

The Truth in Love

Removing Stumbling Blocks

Acts 15:13—35; Ephesians 4:15

Should Gentiles Keep the Law?

- God spoke to Peter three times
- The Word of God foretold
- Signs/wonders corroborated
- Evidence in Gentile life changes
- Result: rejoicing/encouragement/exhortation

After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, “Brethren, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, ‘After these things I will return and I will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, so that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles

who are called by My name,' says the Lord,
Who makes these things known from long
ago.

Therefore it is my judgment that we do not
trouble those who are turning to God from
among the Gentiles, but that we write to
them that they abstain from things
contaminated by idols and from fornication
and from what is strangled and from blood.

For (because) Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath.”

Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them to send to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas—Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren, ...

...So when they were sent away, they went down to Antioch; and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. When they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement (exhortation). Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged (exhorted) and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message. Acts 15:13--35

4 Activities to Avoid

- Things contaminated by idols
- Fornication
- What is strangled
- Blood

Because there are those who read the Law
in every city, i.e Jewish Christians.

Why These 4 Activities?

These were particularly engrained in the Gentile culture in cultic religious practices.

These were particularly forbidden by God to set the Jews apart from the Gentile world.

These practices were the downfall of the Jews when God dispersed them around the world in judgment.

Knowledge & Love

Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge.

Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.

...Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one...However not all men have this knowledge...

But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

1 Corinthians 8:1--9

Strong/weak & Judging

Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. One person has faith, that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables. The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him...

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way. I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died...

Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil. ... Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. ... Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. Romans 14, 15

Why liberty?

Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. 1 Peter 2:16

As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

1 Peter 4:10