

This incident shows the Church “Averting a Crisis.” The three stages were: (1) Dissension, 1-5; (2) Debate, 6-12; (3) Decision, 13-29. ¹

1- Beacon Bible Commentary, John Acts, p. 436.

TWELFTH STUDY

HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

The book of Acts is full of the manifestations of the Spirit's presence and has sometimes been called the 'Gospel of the Holy Spirit.' in everything the Church did, it was conscious of hearing the Spirit's guidance.

Acts 15:28 - *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.*

In the first part of Acts Chapter 15 certain men came down from Judea who were teaching the brethren saying, *Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved* (Acts 15:1). Then Paul and Barnabas had an argument and debate about this subject with them. Therefore it was decided that Paul and Barnabas, *and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question* (Acts 15:2).

At Jerusalem, there was a sect of Pharisees which became believers, *saying, That it was needful to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses* (Acts 15:5). *And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter* (Acts 15:6). Peter then rose up and said that God had given the Gentiles salvation and the Holy Ghost, even as He did to them, *and put no difference between them and us, purifying their hearts by faith* (Acts 15:7-9). *Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck*

of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they (Acts 15:10,11).

In Acts 15:13-21, James proves Gentiles are free from the Mosaic law (but not from the moral law).

So the council (Acts 15:23-27) then sent official letters to those of Gentile birth, stating that *it seemed good* to the council in a united spirit, *to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,*

Men that have hazarded (put at risk) *their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. (Acts 15:23-27)

And the letters read: *For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;*

That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well, Fare ye well. (Acts 15:28,29)

1. Did the Gentile conversion depend on them being circumcised? (p. 57,58) _____
2. What then, was their salvation wrought through? (Acts 15:10,11; p. 58) _____

3. What does Acts 15:13-21 prove? (p. 58) _____

4. Do you think this makes Gentiles free from the Old Testament? _____
5. Who did it seem good too, to lay no greater burden on the Gentiles than necessary? (Acts 15:28; p. 58) _____
6. What though, were the Gentiles to abstain from? (Acts 15:29; p. 58) _____

Then comes the heart of the message. **It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us** (28). Thus the apostles and elders express their conviction of divine authority for the decision they had reached. Peter and John may have recalled Jesus' promise to the disciples: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). They had been filled with the Spirit at Pentecost and now they could claim divine guidance. ¹

The decision was **to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things**--the things necessary to avoid giving offense to their Jewish brethren in Christ. Lumby puts it this way: "And as they [in Jerusalem] at the suggestion of the Spirit were laying aside their long-standing prejudices against intercourse with Gentiles, they claim that the Gentiles in their turn should deal tenderly with the scruples of Jews." ¹