

- ii. This same unity will be brought to Antioch.
- iii. Does unity mean that every one of the false teachers agreed?
- B. The Holy Spirit voice was discerned through a process that involved debate and discussion. (28)
- C. V31 This decree was received as encouragement.

LIVE THE STORY

We must not only love the Gospel Story, we must begin to live the Gospel Story, indeed, to have the Central Character live in us.

- Have you ever envisioned the church of the apostolic age engaging in serious debates and having to find resolution?
- What are some things we can learn here about how to handle church conflicts, even over doctrine, in the church today?
- What is David's tent in David's day? In the context of Amos, what was this promise for it to be restored?
- Discuss what it means that *conversion through repentance and faith in Jesus is all that is required for Gentiles to belong to God's covenant people who make up the Messianic Kingdom of Israel*. Does anything surprise you about this?
- Do the restrictions which Gentiles were given apply to us? Explain your answer?
- What does this chapter tell us about the importance of right doctrine and how to protect it?
- If this issue had not be resolved as it was, and you were a believer today, how might it change your life?
- Salvation included the idea of being *(re)gathered from exile*. How does this understanding speak to the issue of being a believer, but not a part of a gathered community (church) (i.e. remaining scattered)?

Jesus, Faith, and Universal Salvation

Jerry Cisar — October 19, 2014

Text: Acts 15:1-33

Conversion through repentance and faith in Jesus is all that is required for Gentiles to belong to God's covenant people who make up the Messianic Kingdom of Israel.

Introduction (15:1, 5, 11, 13-21)

I. Conflict over Doctrine (15:1-5)

A. Heated Debate

- B. The false argument: *Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved.*
 - i. What is meant by "be saved" here?
 - a) Their primary salvation story was about rescue that led to the founding of the nation of Israel.
 - b) The prophets and reversal of this salvation story
 - Amos 4:10, 11
 - Amos 9:7
 - c) Salvation meant: God's people with God's Presence living in God's ways, with hearts cleansed by the Spirit, so they are no longer idolaters.

II. Conflict Resolution (15:6-12)

- A. Peter, the lead apostle, brings clarity (7-11)

- B. This brought a calm to the group that probably was not there during the debate.

III. Doctrinal Resolution (15:13-21)

- A. Who is James?

- B. Simon Peter (14)
 - i. Peter said God was choosing His people from the ethne (Gentiles).

 - ii. Exodus 19:5 LXX

- C. The Prophets
 - i. What is David's fallen tent?
 - a) The Restoration of David's tent is tantamount to the Restoration of the Kingdom to Israel.

 - b) Amos 9:11ff / Acts 15:16ff God will not only bring His exiled people back when He restores the Kingdom, He will bring Gentiles, as Gentiles, in also.

D. V19 James makes a decision based on **an apostle** and the **prophets**.

- i. Don't trouble the Gentiles who are turning to God.
 - a) Acts 14:15

b) 1 Thessalonians 1:9

- ii. Put it in writing to abstain from 4 things (20).

a) These 4 items were all practices used in pagan festivals and meetings to worship their idols.

➤ 1 Corinthians 10:14, 19-21

➤ This is what repentance looks like for a Gentile; not circumcision and coming under the law.

- iii. What does the Law of Moses have to do with it?

a) Exodus 20:3-5

b) The apostles, elders, Paul, Barnabas... were not okay with mixing Jesus with idol worship.

- iv. Does this apply to us today?

IV. Returning to Unity (15:22-33)

A. They have reached unity (22, 25)

- i. Debates can be vigorous without being divisive.