

# Fulfilled Prophecies

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## Acts 15 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

## Acts 15 Paraphrased

### Introduction

† This chapter settles the issue of whether Gentiles must keep the Law of Moses to be saved

† The apostles make it clear that salvation is by grace, not law, during the transition before AD 70

† This shows the old covenant fading while the new covenant stands complete in Christ

### **Acts 15:1**

Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brothers that unless they were circumcised according to Moses' custom, they could not be saved

- † This was adding works to salvation (Galatians 5:2-4)
- † It shows the lingering hold of the old covenant system
- † This teaching directly opposed grace

### **Acts 15:2**

Paul and Barnabas strongly opposed them and debated them, so they were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about this issue

- † Truth must be defended
- † The apostles handled doctrine carefully
- † Unity comes through truth, not compromise

### **Acts 15:3**

As they traveled, they reported the conversion of the Gentiles and brought great joy to all the brothers

- † Gentile salvation fulfilled prophecy (Isaiah 49:6)
- † The church rejoiced in God's work
- † Salvation had already occurred without the law

### **Acts 15:4**

When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed and reported all that God had done with them

- † The focus is on God's work, not man
- † This confirms divine approval
- † The apostles recognized the evidence

### **Acts 15:5**

Some believers from the Pharisees stood up and said it was necessary to circumcise them and command them to keep the Law of Moses

- † Even believers struggled to let go of the law
- † Old covenant thinking remained strong

† Error can arise within the church

### **Acts 15:6**

The apostles and elders gathered together to consider the matter

† This was a decisive doctrinal council

† Authority rested with the apostles

† The truth would be established clearly

### **Acts 15:7**

After much discussion, Peter stood up and said that God had chosen him to preach to the Gentiles so they would hear and believe

† Refers to Cornelius (Acts 10)

† God already showed His will

† Faith was the key, not law

### **Acts 15:8**

God, who knows the heart, testified by giving them the Holy Spirit just as He did to us

† The Spirit was given apart from law

† God confirmed their acceptance

† This proves salvation was complete

### **Acts 15:9**

He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith

† No difference between Jew and Gentile (Romans 10:12)

† Cleansing comes by faith

† This destroys law-based righteousness

### **Acts 15:10**

Why are you testing God by placing a yoke on the disciples that neither we nor our fathers could bear

† The law was a burden

† It could not save (Galatians 3:24)

† Adding it opposes God

### **Acts 15:11**

We believe we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way they are

† Salvation is identical for all

† Grace alone saves

† This is the core truth

### **Acts 15:12**

The whole assembly fell silent and listened as Barnabas and Paul described the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles

† God confirmed the message

† Evidence supported their testimony

† This validated Gentile inclusion

### **Acts 15:13**

After they finished, James spoke and addressed the brothers

† James provides leadership

† He connects events to scripture

† This brings final clarity

### **Acts 15:14**

He explained how God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for His name

† This fulfills God's plan for the nations

† The Gentiles are now His people

† Covenant inclusion is complete

### **Acts 15:15**

The words of the prophets agree with this

† This was foretold

† Scripture confirms it

† Nothing new is being introduced

### **Acts 15:16**

After these things I will return and rebuild the fallen tent of David

† Fulfilled in Christ's kingdom

† This is spiritual restoration

† Not a future earthly reign

### **Acts 15:17**

So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, all the Gentiles called by My name

† Gentiles are included now

† This is present fulfillment

† God's people are expanded

### **Acts 15:18**

This has been known from long ago

† God's plan was always clear

† Fulfillment was unfolding then

† Nothing was accidental

### **Acts 15:19**

Therefore, we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God

† No burdens added

† Grace remains central

† The gospel is protected

### **Acts 15:20**

They should abstain from things polluted by idols, sexual immorality, and from blood and strangled animals

† These are for fellowship

† Not for salvation

† They promote unity

### **Acts 15:21**

Moses is preached in every city and read in synagogues every Sabbath

† Jews still followed the law

- † This was a transitional period
- † These instructions avoided conflict

### **Acts 15:22**

Then the apostles and elders chose men to send with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch

- † Leadership acted together
- † The decision was unified
- † This ensured clarity

### **Acts 15:23**

They sent a letter to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia

- † The message was official
- † It addressed confusion
- † It brought peace

### **Acts 15:24**

They said some had troubled them with words, unsettling their souls, without authority

- † False teaching causes confusion
- † These men had no authority
- † The church corrected the error

### **Acts 15:25**

It seemed good to them to choose men and send them with Barnabas and Paul

- † Unity in decision
- † Trusted leaders were sent
- † The message was confirmed

### **Acts 15:26**

These men had risked their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

- † Their sacrifice proved their faith
- † They were reliable witnesses

† Their message was trustworthy

### **Acts 15:27**

They sent Judas and Silas to report the same things by word of mouth

† The message was confirmed verbally

† No confusion remained

† Truth was established

### **Acts 15:28**

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials

† The Spirit guided the decision

† No law imposed

† Grace remains untouched

### **Acts 15:29**

They were to abstain from idols, blood, strangled things, and sexual immorality, and if they kept themselves from these, they would do well

† Again, not for salvation

† These are practical guidelines

† They promote unity

### **Acts 15:30**

When they were sent away, they came to Antioch and gathered the people to deliver the letter

† The church received instruction

† The message was shared publicly

† Unity was restored

### **Acts 15:31**

When they read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement

† Grace brings joy

† Burdens were lifted

† The church was strengthened

### **Acts 15:32**

Judas and Silas, being prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers

- † Teaching builds the church
- † Encouragement is essential
- † Truth strengthens believers

### **Acts 15:33**

After spending time there, they were sent away in peace

- † Peace followed truth
- † Unity was restored
- † The mission continued

### **Acts 15:34**

But Silas decided to remain there

- † Workers stayed where needed
- † The ministry continued
- † Flexibility in service

### **Acts 15:35**

Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch teaching and preaching the word with many others

- † The work continued
- † The gospel spread
- † The church grew

### **Acts 15:36**

After some days, Paul said to Barnabas they should return and visit the brothers in every city

- † Follow-up was important
- † Care for believers mattered
- † The mission expanded

### **Acts 15:37**

Barnabas wanted to take John called Mark

- † Barnabas showed grace
- † He gave second chances

† He saw potential

### **Acts 15:38**

Paul thought it best not to take him since he had left them earlier

† Paul valued reliability

† He was focused on the mission

† This shows different perspectives

### **Acts 15:39**

There was such a sharp disagreement that they separated, Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus

† Even strong leaders disagree

† The work still continues

† God uses both paths

### **Acts 15:40**

Paul chose Silas and left, being commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord

† The mission continued forward

† Grace remained central

† God was still at work

### **Acts 15:41**

He traveled through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches

† The church was built up

† The gospel continued spreading

† Strengthening believers remained the focus

### **Historical References**

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, describes the dominance of Pharisaic law during this time

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies, confirms the early church rejected law-based salvation

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, records apostolic unity in

defending grace

## **How It Applies To Us Today**

† We don't add works or law to salvation, it's by grace through faith

† We stand firm against false teaching that adds burdens

† We walk in unity grounded in truth

† We understand the old covenant has been fulfilled and removed

## **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** Were Gentiles required to follow the Law of Moses?

**A:** No, Acts 15:11 shows salvation is by grace

**Q:** Why were instructions still given?

**A:** For unity, not salvation, Acts 15:20

**Q:** Did the apostles agree on this?

**A:** Yes, Acts 15:25 shows unity

**Q:** Was this fulfilled in their time?

**A:** Yes, Acts 15:15-18 shows present fulfillment

**Q:** What is the main message?

**A:** Salvation is by grace alone, Acts 15:11

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## **Source Index**

† Acts 15

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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