



Lesson 18 – Jew and Gentile

Based on Acts 15:1-35

Our Lesson today begins at the end of Paul and Barnabas' first missionary journey. They have just returned to Antioch where they began.

1) Where does our lesson begin today

Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the _____ of _____ unto the Gentiles.

The church at Antioch was a large and growing one. A center of missionary activity, it was one of the most important of the groups of Christian believers. Its membership was made up of many classes of people from among both Jews and Gentiles.

2) Who came to visit the Church there while Paul and Barnabas were teaching?

Acts 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be _____ after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

While the apostles united with the ministers and lay members at Antioch in an earnest effort to win many souls to Christ, certain Jewish believers from Judea succeeded in introducing a question that soon led to wide-spread controversy in the church and brought consternation to the believing Gentiles. With great assurance these Judaizing teachers asserted that in order to be saved, one must be circumcised and must keep the entire ceremonial law.

3) Did Paul and Barnabas accept them quietly?

Acts 15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small _____ and _____ with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

The Jewish converts generally were not inclined to move as rapidly as the providence of God opened the way. From the result of the apostles' labors among the Gentiles, it was evident that the converts among the latter people would far exceed the Jewish converts in number. The Jews feared that if the restrictions and ceremonies of their law were not made obligatory upon the Gentiles as a condition of church fellowship, the national peculiarities of the Jews, which had hitherto kept them distinct from all other people, would finally disappear from among those who received the gospel message.

They were slow to discern that all the sacrificial offerings had but prefigured the death of the Son of God, in which type met antitype, and after which the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation were no longer binding.

4) How did Paul describe himself before his conversion?

Philippians 3:6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, _____.

since his change of heart, he had gained a clear conception of the mission of the Saviour as the Redeemer of the entire race, Gentile as well as Jew, and had learned the difference between a living faith and a dead formalism. In the light of the gospel the ancient rites and ceremonies committed to Israel had gained a new and deeper significance.

God's unchangeable law of Ten Commandments, however, Paul still kept in spirit as well as in letter.

5) What did the Believers in Antioch recommend?

Acts 15:2 ... they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to _____ unto the apostles and elders about this question.



The members of the church, fearing that a division among them would be the outcome of continued discussion, decided to send Paul and Barnabas, with some responsible men from the church, to Jerusalem to lay the matter before the apostles and elders. There they were to meet delegates from the different churches and those who had come to Jerusalem to attend the approaching festivals. Meanwhile all controversy was to cease until a final decision should be given in general council. This decision was then to be universally accepted by the different churches throughout the country.

6) How did the Council Meeting go?

Acts 15:7-8 And when there had been much _____, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the _____, even as he did unto us;

7) What did he add to that?

Acts 15:9-10 And put no _____ between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor _____ were able to bear?

This question was warmly discussed in the assembly. Intimately connected with the question of circumcision were several others demanding careful study. One was the problem as to what attitude should be taken toward the use of meats offered to idols. Many of the Gentile converts were living among ignorant and superstitious people who made frequent sacrifices and offerings to idols.

The Gentiles were accustomed to eat the flesh of animals that had been strangled, while the Jews had been divinely instructed that when beasts were killed for food, particular care was to be taken that the blood should flow from the body; otherwise, the meat would not be regarded as wholesome. God had given these injunctions to the Jews for the purpose of preserving their health. The Jews regarded it as sinful to use blood as an article of diet. They held that the blood was the life, and that the shedding of blood was in consequence of sin.

8) What did Peter remind them of?

Acts 10:15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou _____.

Peter related the plain interpretation of these words, which was given him almost immediately in his summons to go to the centurion and instruct him in the faith of Christ. This message showed that God was no respecter of persons but accepted and acknowledged all who feared Him.

The various points involved in the settlement of the main question at issue seemed to present before the council insurmountable difficulties. But the Holy Spirit had, in reality, already settled this question, upon the decision of which seemed to depend the prosperity, if not the very existence, of the Christian church.

9) What else did Peter tell the Council about?

Acts 11:17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could _____ God?

Peter's address brought the assembly to a point where they could listen with patience to Paul and Barnabas, who related their experience in working for the Gentiles.

10) What did they do?

Acts 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave _____ to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.



11) What was the decision of the Council?

Acts 15:19-20 (*James speaking here*) wherefore my sentence is, that we _____ not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from _____ of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

12) What was the reason?

Acts 15:17-18 That the residue of men might _____ after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. _____ unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

The Holy Spirit saw good not to impose the ceremonial law on the Gentile converts, and the mind of the apostles regarding this matter was as the mind of the Spirit of God. James presided at the council, and his final decision was,

13) What was James final word about it?

Acts 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are _____ to God.

In this instance we have a refutation of the doctrine held by the Roman Catholic Church that Peter was the head of the church. Those who, as popes, have claimed to be his successors, have no Scriptural foundation for their pretensions. Nothing in the life of Peter gives sanction to the claim that he was elevated above his brethren as the vicegerent of the Most High. If those who are declared to be the successors of Peter had followed his example, they would always have been content to remain on an equality with their brethren.

James sought to impress the minds of his brethren with the fact that, in turning to God, the Gentiles had made a great change in their lives and that much caution should be used not to trouble them with perplexing and doubtful questions of minor importance, lest they be discouraged in following Christ.

14) What were the Gentile converts encouraged to do?

Acts 15:20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things _____, and from _____.

The apostles and elders therefore agreed to instruct the Gentiles by letter to abstain from meats offered to idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood. They were to be urged to keep the commandments and to lead holy lives. They were also to be assured that the men who had declared circumcision to be binding were not authorized to do so by the apostles.

15) What did the Council decide next?

Acts 15:22-23 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to _____ with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote _____ by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

16) What was the word to the Gentiles?

Acts 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater _____ than these necessary things;

The council which decided this case was composed of apostles and teachers who had been prominent in raising up the Jewish and Gentile Christian churches, with chosen delegates from various places. Elders from Jerusalem and deputies from Antioch were present, and the most influential churches were represented. The council moved in accordance with the dictates of enlightened judgment, and with the dignity of a church established by the divine will. As a result of their deliberations, they all saw that God Himself had answered the question at issue by bestowing upon the Gentiles the Holy Ghost; and they realized that it was their part to follow the guidance of the Spirit.



17) Where did Paul and the others go?

Acts 15:30-32 So when they were dismissed, they came to _____: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the _____: Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and _____ them.

The Jewish Christians living within sight of the temple naturally allowed their minds to revert to the peculiar privileges of the Jews as a nation. When they saw the Christian church departing from the ceremonies and traditions of Judaism, and perceived that the peculiar sacredness with which the Jewish customs had been invested would soon be lost sight of in the light of the new faith, many grew indignant with Paul as the one who had, in a large measure, caused this change. Even the disciples were not all prepared to accept willingly the decision of the council. Some were zealous for the ceremonial law, and they regarded Paul with disfavor because they thought that his principles in regard to the obligations of the Jewish law were lax.

18) What did Paul scold Peter and Barnabas for?

Galatians 2:11-13 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the _____, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that _____ also was carried away with their dissimulation.

This revelation of weakness on the part of those who had been respected and loved as leaders, left a most painful impression on the minds of the Gentile believers. The church was threatened with division. But Paul, who saw the subverting influence of the wrong done to the church through the double part acted by Peter, openly rebuked him for thus disguising his true sentiments.

19) In the presence of everyone, what did Paul tell them?

Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not _____ according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why _____ thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

Peter saw the error into which he had fallen and immediately set about repairing the evil that had been wrought, so far as was in his power. God, who knows the end from the beginning, permitted Peter to reveal this weakness of character in order that the tried apostle might see that there was nothing in himself whereof he might boast. Even the best of men, if left to themselves, will err in judgment.

Paul was often compelled to stand alone. He was specially taught of God and dared make no concessions that would involve principle. At times the burden was heavy, but Paul stood firm for the right. He realized that the church must never be brought under the control of human power.

20) What were Paul's thoughts about an organized church?

1 Corinthians 14:32-33 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of _____, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

While looking to God for direct guidance, he was ever ready to recognize the authority vested in the body of believers united in church fellowship. He felt the need of counsel, and when matters of importance arose, he was glad to lay these before the church and to unite with his brethren in seeking God for wisdom to make right decisions.

Can you see that God's Message is for All?

Do you want to live life to the fullest?

When is the time to work together in an orderly fashion?