

Bible Study

Gods Word in Focus



Week Forty Seven

Acts of the Apostles

Acts 15:1-41

CONFLICT OVER CIRCUMSION

Men from Judea came to Antioch teaching the necessity of circumcision and keeping the Law. Paul and Barnabas disputed this, and the decision was made to send them to Jerusalem to talk with the apostles and elders. Along the way, Paul and Barnabas described the conversion of the Gentiles which caused great joy

THE MEETING WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH

At Jerusalem Paul and Barnabas first reported to the whole church. When Pharisees who were believers said that circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses were necessary, the apostles and elders met to discuss the issue further. After much dispute, Peter spoke of how God chose him to be the first to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, how God acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, and how God made no distinction, purifying their hearts through faith. Peter thus questioned why they should put a yoke on the Gentiles that even they themselves were unable to bear. Rather, by the grace of the Lord both Jews and Gentiles could be saved in the same manner. Barnabas and Paul again reported the miracles and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles

MEETING WITH THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS

Finally James, the Lord's brother, offered Amos' prophecy in support of what Peter said. He then recommended they not trouble the Gentiles, but that a letter be written asking them to abstain from things offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and sexual immorality. The apostles and elders, with the whole church, agreed to send the letter, and to have Judas and Silas accompany Paul and Barnabas to confirm its authenticity. The letter, its counsel approved by the Holy Spirit, was delivered and joyously received by the brethren in Antioch. Judas and Silas offered their exhortation and strengthened the brethren before Judas returned to Jerusalem

CONTENTION BETWEEN PAUL AND BARNABAS

After some time teaching and preaching in Antioch, Paul wanted to visit the brethren in the cities they had traveled to on his first missionary journey. Barnabas was willing, but determined to take John Mark. Paul insisted they should not take John because he left them on the first trip. Unable to reconcile, Barnabas took John and sailed to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas, and with commendation from the brethren in Antioch went through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches