primary anxiety surrounding mixed marriages was **religious apostasy**. Children born to these households were viewed with high suspicion by the local Jewish community.



Torn Loyalties: Philo writes that children of mixed marriages are naturally dragged into an identity crisis. They are torn between the true worship of God taught by the Jewish parent and the idolatrous customs of the Gentile parent. The community assumed these

children would ultimately default to paganism because of the social and political privileges of being Greek in the Roman Empire.

- **Subject to Pagan Authority:** Josephus frequently highlights how foreign spouses or fathers corrupt Jewish families (pointing to historical examples like King Solomon or Ahab). Because a Greek father held absolute paternal authority (*pater familias*), the local synagogue community assumed a child like Timotheos was being raised under the cultural footprint of Greek paganism, completely cut off from the covenantal duties of an Israelite.

1.3. Connection to Timotheos: Why Sha'ul Had to Act

This socio-legal framework explains the exact problem Sha'ul (Paul) faced in **Acts 16**.

According to the standards described by Philo and Josephus, the Jews of Lystra and Iconium would have classified Timotheos as a *nothos*—a young man of **compromised, illegitimate status** whose lack of circumcision proved his Greek father's pagan dominance. He had the ethnic connection via his mother, but he entirely lacked the legal and covenantal validation required to speak authoritatively in a synagogue.

By stepping in and administering the *b'rit-milah*, Sha'ul effectively bypassed the legal handicap imposed by Timotheos' Greek father, answering the exact anxieties raised by writers like Philo and Josephus, and legitimizing Timotheos as a blameless leader in Israel.