

The Jerusalem Council

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Littleton Bible Chapel – David Anderson

Acts 15



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Scripture Reading: Acts 15:1-5

“But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2 And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. 3 So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. 4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. 5 But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.”



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The Apostolic Question (Acts 15:1-5)



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The Apostolic Verdict: (Acts 15:6-21)



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Eckhard Schnabel,

“A long history of Christian interpretation posits that the Mosaic law could not be kept and was regarded (or should have been regarded) as a burden. This view clashes with Israel’s conviction that the law was good and precious gift from God, and that the obligation to obey the law was a privilege, a joy, and a blessing. Jesus states categorically that he had come to fulfill, not to abolish the Law and the Prophets (Matt 5:17). Paul asserts that he does not abolish the law (Rom. 3:31), that “the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous, and good (Rom. 7:12)”



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Ephesians 2:14,

“For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.”



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The Four Prohibitions:



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The Four Prohibitions:

1. From Things Contaminated by Idols



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The Four Prohibitions:

1. From Things Contaminated by Idols
2. From Sexual Immorality



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The Four Prohibitions:

1. From Things Contaminated by Idols
2. From Sexual Immorality
3. From What Has Been Strangled



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The Four Prohibitions:

1. From Things Contaminated by Idols
2. From Sexual Immorality
3. From What Has Been Strangled
4. From Blood



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Options for Interpretation



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4. This was a list of requirements for table fellowship.



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Augustine,

“Paul was indeed a Jew; and when he had become a Christian, he had not abandoned those Jewish sacraments which that people had received in the right way, and for a certain appointed time. Therefore, even although he was an apostle of Christ, he took part in observing these; but with this view, that he might show that they were in no wise hurtful to those who, even after they had believed in Christ, desired to retain the ceremonies which by the law they had learned from their fathers; provided only that they did not build on these their hope of salvation.”



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“we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— 6 and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

