

Jews and Gentiles

Acts 15:1-35

Acts 15:23-29

“The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ...

Acts 15:23-29, cont.

We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”

Key Questions about Grace

- **Would the church, after a brief fling with grace, return to the law?**
- **Would the church in an abuse of grace ignore all human responsibility?**
- **What would the apostles bind and what would they loose?**
- **They bound us to the Moral Law and loosed us from the Circumcision and Ceremonial Laws.**

1. Festering Pharisaism

- **“You must be circumcised to be saved.”**
- **“You must keep the Law of Moses.”**
- **Five Only’s or “Solas” of the Reformation**
 - **Only Grace**
 - **Only Faith**
 - **Only Christ**
 - **Only Scripture**
 - **Only for the Glory of God**

2. Peter's Speech

- **“Now then, why do you test God by placing on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe it is through the grace of the Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.” (Acts 15:10-11)**
- **There are no second class citizens in God's kingdom.**

3. James' Judgment

- **Gentile conversion was God's work**
- **The prophets foretold it, Amos 9:11-12**
- **Three Provisos for the sake of peace:**
 - **Do not eat meat polluted by idols**
 - **Do not commit sexual immorality**
 - **Do not eat animals with the blood still in them**

4. Peaceful Progress

- **“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond these essential requirements” (Acts 15:28).**
- **“So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement” (Acts 15:30-31)**

What this means for us today

- 1. Respect every believer: all are priests, gifted servants, prayer warriors, and responsible.**
- 2. Be careful of people who have a problem with authority.**
- 3. “Pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding” (Rom. 14:19).**
- 4. Expect God to lead us. “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” (Acts 15:28).**