

GOSPEL
of *Grace*
FELLOWSHIP

Acts 15:3-9
A Serious Dispute Erupts

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There Is Joy at Conversions

Acts 15:3 (LEB)
So they were sent on their way by the church, and passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, telling in detail the conversion of the Gentiles and **bringing great joy** to all the brothers.

- The desire to put these believers under bondage is ironic in the face of this great joy
- "Joy" is used 12 times in Luke/Acts in connection with Messianic salvation and God's mighty deeds

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A Serious Theological Controversy

Acts 15:4-5 (LEB)
And when they arrived in Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders, and reported all that God had done with them. But some of those who had believed from **the party of the Pharisees** stood up, saying, "It is **necessary** to circumcise them and to command them to observe the law of Moses!"

- These wanted all Christians to obey Moses
- Luke 9:28-35 refutes the claim of the Judaizers
- "Necessary" is *dei* which is a strong claim

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This Issue Must Be Resolved

Acts 15:6 (LEB)
Both the apostles and the elders assembled to deliberate concerning this matter.

- This was taken up in Jerusalem because the problem was exported from Jerusalem
- Jerusalem will become a center of controversy again as narrated in Acts 21

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God Made a Choice

Acts 15:7 (NASB)
After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the **early days God made a choice** among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would **hear the word of the gospel and believe.**"

- The Pharisees were a sect who had made a "choice" to be separate
- God made a choice to use Jewish Peter to bring the gospel of salvation to the Gentiles

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God Made No Distinction

Acts 15:8, 9 (NASB)
"And God, **who knows the heart**, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and **He made no distinction between us** and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."

- That God knows the heart is also mentioned in Acts 1:24, 1Kings 8:39; Jer. 17:10; Heb. 4:13
- Peter had been shown a vision, visited by an angel, and led to Caesarea to preach the gospel
- God accepted Cornelius and his household and showed this by pouring out His Spirit

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