


Power to Witness in Word and Deed – Part 2*The Book of Acts***Acts 15:22–41****Review Acts 15:1–21.**



1. The apostles and elders meet in Jerusalem to decide on the very divisive issue of circumcision and Jewish law keeping (15:1–2, 5) that threatens to split the church into Jewish and Gentile factions. What is the final decision? (vv. 19, 28)

Read Acts 15:22–35.

2. What evidence is there that the Holy Spirit has been actively at work in the council's deliberations? (v. 28; Consider Jn. 14:26–27; 16:13; Gal. 5:22)
3.
 - a. How do the believers in Jerusalem see themselves in relationship to the Gentile believers? (v. 23)
 - b. How have the Gentile believers already shown similar affection for the Jerusalem believers? (11:27–30)
4. Read Ephesians 2:13–16.
 - a. What used to define the relationship between Jew and Gentile?
 - b. What brought about such a radical change in their relationship with one another?
5. The apostles and elders decide to write to the Gentile believers.
 - a. What steps do they take to make sure that the recipients of this letter know that it is authentic and trustworthy? (vv. 22–23; 27)
 - b. How does the letter acknowledge the feelings of the Gentile believers? (v. 24)
 - c. How does it affirm the ministry and authority of Paul and Barnabas? (vv. 25–26)
6. How do Judas and Silas follow up on the instructions given to them (v. 27) as stated in the letter? (vv. 32–33)

7. The Jerusalem Council makes four requirements (v. 29) in reaction to pagan worship practices (such as sacred prostitution, drinking blood, and other sacrificial rituals) which were especially offensive to Jews.
- How do you think the council's decision is meant to help the Gentiles as they fellowship with their Jewish Christian friends?
 - How would following these requirements be helpful as they preach the gospel to their unsaved Jewish neighbors?
8. The effect of the letter is that both Jewish and Gentile Christians will have to make changes to both their attitudes and their lifestyles. What will some of these changes be? (Gal. 5:13–14; Rom. 14:13–18;  * 1 Cor. 8:1–2, 9–13)
9. a. If the letter were written today, what causes of division and hostility within the church do you think would be addressed?
- b. What do you need to change in your own attitude and behavior toward others to be obedient to the spirit of the council's letter?

Read Acts 15:36–41.

10. Paul and Barnabas have “a sharp disagreement” (v. 39) as they prepare for their next trip.
- Who is Mark? (v. 37; 12:12, 25; 13:5; Col. 4:10b)
 - Why does Paul refuse to take him on this next trip? (15:38;  13:13)
 - How does Paul's attitude toward Mark change over time? (2 Tim. 4:11)
11. This is the last we hear about the ministry of Barnabas. How does he, once again, live up to his name “Son of Encouragement” (4:36)? (vv. 37–39;  9:26–28; 11:25–26)
12. How do you see God working even in this discouraging conflict between Barnabas and Paul for the good of His kingdom?