

# THE FIRST CHURCH COUNCIL

## Acts 15

From the beginning, the church of Jesus Christ has arrived at sound doctrine & sound practice thru \_\_\_\_\_

### I. THE ISSUE Acts 15:1-5

- A. Converted \_\_\_\_\_ came from Jerusalem, but that church did not send them; they had no authority
  - 1) They insisted that Gentiles could be saved only by being circumcised and by keeping the \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2) These men assumed they were teaching Bible truth, that what the OT taught had not \_\_\_\_\_
- B. The result according to Luke (v.2): “no small dissension and \_\_\_\_\_” with Paul and Barnabas
- C. Paul and Barnabas could have taken steps in a number of \_\_\_\_\_ directions, but they did not:
  - 1) They could have started their own \_\_\_\_\_, splitting their churches from the Jerusalem church
  - 2) They could have assumed that discussing this issue with the apostles was a waste of \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3) They could have written a letter to Jerusalem insisting, “It’s our way or the \_\_\_\_\_”

### II. THE COUNCIL Acts 15:4-21

- A. Phase 1: The Preliminary \_\_\_\_\_ Acts 15:4  
The entire church heard the report of how God had worked thru Paul & Barnabas among the \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Phase 2: The General \_\_\_\_\_ Acts 15:6-7  
There was much “dispute”—a word that means back & forth, \_\_\_\_\_ & answers; all had their say
  - 1) To constructively address controversy, we must take time to give every \_\_\_\_\_ a voice
  - 2) They debated in good \_\_\_\_\_, with mutual respect and with the good of the church at heart
- C. Phase 3: The Leaders’ \_\_\_\_\_ Acts 15:7-21
  - 1) Peter’s Speech (15:7-11):
    - a) Peter did not speak like the first \_\_\_\_\_, the infallible vicar of Christ
    - b) Peter focused on what God must have done—gave the Holy Spirit to Gentiles without \_\_\_\_\_
    - c) Peter concluded \_\_\_\_\_ must be saved by grace through faith just like Gentiles, not vice versa
    - d) Paul & Barnabas also told what God had undeniably done thru \_\_\_\_\_ to validate their gospel
  - 2) James’ speech (15:13-21)
    - a) James focused on what God \_\_\_\_\_: the Bible resolves controversy
    - b) James quoted Amos 9:11-12: the tent of \_\_\_\_\_ which had fallen—the scattered, captive Israelites
      - i) V.16—the house God promised David was in disrepair, nothing but a \_\_\_\_\_ that had fallen down
      - ii) V.17—by calling \_\_\_\_\_ to be part of the people of God, God rebuilt the house of David

### III. THE DECISION Acts 15:19-29

- A. What Did the Decision Say about Circumcision and the Law of Moses?  
In a backhanded way it refuted the doctrine that Gentile converts must be circumcised, keep the \_\_\_\_\_
- B. What Else Did the Decision Say? What Was Its Focus?  
Abstain from food offered to \_\_\_\_\_, from blood, from things strangled and from sexual immorality
  - 1) Some believe it asked Gentile converts to abstain from acts that would antagonize \_\_\_\_\_ believers
  - 2) Others believe it was intended to keep Gentile converts from the \_\_\_\_\_ they came out of