

Changing the “House Rules” from Law to Grace (continued)

Scripture Reading:

- **Acts 14:25-15:31**

REVIEW

Scripture can only be free from the accusation that it contains contradictions when you recognize God-authorized transitions (cf Acts 10:13-16)

The “Acts of the Apostles” is a detailed description of two such God-authorized transitions:

- God’s working exclusively with and through the nation Israel, to His working with ALL the nations (Acts 1:8)
- God’s changing of the rule of daily life of the believer from LAW to GRACE (Acts 15, Gal 2)

INTRODUCTION



This change from a daily life legislated by LAW, to a daily life EMPOWERED through GRACE, began to be clarified by Jewish Christians discussing this very important issue at the Jerusalem Council as recorded in Acts 15



The Question Before the Jerusalem Council

(“...of apostles and elders with the whole church” Acts 15:22)

Is it necessary for the Gentiles, who have already believed the gospel for initial salvation, to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses?

- These Gentiles had already believed that gospel:
 - Cornelius' communication with God - Acts 10:1-6
 - Peter's rehearsal of his trip to Cornelius – Acts 11:12-16
 - Peter's communication of the gospel - Acts 10:39-43
 - The response of Cornelius and his household – Acts 10:44
 - The reaction of the believing Jewish witness – Acts 10:45-48

The Identity of the Questioners and the Council

Believing Jews who were yet living
their daily lives under Mosaic Law
- Acts 10:45, 11:2, 15:2,5

Paul and Barnabas - Acts 15:2

The decision makers: the Apostles
and the Elders - Acts 15:2,6

The Testimonies of the Speakers at the Jerusalem Council

Peter - Acts 15:7-11

- Gentiles at the house of Cornelius saved as Gentiles by faith alone - vs 9
- Why add unbearable burden of law-keeping to their daily lives as believers? Vs 10
- We believing Jews are believing to be saved (present tense salvation), as the Gentile believers are being saved (in their present-tense salvation) THROUGH GRACE! vs 11

Barnabas and Paul - Acts 15:12

- Through them, God did signs and wonders among the Gentiles

James - Acts 15:13-18

- Recognition of God saving Gentiles – vs 13-14
- Agreement of this fact from Scripture vs 15-18, cf Amos 9:11-12, Zech 8:20-23

The Conclusion of the Council - Acts 15:19-21

The Gentile believers do not have to live their daily lives under law – v19

However, they need to keep four “laws” so that they will not scandalize Jews (believing or unbelieving) who do live their daily lives according to Mosaic Law - vs 20-21

- Abstain from things related to idols
- Abstain from fornication
- Abstain from eating blood
- Abstain from animal meat that has been strangled

The Authorized Agreement

- ◆ Communicated in writing and by voice to the Gentile believers at Antioch
 - ◆ Acts 15:22-31 “Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, with the following letter: “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers^lwho are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings...”

◆ This conflict of how to live the Christian life continues to this very hour because of the blind ignorance of God's transition from living under LAW to living under GRACE

◆ Eph 2:8a "For by GRACE are you saved..." (in the past with the continuing result that you are still being saved, i.e. present-tense salvation)

CONCLUSION