

**Acts 15, A Disciplined Church
6ff, The Conference Itself
September 11, 1992
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A. Overview

1. 15 is the third trip of P&B out from Antioch, following famine visit to Jer. and missionary trip to Turkey.
2. Train of thought:
 - a) [Previous] Review the pattern of Matt. 18
 - b) [Previous] Recognize this pattern in Gal. 2 and Acts 15.
 - c) [Last message] Study the deliberations of the conference in Acts 15.
 - d) Today: action and relevance for how the church makes decisions today (NO basis for councils).

B. The Embassy, 22-23

The problem was people coming from Jerusalem bearing misleading teaching. To correct this,

1. Paul and Barnabas will certainly go back. But the church in Jer. wants to make a stronger statement disowning the false teachers.
2. So they send two representatives of the Jerusalem ass'y itself. Described as "chief men," leaders, likely from among the elders.

Application: Cf. sending of Barnabas and Saul in Acts 13. When the church has a mission, it is the older, more experienced who are sent, not young people still wet behind the ears!

3. Even these rep's are not enough. They compose a letter to disown explicitly the false teachers.
4. *Application:* Harmony among believers is extremely important. We're not to write off one another as unspiritual, nor to harbor grudges one against another.

C. The Letter, 23-29

Especially noteworthy

1. 24, They reject the false teachers, accusing them of "subverting" (lit. plundering, ransacking) their souls, stealing from them the joy and confidence of salvation by grace through faith.
2. 25, They report the oneness of mind that God has given them. Powerful indication of his will.
3. 28-29, They repeat the summary of Lev. 17ff that James suggested. Four commands, dealing with two basic areas: idolatry and fornication. (Paul's trip is tantamount to a question from the Gentile believers to Jerusalem: What should we do? This is Jerusalem's answer.)

D. Details of the Outcome, 30-35

1. 31, the epistle as a "consolation" or "exhortation" that brings "joy." The letter contains both comfort (repudiation of the false teaching) and exhortation (the four commands). Well-rounded ministry must include both.
2. 35, continued ministry in Antioch. Note
 - a) both teaching and evangelism;
 - b) not only P&B, but "many others also."

E. Acts 15: Council (legislative) or Conference (about matter of joint concern)?

1. Fits pattern of Matt. 18:15-17.
2. When Paul subsequently deals with meat offered to idols (1 Cor. 8-10), he ignores the decree and argues from first principles. Suggests that he does not consider this binding.

(Note: This observation suggests that one argument for the early date of Gal., that it does not cite the Jerusalem decree, might be invalid; on the other hand, the epistle in Acts 14 is not addressed to gentiles everywhere, but to those of Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. But then, are Paul's epistles only valid for the churches to which written?)
3. Continued references to circumcision in later epistles (e.g., 1 Cor. 7:18f; Rom. 2; Php. 3:3; Col. 2:11) show that the Judaizers didn't follow it either. The outcome of the conference is simply to clarify Jerusalem's position on the question, not to legislate.
4. --> No biblical basis for church councils!
5. Need to explain the outcome as a matter of discipline. No winners! perhaps should be more often like that. After all, what the Lord requires is that your brother HEAR you, not necessarily AGREE.

Hymn: 35, Blest Be the Tie.

Analysis

- A. 1-2, Disagreement in Antioch [Earlier message]
- B. 3-5, Contrasting Responses to the Gentile Mission [Earlier message]
- C. 6-29, Jerusalem Conference
 1. 6-21, Discussion [Last message]
 2. 22-23, Letter

- a) 22 To/te e)/doce toi^s a)posto/lois kai\ toi^s presbute/rois
 su\n o(/lh| th^| e)kklhsi/a| e)klecame/nous a)/ndras e)c
 au)tw^n pe/myai ei)s)Antio/xeian su\n tw^| Pau/lw| kai\
 Barnaba^|,)Iou/dan to\n kalou/menon Barsabba^n kai\ Sila^n,
 a)/ndras h(goume/nous [cf. Heb. 13:7, 17, 24] e)n toi^s
 a)delfoi^s,
- b) quote f: 23 gra/yantes dia\ xeiro\s au)tw^n,
- c) quote (letter form)
- 1) Salutation:
- a> From:
- 1> Oi(a)po/stoloi
- 2> kai\ oi(presbu/teroi
- 3> kai oi a)delfoi\
 b> To:
- 1> toi^s kata\ th\n)Antio/xeian kai\ Suri/an kai\
 Kiliki/an a)delfoi^s
- 2> toi^s e)c e)qnw^n
- c> xai/rein.
- 2) Body:
- a> 24)Epeidh\ h)kou/samen
- 1> o(/ti tine\s e)c h(mw^n [e)celqo/ntes] e)ta/racan
 u(ma^s lo/gois
 a: a)naskeua/zontes ta\s yuxa\s u(mw^n, (cf. 2 Tim.
 2:14)
 b: legontes peritemnesqai kai threin ton nomon
 c: oi(^s ou) diesteila/meqa,
- b> 25 e)/docen h(mi^n genome/nois o(moqumado\n
 e)klecame/nois a)/ndras pe/myai pro\s u(ma^s su\n toi^s
 a)gaphtoi^s h(mw^n Barnaba^| kai\ Pau/lw|, 26
 a)nqrw/pois paradedwko/si ta\s yuxa\s au)tw^n u(pe\r
 tou^ o)no/matos tou^ kuri/ou h(mw^n)Ihsou^ Xristou^.
- c> 27 a)pesta/lkamen ou)^n)Iou/dan kai\ Sila^n, kai\
 au)tou\s dia\ lo/gou a)pagge/llontas ta\ au)ta/.
- d> 28 e)/docen ga\r tw^| pneu/mati tw^| a(gi/w| kai\
 h(mi^n mhde\n ple/on e)piti/qesqai u(mi^n ba/ros plh\n
 tou/twn tw^n e)pa/nagkes, 29 a)pe/xesqai ei)dwloqu/twn
 kai\ ai(/matos kai\ pniktw^n kai\ pornei/as:
 e> e)c w(^n diathrou^ntes e(autou\s eu)^ pra/cete.
- 3) Close:)/Errwsqe.

D. 30-35, Return to Antioch

1. 30 Oi(me\n ou)^n a)poluge/ntes
2. kath^lqon ei)s)Antio/xeian,
3. kai\ sunagago/ntes to\ plh^qos
4. e)pe/dwkan th\n e)pistolh/n:
5. 31 a)nagno/ntes de\ e)xa/rhsan e)pi\ th^| paraklh/sei.
6. 32)Iou/das te kai\ Sila^s, kai\ au)toi\ profh^tai o)/ntes, dia\
 lo/gou pollou^ pareka/lesan tou\s a)delfou\s
7. kai\ e)pesth/rican:
8. 33 poih/santes de\ xro/non
9. a)pelu/qhsan met' ei)rh/nhs a)po\ tw^n a)delfw^n pro\s tou\s
 a)postei/lantas au)tou/s.
10. 35 Pau^los de\ kai\ Barnaba^s die/tribon e)n)Antioxei/a|
 dida/skontes kai\ eu)aggelizo/menoi meta\ kai\ e(te/rwn pollw^n

to\n lo/gon tou^ kuri/ou.