

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter Fifteen

Settling New Testament Salvation

Focus Verse: **Romans 3:28**

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

I. Study Introduction

- A. When God wants something done, Satan always wants to stop it! The only way to stop the work of soul-winning was to confuse Christians about the message, so they would stop presenting the Gospel - always ends up confusing the Grace of God with the Works of religion.
- B. In Acts 15, some highly educated Bible “teachers” show up at church, attempting to persuade the Christians from preaching the message that JESUS saves, and to start preaching that Jesus PLUS circumcision saves
- C. This “teaching” caused great confusion and concern, and needed to be dealt with, because it is the very foundation for **how** a sinner is saved, and **why** a Christian is saved!

II. Chapter Review

- One **The Church** _____ - The Ascension of Jesus
- Two **The Church** _____ - The Day of Pentecost
- Three **Christianity Meets The** _____ - The Invalid Man Healed
- Four **How To** _____ **For Christ** - Handling Persecution
- Five **Staying** _____ **! In Spite of Sin** in Christian’s Lives
- Six _____ **the Work** - Choosing Deacons
- Seven **Learning the Lessons of** _____ - Stephen’s Attack on Religion
- Eight **The Church** _____ - Saul Begins His Persecution
- Nine **The Conversion of** _____ - Saul on the Road to Damascus
- Ten _____ **Meets Christ** - Peter Tells Cornelius About Christ
- Eleven **The First** _____ - The Birth of the Church at Antioch
- Twelve **The Church Learns to** _____ - Peter escapes death due to prayer
- Thirteen **God’s Call to** _____ - Calls Paul and Barnabas to evangelise
- Fourteen _____ **while Serving** - Doing God’s will is going to be hard

III. Study Outline - Settling New Testament Salvation (Acts 15)

A. The Dissension (15:1-3)

1. False _____ arrived in Antioch teaching that a man had to be circumcised to be saved - this is “another _____” (Gal 1:6-9)
 - a. Roman Catholic: you must “keep the sacraments” to be saved
 - b. Mormon: you must follow the teachings of Joseph Smith
 - c. Seventh Day Adventist: you must keep the Sabbath to be saved
 - d. Pentecostal: you must have the initial evidence of the Spirit - be able to speak in tongues
 - e. Jehovah’s Witness: you must “endure to the end” to be saved
 - f. There is always someone trying to add to your salvation, by commanding you to DO something more than just trust Christ!
2. Proves that there are only ___ “religions” in the world:

WORKS	GRACE
All Religions teach that a man has to "DO" something in order to be saved. They never “know” whether they are saved or not.	Bible teaches that it is only what CHRIST did on the cross (grace) that completely saves - “DONE” - all we do is receive its effect by <i>faith</i> .
<p style="text-align: center;">Jewish Way of Thinking</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">God's Way of Salvation</p>

3. Why do false teachers show up?
 - a. _____ will - Satan is always looking for “new converts” so to confuse them, and to make them incapable of winning souls!
 - b. The key is to have strong _____ - clear, simple preaching of the gospel from the Bible only (2 Cor 11:3), and personal study for yourself (2 Tim 2:15).

B. Doctrinal Convictions Are Established

1. What are Convictions? Something that you know for sure is right, and is worth defending. Examples:
 - a. Life is of the highest value - abortion is wrong, as is euthanasia
 - b. Hell is just as real as heaven
 - c. The family unit must be maintained and protected at all costs
 - d. The Bible is the very word of God - does not just “contain” them
2. Controversy is not always wrong. Paul and Barnabas attack the false teachings - unity was not more important than doctrinal _____!
3. An answer, based upon Final _____, is called for! This issue cannot be overlooked - it is the very reason for the coming of Christ, for the existence of Christianity on this planet, etc! Must settle it!

C. The Discussion (15:4-19)

1. The Contention - the two teachings (_____, and _____) cannot be merged, or adapted - one has to be right, and the other wrong!
2. The Convention - NOT "*Council*" as in Trent, and Vatican.
 - a. Peter speaks first
 - b. Paul and Barnabas speak
 - c. James settles the question with the final authority - the Scriptures (15:13-19)

D. The Decision (15:20-41)

1. Gentile Christians should refrain (NOT do the following things):
 - a. From eating meats (foods) offered to _____ (Lev 17:7) - stay clear of idolatry, and anything associated with it!
 - b. From _____ (Lev 18) - live clean in your heart, and life - this is THE greatest testimony to the lost (Jew or Gentile) - that of a transformed life (Rom 12:1,2). A Jew knows the holiness of God, and expects it of anyone worshipping the same God.
 - c. From eating _____ - not dealing with transfusion (Lev 17:10) - just leave the blood of an animal alone - no fooling with it
 - d. From eating things killed by other animals, i.e. _____ (Lev 17:15) - don't disregard healthy eating
 - e. All for the _____ sake (15:21) - Gentile Christians are claiming that the very same God of the Jews has brought them the salvation and eternal life that had been offered to the Jews - they then need to not “offend” the Jews, making them think they are superior - don't get trapped into thinking like the Jews.

NOTE: To “offend” means to hinder, block someone from getting saved (1Cor 8:7-13). The Christian is not free to live as they please!

- f. Notice what's missing: No mention of keeping the _____, and no mention of this enabling a person to BE saved, or to STAY saved - just to do well, and so that OTHERS get saved!
2. They return to Antioch with letters (*epistles*) explaining these instructions (15:22-35), telling them to:
 - a. Beware of false teachers - not teaching New Testament doctrine!
 - b. Listen to chosen men - not self-styled mavericks
 - c. The Holy Spirit will confirm what this epistle says. Always does
 - d. Everyone listens, and rejoices for the freedom in Christ *to do right*, not to do religion! Got encouraged because of unity and preaching!
3. Paul and Barnabas renew their missionary work (15:36-41)
 - a. Only this time, they split up - Over personality differences
 - 1) Had the right motive - to go strengthen ALL new Christians
 - 2) Had the right volunteers - extra helpers this time
 - 3) But Paul was wary of John Mark's _____ - didn't want to give him another chance - did not have much grace with other Christians yet - Christianity at this time was like being in a war: no time for wimps!
 - 4) Developed into “_____” - an argument - the best Christians get into arguments - because they have convictions (firm beliefs about things)
 - b. Barnabas takes John Mark again - always a risk taker - Amen!
 - c. Paul takes Silas - a strong Christian (15:22)

Notice that God designed the Christian life to be one of serving along side a companion - not usually alone

4. God used this disagreement to multiply the number of workers - troubles, and hurdles, are usually intended by God to get us to stretch further than we think we can go, and to force us to get out of our comfort zones and reach more people with the Gospel

IV. Conclusion and Application

V. Study Questions