

Studies in the Acts of the Apostles

NT Survey Lesson 65--Acts 15

Introduction: Certain disciples from Jerusalem brought great controversy to the new church at Antioch by teaching these Gentile disciples that they must keep the laws of Moses. They presented this information as if it came from the apostles themselves. Such a posture demanded a meeting in Jerusalem where the exact truth about these things could be determined and the issue settled. The Jerusalem church did not assume any oversight over the church at Antioch nor did this meeting serve as authority for church councils.

Jews from Jerusalem cause disturbance at Antioch--Ac. 15:1-5

1. What issue was raised by the Judean Christians who came to Antioch? By whose authority did they claim to teach this?
2. How did Paul and Barnabas react to those who sought to bind the Law on Gentile believers? Why?
3. Why was it wise to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this matter?
4. What did Paul and Barnabas relate to the churches as they journeyed to Jerusalem? What did they report at Jerusalem?
5. How did the Judaizers react to the good news that many had been converted?

The issue is thoroughly discussed by the apostles and elders--Ac. 15:6-22

1. What provisions did the Jerusalem church make to discuss this difference? Who was present for the discussion? Who participated in the discussion?
2. Relate Peter's main point in his discussion of the issue.

3. How did Barnabas and Paul confirm that Peter's conclusions were true?
4. What point did James add to the discussion? What judgment did he give about the Gentiles?
5. Why were the stipulations concerning the eating of blood, things sacrificed to idols, and fornication urged upon Gentile believers?

A letter is addressed to the Gentile churches--Ac. 15:22-35

1. What was the reaction of the church to this discussion?
2. What essentials did the letter urge the Gentiles to respect? Why these?
3. From whom had this spiritual judgment come? Men? God? Both?
4. What was the effect of this correspondence?
5. Does this passage authorize church councils today? Why or why not?

Paul and Barnabas embark on separate preaching efforts--Ac. 15:36-41

1. What was the proposed purpose of the second preaching journey of Paul?
2. What disagreement did Paul and Barnabas have? Who was right?
3. What did each do?
4. Was there any loss of appreciation for each other implied in this separation?
5. Did it help or hurt the cause of Christ?
6. What might we learn about disagreements from their example?