

And certain persons, having come down from Judaea, taught the brethren, If ye shall not have been circumcised according to the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. - Acts 15:1

This Lesson Outline was prepared by John M. Wharton

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Sources -

All bible text, unless otherwise indicated, is the Darby Translation. ASV indicates the American Standard Version, with KJV indicating the King James Version. Quotations are often included from various classic christian commentaries such as John Gill's Expositor, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures, and others. Greek and Hebrew word definitions are often included from the Strong's Concordance, unless otherwise indicated. All of these sources, both the bible text's, commentaries, and Strong's definition's are taken from THE WORD from Online Bible 1.00, or The Power Bible also from Online Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction -

Despite revelations from God to the contrary the early church in Jerusalem persisted in believing that Salvation from God came as a result of circumcision and doing works of the Law.

Point # 1 – Believers came up to Antioch from the Jerusalem Assembly teaching the believers that they must be circumcised to have salvation.

Point # 2 – Paul and Barnabas withstood their teaching so strongly that they could only agree to go to Jerusalem to discuss the matter further.

Point # 3 – Only Peter among the Apostles and leaders at Jerusalem is mentioned as supporting Paul and Barnabas position.

Point # 4 – James seems to have proposed a compromise position between the positions of the two sides.

Point # 5 – After the arguments and proposals they determined to send out a party to inform the other believers about their conclusions on this matter.

The Lesson text is from Acts 15 -

Point # 1 -

Despite God's clear revelation to Peter and the blessing of God on his work and that of others among the Gentiles many in the Jerusalem Assembly still believed that salvation came really from keeping the Law.

Acts 15: 1 ¶ And certain persons, having come down from Judaea, taught the brethren, If ye shall not have been circumcised according to the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

If ye shall not - 3362. *ean mh ean me eh-an' may*; i.e. 1437 and 3361; **if not**, i.e. **unless**:-X before, but, except, if, no, (if, + whosoever) not.

ye cannot - 3756. *ou ou oo*; also (before a vowel) *ouk ouk ook*; and (before an aspirate) *ouc ouch ookh*; a primary word; **the absolute negative** [compare 3361] adverb; no or not:- + long, nay, neither, never, no (X man), none, [can-]not, + nothing, + special, un([-worthy]), when, + without, + yet but. See also 3364, 3372.

Comments -

There isn't any doubt that the teachers from Judea were delivering an ultimatum to the believers at Antioch. No salvation without circumcision! And it wouldn't have stopped at circumcision. The sense of what they say to the believers in Antioch as well as what they argue in Jerusalem indicates that they meant for the Gentile

believers to start keeping the law just as they did. To see this refer to the circumcision party's argument in vs. 5 and then to James more moderate compromise position in verses 19-21 to require only a few obvious points of the Law from the Gentiles. Remember that in the Old Testament non Israelites who become a part of the community had to be circumcised and start keeping the Law. That was still their way of thinking. And so the question facing these Gentile believers was do we have Salvation by faith or do we have to keep the Law also.

Point # 2 -

The argument between these teachers and Paul and Barnabas about this was so strong that the only solution visible to everyone was to send a delegation to Jerusalem to discuss the matter.

2 A commotion therefore having taken place, and no small discussion on the part of Paul and Barnabas against them, they arranged that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others from amongst them, should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this question.

no - 3756. ou ou oo; also (before a vowel) ouk ouk ook; and (before an aspirate) ouc ouch ookh; a primary word; **the absolute negative** [compare 3361] adverb; no or not:— + long, nay, neither, never, no (X man), none, [can-]not, + nothing, + special, un([-worthy]), when, + without, + yet but. See also 3364, 3372.

Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures from The Word from The Online Bible

{When Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them} (genomenhv stasewv kai zhthsewv ouk oligw tw paulw kai barnaba prov autouv). Genitive absolute of second aorist middle participle of ginomai, genitive singular agreeing with first substantive stasewv. **Literally, "No little (litotes for much) strife and questioning coming to Paul and Barnabas (dative case) with them "**(prov autouv, face to face with them). Paul and Barnabas were not willing to see this Gentile church brow-beaten and treated as heretics by these self-appointed regulators of Christian orthodoxy from Jerusalem. The work had developed under the leadership of Paul and Barnabas and they accepted full responsibility for it and stoutly resisted these Judaizers to the point of sedition (riot, outbreak in #Lu 23:25; Ac 19:40) as in #23:7. There is no evidence that the Judaizers had any supporters in the Antioch church so that they failed utterly to make any impression. Probably these Judaizers compelled Paul to think through afresh his whole gospel of grace and so they did Paul and the world a real service. If the Jews like Paul had to believe, it was plain that there was no virtue in circumcision (#Ga 2:15-21). It is not true that the early Christians had no disagreements. They had selfish avarice with Ananias and Sapphira, murmuring over the gifts to the widows, simony in the case of Simon Magus, violent objection to work in Caesarea, and now open strife over a great doctrine (grace vs. legalism). *{The brethren appointed}* (etaxan). "The brethren" can be supplied from verse #1 and means the church in Antioch. The church clearly saw that the way to remove this deadlock between the Judaizers and Paul and Barnabas was to consult the church in Jerusalem to which the Judaizers belonged. Paul and Barnabas had won in Antioch. If they can win in Jerusalem, that will settle the matter. The Judaizers will be answered in their own church for which they are presuming to speak. The verb etaxan (tassw, to arrange) suggests a formal appointment by the church in regular assembly. Paul (#Ga 2:2) says that he went up by revelation (kat apokaluqin), but surely that is not contradictory to the action of the church. *{Certain others of them}* (tinav allouv). Certainly Titus (#Ga 2:1,3), a Greek and probably a brother of Luke who is not mentioned in Acts. Rackham thinks that Luke was in the number. *{The apostles and elders}* (touv apostolouv kai presbuterouv). Note one article for both (cf. "the apostles and the brethren" in #11:1). "Elders" now (#11:30) in full force. The apostles have evidently returned now to the city after the death of Herod Agrippa I stopped the persecution.

Comments -

no small discussion - The word "no" is the same used by the teachers in vs. 1 to say that the Gentiles absolutely could not have Salvation if they weren't circumcised. So this absolutely was not a small discussion. It was flatly a theological brawl and Paul and Barnabas wouldn't have any of the circumcision party's wrangling and arrogant self righteousness. We will see in vs. 5 that these of this opinion were Pharisees who had converted. Self righteousness and making the Law harder than it was were some of the very criticisms that Jesus Himself leveled at the Pharisees. It was surely a heated argument and it went on for some time with neither side convincing the other. **they arranged that Paul and Barnabas....should go up to Jerusalem....about this question** But Paul and Barnabas refused to accept their requirements and so the only solution in sight to them was to present the matter to the Apostles and elders in the Jerusalem church.

3 They therefore, having been set on their way by the assembly, passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, **relating the conversion of those of the nations. And they caused great joy to all the brethren.**

all - 3956. pav pas pas; including all the forms of declension; apparently a primary word; **all, any, every, the whole**:—all (manner of, means), alway(-s), any (one), X daily, + ever, every (one, way), as many as, + no(-thing), X thoroughly, whatsoever, whole, whosoever.

Comments -

relating the conversion of those of the nations Paul and Barnabas took the opportunity to relate their success in preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles to everyone along the way who'd listen and be sympathetic. We might view this in our modern terms as a little bit of a Public Relations campaign on Paul and Barnabas part and it was a huge success. Was Paul concerned about what the Jerusalem assembly might think about his and Barnabas teaching? He would have been less than human if he weren't. A negative opinion from the leaders there might have caused him to have to break off all relations with them. Given Paul's strength of conviction and character I don't think he would have given up the Gospel he received personally from Christ and taught to the Gentiles. In view of that we can see why they felt a need to tell their side of the story and their successes to anyone who'd listen. It's always nice to enter into a fight knowing that you have a crowd of supporters behind you.

4 And being arrived at Jerusalem, they were received by the assembly, and the apostles, and the elders, and related all that God had wrought with them.

Comments -

First the pleasantries and then they got down to business and Paul and Barnabas started telling the whole crowd of leaders what a wonderful harvest of converts from among the uncircumcised Gentiles God had given to them.

5 **And some of those who were of the sect of the Pharisees, who believed,** rose up from among *them*, saying that **they ought to circumcise them and enjoin them to keep the law of Moses.**

Comments -

they ought to circumcise them and enjoin them to keep the law of Moses Their intent wasn't just circumcision but also living by the entire Law of Moses as apparently all of these believers in Judea were all still doing. As the story continues it becomes clear that the revelation given to Paul of the Gospel and of Salvation just for faith free of works had not taken root here in the Judean church if it was even being seriously considered. And remember that they had already faced this question twice before with first Peter's leading by God to the house of Cornelius in chapter 10 of Acts and then with the repost of converts in Antioch causing the Jerusalem church to dispatch Barnabas to go check it all out. They were well aware that the Gentiles were responding well to the good news of the Gospel so this could not have been a surprise to them. They had simply refused to accept the testimony of Peter and others and continued to view everything through the spiritual blinders of their religious traditions.

6 ¶ And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to see about this matter.

Comments -

And the apostles and the elders were gathered together The Apostles and the other elders weren't sure what to do about the matter. No indication that anyone rose up immediately and spoke out on Paul and Barnabas behalf. And remember that this group has already heard Peter's account of what God did at Cornelius house as well as surely glowing reports from Barnabas after they sent him up to investigate. All of this testimony an they still weren't sure what to do. There's an impression here that most of the believers preferred or could at least easily accept the position of these Pharisaic believers. The odds seemed to be stacked against Paul and Barnabas. They were right to be concerned about this meeting and to seek all the support they could get along the way.

John Gill's Expositor from The Word from The Online Bible

Ver. 6. *And the apostles and elders came together, &c.]* And also the brethren, or private members of the church, even the whole church, as appears from #Ac 15:22,23. Whether all the apostles were here present, is not certain; Peter, James, and John were; but who else, cannot be said: these met together

for to consider of this matter; to hear what was to be said on both sides of the question, and then to judge what advice was proper to be given to the Gentiles.

Point # 3 -

Little support for Paul and Barnabas position seems to have existed among the other leaders at Jerusalem. Only Peter is given by name here as openly supporting them.

7 **And much discussion having taken place**, Peter, standing up, said to them, Brethren, *ye* know that from the earliest days God amongst you chose that the nations by my mouth should hear the word of the glad tidings and believe.

Comments -

And much discussion having taken place Arguments and counter arguments. It went on for awhile. Finally Peter felt the strength of his convictions and spoke out on behalf of Paul and Barnabas. The only question I ask (and respectfully) is why Peter waited this long to stand up in support of them. Perhaps easier to ask and harder to actually do, but then God had revealed His intention for the Gentiles to Peter himself personally. And he had faced these same accusations that Paul and Barnabas were now. And he knew the stakes for all of them in the Gentile church if they lost here. The impression is that the circumcision party carried a lot of weight and the others were sympathetic to (or afraid of?) them. If they were a minority as many seem to think then they were clearly a very powerful one. And Paul indicates that Peter on another occasion had vacillated in front of the circumcision party on this very same matter. (See Galatians 2:11-14)

8 And the heart-knowing God bore them witness, giving *them* the Holy Spirit as to us also,

9 and put no difference between us and them, having purified their hearts by faith.

10 **Now therefore why tempt ye God, by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?**

tempt ye - 3985. *peirazw* peirazo *pi-rad'-zo*; from 3984; to test (objectively), i.e. endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline:--assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt(-er), try.

Comments -

why tempt ye God Peter says that they were literally tempting God to anger by considering requiring observance of the Law from the Gentile believers when they knew that neither they themselves nor their forefathers had ever been able to truly keep it.

He admits that neither they nor their fore fathers had ever been able to keep the entire weight of all of that Law. Thats why it's so foolish for christians today with the advantage of this inspired record from God to then go back into the Old Testament Law and start yanking out verses here and there and almost always totally out of their context and start teaching those points of Law to believers as things that must be done today for salvation! That is directly contrary to what Peter here was inspired to warn the assembly about.

by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples Paul uses that very same symbolism in his epistle to the Galatan church which was later on under the same attack again as Antich was here.

Galatians 5:1 ¶ Christ has set us free in freedom; stand fast therefore, and be not held again in a yoke of bondage.

11 But we believe that we shall be saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same manner as they also.

12 **And all the multitude kept silence and listened to Barnabas and Paul relating all the signs and wonders which God had wrought among the nations by them.**

Comments -

And all the multitude kept silence and listened Still they weren't convinced even after all of this argument and the testimony of the blessing of God on the efforts of those teaching the Gentiles. Even after the stern warning from Peter that they were tempting God to move in judgment against them if they continued in this

path. And the testimony of history seems to indicate that they in the Judean church did in fact continue in this course, always wedded to the Law and the traditions of their fore fathers.

and listened to Barnabas and Paul And Paul and Barnabas didn't leave anything to chance. The group had not been clearly won over yet so they kept on talking, telling about all of the miracles and conversions God had performed during their ministering among the Gentiles.

Point # 4 -

James proposed a 'compromise' position after both sides had argued at length about the need, or not, for the gentile believers to have circumcision, and the Kosher Laws.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, listen to me:

14 Simon has related how God first visited to take out of *the* nations a people for his name.

15 And with this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written:

16 After these things I will return, and will rebuild the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and will rebuild its ruins, and will set it up,

17 so that the residue of men may seek out the Lord, and all the nations on whom my name is invoked, saith *the* Lord, who does these things

18 known from eternity.

19 Wherefore *I* judge, not to trouble those who from the nations turn to God;

I - 1473. *egw* ego *eg-o*; a primary pronoun of the first person I (only expressed when emphatic):—I, me. For the other cases and the plural see 1691, 1698, 1700, 2248, 2249, 2254, 2257, etc.

judge - 2919. *krinw* krino *kree'-no*; properly, to distinguish, i.e. decide (mentally or judicially); by implication, to try, condemn, punish:—avenge, conclude, condemn, damn, decree, determine, esteem, judge, go to (sue at the) law, ordain, call in question, sentence to, think.

trouble - 3926. *parenoclew* parenochleo *par-en-okh-leh'-o*; from 3844 and 1776; to harass further, i.e. annoy:—trouble.

not - 3361. *mh* me *may*; a primary particle of qualified negation (whereas 3756 expresses an absolute denial);

(adverbially) not, (conjunctively) lest; also (as an interrogative implying a negative answer [whereas 3756 expects an affirmative one]) whether:—any but (that), X forbear, + God forbid, + lack, lest, neither, never, no (X wise in), none, nor, [can-]not, nothing, that not, un[-taken], without. Often used in compounds in substantially the same relations. See also 3362, 3363, 3364, 3372, 3373, 3375, 3378.

turn - 1994. *epistrefw* epistrefho *ep-ee-stref'-o*; from 1909 and 4762; to revert (literally, figuratively or morally):—come (go) again, convert, (re-)turn (about, again).

Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures from The Word from The Online Bible -

Ver. 19. *Wherefore my sentence is, &c.*] Opinion or judgment in this case, or what he reckoned most advisable to be done; for he did not impose his sense upon the whole body, but proposed it to them:

Comments -

After all of the arguments had been stated fully James seems to propose a compromise position that might prove (hopefully?) to be acceptable to both party's. Many see this as the correct conclusion which resolved the matter for the church or at least should have. But Paul continued even after this church council to have extreme trouble with the circumcision party. It seems to me that this agreement only served as a temporary measure between the two groups. Soon enough the argument started back up and over time both sides seemed to harden their positions. Paul hardens his position out of desperation because of the confusion being inflicted in his churches by these false teachers whom he characterizes as perverting the gospel *Gal. 1:6 ...there are some that trouble you, and desire to pervert the glad tidings....* and as teaching a false gospel *Gal. 1: 6 ...to a different gospel, 7 which is not another one...* and later to the Philippians he refers to them as effectively worthless and dogs set on mutilating others (as themselves?) *Phil 3:2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision:*

Paul calls them *dogs* which is how they viewed the Gentiles, *evil workers* are worthless lier's, and the word *concision* there means to mutilate or maybe even to cut the entire organ off, and is a clear jab at the circumcision party's continual emphasis on circumcising everyone so that they would all be alike. By this point Paul was clearly throughly tired of all of them and the continually legalizing arguments!

20 but to write to them to abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood.

to abstain - 567. *apecomai* apechomai *ap-ekh'-om-aher*; middle voice (reflexively) of 568; to hold oneself off, i.e. refrain:—abstain.

pollutions - 234. *aligema* alisgema *al-is'-ghem-ahr*; from *aligew* alisgeo (to soil); (ceremonially) defilement:—pollution.

fornication - 4202. **porneia** porneia *por-ni'-ah*; from 4203; **harlotry** (including adultery and incest); figuratively, idolatry:—fornication.
what is strangled - 4156. **pniktov** pniktos *pnik-tos'*; from 4155; **throttled, i.e. (neuter concretely) an animal choked to death (not bled)**:—strangled.
blood - 129. **aima** haima *hah'-ee-mah*; of uncertain derivation; **blood**, literally (of men or animals), figuratively (the juice of grapes) or specially (the atoning blood of Christ); by implication bloodshed, also kindred:—blood.

John Gill's Expositor from The Word from The Online Bible

Ver. 20. **But that we write unto them, &c.]** Or send an epistle to them, to this effect, concerning the following things:

that they abstain from pollutions of idols; that is, from eating things offered to idols; see #Ac 15:29 for not idolatry, or the worshipping of idols itself, is here spoken of; for that was no indifferent thing; and besides, these converted Gentiles were turned from that, and there was no danger of their returning to it; but eating things sacrificed to idols was an indifferent thing; but yet inasmuch as it had a tendency to lead to idolatry, and gave offence to the Jewish believers in the churches, and was a stumbling block to weak minds, who by the example of stronger Christians, were led to eat them as sacrificed to an idol, and so their weak consciences were defiled, therefore it was very proper to abstain from them;

Comments -

James four points are clearly aimed at things that would be easily noticed by Jewish people and so might offend them. Refraining from these matters, it was hoped, would lessen the chance of offense to Jewish observers and possibly ease the way toward their conversion. And James indicates this intent in the next verse.

21 For Moses, from generations of old, has in every city those who preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath.

John Gill's Expositor from The Word from The Online Bible

Ver. 21. **For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, &c.]** That is, for many years past, even from the times of Ezra, the law of Moses has been publicly expounded by them, whom the Jews call Derashim, preachers, or expounders, in every city where there was a synagogue; and every city belonging to the Jews, were obliged to build a synagogue, yea, they were obliged to do it where there were but ten Israelites {n}:

{n} Maimon. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 1.

Point # 5 -

Then they decided to send out a group with Paul and Barnabas to inform everyone else of the determinations about the matter.

22 ¶ Then it seemed good to the apostles and to the elders, with the whole assembly, to send chosen men from among them with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, Judas called Barsabas and Silas, leading men among the brethren,

23 having by their hand written *thus*: The apostles, and the elders, and the brethren, to the brethren who are from among *the* nations at Antioch, and *in* Syria and Cilicia, greeting:

24 Inasmuch as we have heard that some who went out from amongst us have troubled you by words, upsetting your souls, saying that ye must be circumcised and keep the law; to whom we gave no commandment;

have troubled - 5015. **tarassw** tarasso *tar-as'-so*; of uncertain affinity; **to stir or agitate (roll water)**:—trouble.
upsetting - 384. **anaskeuazo** anaskeuazo *an-ask-yoo-ad'-zo*; from 303 (in the sense of reversal) and a derivative of 4632; properly, **to pack up (baggage)**, i.e. (by implication and figuratively) **to upset**:—subvert.
keep - 5083. **threw** tereo *tay-reh'-o*; from terov teros (a watch; perhaps akin to 2334); **to guard** (from loss or injury, properly, **by keeping the eye upon**; and thus differing from 5442, which is properly to prevent escaping; and from 2892, which implies a fortress or full military lines of apparatus), i.e. to note (a prophecy; figuratively, to fulfil a command); by implication, to detain (in custody; figuratively, to maintain); by extension, to withhold (for personal ends; figuratively, to keep unmarried); by extension, to withhold (for personal ends; figuratively, to keep unmarried):—hold fast, keep(-er), (pre-, re-)serve, watch.
gave - 1291. **diastellomai** diastellomai *dee-as-tel'-lom-ah-ee*; middle voice from 1223 and 4724; **to set (oneself) apart**

(figuratively, distinguish), i.e. (by implication) to enjoin:—charge, that which was (give) commanded(-ment).
no - 3756. ou ou oo; also (before a vowel) ouk ouk ook; and (before an aspirate) ouc ouch ookh; a primary word; **the absolute negative** [compare 3361] adverb; no or not:— + long, nay, neither, never, no (X man), none, [can-]not, + nothing, + special, un([-worthy]), when, + without, + yet but. See also 3364, 3372.
commandment - 1291. diastellomai diastellomai dee-as-tel'-lom-ah-ee; middle voice from 1223 and 4724; **to set (oneself) apart** (figuratively, distinguish), i.e. (by implication) to enjoin:—charge, that which was (give) commanded(-ment).

Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures from The Word from The Online Bible

{*Certain which went from us*} (tinev ex hmwn, Aleph B omit exelyontev). A direct blow at the Judaizers, **put in delicate language** (we heard hkousamen) as if only at Antioch (#15:1), and not also in Jerusalem in open meeting (#15:5). {*Have troubled you with words*} (etaraxan umav logoiv). What a picture of turmoil in the church in Antioch, words, words, words. Aorist tense of the common verb tarassw, to agitate, to make the heart palpitate (#Joh 14:1,27) and instrumental case of logoiv. {*Subverting your souls*} (anaskeuazontev tav qucav umwn). Present active participle of anaskeuazw, old verb (ana and skeuov, baggage) **to pack up baggage, to plunder, to ravage. Powerful picture of the havoc wrought by the Judaizers among the simple-minded Greek Christians in Antioch.** {*To whom we gave no commandment*} (oiv ou diesteilameya). First aorist middle indicative of diastellw, **old verb to draw asunder, to distinguish, to set forth distinctly, to command. This is a flat disclaimer of the whole conduct of the Judaizers in Antioch and in Jerusalem, a complete repudiation of their effort to impose the Mosaic ceremonial law upon the Gentile Christians.**

Comments -

James and the others in the Jerusalem church said that they hadn't sent the circumcision teachers to Antioch and implied that they had no knowledge of their activity until this meeting. It seems strange that no one of significance in the church would have known or at least suspected that they were planning to go up to Antioch to straighten out the Gentile believers. Paul does seem to have a different perspective on this incident later in the epistle to the Galatians. See *Galatians 2:12*.

25 it seemed good to us, having arrived at a common judgment, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

common judgment - 3661. omoyumadon homothumadon hom-oth-oo-mad-on; adverb from a compound of the base of 3674 and 2372; **unanimously**:—with one accord (mind).

Comments -

It may have seemed at the time like everyone was unanimous in agreeing to this compromise position. But if you think about it, it's a little hard to believe that the Pharisaic believers who had only shortly before argued so fiercely against the free grace that Paul taught could now switch gears and thoroughly agree with this very modified opinion. And it is clear in Paul's epistles written after this event that some from this circumcision party were still going into his Gentile churches while he wasn't there and stirring up a lot of trouble among the believers and even miss-representing what was the Gospel that he really taught. Is it possible that some of them seemed to agree at that time but later changed back to their original opinion?

26 men who have given up their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27 We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves also will tell you by word of mouth the same things.

28 For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

Comments -

Did it seem good to everyone, and for how long? This concord didn't last very long. Paul spends a lot of time in the Epistles to the Corinthians still dealing with this matter. And chapter's 1 and 2 of Galatians are explosive in the implications regarding the truth and sincerity of these circumcision teachers who were coming into Paul's churches.

29 to abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from

fornication; keeping yourselves from which ye will do well. Farewell.

30 They therefore, being let go, came to Antioch, and having gathered the multitude delivered to *them* the epistle.

31 And having read it, they rejoiced at the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with much discourse, and strengthened them.

33 And having passed some time *there*, they were let go in peace from the brethren to those who sent them.

34

vs. 34 in the American Standard Version from The Word from The Online Bible

34 {Some ancient authorities insert, with variations, verse 34 But it seemed good unto Silas to abide there.}

Robertson's New Testament Word Pictures from The Word from The Online Bible

{*But it seemed good unto Silas to abide there*} (edoxe de sila epimeinai autou). This verse is not in the Revised Version or in the text of Westcott and Hort, being absent from Aleph A B Vulgate, etc. It is clearly an addition to help explain the fact that Silas is back in Antioch in verse #40. But the "some days" of verse #36 afforded abundant time for him to return from Jerusalem. He and Judas went first to Jerusalem to make a report of their mission.

35 And Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, teaching and announcing the glad tidings, with many others also, of the word of the Lord.

36 ¶ But after certain days Paul said to Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city where we have announced the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are getting on.

37 And Barnabas proposed to take with *them* John also, called Mark;

38 but Paul thought it not well to take with them him who had abandoned them, *going back* from Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work.

39 **There arose therefore very warm feeling, so that they separated from one another; and Barnabas taking Mark sailed away to Cyprus;**

very warm - 3948. [paroxusmov](#) paroxusmos *par-ox-oos-mos*⁴; from 3947 ("paroxysm"); **incitement** (to good), or **dispute (in anger)**:—contention, provoke unto.

Comments –

It was a hot argument and neither one convinced the other. Paul and Barnabas seemed to both be strong in their convictions (and maybe a little stubborn?) and so they parted and went their separate ways. Later Paul was able to say that Mark was useful for him. But at this time Paul just didn't trust him to help them on the evangelistic trail after he had left them once before.

Acts 13:13 And having sailed from Paphos, Paul and his company came to

Perga of Pamphylia; and John separated from them and returned to Jerusalem.

This is the John also, called Mark; mentioned in vs. 37 above.

40 but Paul having chosen Silas went forth, committed by the brethren to the grace of God.

Comments –

Presumably the Silas mentioned in v. 32 who, along with Judas, was sent with Paul and Barnabas by the Jerusalem church. From his acceptance of the Gentile believers as mentioned in vs. 32 and Paul's acceptance of him and his ministering to the believers, he seems to have agreed with the Gospel that Paul and Barnabas preached in their churches.

41 And he passed through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the assemblies.

Conclusion -

The church council in Jerusalem confronted the issue of requiring the Gentile believers to become circumcised to have Salvation. They backed away from this position requiring only

a few obvious points of Law instead. These were mostly based on the most obvious Kosher requirements. The question now is whether or not this agreement succeeded in settling the dispute between the parties.