



“Clarifying the Gospel” Part 2

Acts 15:6-35 ♦ Pastor Jim Lennon
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Introduction – The apostle Paul and Barnabas travel back from their first missionary journey to the church in Syrian Antioch which sent them, and then on to Jerusalem for a church council assembled to clarify the message of the Gospel of Christ.

I. The Gospel’s Freedom.

- A. The early church struggled to clarify the Gospel.
- B. The Gospel gives us Cultural freedom and Spiritual freedom.
- C. Cultural freedom is based on the Spiritual freedom announced in the Gospel.
 - 1. Christ has atoned for all our sins.
 - 2. Salvation in Christ is a free gift.
 - 3. You don’t have to become a Jew to receive God’s salvation.
- D. Be careful, we tend to turn our cultural expectations into a standard of righteousness.

II. The Gospel’s Confirmation.

- A. The apostles and elders agreed on content of the Gospel.
- B. The Holy Spirit confirmed the message of the Gospel from the Word of God.

- C. The apostles sent a letter clarifying the message of the Gospel and its freedom.

III. The Gospel’s Covenant.

- A. The core issue the council debated was over the requirement to obey the Jewish ritual clean laws, beginning with circumcision.
- B. Circumcision was a sign of being in a blood covenant with God.
- C. Jewish believers insisted that Gentile believers must be circumcised to really be Christians.
- D. Peter understood that God was making a new blood covenant in Jesus.
- E. The ancient blood covenants required the penalty and curse of death if it was not followed.
- F. The curse for violating God’s covenant was death (being “cut off”).
- G. At the Last supper Jesus spoke of a new covenant with God in His blood.
- H. God makes people clean not by keeping the Law, but by believing in Jesus.

Conclusion.