

## HOW ARE MEN SAVED?

Acts 15:1-11

### Introduction:

- A. Certain men have come to Antioch from Judaea Vs. 1
  - 1) They have come to teach
  - 2) "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."
  - 3) "manner" = ethos = "a custom, usage, of a people, established by law or otherwise"
  - 4) Genesis 17:10 - Lev. 12:3
  
- B. Paul and Barnabas preached otherwise
  - 1) Paul - Acts 13:38-40
  - 2) Barnabas, "preached the word"
  
- C. They refused to yield to false teachers Vs. 2a
  - 1) "dissension" = stasis = "an uproar", "a commotion", "an insurrection", "a controversy"
  - 2) "no small" = holigos = " little"
  - 3) "disputation" = suzetesis = "a joint inquiry, and so an investigation"
  
- D. The brethren appointed Paul and Barnabas and "certain other of them", to go to Jerusalem
  - 1) They were to go to the Apostles and Elders
  - 2) This would bring the full weight of personal knowledge on the question
  
- E. How are men saved? (1 act - threefold)
  - 1) By believing in Jesus, Jew & Gentile
  - 2) By becoming a Jew first by circumcision and then subject to law and then faith



F. "On the way" Vs. 3

- 1) "And so they were endorsed and sent on by the church"
- 2) "It was, in fact, the congregation that was sending them"
- 3) The authority of the church is beginning to emerge, Antioch to Jerusalem
- 4) "conversion" = epistrophe = "a turning about"
- 5) Acts 14:15
- 6) This caused, "great joy"

I. Their Reception at Jerusalem Vs. 4

A. They were received of the church

- 1) "church" = ekklesias = "called out....."
- 2) Apostles and Elders

B. They set the facts before the church

- 1) "and they declared all things that God had done with them"
- 2) "all that God had accomplished through them"
- 3) Most of the successful things that occur in religion can be explained by mass marketing techniques, human leadership, carnal appeal, McDonald's, Hitler, designer clothes.

II. The Identification of Error Vs. 5

A. The Pharisees, who were believers in Jesus, stated their convictions

- 1) "that it is needful to circumcise them"
- 2) "and to command them to keep the law of Moses"

B. What were these men saying?

- 1) They are Jews, they have a foundation for what they believe, they have been circumcised, they are covenant people.
- 2) Circumcision was a multi-daily reminder of the covenant relationship that the male had with Jehovah. In sexual relationship it reminded both male and female of God's promise to make of Abraham a great nation.

- 3) In keeping the law they were reminded of God's
  - a. moral requirements
  - b. of man's obligation to man
  - c. of God's provider (the days, moons, etc)
  - d. the coming one and blood redemption (the sacrifices) and PassoverThey could not conceive of men, (gentiles) starting in the middle.

### III. The Matter Considered by Pastors Vs. 6

#### A. "And the Apostles and Elders came together for to consider this matter"

- 1) "consider" = eidon = "to see", "to behold"
- 2) "matter" = logos = "the subject matter of discourse"
- 3) The Apostles and Elders were gathered together to look into and consider this question"

#### B. This is not a sign of weakness

- 1) Not an attempt at compromise
- 2) A genuine search for truth

#### C. How do these Gentiles fit into God's plan? What were they to discuss?

- 1) Peter gave them facts
- 2) Paul gave them facts
- 3) They were saved, God approved by signs!

### IV. Peter's Testimony About the Gentiles Vs. 7-11

#### A. He seems reluctant to speak

- 1) "much disputing" = dialogismos = "balancing or adjustment of accounts", hence "reflection" or "thought"
- 2) He realized what grave consequences lay ahead for him. He later retreated in daily life.

#### B. God chose Peter to preach to them

- 1) Acts 10:9 - At the house of Simon the Tanner
- 2) Acts 11:2-18 - At Jerusalem

- C. God had saved them
  - 1) God knew their hearts Vs. 8
  - 2) He made no distinction as to the method of salvation Vs. 9
  
- D. They should be left alone Vs. 10
  - 1) To require them to keep the law would be to tempt God
  - 2) The Jews did not keep the law
  
- E. God's plan of salvation for all Vs. 11
  - 1) Salvation is by grace
  - 2) Salvation is by grace for all
  
- V. The Testimony of Paul and Barnabas Vs. 12
  - A. They told of miracles and wonders Gal. 2:1-10
    - 1) "miracles" = semeion = "a signal", "an ensign"
    - 2) "wonders" = teras = "a supernatural act"
  
  - B. This appealed to the Jews
    - 1) I Cor. 1:22 - "For the Jews require a sign....."
    - 2) "sign" = semeion = (same as Acts 15:12)
  
  - C. The letter to the Gentiles Vs. 23-29
    - 1) This was a circular letter Vs. 23
    - 2) It carried the weight of 3 sources
  
  - D. The need for the letter Vs. 24
    - 1) "troubles you with words" = tarasso = "to stir up", "to agitate, as water in a pool"
    - 2) "subvert" = anaskeuazo = "to pack up baggage", "dismantle"; hence to upset, rearrange
    - 3) Two things more than faith
    - 4) These were not so instructed

E. The men sent with (to carry) the letter

- 1) The messengers are important Vs. 25
- 2) They are "chosen" men
- 3) They are "beloved" men
- 4) They are brave men, "hazarded" = paradidomi = "to give up or hand over to another"
- 5) They will speak for them Vs. 27

F. The source of the letter's content Vs. 28

- 1) "the Holy Ghost", gifts and inspiration
- 2) "and to us"
- 3) "burden" = baros = "weight", "trial"
- 4) There are necessary burdens

G. "these necessary things"

- 1) Not necessary to salvation!
- 2) Necessary to living as converts
- 3) "necessary" = epanagkes = "force", "constraint", "a necessity arising from constraint"
- 4) It was necessary for them to abstain, etc.

H. The four things that are necessary Vs. 29

- 1) "meats offered to idols"
- 2) "from blood"
- 3) "from things strangled"
- 4) "from fornication"
- 5) They would, "do well"! "you shall be come strong"

I. The delivery of the letter Vs. 30

- 1) They gathered the multitude
- 2) The "delivered the letter" = epididomi = "to put into one's hands", "to give upon", "in addition"

J. The reaction of the Antioch church Vs. 31

- 1) They read the letter
- 2) They rejoiced

- 3) "consolation" = paraklesis = "a calling near", "a summons to ones side"

#### VIII. The Church at Antioch Strengthened

##### A. By Judas and Silas Vs. 32-34

- 1) They were prophets, New Testament
- 2) "exhortation" - "exhorted" = parakeleo = "to call to another",  
"every kind of encouraging word"
- 3) "confirmation" - "confirming" = episerizo = "to make to lean on"
- 4) The church "released" them to do the work the Apostles assigned them Vs. 33
- 5) Silas wanted to stay Vs. 34

##### B. Paul and Barnabas Vs. 35

- 1) "continued" = "to rub away"
- 2) "teaching" = didaskolos
- 3) "preaching" = euaggelizo = "a joyful message"
- 4) "the word of the Lord"

