

Acts 15  
vs. 1-21

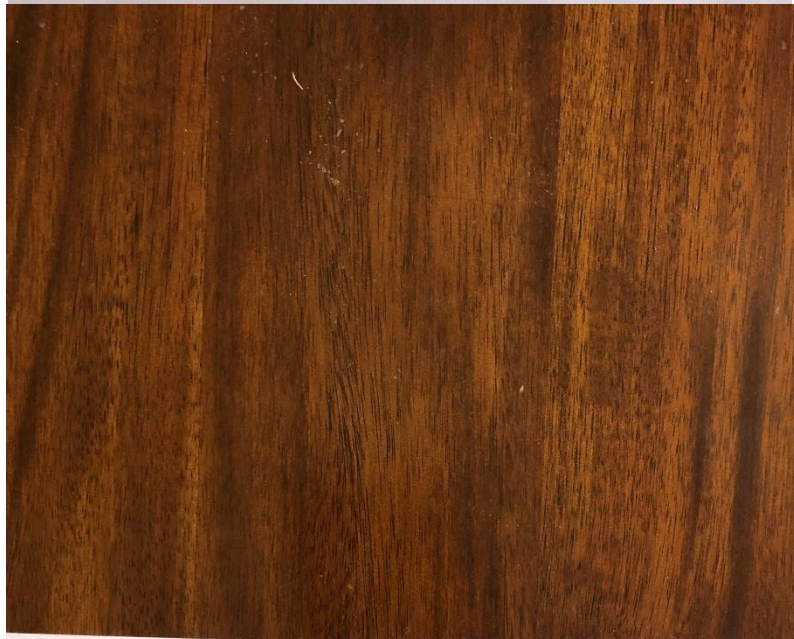
While Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch of Syria, they heard some believers from Judea telling the Gentile Christians of the need to accept the customs and laws of the Jews, if they wanted to be saved. Paul and Barnabas maintained that faith in Christ was sufficient and that Christians are no longer under the law of the Old Covenant (Paul later wrote extensively concerning this matter).

It was decided to send Paul, Barnabas and some other believers to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with the apostles and elders of the Jerusalem church. On the way, Paul and Barnabas continued to spread the good news of the Gentiles conversions, to the Christians in Phoenicia and Samaria.

In Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas reported on their activities. Once again, the matter of obedience to the law of the Old Covenant was brought up by Christians who had been Pharisees (legalistic religious leaders). Peter stated how God had accepted the Gentiles-- as they were and that all were now saved by the grace of Jesus and that alone. Paul and Barnabas spoke of how God had worked among the Gentiles. Then James spoke, demonstrating that the acceptance of the Gentiles was in fulfillment to prophecy (Amos 9:11,12). James conclusion was that the Gentiles should avoid food sacrificed to idols (staying away from the appearance of evil and supporting false gods), from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood (so as not to offend the Jewish Christians).

vs. 22-35

The leaders decided to send a letter explaining this understanding, back to the church at Antioch; accompanied by Paul,



Barnabas, Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas (the latter 2 being leaders of the Jerusalem church).

Upon arriving in Antioch of Syria, the church gladly received the letter. Judas and Silas encouraged and strengthened the church there for a time before they returned home.

Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch teaching and preaching.

vs. 36-41

Paul and Barnabas talked about going back the churches that they had established on their first journey. They disagreed over taking John Mark (Barnabas wanted to take him, but Paul did not because John Mark had deserted them the first time). Barnabas and John Mark went to Cyprus (where Paul and Barnabas had begun their first journey with John Mark) and Paul went with Silas through Syria and Cilicia (going by land to Asia Minor towards the last churches they had established on their journey).

## STUDY GUIDE

### ACTS 15

1. Who did Paul and Barnabas get into a debate with and what was the debate about?
2. Who welcomed Paul and Barnabas when they returned to Jerusalem?
3. Who met in Jerusalem to consider the question of the Gentiles obeying the law of Moses?
4. How did God show his acceptance and impartiality to the Gentiles?
5. How are people saved?
6. What four items or actions were the Gentiles to avoid?
7. What did Judas and Silas do at Antioch?
8. Who taught and preached the gospel at Antioch?
9. What disagreement arose between Paul and Barnabas, and what resulted from it?

### BONUS:

1. Why do you think Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to have the dispute settled; does that set a precedent for us today? Explain.
2. What does the council's letter, teach us today?
3. Did any good come out of Paul and Barnabas' dispute? How do you think God felt about it?