

Acts 15 PART 2 | GENTILES & THE TORAH OF GOD

Date: July 27, 2025

Text: Acts 15

A. TEXT

(ACTS 15:19-21, CSB)

19 Therefore, in my judgment, **we should not cause difficulties for those among the Gentiles who turn to God**, 20 but instead we should write to them to **abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from eating anything that has been strangled, and from blood**. 21 For since ancient times, **Moses has had those who proclaim him in every city, and every Sabbath day he is read aloud in the synagogues.**"

B. REVIEW: GENTILES INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE AS GENTILES

The apostles are not going to require gentiles to become Jews.

(1 Co 7:17–24, CSB)

17 ...This is what I command in all the churches. 18 Was anyone already **circumcised** (already Jewish) when he was called (to eternal life) ? He should not undo his circumcision. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? (while a gentile) He should not get circumcised. (become Jewish) 19 (in regards to inheriting eternal life) Circumcision does not matter and uncircumcision does not matter. **Keeping God's commands is what matters.** (for eternal life)...24... Brothers and sisters, each person is to **remain with God in the situation in which he was called.**

Jews inherit eternal life as Jews by faith. Gentiles inherit eternal life as gentiles by faith.

They do not need to take on the "yoke" of Jewish election and all of covenantal disciplines that come with being part of the nation of Israel.

C. WHAT ABOUT TORAH?

“How shall they live in the meantime? If they aren't to become Jews, what laws should they keep?”

(Leviticus 26:46, CSB)

“These are the statutes and judgments and laws which the Lord made between Himself and the children of Israel on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.”

Acts 15 IS NOT about how Jews relate to Torah.

Acts 15 IS about how gentiles relate to Torah.

The laws gentile disciples are required to obey fall under the umbrella of the greatest commandment

1) love God above all gods

2) Love neighbor

D. THE DECREE: THE LAW FOR THE “GER”

19 Therefore, in my judgment, we should not cause difficulties for those among the Gentiles who turn to God, (we shouldn't require them to take on Jewish identify markers; circumcision, kosher diet, Sabbath, festivals) 20 but instead we should write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from eating anything that has been strangled, and from blood.

Leviticus 17-19

Emphasis of the holiness codes is two-fold.

1) No idolatry and worship of false gods

2) No sexual immorality

1) Israelites; native born descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

2) the "nokri or zar" or foreigner"; which would be non-Israelites that are just passing through and aren't embedded into Israelite life. And they are NOT subject to as many laws.

3) the "ger" or the resident alien; a gentile who resides among Israel long term who Israel is called to love and serve as they dwell among them. And the ger is embedded into the community and is subject to certain laws, particularly those in the holiness code, and particularly those laws that would cause a person to be "cut off" from Israel and therefore "cut off" from the promises.

D1. THINGS OFFERED TO IDOLS

(Le 17:7-9, CSB)

7 They must **no longer offer their sacrifices to the goat-demons...** This will be a **permanent statute** for them throughout their generations. 8 Anyone from the house of Israel or from **the aliens who reside among them** who... [does this]...**that person is to be cut off** from his people.

D2. FROM BLOOD

(Lev. 17:10-12, CSB)

"Anyone from the house of Israel or from **the aliens who reside among them** who eats any blood, I will turn against that person...and **cut him off** from his people...12 I say to the Israelites: None of you and **no alien who resides among you** may eat blood.

D3. FROM THINGS STRANGLED

D4. FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY

(Le 18:26-29, CSB)

6 You must not commit any of these detestable acts—not the native or **the alien who resides among you**....**29** Any person who does any of these detestable practices is to be **cut off** from his people.

E. NOT “LAW FREE” BUT “LAW-”FULL”

For the apostles, discipleship, “Christianity” is not “law-free.” It’s “law-full”

(Matthew 5:17-20, BHT, CSB)

17 “Don’t think that I’m here to **do away with the Torah** or the Prophets! **I have come not to do away with them**, but to make them fully known and **carry them out**. (CSB, “18until heaven and earth pass away, **not the smallest letter or one stroke of a letter will pass away from the law** until all things are accomplished.

19 Therefore, **whoever breaks one of the least of these commands** and teaches others to do the same will be called **least in the kingdom of heaven**. But whoever **does and teaches these commands** will be called **great in the kingdom of heaven**. 20 For I tell you, **unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees**, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.

(Mt 22:37–40, CSB)

37 He said to him, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind., 38 **This is the greatest and most important command**. 39 The second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself., 40 **All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands**.

Laws that gentiles are bound to under these two headings.

1) Love God

2) Love Others

21 For since ancient times, **Moses has had those who proclaim him in every city, and every Sabbath day he is read aloud in the synagogues.**

F. THE DECREE GOES OUT

22 Then the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, decided to **select men who were among them and to send them to Antioch** with Paul and Barnabas: Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas, both leading men among the brothers. 23 They wrote:

“From the apostles and the elders, **your brothers,**

To the brothers and sisters among the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings. 24 Since we have heard that some **without our authorization** went out from us and **troubled you with their words and unsettled your hearts,** 25 we have unanimously decided to select men and send them to you along with our dearly loved Barnabas and Paul, 26 **who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus [Messiah].** 27 Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who will **personally report the same things** by word of mouth. 28 For **it was the Holy Spirit’s decision—and ours**—not to place further burdens on you **beyond these requirements:** (they’re listed) **You will do well if you keep yourselves from these things.**

Farewell.”

G. THE RESULT OF THE DECREE

30 So they were sent off and went down to Antioch, and after gathering the assembly, they delivered the letter. 31 **When they read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement.**

They are thankful to hear how they can best honor and obey this new God they’ve come to worship!

H. RESPONSE

1) HEAR MOSES READ

James thinks it's very important to hear Moses read, then so should we.

We need to read our bibles more, particularly Moses.

Genesis through Deuteronomy contains the truths we need to meditate on to be whole hearted disciples of Jesus.

2) OBEY (& DELIGHT IN!) GOD'S Law

Psalm 119:

1 How happy are those...who walk according to the LORD's instruction! 2 Happy are those who keep his decrees...14 I rejoice in the way revealed by your decrees as much as in all riches. 15 I will meditate on your precepts and think about your ways. 16 I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word....24 your decrees are my delight and my counselors...35 Help me stay on the path of your commands, for I take pleasure in it.

(Mt 4:4, CSB)

"It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.",

(John 14:15, CSB)

If you love me, keep my commands.

(Ro 7:12, CSB)

...the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

(Jas 1:25, CSB)

the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.

(1 Jn 5:2–3, CSB)

2 This is how we know that we love God's children: when we love God and **obey his**

commands. 3 For this is what love for God is: to **keep his commands.** And **his**

commands are not a burden

The law of God handed down at Sinai is for the good of Israel.

And it's for our good as well.

Keeping it is meant not

- to be a burden, but a delight;
- not slavery, but freedom.
- Not sorrow, but joy