

Acts Part 30

Acts 15:1-29

Some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom prescribed by Moses, you cannot be saved."

I. Heresy enters the early church (v.1)

- Gospel + circumcision
- If it wasn't circumcision, it would have been something else...worship music, dress, the color of the carpet...
- Paul and Barnabas had just spent a year discipling Antioch after their first missionary journey
- Missionary work...important! Church care...important!!
- Either one neglected the body is affected

2 After Paul and Barnabas had engaged them in serious argument and debate, Paul and Barnabas and some others were appointed to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem about this issue.

II. Church sends Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (v.2)

- Judaisers spread lies (Gospel + anything)
- Paul and Barnabas engage in argument and debate (v.2)
- Argument (stasis) sedition. different opinion.
- Debate (zetesis) a seeking. Questioning for answers.

IN OUR HARD CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHERS ARE WE SEEKING ANSWERS? ARE WE SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND, OR JUST TO BE RIGHT?

3 When they had been sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and they brought great joy to all the brothers and sisters.

4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, the apostles, and the elders, and they reported all that God had done with them.

5 But some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

The Jerusalem Council

6 The apostles and the elders gathered to consider this matter.

III. Jerusalem council (v.6)

- The church in Antioch arranged for Paul, Barnabas, and others to go, probably together, to Jerusalem. Interesting (v.2)
- The others were fellow believers who shared same doctrinal beliefs
- How do we know this?
- As they traveled, they stopped purposefully to SHARE what had been happening with the gentiles
- The Judaizers would not have believed that the gentiles had become believers
- Upon arrival to Jerusalem, they were welcomed
- Controversy was with the believers who had been Pharisees. They believed you must be circumcised to keep the law of Moses!

7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you are aware that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the gospel message and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he also did to us. 9 He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 Now then, why are you testing God by putting a yoke on the disciples' necks that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? 11 On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in the same way they are."

12 The whole assembly became silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul describe all the signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. 13 After they stopped speaking, James responded, "Brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has reported how God first intervened to take from the Gentiles a people for his name. 15 And the words of the prophets agree with this, as it is written:

16 After these things I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent.

I will rebuild its ruins

and set it up again,

17 so that the rest of humanity

may seek the Lord—

even all the Gentiles

who are called by my name—

declares the Lord

who makes these things 18 known from long ago.

19 Therefore, in my judgment, we should not cause difficulties for those among the Gentiles who turn to God, 20 but instead we should write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from eating anything that has been strangled, and from blood.

IV. Decision is made (v.19)

- Peter is back on the scene. Gives the first speech
- Peter, Paul and Barnabas, and James speak. Here are the points we need to pay attention to:
 1. (Peter) God made the decision to share the Gospel with ALL people (Acts 10)
 2. (Peter) There is NO distinction of calling among all people (v.9)
 3. (Peter) Legalism is a YOKE no one can bear (v.10)
 4. (Peter) We are saved ONLY by grace of Jesus Christ (v.11)
 5. (Paul and Barnabas) Miracles and Holy Spirit power is among ALL people groups (v.12)
 6. (James) Backs up Simon (Peter) (v.14)
 7. (James) References OT, [Amos 9:11-12](#), so the rest of humanity may seek the Lord-even all the Gentiles who are CALLED by my name
 8. (James) We have a ton of evidence that shows us the Gentiles have been called. Period. By grace.

21 For since ancient times, Moses has had those who proclaim him in every city, and every Sabbath day he is read aloud in the synagogues.”