

Restructuring the Gospel (Acts 15:1-11)

Bible verses shows the process of restructuring the Gospel with regard to Salvation: Is it enough by blood of Jesus on the Cross only or one had/has to be/with circumcision (laws of tradition)?

When Paul and Barnabas came back from the first mission trip successfully, they spread the Gospel boldly; several miracles and the work of Holy Spirit happened. However, from Judea to Antioch, one was taught that to be saved one had to be circumcised according to the customs taught by Moses. It was a very serious issue that regarded Paul's teaching unworthy and shook the base of faith. If we are saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, inevitably we should be sanctified also. Justification could be done once - promised word to keep our whole life - but we should bear the fruit of Sanctification in our life. We should not differentiate Sanctification from Justification. Correct theology and interpretation of Gospel is very important in our faith.

“Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. (Acts 15:1-2) In those days, most of believers - Jews, were circumcised. They followed the customs of Moses. But after the first mission trip of Paul and Barnabas, they realized that gentiles were saved when they believed in Jesus (who died on the Cross for their/our sins and that he is the Son of God) even though they were not circumcised. From the viewpoint of Jews, it was not acceptable. It was a very serious issue even in Galatia too. **“But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse (Galatians 1:8)** Pharisees insisted that the Gentiles must be circumcised, required to keep the law. **“Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses. (Acts 15:5)**

Jesus Christ - Redemption and Salvation **“A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.(Romans 2:28-29)** **“Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear??(Acts 15:10)** “Yoke of neck” means a status who still has not become a children of God. Should we do something to be saved? reading bible more, keeping Lord's day, more praying? We do pray, keep his words, try to live right way to please God as children of God and not because to obey as slavery who is afraid and judged by God. Jesus made us believed in his name become we are children of God. **“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12)**

Peter got up and addressed them: **“Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are. (Acts 15:7-11)** Peter argued strongly that how Holy Spirit showed judgement of right and wrong. Circumcised and keeping laws of Moses does not mean receiving Holy Spirit but only with believing in Jesus. What we see believing is different from showing the power of Holy Spirit. Paul and Barnabas testified all works by Holy Spirit. **“The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.(Acts 15:12)**

James Spoke up according to bible when Paul and Barnabas finished their speech. **“When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. Simon has described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written (Acts 15:13-15)** God called Gentiles The words of the prophets are in agreement with salvation of gentiles. Though we see vision and hear the voice of God, all of our conclusions of faith should end with agreement with the words of God - bible. It means our faith should be based on the Bible.” **After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things' things known from long ago. (Acts 15:16-18)** **“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. (Acts 15:19-20)**

Do not force Jew's custom on gentile who were saved by Jesus and received the Holy Spirit. And that there is a way to live as saved people Are we saved when we quit drinking, smoking? No. We would be saved by believing in Jesus and not by good deeds or ethical behavior. However, we will quit because we could not continue when we meet Jesus. We should live as people of God and it is process of Sanctification.

Because, saved one should live by a saved life. **“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. (Acts 15:28-29)**