

THE HISTORIC JERUSALEM COUNCIL

(Acts 15:1-21)

- I. THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM (chapters 1-2)
- II. THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN JERUSALEM (chapters 3-7)
- III. THE CHURCH'S WITNESS FOR CHRIST IN JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND SYRIA (chapters 8-12)
- IV. THE CHURCH'S WITNESS TO THE REST OF THE WORLD (chapters 13-28)

A. Paul and Barnabas' Return to Jerusalem (15:1-5)

1. Legalistic Jews from Judea came to the church in Antioch of Syria and began teaching the Gentile Christians that circumcision was _____ in order to be _____. (v. 1)

* Why was this claim so serious and why did it need to be dealt with immediately?

2. After Paul and Barnabas had a major, heated _____ with these legalists, the church in Antioch decided it would be _____ to take the matter before the apostles and elders in _____; they also sent additional witnesses along with them. (vv. 2-3)
3. Once in Jerusalem they were welcomed by the apostles, and they _____ to their _____ of what had happened at the church in Antioch. (v. 4)
4. Apparently a second group of Jews (these were believing Pharisees) _____ that Gentile Christians needed to keep the Law for _____. (v. 5)

B. Peter's Testimony at the Jerusalem Council (15:6-11)

1. We get the impression that Peter _____ patiently while the disputing and arguing was going on, waiting for the _____ to direct him at the appropriate time. (vv. 6-7a)
2. Peter then explained that God had chosen him to preach the Gospel to the _____ in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10), and the _____ had given them the Holy Spirit, and made _____ distinction between Jew and Gentile. (vv. 7b-9)

3. Peter asked all of them a really good question, “Why should we _____ the Mosaic Law on the Gentiles when our Jewish forefathers could _____ keep it, nor can we?” (v. 10)

4. Peter identified the true gospel, “we believe that through the _____ of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be _____ in the _____ manner as they.” (v. 11)

C. Paul and Barnabas’ Testimony at the Jerusalem Council (15:12)

1. Peter's testimony must have had a great impact on the congregation because they sat in _____ after he was finished; then Paul and Barnabas got up and gave _____ to what the Lord had done among the Gentiles.

2. Luke devoted only one summary sentence to their report since he had already given it in detail in Acts 13-14; the “hands on” testimony of these missionaries carried a _____ deal of _____.

D. James' testimony at the Jerusalem Council (15:13-21)

1. James, the head of the church at Jerusalem took the floor and _____ what Peter had already said, “*God at the first visited the Gentiles*” with _____ and company _____ Paul and Barnabas ever went on their first missionary journey. (vv. 13-14)

2. James then stated that the prophets also _____ with this conclusion, and he cited Amos 9:11-12 to prove his point. Note that he did _____ state that what Peter, Paul, and Barnabas had said was a *fulfillment* of this prophecy, but he said that what Amos wrote _____ *with their testimony*. (vv. 15-18)

3. In conclusion James set forth a practical decision that the church should not _____ the Gentiles who were getting saved; he then added three prohibitions which are best taken in a _____ or _____ sense. (vv. 19-21)

* What can you learn from the importance of this pivotal passage?