

Name: _____

Date: _____

THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

“For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” (Acts 15:28–29)

Objectives

Knowledge of God’s Will	Jews and Gentiles alike are saved by God’s grace, not by observing the Mosaic laws. The Jerusalem council decision was made by the guidance of the Spirit.
Knowledge of God	God is the only God we should worship. He is a jealous God.
Good Work	Seek the truth with discernment, boldness, and the Holy Spirit. Strengthen the unity of the church through submission to the Holy Spirit. Abstain from sexual immorality.

A. The Dispute Over Circumcision

The dispute over circumcision arose when certain Jewish members insisted that Gentile believers needed to be circumcised in order to be saved. The dispute brought into question whether faith alone was sufficient for salvation, or whether the Mosaic laws also had to be followed.

B. Understanding Circumcision

For generations, the Israelites had to be circumcised as a sign of their covenant with God, or else be cut off from it (Gen 17:10–14). Circumcision was a physical sign of a spiritual transformation and dedication to God.

C. The Meeting of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1–31)

1. The dispute is presented before the apostles and elders (vv. 1–6)
2. The opposing argument is stated (vv. 7–11)
3. Supporting facts are presented by eyewitnesses (v. 12)
4. Conclusion and resolution drawn by a third party (in agreement with the Scriptures) (vv. 13–21)
5. The decision is made in unity (vv. 22–29)
6. The decision is presented and supported (vv. 30–31)

D. The Decision of the Jerusalem Council

1. *Abstain from things offered to idols*: we can have no part in this world, for our God is a jealous God (Lev 17:7; 1 Cor 10:19–22)
2. *Abstain from blood*: Blood makes atonement for the soul (Lev 17:10–12)
3. *Abstain from things strangled*: Blood sustains life itself (Lev 17:13–14)
4. *Abstain from sexual immorality*: It defiles our bodies (1 Cor 6:13–20); it destroys the sacred institution of marriage (Gen 2:24; Heb 13:4; Mt 19:6); and those who commit sexual immorality cannot enter the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9–10; Gal 5:19–21).

Life Application

1. Seek the Truth with Discernment, Boldness, and the Holy Spirit
2. Submission to the Holy Spirit Leads to Unity
3. Abstain from Sexual Immorality (1 Cor 6:18)

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Lesson 8 Homework Assignment

The Jerusalem Council

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

Memory Verse (Acts 15:28–29):

1. Why must we abstain from blood and from things strangled?
2. What was the importance of circumcision to the Jews?
3. What was important about the conclusion that James made?
4. What are the main reasons God wants us to abstain from sexual immorality?
5. What are ways we can seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit?
6. Has there been a time when you chose what you wanted over what God wanted? How can you avoid this in the future?