

## **LESSON 1: ACTS 15:1-35**

### **The Jerusalem Council**

1. What problem arises at Antioch (vv.1-2)? How provocative was this problem?
2. What solution was devised (v.2b)? Why Jerusalem? What did the Jerusalem church have to offer?
3. Compare the reaction of the Phoenician and Samaritan Christians with that of the party of the Pharisees (vv.3-5). What Church organizations do you see as comparable to the party of the Pharisees today?
4. How do those at the Council of Jerusalem comport themselves (vv.6-12)? Who is in attendance? What position do you think Peter occupies? How does this differ from today's Church meetings?
5. What is Peter's reason for supporting what might be called "the Antiochene position" (vv.6-11)?
6. What do Paul and Barnabas contribute to the Council? What evidence do Paul and Barnabas offer in support of their view that Gentiles can be saved without becoming Jews (vv.4,12)? What things like this get in the way of pagans coming to Jesus Christ today?
7. In verse 14, James addresses the assembly. Who is this James? (Read the following passages and discuss: Mark 3:20-21, 32-35; Mark 6:3; Acts 8:1-4; 1 Corinthians 15:3-10; Galatians 1:18-20; Galatians 2:9-13; Acts 12:1-3, 17; James 1:1; Acts 21:17-25; Jude 1:1.) What role does he seem to exercise at this meeting? At Jerusalem during these early years of the church?

8. What judgment does James make at the Council (vv. 19-21)? What do you think convinced him that Paul was right about the Gentiles and the Law? What place do past experience and Scripture have in your own decision-making?
  
9. Describe the contents and tone of the letter which is sent to Antioch (vv.22-29). Discuss the significance of these rules for the Church? What is their significance? Do they apply today? (Read and discuss Genesis 1:26-30; 9:1-10.)
  
10. Why was the decision by the Council so important to the Antiochene Church (vv.30-35)?
  
11. Why send representatives as well as a letter (vv.24-25,32-33)? What does this have to offer that a postage stamp doesn't? What do Judas and Silas do during their stay in Antioch? Discuss prophesy in the early church? Can we speak of prophesy happening today?