

FALL QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2015

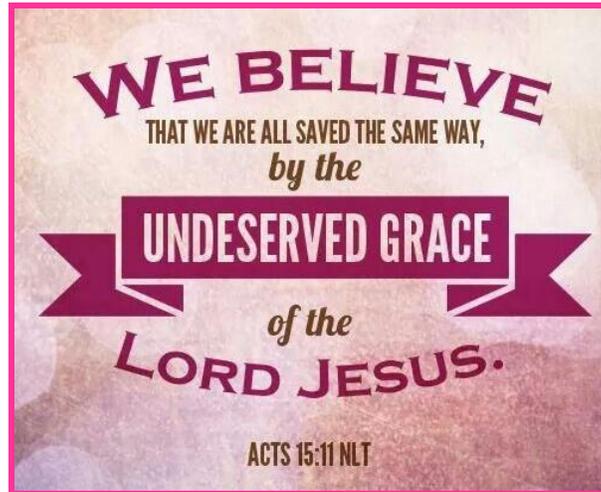
THEME: ACTS – EXPOSING GOD’S CHURCH COMMUNITY IN ACTION!

UNIT ONE – “The Gains of their Actions”

UNIT TWO – “The Pains of their Actions”

UNIT THREE – “The Fame of their Actions”

“THE ACID TEST OF GOD’S SAVING GRACE”



Sunday School Lesson No. X - November 8, 2015

Rev. Frank A. Davis, III - Pastor-Teacher

Lesson Text: Acts 15:1-17

Required Reading: Acts 15:1-35

Memory Text: Acts 15:8-9, *“And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”*

Reliable Resources: Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; Libronix Electronic Library; Precepts for Living (UMI), Word Search 9 and 10 Electronic Library; MacArthur Study Bible; Thirty Amazing People in the Bible by Dr. David Jeremiah; The Book of Acts by E. C. Gillentine; The Book of Acts in 24 Lessons by E. L. Bynum; George Brooks Preaching Commentary

INTRODUCTION

Dr. David Jeremiah declared: “Throughout the history of the Church, there have been many important councils that have met to decide issues related to Church doctrine...The first unofficial council of the Church is the one we study in this lesson: the Council of Jerusalem, described in Acts 15. This council was so very important because it dealt with the issue of salvation. That is, what does a person have to do to be saved?...Specifically, is everyone saved the same way? Is there a necessity for keeping any aspect of the Jewish law in order to be saved? Does one have to renounce certain things, or do certain things, in order to be saved?”

As we enter this study of Acts 15 we are reminded of the words of our Lord penned by the Apostle Paul, *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”*

Let us turn to the issue that could have brought havoc upon God’s Church about 20 years after Pentecost. I call this lesson: **“The Acid Test of God’s Saving Grace.”**

Anticipated Power Points:

- **The Major Challenge to the Church. Acts 15:1-4**
- **The Meeting of the Leaders of the Church. Acts 15:5-12**
- **The Message of the Church’s Leadership Council. Acts 15:13-17**

LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Major Challenge to the Church. Acts 15:1-4

As the Gospel began to spread in earnest, some issues became challenges between Jewish Christians and those who were of a Gentile background. When we read back in Acts 11, we learn that Peter declared the acceptance of Gentiles into the Church by the Lord. (Read Acts 11:15-26). It was also acknowledged by the Church's leadership in Jerusalem.

Paul and Barnabas were commissioned by the Holy Spirit and the Church at Antioch, Syria to go forth and evangelize the nations. According to Romans 1:16, Paul sought the Jews first and then the Gentiles.

In our lesson this week, a delegation of Jews who had received Jesus came to Antioch and demanded that all men who had embraced Christianity should be circumcised according to the Mosaic Law. This caused a great challenge and controversy, because it was totally against the gospel of the Grace of God. Paul and Barnabas then were commissioned by the Church at Antioch to go up to Jerusalem and get clarification on this matter that seemed to be settled, but this teaching by the delegation from Jerusalem was causing havoc!

Now as Paul, Barnabas and the delegation for the Gentile churches traveled to Jerusalem, they took time to visit other churches that were established, and also to evangelize others as they traveled. Upon their arrival at Jerusalem, they were gladly received by the brethren of leadership at the Mother church (vs. 4).

II. The Meeting of the Leaders of the Church. Acts 15:5-12

The controversy must be settled according to God's Truth and not by tradition! What is **The Acid Test of God's Saving Grace**? Is the answer tradition or truth?

A. Tradition. vss. 5-6

By this time many Pharisees had accepted Christ, Paul among them, but the adding of Jesus to the Law was not a grace only salvation! Thus, this would not pass **The Acid Test of God's Saving Grace**. Remember Ephesians 2:8, "**For by grace are ye saved through faith...**" Remember, salvation is purely of grace plus nothing.

B. The testimony of truth. vss. 7-12

1. Peter's deposition. vss. 7-11

According to the Expositor and Illuminator of Union Gospel Press, "Peter reminded the apostles and elders that God had given the Gentiles the Holy Spirit just as He had given Him to the Jews. God did not see any difference between Jewish and Gentile believers. By faith, the hearts of the Gentile believers had been cleansed by God. Peter asked why the Gentiles should be subjected to a burden that the Jews had been unable to bear. Peter said, '**But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved even as they.**' Acts 15:11"

2. Paul and Barnabas' declaration. vs. 12

Dr. David Jeremiah shares, "Paul and Barnabas spoke next, describing all that God had done among the Gentiles on their missionary journey. Their point in describing the 'miracles and wonders God had worked' was, like Peter, to show that God was doing the same thing among the Gentiles without the Law that He had done in Jerusalem among Jewish converts."

III. The Message of the Church's Leadership Council. Acts 15:13-17

According to E. C. Gillentine, James' decree...

"a. Refers to Peter's testimony. v. 14

b. Sets forth the plan of the ages. vv. 15-18

1. He refers to Amos 9:11-12.

2. He shows the meaning of Amos' prophecy.

a.) Christ will form a church out of the Gentiles. v. 15

b.) Christ will rebuild Jerusalem. v. 16

c.) Christ will gather the nations. v. 17. (Isa. 2:2, '**And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.**')"

CLOSING

Beloved, it is not for the Gentile world to revert back to Judaism, but that all the world turn by faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. Remember Ephesians 2:9, "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**" "Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me." "**THE ACID TEST OF GOD'S SAVING GRACE**"

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TV Telecast: WHNO TV-Channel 20, Sunday, 6:30 a.m.

Looking Ahead:

November 15, 2015

Acts 16:1-5, 8-15

The Sunday School Lesson is taught each Wednesday at noon at Bibleway. All are welcome!

