

Lesson VIII.

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

May 23, 1909

Acts 15 : 1-5; 22-29. Study Acts 15 : 1-35—Memory Verses, 28, 29.

Golden Text—We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we shall be saved, even as they.—Acts 15 : 11.

one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Bar'nabas and Paul,
 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Je'sus Christ.
 27 We have sent therefore Ju'das and Si'las, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.
 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things ;
 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication : from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

THE LESSON RETOLD

Paul and Barnabas, as we heard in the Lesson of last Sabbath, told the disciples at Antioch the news, of how many Gentiles had turned to the Lord. But certain strict Jews came down from Jerusalem, who said, "All these Gentiles who have believed in Jesus, must keep the Jewish laws about food and fasting and other such things. Others said that these old laws were made for Jews only, and that Gentiles who believed in Jesus were not required to live as Jews. So there was much disputing in the church, and at last Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem, to ask the advice of the apostles and elders there.

These listened to Paul's story of the wonderful things God had done among the Gentiles, and talked it over, and prayed to God about it ; and at last the apostles and elders and the whole church in Jerusalem decided that both Jews and Gentiles were saved by

1 And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Mo'ses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Bar'nabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Bar'nabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jeru'salem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phen'ice and Samar'ia, declaring the conversion of the Gen'tiles : and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Jeru'salem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Phar'isees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Mo'ses.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to An'tioch with Paul and Bar'nabas ; namely, Ju'das surnamed Bar'sabas, and Si'las, chief men among the brethren :

23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner ; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gen'tiles in An'tioch and Syr'ia and Cilic'ia :

24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law : to whom we gave no such commandment :

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with our beloved Bar'nabas and Paul,

simply believing in Jesus. They said, too, that Gentiles who believed were not required to keep the old laws, which had been given to the Jews only.

So they sent two messengers, Judas and Silas, back to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, and a letter to the Christians in Antioch and other cities, telling them what had been decided. The messengers were also to tell the people of these cities, that all they had to do to be saved, was to obey the words of the gospel, which told them to be sorry for their sins, and love and trust Jesus, and keep His commandments.

So these four men went down to Antioch, and when they had called all the disciples together, they gave them the letter they had brought. The Gentiles were glad when they heard it read, and learned that the way to be saved was so easy and simple.

And Judas and Silas spoke many comfort-