

Acts 15:1-35

“The Gentile Controversy”

Summary

- A controversy rises over Gentiles: Does a Gentile have to follow the Law to be saved?
- As solution to the problem is found in a conference at Jerusalem

Outline

- I. The Controversy Begins
 - A. The controversy arises in Antioch - vs. 1
 - B. Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem to settle it - vs. 2-4
 - C. It was there, too - vs. 5
- II. The Conference
 - A. A conference takes place - vs. 6
 - B. Peter’s testimony
 1. Reminds them of Cornelius’ conversion - vs. 7-9
 2. Presses the issue - vs. 10-11
 - C. Paul and Barnabas testify - vs. 12
 - D. James’ testimony
 1. Reminds of Cornelius’ conversion - vs. 13-14
 2. Its according to Scripture - Amos 9:11-12 - vs. 15-17
 3. God had it all planned - vs. 18
 4. His conclusion - vs. 19-21
 - E. Send messengers with this resolution - vs. 22
- III. The Outcome
 - A. The First Christian Epistle
 1. Address the problem - vs. 23-24
 2. The messengers - vs. 25-28
 3. The message itself- vs. 29
 - B. Antioch received the message and is glad - vs. 20-32
 - C. Silas stays with Paul and Barnabas in Antioch - vs. 33-35

Notes

Judaizers

- Were Jewish Christians (vs. 1) who taught that to be saved you had to become a Jew
- Were often Pharisees (vs. 5) who were extreme traditionalists
- Were a stumbling block to many young Christians
- Were a continual problem in the early church

The Four Prohibitions For Gentile Believers

- Found in Acts 15:20, 15:29, and 21:25
- Their Purpose
 - Separation from the world and paganism
 - Fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers
 - Give new Gentile converts a base line for their Christian growth
 - Separate being a Jew and being a Christian
- **Pollution of idols**
 - Participation in pagan worship
 - Eating of food offered in worship of idols
 - See I Corinthians 8:4-13
- **Fornication**
 - Sexual sins: adultery, prostitution, etc.
 - Also would include some pagan rituals
- **Things strangled**
 - If strangled, the blood was still in the meat (see next)
 - Also would include some pagan rituals
- **Blood**
 - Eating or drinking blood - Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:13-14
 - Could also (but doubtfully) mean “spilling” blood: murder, assault, etc.

Misc. Notes

- The church at Jerusalem was almost entirely made up of Jews
- The church at Antioch was made up of both Jews and Gentiles
- vs. 1 - Basically the false teaching is that to be saved you must become a Jew
- vs. 13 - James = half-brother of Christ, author of *James*, pastor of Jerusalem church
- vs. 14 - Simeon = Simon Peter
- Galatians 2
 - vs. 1-10 - possibly refers to the conference of Acts 15
 - Paul brought Titus (a convert of the first missionary journey)
 - Outcome: Peter would reach Jews, Paul would reach Gentiles
 - vs 11-15 - Paul confronts Peter later over this same issue
 - Peter had withdrawn from Gentile believers and caused others to stumble (including Barnabas)
 - This caused a rift between Jewish and Gentile believers
 - Paul confronts Peter over his own inconsistency
 - vs. 16-21
 - The Law and works cannot save anyone
 - We are justified through by grace through faith