

Bereans Bible Institute
Module VII – The Apostolic Mission
Lesson 20 – The Ministry of the 12th Apostle – Paul (Part 7)

I. The Jerusalem Council Acts 15

- A. Paul had already received the approval of His message to the Gentiles during his previous trip to Jerusalem 14 years after Pentecost (Acts 11:30 – 12:25; Gal. 2:1-10).
- B. Vss. 15:3-4 Paul and Barnabas report to the Jerusalem congregation concerning the great success of their first missionary journey in Galatia.
 - 1. Miracles by the hand of Paul:
 - a. Cyprus: Blinding of the sorcerer (Acts 13:6-12)
 - b. Iconium: Signs and miracles (Acts 14:3)
 - c. Lystra: Healing of the lame man (Acts 14:8-13)
 - 2. Many new converts
 - a. Cypress: The conversion of proconsul Sergius Paulus
 - b. Antioch of Pisidia: Almost whole city, many believed (Acts 13:42-49)
 - c. Made many disciples in Derbe (Acts 14:21)
 - 3. Appointed elders in all four congregations
 - 4. Suffered great persecution, including stoning to ‘death’
- C. Vs. 5 A segment of Pharisees insisted on circumcision and Law keeping (the SOURCE of the problem)
- D. Vss. 6-7a The Apostles and Elders assembled apart from the congregation to discuss “this matter” (the problem of the Elders/Pharisees support for law-keeping).
 - 1. Only the **Apostles** and **Elders** (w/Paul & Barnabas) were present.
 - 2. The ‘much disputing’ was between the ‘Elders’ vs. the ‘Apostles.’
 - a. Elders/Pharisees relied solely on Scripture + Tradition
 - b. Apostles relied solely on Scripture + Divine Confirmation
- E. Vss. 7b-11 The head Apostle (Peter) points to Divine Confirmation (against tradition)
 - 1. Vs. 12 Barnabas & Paul provide anecdotal support.
 - a. Barnabas listed first because he was a member of the Jerusalem cong.
 - 2. Vss. 13-18 James (bro. of Jesus) confirms w/Scripture (quoting Amos 9:11-12)
- F. Vss. 19-21 James, as the Head Elder (pastor) gives his judgment
 - 1. Write an encyclical letter to all the Gentile congregations to include 4 points:
 - a. Abstain from everything that is polluted by idolatry
 - b. Abstain from sexual immorality
 - c. Abstain from eating meat from animals not properly killed
 - d. Abstain from eating blood
 - 2. The Gentiles should abide by the requirements of God delivered for the nations after the flood:
 - a. Eating blood forbidden for Gentiles (Gen. 9:1-4 {Lev. 17:10-14})
 - b. ‘Idolatry’ began with the sons of Noah (Nimrod – Gen. 10:8-12) at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11). God’s people are distinguished by separation from idols & foreign gods (Gen. 35:1-4).
 - c. Sexual immorality was commonplace (example of Ham - Gen. 9:20-27), and became commonplace among all pagans.
 - 3. Vss. 20-21 The need for an authoritative ‘Epistle’ specifically for the Gentiles
- G. Vss. 22-31 The Gentile Epistle