

The Conflict Over Circumcision

Text: Acts 15:1-5

Question #1: Why not just circumcise the gentiles? What is the real danger of this teaching? How would, giving into this teaching, jeopardize the entire Gospel outreach to the Gentiles? [1]

Question #2: Why don't Paul and Barnabas quickly counter this teaching, by stating, "Baptism is the New Covenant replacement for circumcision?" [in Galatians either?] [1]

Question #3: The conflict became heated, and when a resolution became unattainable, what did they agree to do? What general application can we take from this, when dealing with difficult matters of conflict/contention within the church? How does ARBCA utilize this principle, when seeking to help churches, who are stuck in conflict, when their assistance is sought? [2]

Question #4: Who commissioned these men to go to Jerusalem for a resolution? Why is this important? What can we derive from this ongoing pattern? [3]

Question #5: Notice, what they did on the way to Jerusalem. What does this teach us about their ability to maintain a broader focus, without getting overwhelmed by the urgency of the conflict, they were seeking to resolve? What is the result of this? How might things have turned out different, if they were overly consumed with resolving the conflict alone? How can we apply this to us? [3]

Question #5: Notice, who *received* them. Consider the three distinguished *receivers*. Again, what does this tell us? To whom did Paul and his companions report? Again, in spite of the pressing conflict, what did they take the time to do? However, how might this also have helped in bringing about a resolution to the conflict? [4]

Question #6: What can we note about this "sect of the Pharisees"? Are these Christians? If so, what are the implications, based upon what they are teaching at the present moment? Is there any broader application for us, to be taken here, or is this more of a "transitional" challenge? [5]