

We will now begin the thirteenth lecture on the book of Acts. /The main text is Acts chapter 15. /The title of chapter 15 is, "The Council at Jerusalem." /First, the debate on circumcision. /Verses 1-5. /Second, the gathering of the assembly. /Verse 6. /Third, the discussion. /Verses 7-21.

/Fourth, the resolution of the council. /Verses 22-29. /Fifth, the letter delivered to the church of Antioch. /Verses 30-35. /Sixth, the second missionary journey. /Verse 36. /Seventh, Barnabas and Paul separated. /Verses 37-41.

/There were Jewish believers in the church of Antioch who came from Jerusalem. /They came and said, "Gentiles must be circumcised even if they believe in Jesus." /The people went to Jerusalem to resolve this issue.

/Read verse 1. /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."

/There were believers who came from Judea. /These people and their forefathers had all been circumcised. /They believed in Jesus, but still lived legalistically.

/"Legalism" is the belief that even if one is saved through belief in Jesus, he or she must keep the laws. /However, Paul and Barnabas claimed that one is saved through faith. /This is justification by faith.

/Therefore, Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem. /They went to Jerusalem and the men decided to have a debate. /This was the first issue regarding the doctrine that arose in the early church.

/Verse 3. /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.

/Paul and Barnabas traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, and encouraged the brothers. /They told the brothers that many Gentiles had been saved. /The brothers were very glad when they heard that the Gentiles were saved.

/Paul and Barnabas arrived in Jerusalem. /The apostles and the elders welcomed the two men. /Then Paul and Barnabas reported that the Gentiles believed in Jesus and had been saved.

/They testified that God's great works of salvation took place when they preached to the Gentiles. /Then some believers who belonged the party of the Pharisees claimed that the Gentiles needed to be circumcised.

/Verse 5. /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."

/The party of the Pharisees was conservative and strictly kept the laws. /However, they were caught up in traditions and customs.

/They did not understand the truth of redemption. /Therefore, Paul and Barnabas gathered with the apostles and had a discussion.

/Verse 6. /The apostles and elders met to consider this question.

/The “elders” here refer to the veterans in the church other than the apostles. /They were the leaders of the church. /Acts 20:28-29. /Today, there are sessions, presbyteries, and general assemblies.

/Jesus said that whatever is bound on earth will be bound in heaven. /Also, whatever is loosed on earth will be loosed in heaven. /Matthew 18:18.

/When we have meetings, we must not act according to our own desires or greed. /We must give our opinions always according to God’s will.

/Verses 7-9. /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. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

/There was much discussion. /Some argued that the Gentile believers needed to be circumcised, /and others said that the Gentile believers did not need to be circumcised, for it was by faith in Jesus alone that people were saved.

/There was much discussion and dispute. /Then Peter got up and addressed the people. /Peter testified about the following. /First, he spoke about his experience at Cornelius’ home. /Acts 10, 11.

/Cornelius was a Gentile; yet, he received the Holy Spirit without having been circumcised. /Cornelius received salvation through faith. /God does not look at the appearance.

/There is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. /There is no distinction between the circumcised and uncircumcised. /Second, Peter said that God purified the hearts of the Gentiles by faith.

/Therefore, it was not through circumcision that one was made pure. /Jesus makes our hearts pure through faith. /We become pure by receiving forgiveness of our sins through our faith in Jesus.

/Verses 10-11. /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? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

/Third, Peter said that to demand Gentiles to be circumcised and keep the laws is to test God. /To "test God" means to doubt God. /Fourth, Peter said that this was to put a heavy yoke on the necks of the disciples.

/There is no one in this world that can keep all the laws. /The purpose for the laws was that people would become aware of their sins. /Romans 3:20. /Galatians 3:24. /There is no one who can become righteous through the laws. /Romans 3:10.

/Therefore, to demand that the laws be kept means to make others carry a yoke that they cannot bear. /Fifth, Peter testified that all are saved through Jesus, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. /Paul and Barnabas also testified to this.

/In verse 12, it says when Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel to the Gentiles, there were miraculous signs and wonders from God. /When Paul and Barnabas evangelized to the Gentiles, there were miracles from God.

/The Holy Spirit also told them to go preach to the Gentiles. /Acts 13:2-3. /Then the Gentiles believed in Jesus and returned to God.

/The crippled man in Lystra walked by the power of God. /Those who believed received the Holy Spirit. /Paul and Barnabas testified to these things.

/Verse 13. /When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me.

/Then James the bishop spoke. /This James is Jesus' younger brother. /He was a bishop in the Jerusalem church. /He also spoke about salvation of Gentiles.

/Verse 16. /"After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,

/God said that he would rebuild David's fallen tent. /This means that David's kingdom will be rebuilt through Jesus. /This means that Christ will come and continue the royal line of David.

/However, it was not only the Jews who were included in this, but the Gentiles as well. /James said that all Gentiles may seek the Lord. /Then the Gentiles will come before God.

/Verse 20. /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.

/James gave words of caution to the Gentiles. /"Abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood." /What is "polluted by idols" are sacrifices to idols. /Verse 29. /Sacrifices made to idols are filthy.

/Therefore, we must not eat what was sacrificed to idols. /Even in the New Testament times, people were not to eat food sacrificed to idols. /1 Corinthians 10:20. /1 Corinthians 10:18. /When one eats food that was sacrificed to idols, it means that he has taken part in the altar of idols.

/To perform rites to Gentiles was to perform rites to ghosts. /Therefore, we must not eat food that has been sacrificed to idols.

/There are cases where people perform ancestral rites. /This is to perform rites to one's dead ancestors. /Then people eat the offered food. /Food from the table of ancestral rites is considered food sacrificed to idols. /Dead ancestors are dead, not alive.

/Dead ancestors do not have character. /They will not come back to life. /Therefore, we must not give sacrifices to the dead nor eat food that has been sacrificed. /Next, we must not eat "the meat of strangled animals."

/We must not eat any meat that comes from strangled animals. /We can eat the meat of animals that were not strangled. /Next, it says to abstain "from blood." /We must not eat blood. /This is because blood symbolizes life.

/Therefore, we must not eat food that contains blood. /We must also not get drunk from alcohol. /We must not consume alcohol. /We believers must keep our bodies healthy. /We must not smoke. /Isaiah 55:2.

/Therefore, don't spend money on what does not satisfy. /Also, we must not eat what is harmful to our bodies. /Drugs are harmful to our bodies. /Our bodies are the temple of God.

/Therefore, our bodies must live for God. /Also, God did not completely abolish the laws. /Jesus came to fulfill the laws. /Romans 3:31. /Matthew 5:18-19.

/We are not keeping just the outer skin of the laws. /Today, we do not give sacrifice offerings with cattle or sheep. /We worship Jesus by faith.

/Still, believers of Jesus must keep the implicit truth of the laws. /We are saved through faith in Jesus. /We, as saved believers, must keep the Word of God. /We must keep the Ten Commandments. /We must keep our morals.

/Keeping the commandments makes God happy. /Going against the Word and breaking the commandments is considered sin. /Matthew 7:24-27. /John 8:31-32. /Revelation 1:3.

/We will emphasize this once more. /We are saved through faith alone. /As saved people, we must obey the commandments of God and the Word of God.

/Verse 21. /For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read

in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

/They read the Mosaic Law every Sabbath. /Therefore, we must read the Word of God. / We as saved believers must read the Bible and keep it.

/Verse 22. /Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers.

/The apostles and the elders sent Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch. /Then they sent Judas and Silas with them as servants.

/Verse 28. /It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:

/The decision of the council was made with the Holy Spirit. /Therefore, we must obey the Word by believing that these are the instructions of the Holy Spirit.

/Verse 30. /The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter.

/The men arrived in Antioch. /Then they taught the people the precautions that were written in the letter. /They taught the believers the correct doctrine.

/Then the believers were glad. /There is freedom and joy in the truth. /John 8:32.

/Verse 33. /After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them.

/Verse 35. /But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

/The church of Antioch sent the brothers off with love. /The brothers completed their mission and returned to Jerusalem. /Then Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch and taught the Bible to the believers.

/Verse 36. /Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing."

/Paul said to Barnabas to go the towns and preach the word of the Lord. /There were many churches that they set up during their first missionary journey. /Paul wanted to revisit these churches and encourage and nurture the brothers there.

/We must not only set up churches but must nurture believers. /We must hold strong to the truth and go forward.

/Verses 37-39. /Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus,

/Barnabas took John, also called Mark, on his second missionary journey. /Barnabas wanted to take Mark with him. /Paul did not want to take Mark.

/Paul did not want to take Mark because he returned home when they preached God's word in Pamphylia in Asia Minor. /Barnabas forgave Mark and wanted to take him along. /Barnabas was generous and kind in character.

/However, Paul was a just man. /He did not tolerate injustice. /Therefore, he insisted that they could not take Mark with them. /What is important here is what Paul did.

/It is more important to be righteous and stay on the correct path than to show approval. /Hence, Paul and Barnabas quarreled and then split ways. /It was better that they preach the gospel separately than to argue with each other.

/Although they parted ways, Paul thought well of Barnabas. /1 Corinthians 9:6. /Also, Paul accepted Mark after he repented. /2 Timothy 4:11. /Colossians 4:10.

/Thus, Barnabas took Mark and went to the island of Cyprus. /In verse 41, Paul took Silas and went to Syria and Cilicia.

/We will continue the lecture with Acts chapter 16. /The title of chapter 16 is "Evangelism in Philippi."

/First, Timothy gains faith. /Verses 1-5. /Second, the Holy Spirit does not allow the gospel to be preached in Asia. /Verses 6-7. /Third, evangelism in Macedonia. /Verses 8-15. /Fourth, Paul casts out the spirit. /Verses 16-18.

/Fifth, Paul and Silas are put in prison. /Verse 19-25. /Sixth, God works in the prison. /Verses 26-34. /Seventh, forgiveness. /Verses 35-40.

/Read 16:1. /He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek.

/Paul went to Derbe and then to Lystra. /He met Timothy there. /Timothy's mother was a Jew. /His father was Greek. /This was the place Paul preached the gospel during his first missionary journey. /Acts 14:6-10.

/Timothy later became Paul's son in faith. /1 Timothy 1:2. /Timothy accepted Paul like he was his father. /Timothy gave his life for the works of God and obeyed.

/Timothy believed in God through his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois. /2

Timothy 1:5. /He also learned the Scriptures. /2 Timothy 3:15.

/Verse 3. /Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

/Paul wanted to take Timothy with him and preach to the Gentiles. /Of course they also preached to the Jews as well. /Therefore, Paul had Timothy circumcised.

/This was so that they could evangelize to the Jews. /Timothy was circumcised so that he would be more useful in evangelizing. /However, it seems that Titus was not circumcised. /Galatians 2:3.

/This is because there was a problem with circumcision at the time. /False prophets claimed that circumcision was a condition for salvation.

/Therefore, if Titus were to be circumcised, there would be a misunderstanding regarding Paul that “even he must be circumcised to be saved.” /Paul claimed that it was by faith alone that one was saved.

/Yet at this time, there were no problems regarding circumcision or the laws. /Thus, Timothy was circumcised to be more useful in evangelizing. /Paul did not circumcise Titus.

/Verses 4-5. /As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

/Paul went from town to town and taught the truth that was decided in Jerusalem. /15:29. /We will continue the lecture with verse 6.

/Verse 6. /Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

/The Holy Spirit kept them from reaching the word in the province of Asia. /“Asia” refers to Asia Minor. /It is where Turkey is located today.

/At the time, the people in Asia served much too many idols. /The hearts of the people were not ready to receive the gospel.

/Verse 7. /When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

/The Spirit of Jesus is the Holy Spirit. /The Holy Spirit kept them from preaching in Asia. /Mysia and Bithynia are all parts of the region of Asia.

/Verse 8. /So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.

/Troas is a harbor located west of Mysia. /It is the very western region of Asia. /This was the gateway into Europe.

/Verses 9-10. /During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

/Paul prayed a lot at night. /He sought the will of God. /God showed Paul a vision. /A man of Macedonia asked Paul to come and help them. /Macedonia is in Europe.

/Before the Bible was completed, God taught and showed his will through visions, dreams, and voices. /Now, the Bible is complete. /Today, we must understand the will of God through the Bible.

/The people of Macedonia wanted to receive the gospel. /God told Paul to go preach the gospel in Macedonia.

/Verse 11. /From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis.

/Neapolis is in Europe. /Samothrace is located between Troas and Neapolis. /Samothrace is an island. /Neapolis is a harbor located outside of Philippi.

/Verse 12. /From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

/Paul sailed to Neapolis and then arrived in Philippi. /Take a look at the map. /This is Troas. /This is where Asia Minor ends.

/Paul sailed to Troas, traveled through Samothrace, and then arrived in Neapolis. /From Neapolis he traveled to Philippi. /Then he went from Philippi to Thessalonica. /Philippi is Europe's first town.

/Philippi and Thessalonica are both located in the district of Macedonia. /Paul arrived in Philippi.

/Verse 13. /On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.

/Paul thought about where he could go to pray on the Sabbath. /He went to the river to pray. /Paul always spent time in prayer. /We must seek quiet places and pray continuously. /There were women who had gathered there.



/Verse 14. /One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

/There was a woman named Lydia. /She was from Thyatira in Asia Minor. /She was a dealer in purple cloth. /She had come from Philippi to make money.

/Paul preached to many women there. /The Lord opened the heart of Lydia. /Lydia received the gospel. /The Holy Spirit gave Lydia faith. /Ephesians 2:8.

/When Paul preached, she received the gospel. /She believed in Jesus. /Therefore, she was saved. /Lydia is the first person in Europe to have believed in Jesus.

/In verse 15, Lydia invited Paul to her home. /Then everyone in her household were baptized and saved. /Everyone in Lydia's home received Paul and the missionaries.

/Verse 16. /Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

/Paul, Silas, and Luke traveled to preach the gospel. /They met a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future.

/Verses 17-18. /This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

/This girl with the spirit followed Paul and Silas. /Then she shouted, "These men are servants of the Most High God." /Paul became extremely troubled.

/Paul commanded the spirit, "come out of her." /The spirit called Paul and the men "servants of the Most High God," so why was Paul troubled by it?

/Paul could have misunderstood Paul to be of the same kind as the slave girl with the spirit. /People could have treated Paul the same way they treated the slave girl.

/People could have treated the gospel that Paul preached as the same as the words of the slave girl with the spirit. /This was the devil's tactic.

/Therefore, Paul commanded the spirit to come out of the girl. /2 Corinthians 6:15-16. /The works of the Holy Spirit and the works of the devil cannot complement each other.

/Verse 19-21. /When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making

money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

/The owners of the slave girl were no longer able to make money. /They were not able to use the spirit for their fortune telling. /Therefore, the girl's owners were angry.

/The owners took Paul and Silas and went before the magistrates. /Then they accused the men for causing uproar in the city. /The external reason for their accusation was that Paul caused uproar.

/The internal reason for their accusation was before they were unable to fill their greed. / They were angry that they could no longer make money off the slave girl. /Similarly, people say one thing when they actually mean something else.

/Verses 22-23. /The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

/Then many people also accused Paul and Silas. /The magistrates ordered them to be stripped of their clothes. /The magistrates ordered them to be beaten. /Then they were thrown into prison.

/The jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. /Paul and Silas did nothing wrong. / Yet, the magistrates did not look deeper into the accusation, but had the apostles beaten and thrown into prison.

/Verses 24-25. /Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

/Paul and Silas were thrown into prison. /They encountered hardships while preaching the gospel. /Now, they were put in the inner cell in prison. /Their feet were fastened with shackles. /They were thrown into the inner cell in prison.

/They did not know when they would die. /They did not know when they would ever go outside again. /There was no one else that they knew there. /They had no powers there. / Yet, Paul and Silas prayed in prison.

/They sang praises to God. /They considered their sufferings as participation in the sufferings of Christ. /1 Peter 4:1. /They gave thanks in prison. /We must be thankful in all circumstances.

/Paul and Silas were not disheartened. /Rather, they considered it an honor to receive sufferings for preaching the gospel. /They were glad. /Revelation 2:17. /Daniel 6:10.

/Daniel prayed and gave thanks to God even before the lions' den. /Job 35:10-11.

/Paul and Silas sang through the night. /We must sing praises when we encounter hardships. /Psalm 30:4. /James 5:13. /We must believe in the sovereignty of God and give thanks. /Psalm 37:4. /We must overcome our circumstances.

/We must overcome death. /Matthew 5:11. /We must live life in Christ. /Philippians 1:21. /When we walk in faith, we will receive Christ's comfort. /2 Corinthians 1:5.

/Paul and Silas praised God even when they were in prison. /Then, the works of God took place.

/Here we will conclude the thirteenth lecture on the book of Acts. /Thank you.