

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further ***International Bible Lessons***

Acts 15:1-12 (and 13-15)

Sunday November 8, 2015

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What ideas did the opponents of Paul and Barnabas insist the Church adopt?

They insisted that Gentiles be circumcised in order to be Christians, members of the Church, and saved. They insisted that Gentiles who entered the Church needed to keep the law of Moses as well as believe in Jesus.

2. Why was it important for Peter, Paul, and Barnabas to tell “how” the Gentiles had been converted?

They needed to say that (and illustrate how) God was the one who converted the Gentiles to faith in Jesus Christ, not them. It was not something they thought up, but something God intended from the beginning; God decided to work through them to achieve His intentions.

3. What two groups of leaders composed the Council in Jerusalem? How were these two groups selected? How might the experiences of these groups differ to benefit the Council’s decisions?

Apostles and elders. Jesus selected the apostles. The Church (or churches) selected the elders or they were appointed by the Apostles or the missionaries who helped found a Church (they may have been selected by church members, then appointed). The Apostles knew the heart and mind of Jesus and saw how He solved problems. The elders would have had experiences with different types of people and Christians in the Church, and probably experiences with Pharisaic Christians and Gentile Christians (who may have converted after being God-fearers). They would all be aware of the work of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of the Scriptures, and their varied experiences would help the Council make good decisions.

4. Who made the choice that the Gentiles would hear the good news of Jesus and believe and be saved?

God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, made the choice. Then, the Council ratified what God had done through the

Holy Spirit so Gentiles who heard the good news of Jesus and believed were saved without needing to also follow the law of Moses.

5. What evidences did Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and James give that led to a unanimous decision in favor of the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ?

Peter, Paul, and Barnabas explained the work of the Holy Spirit when the Gentiles believed as they shared the good news about Jesus the Messiah. James explained what the Scriptures taught, and that the Scriptures agreed with what Peter, Paul, and Barnabas experienced. The two evidences (or witnesses) were the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures, which because they agreed led to a unanimous decision by the Council.

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