

CP - 9/10/23

## Acts 15:6–22 - The Jerusalem Council, Part Two

### Sermon Outline

The Crisis at Antioch:

- \*False teaching and teachers: “You must be circumcised to be included in God’s salvation.” (15:1)
- \*The crisis concerned the gospel, and the church’s unity/mission. (15:1–2).
- \*The church at Antioch sent Paul, Barnabas, and others to Jerusalem to settle the issue. (15:1–4)

#### 1. Discussing the Crisis (15:6–18)

\*Questions to discuss and answer:

- “How does God save?”, “Are we saved by faith of the law?”, “Is keeping the Law required for Gentile believers?”, “What do we do to be saved?”

\*Three Speeches at the Council

##### 1. Peter (15:7–11): We are saved by God’s grace through faith.

- \*Gentiles heard and believed the gospel in the past. (7)
- \*God gave Gentile believers the Holy Spirit. (8)
- \*God cleansed the hearts of Gentile believers. (9)
- \*We are saved by Christ’s work, not our own. (10–11)

##### 2. Paul/Barnabas (15:12): God confirmed salvation by grace.

- \*Paul and Barnabas discuss their missionary journey of Acts 13–14.
- \*Galatians is written to the churches Paul and Barnabas plant in Acts 13–14.
- \*Galatians 2:1–9 - Paul discusses the trip to Jerusalem.
- \*Salvation by faith, not the Law: Gal. 2:15–16, 3:7–8, 3:11–14, 3:22–26, 5:6, 6:13–15

##### 3. James (15:13–18): God’s salvation always included Gentiles.

- \*James quotes from Amos 9:11–12 (Septuagint).
- \*Gentiles were called to the Lord, not to be Jewish.
- \*Saving the Gentiles did not mean God was finished with Israel! God still had plans for them!

## 2. Deciding the Crisis (Acts 15:19–22)

\*All Gentiles and Jews are saved the same way: by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

\*We must not add unnecessary burdens on the Gentiles.

\*We should exhort the Gentiles to abstain from certain actions for the sake of unity, fellowship, and witness.

### Application:

1. Honest, loving discussion in the church is good. We grow as we talk through and submit to God's truth.
2. We cannot add anything to Christ's finished work. We do good works because of His love and work for us.
3. Show sensitivity to others. Do not use your freedom selfishly but honor Christ and build up others.

### **Small Group Discussion Questions:**

1. How did the Holy Spirit use the Bible passage and sermon to speak to you? What stood out the most?
2. What was the central question for the Jerusalem Council to answer? Who was involved? How was the tone different than in 15:2 with the false teachers? (Hint: How Peter and James addressed the group shows their tone and motive).
3. What was the theme of Peter's speech? How did he show that Gentiles are saved by faith and not the Law? Which point(s) resonates with you?
4. What was the theme of Paul and Barnabas' speech? What do we learn from Galatians to help us understand Paul's thoughts on the issue? (See Galatians 2:1-9; 2:15–16; 3:7–8; 3:11–14; 3:22–26; 5:6; 6:13–15 if needed.)
5. What was the theme of James' speech? What was his point in quoting the prophet Amos? Discuss the practical advice and commands James offered in 15:19–21. In being free in Christ, why is it important to be sensitive to others' consciences? How do we live this way?