

## SERMON NOTES: Week 3, April 17, 2016

### FROM THIS DAY FORWARD . . .

#### ***“GRACE”***

**Question: What was the issue that threatened the early church?**

#### **Acts 15:1–5**

<sup>1</sup> **Some men came down from Judea to Antioch** and were teaching the brothers: **“Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”** <sup>2</sup> This brought **Paul and Barnabas** into **sharp dispute and debate** with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. <sup>3</sup> The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad. <sup>4</sup> When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them. <sup>5</sup> Then **some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees** stood up and said, **“The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.”**

                   and                    are introduced into the church in Antioch

**The heart of the dispute: How is a person    ?**

- **“The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses.”**

#### **Acts 15:6–12**

<sup>6</sup> The apostles and elders met to consider this question. <sup>7</sup> After much discussion, **Peter got up and addressed them:** “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. <sup>8</sup> God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. <sup>9</sup> He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. <sup>10</sup> **Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke**

that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? <sup>11</sup> No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.” <sup>12</sup> The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

- **We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved (cf. Romans 3:19-24)**

#### **Acts 15:13–21**

<sup>13</sup> When they finished, **James** spoke up: “Brothers, listen to me. <sup>14</sup> Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. <sup>15</sup> **The words of the prophets are in agreement with this**, as it is written: <sup>16</sup> “ ‘After this I will return and rebuild David’s fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, <sup>17</sup> that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things’ <sup>18</sup> that have been known for ages. <sup>19</sup> **“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. <sup>20</sup> Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. <sup>21</sup> For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath.”**

#### **JAMES’ CONCLUSION:**

- **Peter and Paul reflect the words in Amos 9:9-12**
- **Salvation is by \_\_\_\_\_ not by works**
- **Salvation \_\_\_\_\_ itself by its love for God and others**

In fact, all four of the “apostolic decrees” are found in Lev 17 and 18 as requirements expected of resident aliens: abstinence from pagan sacrifices (17:8), blood (17:10–14), strangled meat (17:13), and illicit sexual relationships (18:6–23).