

Acts, Part 16

by Bishop Keith Butler | Bible Study Notes | Ministered Wed., 8/19/20

Opening Summary

As we continue in this great book that I call *the acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles*, we will discover that the devil wants to stop the move of God. By recognizing his tricks, we can stop his plan so that God's plan can continue to move forward. By following the peace of God, we open the door for many more people to be saved.

- I. **Acts 15:1:** Why did these men require obedience to the law?
 - A. Circumcision was a mark of the covenant (Gen. 17:9-11).
 - B. Circumcision was a sin offering (Lev. 12:3).
 - C. The offering for sin is Jesus (John 1:29, Gal. 3:19, Eph. 2:8, Rom. 10:8).
 - D. If it is ours from the Old Testament, we'll find it in the New Testament.

- II. **Acts 15:2:** They travelled a great distance to settle the question of circumcision.
 - A. **Acts 15:3:** Believers must help, in order for the gospel to be preached.
 - B. They had great joy because the Gentiles were saved (Luke. 15:10).

- III. **Acts 15:4-5:** These saved Pharisees' minds had not yet been renewed. Paul was a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5-6).

- IV. **Acts 15:6-12:** A lot of arguing occurred.
 - A. Peter rose up and gave an argument (Acts 10:38-46).
 - B. Is Peter the head of the church, as Catholicism says (Mat. 16:13-18)?

- V. **Acts 15:13-21:** Who is James?
 - A. James is the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:17-19).
 - B. James is the leader, because he made the final decision (Acts 15:19).
 - C. James' final decision (sentence) was carried out.

- VI. **Acts 15:22-35:** James' decision was that letters should be taken to the Gentile believers to clarify the matter of circumcision. They sent Barnabas and Paul to carry the letter, accompanied by Judas and Silas, as witnesses.
 - A. Once James made the decision, they were in one accord.
 - B. The authorities of the church inspired the Gentile believers to do what they had been taught (Acts 15:23-35).

- VII. **Acts 15:36-39:** Barnabas and Paul had a sharp dispute that separated them.
- VIII. **Acts 15:40-41:** Paul and Silas were recommended by the brethren to do the work of God. The *grace* of God is the *work* of God.
- IX. **Acts 16:1-3:** Paul acts in wisdom in circumcising Timothy. (2 Tim. 1:1-7).
- A. You give account of yourself to the Lord (Rom. 14:12).
 - B. You won't give an account to the Lord of your racial group.
 - C. The only difference in blacks and whites is skin tone and hair texture.
 - D. A peaceful protest is fine, but destroying someone's business is wrong.
 - E. The devil uses race to divide the church.
- X. Do not intentionally cause your brother to fall (Rom. 14:13-14).
- A. The heathen used the meat to sacrifice to idols, and then gave the rest to the restaurant to serve to people (Rom. 15-23).
 - B. Some said "We're going to hell if we eat this."
 - C. Others said "It's just meat, and I'm going to eat it."
 - D. The Scripture says to do that which causes peace.
- XI. Let's replace "mask" for "meat." This is what I'm teaching.
- A. Whether you wear a mask has nothing to do with your faith.
 - B. Faith comes by hearing the Word, not by whether you wear a mask.
 - C. We wear a mask because of Romans 14.
 - D. As the leader have to decide for the large group who attends church here.
 1. There are people at our church that believe a person doesn't care about others if they don't wear a mask.
 2. There are also people at our church who believe wearing a mask means you're not in faith.
 3. Then people look at me to make a determination by seeing if I wear a mask. That's wrong.
 - E. We wear masks to protect the ones who believe they are vulnerable.
 - F. I am mandated by the Lord to not fight about small things.
 - G. In the media, it's no longer about health, it's about an election and it's about politics.
 - H. You are to pray, do your homework, become informed, compare to the Word of God and do as you are led by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:14).
 - I. We must do Roman's 14:12-23; follow peace and edify the body of Christ.

Closing Summary

We have seen how strife can quickly stop the plan of God. By recognizing it when it arises, we do best to stop it in its tracks. Racial strife is a subtle tactic of the devil that creeps in and has stopped many moves of God throughout history. When we see it, we must resist it by following God's peace. Love and truth is found in the Word of God. When we find it, we must act on it so that we remain at peace with one another.