

Acts 15

King James Version (KJV)

(This chapter involves dissension in the church. That usually happens when people start preaching their own "interpretations" of what God's Word means)

15 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. (These were old school Jews who were still practicing animal sacrifice. These people missed the coming of Messiah. They were holding on to Judaism, instead of recognizing Christianity)

NOTE: (Jesus' crucifixion fulfilled all blood ordinances. An animal sacrifice to God, after the crucifixion of Jesus, is an insult to God. Circumcision of males was not longer mandated. Additionally, the crucifixion opened Christianity to all people, not just Israelites. That's why God sent Peter, and then Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles) see Collosians-2

²When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. (Their teaching contradicted what Paul and Barnabas were teaching. That salvation was open to all people and that all blood ordinances were fulfilled by Jesus, on the cross)

(God taught that lesson to Peter; but apparently, that lesson didn't reach these people)

(This was the beginning of division in Christianity. Today these are called denominations. This is what happens when men take over churches. It starts as a disagreement, and then devolves into some churches teaching false doctrine) See Collossians-2:3-4

³And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. (Salvation was opened to all people, so they continued to teach people as they traveled)

⁴And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. (They told the apostles of their progress

in converting so many people to Christianity. God had worked great deeds through these two men)

⁵ But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. (What did they believe? Apparently they didn't believe Jesus)

NOTE: (In order to understand the Word of God, we have to know the difference between the law, the statutes and the ordinances. The law is the Ten Commandments. The law is absolute and will be forever.

The statutes and ordinances were rules established by Moses, with inspiration from God. They were for health. They were also for social order. They allowed the Israelites to live together in peace and justice. Jesus fulfilled all of the blood ordinances when He became the last Sacrifice - His crucifixion on the cross. There is no more sacrificing of animals to God. Circumcision is now only for health reasons. It's up to the individual)

⁶ And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. (There really wasn't anything to consider. Either they believed in what Jesus taught us, or they didn't. The truth is absolute. It's not open for interpretation; especially by men with agendas)

⁷ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. (God told Peter to call no man common; and to preach the Word of God to them. Man has no right to overrule God's command) Acts-10

⁸ And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; (They spoke in the cloven tongue of the Holy Spirit. This was proof to Peter that God was with them)

⁹ And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. (God didn't differentiate the Gentiles from the Israelites, so men should not either. After Jesus opened salvation to all, preachers should not exclude anyone who believes and wants God's salvation)

NOTES: (We still see this today when ignorant preachers treat divorced people as second class citizens; and also when they refuse

women the right to preach and teach. Jesus didn't exclude women or divorcees)

(Paul said that women shouldn't chatter in church. No one should chatter in church – neither men nor women. That doesn't exclude women from becoming preachers. Paul was a great Bible teacher, not a prophet)

¹⁰ Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? (People failed by the law alone. When we trespass against the law, we need repentance and the forgiveness that Jesus provides; or no one will make it to salvation)

¹¹ But we believe that through the grace of the LORD Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. (The law is still in effect but Jesus opened the door to repentance and forgiveness. HE didn't end the law. The law is the Ten Commandments; not the blood ordinances)

¹² Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. (This should have been enough to convince the whole bunch. It wasn't)

NOTE: (The people that refused the changes that Jesus brought <the New Testament> belong to the Jewish religion <Judaism> today. They are still waiting for the Messiah to come)

¹³ And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

¹⁴ Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. **Luke-1:68**

¹⁵ And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, (This was all prophesied in the Old Testament)

¹⁶ After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

¹⁷ That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things. (upon whom my name is called = Christians – Christ's

men) (If they are calling on God for salvation, they shall receive it)
Amos-9

¹⁸ Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.
(God's plan started at the beginning of time and has not changed one bit)

¹⁹ Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: (my sentence is, = my judgment is)

(The Gentiles were not under the ordinances of Moses. They were under the Law of God – the Ten Commandments)

²⁰ But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.
(The food health laws. This is not against blood transfusions)

(The blood ordinances were fulfilled by Jesus)

NOTE: (These are ordinances to help people to remain healthy in their daily lives. When you butcher an animal for food, drain the blood out to prevent spoiling the meat)

(The Ten Commandments are the law. Jesus did not change one bit of the law. Christians are bound to obey the law of God)

²¹ For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day. (The Jews are still preaching the Mosaic ordinances to the Jews in the synagogues)

²² Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren: (Barsabas = son of the Sabbath; Silas = woody)

²³ And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia.

²⁴ Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: (These preachers came on their own. We didn't send

them. Don't listen to them and stick with the teachings of Jesus, as taught by Paul and his group)

²⁵ It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

²⁶ Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (These are Christians. They will teach the Word of God, as they were taught by Jesus Christ)

²⁷ We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. (They were sending other witnesses to teach them)

²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; (They will not burden you with the Mosaic ordinances. They will only teach the Word that Jesus gave us; and the Ten Commandments which is the law of God)

²⁹ That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. (Because that would insult the people that made the offering. They don't know better)

(Instead, teach them about Jesus and His doctrine. They will voluntarily make the switch to Christianity when their time is right)

³⁰ So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: (epistle = a letter)

³¹ Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. (The Gentiles rejoiced because salvation was now opened to them. They didn't have to be Israelites in order to be saved. All they had to do was believe in Jesus Christ as God with us; and obey the Ten Commandments)

NOTES: (The doctrine that Jesus brought to us <Christianity> sets us free. If we make mistakes, repentance and salvation are open to us. The false doctrines of men trap people by fear of God, and with judgment by men)

(Men are not qualified to judge anyone. Don't let false preachers steal the greatest gift of God from you. True Christianity has no denominations)

³² And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. (They taught the Word of God. The word prophet <here> can also be translated – teacher)

³³ And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

³⁴ Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. (He stayed there to continue the ministry. It is believed that Salas was a Hellenist with Roman citizenship – like Paul)

³⁵ Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. (They built up a following to teach more and more people. They taught God's Word, chapter by chapter, verse by verse)

³⁶ And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the LORD, and see how they do. (Go back and check progress on the ministries that they have started. Making a circuit to re-visit the churches would give them a chance to advance the Word with deeper teaching; and to correct them if they had strayed)

³⁷ And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.

³⁸ But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. (When things got rough, Mark John went back to Jerusalem)

(Maybe Paul thinks that he's not up to this. Things could get rough again <beatings, imprisonment, and Paul even got stoned>)

NOTE: (Instead, Mark will go on to write the Gospel of Mark. That must have been his calling)

³⁹ And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; (Paul and Barnabas split up over this disagreement)

⁴⁰ And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. (Mark John was not a Roman)

(Paul and Silas were both Roman citizens. It was dangerous where they were going. Their Roman citizenship would help them out of a few jams)

⁴¹ And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches. (They are branching out to expand the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is guiding them to different places)