



Acts 15

The Jerusalem
Council

At which “Antioch” do we find Paul and Barnabas
at the beginning of chapter 15?

- Antioch in Syria (14:26) – “Antioch,
from which they had been commended
to the grace of God for the work that
they had accomplished.”
- It is c. 300 miles North, along the coast
of the Mediterranean Sea.



MAIN IDEA: Paragraph by Paragraph

vs. 1-5 – “Paid Agitators” create division.

vs. 6-11 – Church leaders clarify the issue.

vs. 12-21 – Scripture applied to the conflict.

vs. 22-29 – Solution given to the church.

vs. 30-35 – Antioch church encouraged by the resolution of the conflict.

15:1 & 24 – Impact of the “Agitators”?

Who was causing the conflict?

- *“Some men from Judea” (v. 1)*
- *“...of the sect of the Pharisees” (v. 5)*
- *“some of our number to whom we gave no instruction” (v. 24)*

Resulting impact on the church?

- *They were “disturbed” by their words and “unsettled” in their souls.*

Summarize the Issue in this Conflict

Deciding whether circumcision and obedience to the Law of Moses were requirements for salvation in Christ. (v. 5)

Primarily, who spoke to the issue?

Paul & Barnabas – reported their ministry and debated the Pharisees. (vs. 2 & 12)

Peter – referred to his own experience and to church experience. (vs. 7-11)

James – proposed a solution based upon Jewish history & Scripture. (vs. 13-20)

Their Qualifications?

The Groups Involved and Their Role?

- *The “brethren” who were in the Church in Antioch*
- *Believers from the sect of the Pharisees*
- *The Apostles and Elders of the Jerusalem Church*

10-Word Summary

*Salvation is through faith
in Christ alone, not
through works.*

“Belief in Jesus... Plus???”

*Yeah, I guess he's alright...
if he could only _____!*

Steps to Resolve a Theological Conflict

- 1. They referred the matter to a more authoritative group. (v. 2)*
- 2. That group investigated and debated the matter. (vs. 6-7a)*
- 3. Gathered wisdom from how God had previously worked. (vs. 7b-9)*
- 4. They sought the Holy Spirit (v. 28) to discern what God was doing. (v. 12)*

Steps to Resolve a Theological Conflict

- 5. They asked if the proposed course of action aligned with Scripture. (vs.15-18)*
- 6. The leaders initiated a proposal to satisfy the concern. (vs. 19-20)*
- 7. Apostles, Church Elders and the whole church affirmed the decision. (v. 22)*
- 8. Decision was communicated back to those seeking clarification. (vs. 23-30)*

The Resolution of the Conflict

The resulting instruction of the apostles, elders, and the church to gentile believers, expressed by James in Acts 15:20, was certainly clear and firm.

Was it at all surprising to you?

According to Acts 15:13-15...

What was James' stand regarding Gentile believers?

- *God had taken for Himself, “from among Gentiles, a people for His name.” (v. 14)*

How does James validate his position in verse 15 ff?

- *He quotes O. T. Prophets to support his claim – he agrees with their position.*

What were the Gentile believers to abstain from and why? cf. v. 29.

- *from things sacrificed to idols*
- *from blood*
- *from what is strangled*
- *from fornication.*

Peter warned about placing a “yoke” (v. 10) on the necks of Gentile believers. James did not want to “trouble” (v. 19) them.

– *However, did the Council’s call to Abstinence, in fact, do that very thing?*

– *Why, or why not?*

a “yoke” (v. 10) or “trouble” (v. 19)?

– *Note: v. 29* –

- *“if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell.”*

- *These instructions were not intended to be requirements for salvation.*

Relationship: Mosaic Law and Salvation

Romans 3:9-24 – “...both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ...there is none righteous, not even one... there is no fear of God before their eyes. ...all the world may become accountable to God; ...by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Relationship: Mosaic Law and Salvation

Titus 3:3-7 – “For we also once were... disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures... But... He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, ...so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Relationship: Mosaic Law and Salvation

Galatians 3:19-28 – “Why the Law then?

...because of transgressions, ...if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law... therefore, the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. There is neither Jew nor Greek, ...slave nor free man, ...male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Summary of the Way of Salvation

*Salvation is through faith
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