

Acts # 64

**“Adding Anything to Grace for Salvation is Unacceptable” Acts 15**

**Cultural conviction can alienate us if we’re not careful as we should strive always to be flexible on the non-essentials and inflexible on the essentials.**

The salvation doctrine of faith alone in Jesus Christ alone through grace alone is about as essential a concept as there is in Christianity.

*To add anything to God’s free gift grace-solution for mankind’s most grievous illness of spiritual death is the ultimate in arrogant blasphemy.*

God doesn’t need our help but we desperately need His.

**James will infer that the Gentiles don’t need to obey the Mosaic laws to be included in the body of Christ but he suggests that they are to be encouraged to abstain from four things which are cultural for Gentiles but highly sensitive for Jews.**

So, they send Paul and Barnabas to the Gentile believers with a letter that will be read leading to mass rejoicing when it becomes obvious to all that Jews and Gentiles can not only live in the same area but in peace together in Christ because He saves all who come to Him by grace through faith.

**When these Gentiles heard the message, they were already at the point of God-consciousness and they had a positive response, so into their mentality or understanding, went the Gospel.**

And they responded to the Gospel by believing and this describes the Gentile Pentecost at Caesarea; so giving them the Holy Spirit indicated that Gentiles had equal rights with Jews in the Church Age as believers and therefore, no distinction is made.

*So, if the Jews considered themselves superior in the fields of religion and theology, this superiority is gone because the Gentiles are one with them in Christ and eventually many great theologians of the Church would be Gentiles; although at this point, the great theologians are Jews but nonetheless all superiorities are removed; we are now all one in Christ.*

**How is God tested or tempted? To destroy us for our legalism.**

If there’s anything God despises, it’s the self-righteous legalism of living by man-made taboos.

*These Pharisees who are legalistic are trying to impose a system of bondage on Christianity and Peter is saying that no one can successfully carry the yoke of legalism which destroys the power of the church.*

In the movie ‘Love Story’ Love means never having to say you’re sorry and in Christianity, grace means

Jesus Christ did all the work, period!

Remember that a knowledge of the Word of God in itself can be neutralized by failure to orient to the grace of God.

God always knew and there never was a time when He didn't know, every person who would believe in

His Son, Jesus Christ which is the principle of divine omniscience plus eternity.

Saved Gentiles are just as much in the plan of God as saved Jews.

*God's plan was always known to God; Romans 8:29-30.*

God is perfect; His plan is perfect and God's provision under the plan is perfect.

There never was and never will be, a problem too great for the plan of God.

*This provision for the problem was made in eternity past through the doctrine of divine decrees.*

The Law of Moses is a way of describing the Old Testament since Moses wrote the first five books in it.

And because in those first five books known as the Torah or Pentateuch, we have the Mosaic Law and the Law is the heart and soul of Jewish life for believer and unbeliever alike; wherever Moses was read or preached in the synagogues throughout the ancient world, the Law

of expediency was to be put into operation by the Gentiles.

*Notice who will validate the policy; first, the apostles who had the spiritual gift of absolute dictatorship before the canon*

*of Scripture was completed; secondly, the elders who are local pastors in Jerusalem and throughout Judea and thirdly,*

*the entire church, so this was a policy voted on by three separate groups.*

Our self-consciousness under legalism quickly becomes characterized by pride.

Our mentality under legalism becomes our way of processing information.

*Our free-will under legalism means all our decisions which are made lead to false-spirituality by taboos*

*for example.*

Our emotion under legalism becomes our standard for decision-making.

Our conscience under legalism has false standards, that at best can only produce human good, never divine good.

*Legalism always leads to very subtle and vicious type sins.*

These Gentiles are desirous that the Jews might be saved and these Jews are going to be saved by the witness

**of Gentiles but no Gentile observing these sins is going to have a ministry with unsaved Jews even if he is born-again.**

*'Farewell' should really be translated, 'Be strong; be strong in the Lord.'*

*The implication is: Be strong in the past from knowing biblical truth under the filling of the Holy Spirit, with the results that go on in phase 2 of the plan of God and the passive voice here indicates that you receive this strength through God's grace and the imperative mood tells us this is a command.*