



# PASSIONFORTRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

## Understanding Acts Chapter 15 - Part 8 - Jim Staley 2024

Have you been taught that Acts 15:20, when James says that these are the only four things that the Gentiles need to do, means that we don't have to keep the law of God, and we only need to not do these four things? If you've been taught that, you've been taught wrong. Forty-four thousand denominations have gotten it wrong, my friends, because we don't read the front of the book. We don't know first-century Judaism. We're going to talk about it, unravel it, and show you what the Bible *really* says. This is going to blow your mind, coming up right after this.

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Shalom, shalom, everyone! Jim Staley here, Passion for Truth Ministries. Welcome to today's broadcast. And yes, this one's going to be controversial. Yes, this one's going to be tipping the scales of whether or not we got things right or wrong in traditional Christianity as it pertains to **Acts chapter 15**.

As you know, if you've been following along, we've been doing verse-by-verse commentary from the original Hebraic Christian roots perspective, and it has radically opened our eyes to some things that we've got right and a lot that we've got wrong. These authors are *Jewish*, and the framework is within a Hebrew context. And if we don't know the idiomatic expressions, the people groups, the arguments, the debates, and the culture, the language, we're just going to be susceptible to reading into it—and that's what we've been doing.

If this is your first time or you're brand new to this channel, and someone just sent this to you, if you like what you're about to see and you want to learn to do Bible things in Bible ways and get past the denominational bias that's out there in Gentile land, then [subscribe to this channel](#) and make sure you turn on your notifications so you don't miss anything. Also, check out our website at [passionfortruth.com](https://passionfortruth.com)—we have hundreds and hundreds of resources, articles, and videos. But in the meantime, wherever you are following us from, wherever you're watching from—from sea to shining sea or overseas—we are so glad that you're taking the time to watch this broadcast. We pray that it will be a blessing to you.

So, without further ado, let's dive into Acts chapter 15, and I'm going to start right where the miscommunication, misunderstanding, and misinterpretation are. It's in Acts chapter 15, verse 20. All right, now before we dive in, let's quickly go over the context. Paul and Barnabas have been in Antioch. As you know from our last broadcast, they've been there for quite some time. They're encouraging the disciples. They're growing the ecclesia, the assembly there in the first century. This is just a few years—probably seven or eight years—after the Messiah dies and rises from the dead, and they are in Antioch.

Now, there is a giant dissension happening because people are coming down from Jerusalem, and these religious zealots are telling them that their converts aren't saved. They're saying these Gentiles aren't saved because they're not keeping God's law—they've got to be circumcised. All this is happening, so they go up for a courtroom experience in Jerusalem because they're very upset. Paul and Barnabas go all the way to Jerusalem to tell James about it. They form what's called a **Beit Din**, which is a fancy **Hebrew word for "house of judgment,"** or **what we today would call a trial**, and they debate these issues.

We're going to go back over the debate, but we're going to start at the end first. In verse 20, we see the conclusion of the debate, and this is what James says. Follow along very carefully because this is where we get it all wrong.

**Verse 20** says this: *"**20 But that we should write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.**"* Now, right there is where everybody stops. Everybody stops right there. James says these are the only four things that Gentiles need to do: they need to abstain from things polluted by idols, stay away from sexual immorality, stay away from things strangled, and from blood, specifically drinking blood.

Now, let's just think through the logic of this, because there are so many people out there in Christianity—in denominations, seminaries, you name it—that are teaching that the Gentiles do not have to keep God's law or honor any of the commandments because James, the president of the Council of Jerusalem, basically the head pastor of the early Messianic Christian Church, says that Gentiles don't have to do anything but these four things. And quite honestly, there are not four things to do; there are four things *not* to do.

Are we to believe that the Gentiles can—can they—take God's name in vain? Can the Gentiles not keep the Sabbath, remember the Sabbath, the fourth commandment? Can they covet? Because that's not in here. It doesn't say anything about them not coveting. It doesn't say that they can't even serve another god or anything like that. There are only four things that they can't do. Something is amiss, and I'm going to prove it to you right now. Here we go.

The thing that we miss is we stop reading. Oftentimes in Christianity, when we're trying to read the Bible from a theological perspective, we find what we already believe, and then we stop. We see those keywords that trigger us—like trigger words in an argument where you stop listening to your spouse or your child or whoever because they said something that triggered you. It's the

same way here. We hear trigger words, we read trigger words of what we already believe, and then we stop—we stop listening, we stop reading.

My friends, let's just keep reading in the next verse and watch what happens. Here we go. So, he says they can't do these four things. And I haven't told you yet what these four things are for, but we'll find that out as we go back and start over. But read **verse 21**. He says they can't do these four things ***"<sup>21</sup> For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."***

Now, I'm going to leave this on the screen and teach for just a moment because it's important. If you're new at learning the Hebraic foundations of your faith, if you're learning the Christian roots and you want to really find out what the Bible says, you've got to learn some of these Hebraic concepts and these idiomatic expressions. And one of them is the word "Moses." Almost all of you probably know who Moses is. Of course, he's the one that was given the Ten Commandments. He was the one that was given the entire Torah on Mount Sinai. So, "Moses" became synonymous with the law of God, okay, or what's better known as the Torah in the strict sense—the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, okay?

Now, **Torah just simply means "instructions." It does not mean "law" at all.** The word for "instructions" in Hebrew is *Torah*, okay? It just simply means "instructions." If you're married out there, your wife has instructions—I promise you, she has a *Torah*, and you better know it if you know what's good for you. Amen, guys?

So, when we get to this term, *"for Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him,"* that is a phrase that simply means the Torah in every generation has somebody that's preaching it—preaching the Torah in every city. So, he says, "Look, don't worry about anything else. They cannot do these four things because they're going to be hearing the Torah being read in every city, in every synagogue, every Sabbath."

Now, my friends, again, I'm going to leave this on the screen for just a moment as I begin to expound on this. This is telling us volumes of information about what's in the mind of the early disciple and the first bishop of the early Messianic Christian Church, if you want to call it that. And the volume of information broken down goes like this:

1. There was an expectation that the Gentiles couldn't do four things in order to be in fellowship. And we know what those four things are, and I'll explain those a little bit later.
2. What was in his mind was that they absolutely are going to learn the instructions called Torah. They're going to learn the front of the book.

Remember, there is no New Testament at this time—zero. So, he can't be talking about the New Testament. The New Testament doesn't exist in the first century at this time. So when he talks about them learning something, they're going to be learning it *in the synagogue*. He didn't say they're going to, you know, the Baptist church down the street. Nothing against the Baptist

church, but there's no Christian church at this time, okay? They're going to learn it in the synagogue along with the Jews.

So, the Jews and the believers in Christ are operating together. You've got three groups of people that are operating inside of a synagogue every single week. The non-believing Jews are operating inside the synagogue. So you have the non-believing Jews, you've got the believing Jews—okay, like Paul and Barnabas. These are Jews that believe in Christ. And then there are the Gentiles, considered the proselytes, those that were converting to Judaism. These are the God-fearers. Actually, technically, there's a fourth group—these are the Gentiles that believe in Christ. And they're all supposed to come to the synagogue.

In the mind of James, every Gentile is going to the assembly—what we call church today—at the synagogue, and they are doing so on the Sabbath. Why? Because this is what God said: "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." And this is when church was—church was on Saturday. It was not until the early 300s when the Roman church switched the Sabbath day from the seventh day, which was Saturday, to the first day of the week, which was Sunday. And they did that because "Sun's day" was the day of the sun god, whose day was on the first day of the week. And to make it easy for the Roman citizens to convert to Christianity, they simply switched the Sabbath day from Saturday, because they didn't want anything to do with the Jews, and they were anti-Semitic, to the first day of the week. And they justified it, saying, "Oh, Christ rose on the first day of the week, therefore we are going to have church on the first day of the week."

But the real truth is, it was just a compromise, and out of anti-Semitism. I go into that much later in a different teaching. But for now, it's important to point out the indisputable fact that, in the mind of James, every Gentile is going to be inside, celebrating the Sabbath and going to church on Saturday, on the Shabbat, with his Jewish counterparts. There was no separation; they didn't disconnect from their early Jewish roots until after 70 AD, when the Temple was destroyed. When the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD, the Jews fled to Yavneh, the Christians fled to Pella (if my memory serves me correctly), and that immediate disconnect—and the Temple not being there and the synagogues no longer being alive—forced the independent non-believing Jews to be on their own, and the believing Jews and believing Gentiles to be on their own. And that's where *all* the trouble began.

As long as they stayed inside of the Jewish framework, okay, of the front of the book, as I like to call it—the Old Testament—and the back of the book, the New Testament, when all of that is put together, spirit and truth, you can't go wrong. But if you remove the foundation of the Hebrew foundation of Christianity, then your only framework is paganism. So the Gentiles are coming into the church from polytheistic paganism, with no Jewish or Hebrew background at all. They're trying to understand Hebrew scriptures written inside of a Jewish framework by Jews about a Jewish Savior, and they're just going to read right into it their anti-Semitism. And they read into it what they already believe, and outcomes, an amalgamation of all kinds of doctrines and creeds that are far from the truth, adding traditions and doctrines of men from the Roman church. Out comes really a new golden calf—a completely new golden calf, my friends.

Starting off in this broadcast—how far did I get in? I did it in 12 minutes. I thought I was going to do it in a few, but in less than 12 minutes, proving that these four things that James said are not just four things. That was not his ultimate goal. His ultimate ruling was these four things they *can't do*, and they're going to learn the rest along the way.

All right, Acts, chapter 15, verse 1. Let's go verse by verse, and I'm going to show you, as we culminate into verse 20, what those four things really are for. If you're brand new to this, you're not going to believe it, and even if you're not, it'll encourage you because we'll make a connection here at the end. **Verse 1**, here we go:

***"1 And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'"***

Okay, so the title in my Bible—I use the Olive Tree Bible software, and I do like it, but there are biases. This is the New King James Version, and it says, "The Conflict Over Circumcision." That's *not* the debate. It's really critical, when you're trying to understand Scripture, that we understand the people groups, what they believed, who they are, and what the debate is over, or we will wrongly understand what the conclusion is. So, in this case, although the debate is *about* circumcision, that's not what the debate was ultimately about, okay? That's just a subheading of the ultimate debate. What's the ultimate debate about? Right here: "Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you *cannot* be saved.'" And Paul disagreed. So the debate is over *how* a Gentile gets saved. *How does someone get saved?* That's what the debate was about.

So let me give you a little background on why this is really important inside of first-century Judaism. All right, the idea of being in covenant with God was to first be circumcised. That's the covenant of circumcision that God gave to the patriarchs and even Moses, right? God was really upset, almost killed Moses because his children weren't circumcised, right? And Zipporah had to come up and take care of business. So, circumcision to the Jewish people—to the Israelite people, I should say—was critical. It was so important because God said, unless your hearts are circumcised and the flesh of your physical body is circumcised, you could not be in covenant with God. It was the earmark. It was a way that God could say, "Are you serious about following Me? Because if you're serious about following Me as the head of your house, you need to be circumcised." No one's getting circumcised unless they're very serious about following God, all right?

At the end of the day, they had incorporated this into the concept of salvation. So when Jews were getting saved and coming to know Christ as Messiah, they were drawing from their historical doctrines and their Hebrew heritage that circumcision was that important, okay? You could not be in covenant with God and not be circumcised. And there was some validity to that when you look at how much emphasis God placed on circumcision in the Old Testament. I get it, totally. But they were confused about the weight and the priority of it as it relates to the death of Christ on the cross. So, that's why this debate in Acts chapter 15 is over salvation; it is not about

Christian living. By the time you get to verse 20, and James gives his famous decree of what these Gentiles need to do, it's not about Christian living; it's about salvation. Let's keep going.

**"<sup>2</sup> Therefore," verse 2: "When Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others should go up to Jerusalem and see the apostles about this question."** So they're going to go and say, "Hey, let's find out what they have to say."

**"<sup>3</sup> So, being sent on their way by the ecclesia, or the assembly there in Antioch, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles, and they caused great joy to all the brethren. <sup>4</sup> And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the ecclesia there,"** (by the assembly) **"and the apostles and the elders, and they reported all things that God had done with them. <sup>5</sup> But some of the sect of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, 'It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the Law of Moses.'"**

Okay, so this is really good and bad news. The good news is that there were people from the Pharisees—Pharisees getting saved. That's fantastic. The problem is, they're taking their religious background with them, and it's influencing their perception of what the truth actually is. So now they're saying that you have to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, which, in their minds, included the traditions and doctrines of the Pharisees. To them, there was no difference between what was called the Oral Law and the Written Law; they were all the same.

**The Written Law would be the Torah, the instruction manual of God, and the Oral Law would be the tradition and doctrine of the elders that they made up to help assist people.** Well, sometimes those "assisted living" details of the laws actually choked out the spirit of the law and prevented God's people from serving Him properly. So, there was this dispute about what salvation is and what the Gentiles need to do to be saved.

As we continue, it says, **"<sup>6</sup> Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. <sup>7</sup> And when there had been much dispute,"**—oh, they were arguing, all right. So this is not the first time they argued. **"Peter rose up and said to them, 'Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago, God chose among us that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. <sup>8</sup> So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us.'"**

Now, by the way, Peter stands up first because he says, "Look, I thought we already dealt with this in **Acts chapter 10**. I had a four-cornered sheet that came down with unclean animals, and I thought it was about food. It had nothing to do with food; it had to do with the Gentiles. They were placeholders. The unclean animals were placeholders for Gentiles." And in **verse 28**, he said, "God showed me by going into Cornelius' house that what God said is clean, I should not call unclean. God accepted the Gentiles, and the proof was in the pudding when the Holy Spirit came down, and they began to speak in other tongues." And so he's giving his testimony before Paul even jumps up.

So, in **verse 10**, he says, **"<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples"**—meaning the Gentile disciples—**"which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? <sup>11</sup> But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved in the same manner as they."**

Now, this is really important, my friends, because some people will interpret—or we, almost all of us in every denomination growing up in Christianity—if you grew up in the church and you know a lot about the Bible, this is going to rub against you. Because you've been taught that the yoke is the Torah, and it says right here, "Look, you shouldn't put the yoke of the Torah on these disciples because we couldn't bear it, and our forefathers couldn't bear it." But that's not the debate. The debate's not over whether or not they should keep the Torah. Nobody in this room believes that they shouldn't keep the Torah. They're all Jews, for crying out loud, and they're trying to go beyond the Torah—this Pharisaical group in the sect of the Pharisees—believing that they should keep *all* of the Oral Law *and* the traditions *and* circumcision just for salvation, okay? But that's not what the debate is. The debate is over what it means to be saved.

What he's saying is, "Look, you cannot place the Torah on our shoulders for salvation, because none of us can keep the law perfectly and be saved. Our forefathers couldn't bear it. We can't bear it," meaning not keep the law. We can keep the law. "Okay, I don't have to commit adultery. I can keep that. That's not a burden to me. But for salvation, I can't keep it all. Nobody could be under the weight of that much pressure and do it right." That's what he's saying, and that's why he says in the next verse, "*We believe that through the grace of Christ, we are saved in the same manner as they.*"

In other words, we're saved in the same manner as our forefathers were saved—by faith. The Torah was just how we live; it tells us what's right and what's wrong. We shouldn't marry those that are outside of the faith. We shouldn't commit adultery. We shouldn't curse. We shouldn't, you know, commit idolatry. We shouldn't covet our neighbor's wealth or their wife. That was just a system of right and wrong for life. That's why God said, "I set before you on Mount Sinai *blessings* if you keep My commandments, curses if you don't." If we get rid of God's law, there is no curse, and there's no blessing. If there's no blessing, we're in big trouble. That would make for a miserable life. If there's no curse, that's great—then we need to stop telling people about Christ, stop telling them that they're a sinner, because no one can be a sinner if you're not breaking a law that doesn't exist. So again, oh, our theology doesn't fit reality.

In order for there to be a gospel, there must be *sin*. And if you are a sinner, then you're condemned, and you're condemned because you sinned. The definition of sin—1 John 3:4—is the breaking of the law, the transgression of the law. Sin is the transgression of God's law. So all that to say, this is not about Christian living. This is about salvation, and that's what he's bringing up here in verse 10.

All right, so let's go back to the text as we work our way through here. **"<sup>12</sup> Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles**

**and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. <sup>13</sup> And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, 'Men and brethren, listen to me. <sup>14</sup> Simon Peter has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.'" Again, he's pulling his testimony from Acts chapter 10, with Cornelius. <sup>15</sup> **And with this, the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:****

<sup>16</sup> **'After this, I will return**

**And I will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;**

**I will rebuild its ruins,**

**And I will set it up;**

<sup>17</sup> **So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,**

**Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,'**

**Says the Lord who does these things."**

So he's calling upon the prophets, saying, "Look, here's the proof that the gospel can go to the Gentiles. The prophets declare that it's going to go to the Gentiles." Now, I'm going to tell you right off the bat, the whole point of God choosing the Israelite people, as I stated in last week's broadcast, is to be a light to the nations. We talked about being a light. What does that look like? They were commanded to be a light to the nations. It was never meant to be an exclusive country club. They were supposed to receive the light and then take the instruction manual out and show people how blessed you can be by following the God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. They didn't do it. So God came down in the flesh, in the form of His Son, rebooted the whole process. He didn't choose a new people. He just said, "Hey, this is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Who's on My team?" Jew, Gentile—Jews first, to the Jew first. So for the first 10 years after Christ, it was just the Jews. And then Cornelius gets saved, and a few years later, Paul comes around, and more Gentiles are starting to get saved. And then the whole thing begins to shift into the uttermost parts of the earth.

So now in **verse 18**, it says, <sup>18</sup> **Known to God from eternity are all His works. <sup>19</sup> Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God."** Careful—**verse 20**—about what we should not trouble them about: salvation. The entire context of everything being said is about salvation. Let's not trouble the Gentiles and make it so difficult to get saved like our forefathers did. Let's just do this... <sup>20</sup> **But that we write to them that they have to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. <sup>21</sup> For Moshe has, throughout many generations, had those who preach him in every synagogue, in every city, being read in every synagogue every Shabbat, every Sabbath."**

What we have here in the first 21 verses is Peter standing up. We have Paul and Barnabas standing up, giving testimony about how the Gentiles not only got saved—here's the proof that they got saved—but they were also having manifestations of the Holy Spirit through the speaking of tongues. They weren't even circumcised, and they hadn't learned a single word of the Torah, yet they were giving proof that God was ordaining their salvation and stamping it without the Pharisees—these Christian Pharisees, if you will, which is an oxymoron—these



Jewish Pharisees that believed in Christ, without *their* definition of salvation, which included all the traditions and doctrines of men, the Torah itself, and circumcision. And they were silent; there was nothing they could say.

So, James says, "Look, by the mere fact the Holy Spirit is endorsing them, that should be enough. My ruling is going to be..." (James is speaking.) "My ruling is going to be: in order for them to be in fellowship with us and receive real salvation, they must stay away from things that are strangled, from sexual immorality, from things that are polluted by idols, and from blood."

Now, what's fascinating to learn about these four things? These are not four things that they need to do for salvation. These are four things that they *cannot do* in order to be considered inside of the fellowship or the assembly—the ecclesia, the early church, as we would say it today. Now, why did he do that? Because these Gentiles are coming out of paganism, and inside of paganism, if you're going to serve a deity—inside of paganism, like in Corinth, for sure—there are temple prostitutes that you're required to go to. You have to sacrifice animals to these gods and eat these animals that are strangled; that was part of cultic society, polytheism, and idolatry, including drinking blood. So, they had idols, there was drinking blood, there were animals that were strangled, and there was cult prostitution. All of those four things were the top things that were dead giveaways that you were submitting to that particular god. James could have probably made a better statement, a more generic statement, that would have helped us today. But back then, they knew exactly what he meant: "Look, they can't be saved and still be found in an idol's temple. They can't be saved and be in our temple if they're going to be just taking Christ, the God of Israel, and adding it to their polytheistic plethora of gods—the harem of gods." He says, "No, not going to happen. They have to forsake all of that. No more drinking blood, no more cult prostitutes, no more idolatry, or offering anything that's strangled," because that was so common within the cultic atmosphere of the first century.

And he says, "Look, they'll learn the rest." So imagine this: as a pastor, and being a pastor for many years, people would come into my church, and let's say they were struggling with homosexuality, and they also struggled with cursing and smoking. What I might say to my pastor friend, who might be super sensitive towards smoking, and he's missing the boat here because he's focusing on, "Hey, you can't smoke if you're going to be one of us, you can't be a smoker, you can't curse." And I'd be like, "Look, look, look, associate pastor, you need to understand the priority here. If they're going to be in fellowship with us, they cannot continue in homosexuality. Now, I understand there's grace and there's time for putting aside sin. I get it. But they cannot be found in homosexual bars and moving in that lifestyle and still be in intimate connection as a congregant in an assembly here. They'll learn the rest every week when they come to church. So let's not burden them with too much at one time. Let's give them just the top, highest priorities. Okay, no more this, this, and this. We've got to stop that right away—put a hard stop on it. The rest they'll learn every week. That's all he's doing. James is being a good pastor, and he's saying, let's not put a burden on them too much at one time. Salvation is through faith in Christ—we get that. But they can't do these four things if they're going to remain in fellowship with us. They'll learn the rest every week. It's that simple."

Let's go on and finish the rest of this chapter. **Verse 22:** *"<sup>22</sup> Then it pleased the apostles and the elders, with the whole assembly, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely Judas, who was also named Barsabas, and Silas, leading men among the brethren."* <sup>23</sup> *They wrote this letter by them: 'The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. <sup>24</sup> Since we have heard that some of you went out from us and have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"—to whom we gave no such commandment—<sup>25</sup> it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, <sup>26</sup> men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Yeshua HaMashiach."*

Now, remember, this letter is understood that these men are telling them they must keep the law and be circumcised to be saved. Okay, now he doesn't put that in the particulars because it's understood. It's already, remember, in the first verse: 'Unless you're circumcised according to the custom of Moshe, you cannot be saved.' That's the debate. Okay? So, running back down to verse 26. Okay. **Verse 27:** *"<sup>27</sup> We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. <sup>28</sup> For it seemed good to the Ruach HaKodesh and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: <sup>29</sup> 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."*

Why? Because you're going to learn the rest of the Torah every week. In every synagogue, the Torah is read every Shabbat. You're going to learn all the rest of the commandments, but we're not going to burden you upfront. And that's what they're talking about—salvation upfront. We're not going to put any more burden on you. You just can't do this. This will prove to us you're not saved if you do these four things. Okay?

**Verse 30:** *"<sup>30</sup> So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch, and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. <sup>31</sup> When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. <sup>32</sup> Now Judas and Silas themselves, being prophets, also exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. <sup>33</sup> And after they had stayed there for a time, they were sent back with greetings from the brethren to the apostles. <sup>34</sup> However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. <sup>35</sup> Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. Antioch is a big place of business, and they had spent a lot of years there, really seeding into those people.*

All right, we're almost finished. **Verse 36:** *"<sup>36</sup> Then after some days, Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.' <sup>37</sup> Now, Barnabas was determined to take with them John, who was called Mark, but Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. <sup>39</sup> Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; <sup>40</sup> but Paul chose Silas and departed, being*

***commended by the brethren to the grace of God. <sup>41</sup> And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches."***

As we close this broadcast, I want to kind of pull all of this together. So yeah, Paul and Barnabas had a big argument, and they split over the idea of whether or not they should take John Mark, because earlier in Acts, John Mark decided to take off a little bit early and didn't put the work in. So Paul's like, "Why should he come when he departed from this and abandoned us, and you want to bring him back?" Well, Barnabas felt differently, and they departed. The work of the gospel actually doubled from that point, because now Barnabas—who is just as qualified as Paul, doing miracles, signs, and wonders, and so on—took the gospel over here, and Paul went over there. It was amazing how God used even an argument, maybe even orchestrated divinely, to take and multiply the seeds that were going out there. Maybe Barnabas had learned enough from Paul, and Paul from Barnabas, and they needed to multiply those efforts. So now there's not two, but four who are moving out about the country.

At the end of this chapter, what do we learn? We learned that the majority of us in Christianity have grown up thinking that we don't have to do *anything* in Christianity, but we can't do these four things. We're not thinking through the logic of it—that if these are the only four things that we can't do, then that means we don't have to do *anything* else. And nobody I know believes that. So the ramifications of believing that Acts chapter 15 and the decree from James in this time of debate literally mean that the Gentiles don't have to do anything. Then we've got a large problem on our hands, because that means there are so many sins that we could commit. And I know that we don't believe that.

The reason why this is important is because, in the mind of James, he believes that we should be learning the Torah. We should be learning what I call the front of the book—the foundation of the Christian faith—and learning by the Spirit what we need to apply today. And by default, it means that the Sabbath is still in their minds as something highly valuable that brings tremendous blessing, and it certainly does in my life. As we're learning the Hebraic backdrop of our faith, **it's important for us to understand that we need to have a little bit of humility in our lives. We can actually be a part of the ecclesia and have a disagreement and be wrong, and it's okay to be wrong.** Being wrong tells us that we're not always right. And I know that sounds very simple, but the truth of the matter is that when we learn something new, it draws us closer to Christ. Why? Because we've put down a lie, we've put down something that we thought was true, and we are taking up a mantle of something that is truth. And the truth only knows how to do one thing, my friends: set us free.

I encourage you to watch this entire Acts series. It will teach you more and more about the fundamentals and the foundation of our faith. We're going to close out today's broadcast here. We want to thank you guys so much for joining us. Thank you for partnering with us through prayer and financially. Thank you for being a part of the solution. Don't forget that we're out here every day doing this for you, and we need your help in order to get this message out to the nations. We love it when you guys pray for us, and we are also very, very thankful for those of you that financially partner with us. You can do that at [passionfortruth.com](http://passionfortruth.com), and you can

[donate](#) there. We have hundreds of free materials that we offer on our website, and of course, this channel. Take a look at our playlist—I think you'll be very encouraged.

Until next week, my friends, as we walk through the second half of Acts where it's all about Paul—the first 14 chapters are really setting up for the 15th and following—I hope you learned a couple of things. That's what I think. But what do you think? Put it in the comments. Let me know—do you agree, disagree? Why? Check us out at [passionfortruth.com](http://passionfortruth.com), and check out our social media channels as well. I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries. I'll see you in the next video. Shalom, shalom.

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