

Acts 15

- Introduction
 - All spiritual people disagree at one time or another
 - Sometimes the disagreement is about senseless things
 - Sometimes there is a division because of caring
 - Disagreement about how to be saved
 - Still a dispute in the church today
 - People have a hard time with the free gift of grace

Acts 1:1 Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” **2** This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. **3** The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad.

- There was great rejoicing because Gentiles were being saved
 - Paul and Barnabas returned to **Antioch**
 - The first missionary journey was over
 - They discovered that Gentiles were attracted to the message of Jesus
- Why because the Gospel is “good news”**
- The Jews had a hard time with the Gentiles being accepted into the church and guaranteed heaven without having to keep the law or be circumcised
 - God had given them His covenant in the Old Testament and they had kept so many rigid rules and regulations to be acquainted with Him
 - The resistance came from Pharisees who were believers
 - They taught faith alone by grace alone in Christ alone
 - The basis for their faith was the Jewish Messiah predicted in Jewish Scripture
 - Paul taught that if the Gentiles believed in Jesus, they could be forgiven from their sins without keeping the law of Moses
 - The Pharisees sincerely believed that you had to keep the law of Moses to be saved
 - Sincerely believing something does not make a lie truth.
 - They brought the message to Antioch that if you wanted to be a saved person, you first had to be a Jewish person **this was a big issue**
 - This thinking had spread to all the places Paul had started churches, including Galatia
 1. Paul fights this issue through out his ministry the Judiazers, troublemakers, in phillipians 3:2 he calls them dogs.
 2. They were trying to mix law and grace
 3. They were trying to add to the finished work of Christ—stitch up the veil
 - They were trying to make it harder for people to be saved
 - Paul and Barnabas had to resolved this. **Some conflicts need to be confronted**

Becasue all it really takes is Jesus.

It's Jesus, it has always been Jesus and it will never stop being Jesus
Thats the difference between the Gospel and other beliefs Do this to be saved,
Jesus said **“it is finished”**

- The gospel has often been hindered by closed minds who stand in front of open doors and keep people from getting in (like in the gospels when the 4 bring their friend)
 - This was so bad that Paul and Barnabas are sent to Jerusalem to the Apostles
- They went to the elders**

Before making any harsh decisions or judgment
they sought the advise of the church in Jerusalem.
Seek the advise of elders
Go to the Word of God

Acts 15:4 When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. **5** Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses."

The apostles and elders met to consider this question. **7** After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. **8** God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. **9** He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. **10** Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? **11** No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

12 The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

- God had revealed to Peter that the Gentiles should hear the gospel Acts 10
 - But now Peter stated that by forcing the Gentiles to keep the law, they were putting a yoke on them that the Jews themselves had not been able to keep
- By this time, Judaism did not just have the Old Testament; they had the oral law as well
 1. Not just the Ten Commandments
 2. The rabbis said there were 613 commandments Jews had to keep
 3. They also had to honor the Talmud. Just for the sabbath had 24 chapters
- Paul and Barnabas gave an account of the first missionary journey
 1. There are portions of Scripture that are not detailed that we may often wish we had access to **Luke 24:27**
 2. Some believe that when Paul was stoned, he developed a thorn in the flesh Acts 14:19-20; 2 Corinthians 12:1-10
 - Paul said he was caught up into the third heaven

Acts 15:13 When they finished, James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me. **14** Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. **15** The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

16 "'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, **17** that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name,' says the Lord, who does these things' **18** things known from long ago.

19 "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. **20** Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. **21** For the law of Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

22 Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders among the believers.

- James, the half-brother of Jesus
 3. Author of the book of James
 - James was the first leader of the church
 - Many believe that it was Peter (important)

- Tabernacle of David v. 16
 1. Refers to the lineage of David
 2. The lineage was broken because of the sins of the nation
 3. The only fix to the bloodline could be a virgin birth
 4. With Jesus the tabernacle of David was restored so that all can come to the presence of God
 4. **James' response was rooted in Scripture Amos 9:11-12**

Acts 15:23 With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings.

24 We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. **25** So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— **26** men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **27** Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. **28 It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us** not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: **29** You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

30 So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. **31** The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. **32** Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. **33** After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. **[34] [d]** **35** But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

- I love James references for the men that accompany Barnabas and Paul “risked their lives for the name of our Lord”
- James' decision was twofold
 1. For the legalists, he instructed them to be inclusive
 2. To the converts, he instructed them to be sensitive
 - Three restrictions
 - Things polluted by idols
 - Sexual immorality
 - Blood Leviticus 17:11
 - The burden was meant to be light Matthew 11:30
- **Acts 15:36** Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” **37** Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, **38** but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. **39** They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, **40** but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. **41** He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.
 - Another conflict went unresolved
 3. Not a biblical or spiritual issue
 4. An issue of who would go on the next missionary journey
 - Paul wanted to go back and visit the churches they had already planted
 - Barnabas wanted to take his nephew
- **Closing:** lets seek the guidance of elders, leaders, the Holy Spirit and most important the word of God before we make rash decisions.