LESSON 14 - The Church Council at Jerusalem - Acts 15:1-35

KEY VERSE
So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them [the Gentiles] by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them purifying their hearts by faith (Acts 15:8, 9).

PONDER

WRITE the word, phrase, or verse that spoke to you the most. Explain: ____________________________

DISPUTE OVER CIRCUMCISION
READ Acts 15:1-5.

1. What did the men from Judea\(^2\) teach the brethren (v. 1)? ____________________________

2. How did Paul and Barnabas react to their teaching (v. 2)? ____________________________

3. How did they bring great joy to the brethren in Phoenicia\(^4\) and Samaria\(^5\) (v. 3)? __________

4. When Paul and Barnabas came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, the Apostles, and elders, why did the believing sect of Pharisees\(^6\) dispute the conversion of the Gentiles (vv. 4, 5)?

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\(^1\) PONDER: think about and consider carefully God's spiritual truths as revealed in the Word of God.

\(^2\) Judea: In the time of Jesus, Palestine was divided into three provinces: Galilee, Samaria, and Judea.

\(^3\) circumcision: some Jewish Christians believed that Gentiles had to become Jews first, before they became Christians, by being circumcised and keeping the Law of Moses.

\(^4\) Phoenicia: the land north of Palestine on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea.

\(^5\) Samaria: In the time of Jesus, Palestine was divided into three provinces: Galilee, Samaria, and Judea.

\(^6\) Pharisees: a legalistic party among the Jews that believed in immortality of the soul, resurrection of the body, and the existence of angels and spirits.
THE CHURCH COUNCIL

1. Who came together to consider the matter of the Gentiles needing to be circumcised for salvation (v. 6)?

2. After much disputing, what did Peter conclude about . . .

   the Gentile believers (vv. 7-9)?

   the disputing sect of the Pharisee who believed (v. 10)?

   what the Apostles and the new church believed (v. 11)?

LOOK DEEPER
What do the following Scriptures say about God’s grace for salvation.

Romans 3:23, 24

Ephesians 2:4-8

Titus 2:11

Titus 3:4-7

PERSONAL
How have you experienced the Lord’s grace in your life?

7 yoke: heavy wooden instrument put on two farm animals in order to bind them together; symbolic of an instrument of bondage and hardship that improperly linked Jews and Gentiles together.
3. What did Barnabas and Paul declare to a multitude who listened in silence (Acts 15:12)?

   what Simon Peter declared (vv. 13, 14)?
   what the prophets agree on and God has known from eternity (vv. 15-18)?
   what James judges (vv. 19, 20)?
   Moses⁸ (v. 21)?

THE JERUSALEM DECREE⁹

1. Who did the Holy Spirit lead the Apostles, elders, and the whole church to send with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch (vs. 22)?

2. What did the letter that was sent with them to the Gentile churches declare about circumcision (vs. 23-29)?

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⁸ Moses: the Law of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy).
⁹ DECREE: ordinance, dogma, law; the first letter written to the church by the Apostles and elders.
CONTINUING MINISTRY IN SYRIA
READ Acts 15:30-35.

1. After they gathered the multitude together to read the letter, how did the multitude respond (vv. 30, 31)?

2. Being prophets\(^\text{10}\), how did Judas and Silas exhort the multitude (v. 32)?

3. What did these church delegates go on to do (vv. 33-35)?

WRITE out the KEY VERSE.

And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Acts 2:42

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Due to the holy nature of God, the first letter of all references to Him, His holy name, and His Word have been capitalized.

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\(^{10}\) prophets: ministers of the Word of God; Christian teachers.