



Acts 15: Peter's [?] Council in Jerusalem by [John T Polk II](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

Acts 15:1-31: And **certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren**, "Unless you are **circumcised according to the custom of Moses**, you cannot be saved."

2 Therefore, when **Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension** and dispute with them, they determined that **Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem**, to the **apostles and elders**, about this question. **3** So, being **sent on their way by the church**, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, **describing the conversion of the Gentiles**; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. **4** And when they had **come to Jerusalem**, they were **received by the church and the apostles and the elders**; and they reported all things that God had done with them.

5 But **some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed** rose up, saying, "**It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.**" **6** Now the **apostles and elders came together** to consider this matter.

7 And when there had been much dispute, **Peter rose up and said** to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that **by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe**. **8** So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, **9** and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. **10** Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? **11** But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." [**Acts 10-11**]

12 Then **all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul** declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. [**Acts 13-14**]

13 And after they had become silent, **James answered**, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: **14** Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. **15** And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: **16** 'After this I will return And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, And I will set it up; **17** So that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD, Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, Says the LORD who does all these things.' [**Amos 9:11-12**] **18** Known to God from eternity are all His works. **19** Therefore I judge [*krino*] that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, **20** but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. **21** For Moses has had

throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch **with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas** who was also named Barnabas, **and Silas**, leading men among the brethren. **23 They wrote this letter by them:**

The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. **24** Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law" — **to whom we gave no such commandment** — **25 it seemed good to us**, being **assembled with one accord**, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, **26** men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **27** We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. **28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us**, to lay upon you no greater burden than **these necessary things: 29** that you **abstain from [1]** things offered to idols, **[2]** from blood, **[3]** from things strangled, and **[4]** from sexual immorality. **If you keep yourselves from these**, you will do well. Farewell.

30 So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, **they delivered the letter. 31 When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement.**

I. Peter's Council?! - Acts 15:1-31

A. There was **NO** appeal to Peter, but to "apostles, elders" and the "whole church" **Acts 15:2,4,6,12** ("all the multitude"), **22**

B. The letter delivered to Gentile Christians was "dogma." **Acts 16:4**

Bible "Dogma"

(Greek, dogma—"an opinion, a judgment, doctrine, decree, ordinance")

1. of public decrees

Luke 2:1; Acts 17:7; Hebrews 11:23

2. of the rules and requirements of the law of Moses

Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14

3. of certain decrees of the apostles about living right

Acts 16:4- "And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the decrees to keep, which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem."

Refer to **Acts 15** and notice that:

A. The church didn't wait hundreds of years to know "dogma."

B. There was an epistle of Scripture from the Apostles' "Magisterium."

(AND THERE WAS NEVER ANOTHER SO-CALLED "MAGISTERIUM!")

C. "So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily." Acts 16:5

C. EVERY speaker proclaimed only the Word of God (Oral & Written):

15:2-4: Paul and Barnabas proclaimed what **God had been doing** among Gentiles **Acts 13-14** (unwritten N.T.);

15:5-11: Peter reminded them of the events of **Acts 10-11** in **selecting Gentiles to be saved** (unwritten N.T.);

15:12-21: James preached God's Prophecy about the goal of bringing in Gentiles **Amos 9:11-12** THEN gave HIS "judgment";

15:22: THE CONCLUSION WAS INSPIRED ENTIRELY BY GOD'S WORD (a.k.a. "SCRIPTURE"), AND IT WAS UNANIMOUS – LIKE NO RCC COUNCIL!!!!

15:23-31: The "DOGMA" was necessary and delivered immediately to Gentiles!!

D. THERE WAS NO VOTE TAKEN, NOR SUCCESSIVE SESSIONS OF THIS COUNCIL!

E. There was NO:

1. supremacy of Peter;
2. voting on doctrine;
3. waiting hundreds of years to deal with controversy;
4. multiple sessions to arrive at a conclusion;
5. opposition to the views expressed;
6. presentation of any extra-biblical: "tradition;" "commentaries;" or previous "council" conclusions;
7. There was **ONLY SCRIPTURE** (BOTH WRITTEN & UNWRITTEN)!

F. This was the ONLY council gathering like it in Scripture.

1. **The gathering to replace Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:13-26)** did nothing to replace James the brother of John when Herod killed him (**Acts 12:1-2**);
2. **The gathering to disprove Jewish heretics** sent Gentiles their "dogma" (**Acts 15:1-31**) and never met again!