

Story Time - Read the story to the children
Lesson 259: THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL
ACTS 15:1-29

Then some men came to Antioch from Judea and began teaching the Gentile (which means non-Jewish) believers: "You cannot be saved if you are not circumcised as Moses taught us." Paul and Barnabas were against this teaching and argued with these men about it. So the group decided to send Paul, Barnabas, and some others to Jerusalem to talk more about this with the apostles and elders. The church helped them get ready to leave on their trip. The men went through the countries of Phoenicia and Samaria, where they told all about how the non-Jewish people had turned to the true God. This made all the believers very happy. When the men arrived in Jerusalem, the apostles, the elders, and the whole church welcomed them. Paul, Barnabas, and the others told about all that God had done with them. Some of the believers in Jerusalem had belonged to the Pharisees. They stood up and said, "The non-Jewish believers must be circumcised. We must tell them to obey the Law of Moses!" Then the apostles and the elders gathered to study this problem. After a long debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "My brothers, I am sure you remember what happened in the early days. God chose me from among you to tell the Good News to those who are not Jewish. It was from me that they heard the Good News and believed. God knows everyone, even their thoughts, and he accepted these non-Jewish people. He showed this to us by giving them the Holy Spirit the same as he did to us. To God, those people are not different from us. When they believed, God made their hearts pure. So now, why are you putting a heavy burden around the necks of the non-Jewish followers of Jesus? Are you trying to make God angry? We and our fathers were not able to carry that burden. No, we believe that we and these people will be saved the same way--by the grace of the Lord Jesus." Then the whole group became quiet. They listened while Paul and Barnabas told about all the miraculous signs and wonders that God had done through them among the non-Jewish people. When they finished speaking, James said, "My brothers, listen to me. Simon Peter has told us how God showed his love for the non-Jewish people. For the first time, God accepted them and made them his people. The words of the prophets agree with this too: 'I will return after this. I will build David's house again. It has fallen down. I will build again the parts of his house that have been pulled down. I will make his house new. Then the rest of the world will look for the Lord God-- all those of other

nations who are my people too. The Lord said this. And he is the one who does all these things.' 'All this has been known from the beginning of time.' "So I think we should not make things hard for those who have turned to God from among the non-Jewish people. Instead, we should send a letter telling them only the things they should not do: Don't eat food that has been given to idols. This makes the food unclean. Don't be involved in certain sins. Don't eat meat from animals that have been strangled or any meat that still has the blood in it. They should not do any of these things, because there are still men in every city who teach the Law of Moses. The words of Moses have been read in the synagogue every Sabbath day for many years." The apostles, the elders, and the whole church wanted to send some men with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch. The group decided to choose some of their own men. They chose Judas (also called Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were respected by the believers. The group sent the letter with these men. The letter said: From the apostles and elders, your brothers. To all the non-Jewish brothers in the city of Antioch and in the countries of Syria and Cilicia. Dear Brothers: We have heard that some men have come to you from our group. What they said troubled and upset you. But we did not tell them to do this. We have all agreed to choose some men and send them to you. They will be with our dear friends, Barnabas and Paul. Barnabas and Paul have given their lives to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. So we have sent Judas and Silas with them. They will tell you the same things. We agree with the Holy Spirit that you should have no more burdens, except for these necessary things: Don't eat food that has been given to idols. Don't eat meat from animals that have been strangled or any meat that still has the blood in it. Don't be involved in certain sins. If you stay away from these, you will do well. We say goodbye now.

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

(ACTS 15:1-29)



“The apostles and spiritual leaders met to consider this statement.” **ACTS 15:6**

259. THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

ACTS 15:1-29

MEMORY VERSE:

"...We are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...." ACTS 15:11

Review Questions

True or False

1. Some men came from Judea and taught the people that they cannot be saved unless they are circumcised according to the Law of Moses.
2. Paul and Barnabus agreed with them.
3. The apostles and the elders did not come together to consider this matter.
4. Peter told the apostles and elders not to put such a big load on the backs new believers that not even the ancestors of the Jews were able to carry.
5. Peter said, "We believe that we are saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, just as they are."

Questions

1. What were some men teaching the non-Jewish believers that they must do to be saved?
2. Did Paul and Barnabus agree that the Gentiles should have to be circumcised?
3. When they went back to Jerusalem to discuss this thing, what did the believers that were Pharisees say they should do?
4. How did Peter say that they were saved? Was it by being circumcised? Or was it by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ?
5. What did the leaders decide they should do? Did they send a letter?
6. What did the letter tell the Gentile believers that they should do?

Lesson 259 Activity

Law vs. Grace

Divide your class into two teams; law vs. grace. Give one child on each team a paper cup full of crayons.

This child will be the dispenser area at the other end of the room(each team should have the same number of crayons in the cup). Have the two teams line up like for a relay with the dispenser at the far end for kids to run to. Each member of the team must walk to the dispenser for his team and get a bean crayon, then come back to where they started and put their crayon in a bowl on the floor or just carefully put them on the floor.

The Law team must first bow to the dispenser child, then hop three times, then turn around one time, and then ask for a crayon. The Grace team only has to ask for a crayon. Obviously, the Grace team should win.

When the game is over, explain to your class that the heavy burden of the Law is impossible to bear. You can't win with the burden of the Law. God's grace, marked by the fruit of a life that is surrendered to Him, always comes out ahead of a life lived by legal, fruitless rituals and procedures.

Explain that before Jesus, the Jews had to live by all these Laws that Moses gave them from God. But those laws didn't save them or forgive their sins, they were impossible to always follow without messing up even once! But when Jesus came, He gave us forgiveness of our sins by Grace, which means all we have to do is ask Him to forgive our sins, and to live in our hearts! Grace is free, and all we have to do is ask God for His forgiveness and blessings!

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer to seek the unity of the Holy Spirit. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.