

Vision'22

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Leader Guide

What We Value: Crossing Cultures

October 31, 2021

Main Passage: Acts 15:1-21

Theological Theme

The Jerusalem council established for the early church that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ, without adding any requirement, and is freely offered to all people.

Introduction

- ❓ Think about a group or a close-knit community you have been a part of, either presently or in the past? What was the group, and why were you involved in it?
- ❓ Was there a unifying purpose behind the group? What brought you all together?

We believe that the whole gospel of Jesus is for the whole person. We believe that the gospel is for all people. That's why we value crossing cultures with the message and the hope of Jesus. Right here in our city, we have the opportunity to reach people of all nations, ages, and backgrounds. We are committed to reaching every person no matter who they are or where their story begins. From Middle Tennessee to the ends of the earth, we are going to do whatever it takes to make sure everyone hears the good news of Jesus.

1. The Conflict of the Council (Acts 15:1-5)

The significance of the meeting in Jerusalem is hard to overstate. The debate centered around one question: Did Gentiles who believe in Jesus have to become proselyte Jews to be saved? The Judaizers saw Christianity as an extension of Jewish belief so they thought it was right for Gentiles to follow their rules. The only problem with that line of thinking is the gospel. The criteria for inclusion in God's family is faith in Jesus. To add to the gospel is to take away from its meaning. The Bible clearly teaches salvation is a gift available to all, and it is through Christ alone.

2. The Conclusion of the Council (Acts 15:6-21)

“After much discussion” (v. 6) indicates that the debate must have been long and intense. Peter briefly shared his unforgettable experience with Cornelius and his household (see 10:9-48). He made clear the Lord had made a choice to use Peter for His purpose of sharing the gospel with some Gentiles. This was a sovereign act of God that began with a vision and ended with Cornelius and other Gentiles believing in Jesus. All are included in the church through faith.

3. Peter’s Example (Acts 10:1-6, 13-16, 19-20, 27b-35, 43-45)

These verses depict the responses to two different visions from God. The first was a vision to a Gentile seeker named Cornelius. The second was a vision to Peter, the God-appointed leader of the early church. The vision Peter experienced from God communicated it was now permissible to kill and eat unclean animals (Acts 10:9-33). The vision didn’t make sense to Peter, since it would have violated dietary food laws. But God was communicating to Peter that He was overturning these restrictions and Gentiles could be embraced in Christian community. Peter was tasked with the responsibility of sharing the good news with both Jews and Gentiles.

Questions to Guide Your Group’s Discussion

- ❓ What does this passage say?
- ❓ What did this passage mean to its original audience?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about God?
- ❓ What does this passage tell us about man?
- ❓ What does this passage demand of me?
- ❓ How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (*How can you use this information this week at work or with friends and neighbors?*)
- ❓ How does this passage prompt me to pray to God?

*Adapted from Seven Arrows by Matt Rogers pastor of The Church at Cherrydale, Greenville, SC