

## **The Council at Jerusalem**

Acts 15:1-35

by Don Falkos

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Some men came to Antioch and were telling the new Gentile believers, "Unless you're circumcised, you can't be saved." Paul and Barnabas objected. The two of them were sent to Jerusalem to consult with the apostles and the other leaders. When they arrived in Jerusalem they talked at length about all the wonderful things God was doing among the Gentiles in Antioch.

But before they had even broached the subject they had come to discuss, some believers who were Pharisees said, "These Gentile believers must be circumcised and must learn to follow the Law of Moses."

There was a lengthy and heated discussion. Then Peter said, "God chose me to be the first to share the good news with Gentiles so they might believe. God gave them the same Holy Spirit we received. Let's not burden the Gentile believers with all the rules and regulations of the Mosaic Law. After all, none of our ancestors and none of us has ever been able to truly follow them. Jews or Gentiles – we are all saved the same way, by the unmerited grace of the Lord Jesus."

James, the leader of the church in Jerusalem, agreed. "We should not put obstacles in the way of Gentiles who are turning to God."

At his suggestion, a letter was composed and sent with Paul and Barnabas to the church in Antioch. The letter stated,

There are a few basic rules we would ask you to follow: don't eat meat that has been offered to idols; don't consume blood or the meat of strangled animals; and don't engage in sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

When the letter was read in the church at Antioch, the believers were pleased and encouraged.