Murray Baptist Church – 7/28/20 – Bible Study Outline

**Discussion of Prophets**

* Acts 13:1 – cross reference Acts 11:27 and Acts 15:32
* Prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch
  + Antioch is the place where believers were first called Christians
  + It seemed to be place where Christ-like behavior was being modeled
  + Strong teaching was taking place
  + Barnabas and Paul were at the Center of it
    - Barnabas, the son of encouragement, was the one who was Paul’s advocate to the disciples in Jerusalem after his conversion experience
    - Barnabas found Saul (Paul) and brought him to Antioch and their identities as Christians was identified (Acts 11:26)
* The meaning of what a prophet was compared to the OT meaning was still appropriate
  + Agabus foretells of a coming event – a famine which did occur and Paul writes about later, and collecting donations for a church after it happened

The title “prophet” is given directly and indirectly

* to Jesus (Luke 4:24; 7:16, 39; 13:33-34; 24:19; Acts 3:22-23; 7:37
* to others Acts 15:32
* Prophets of old (persons or authors of prophecy) – Luke 1:70; 3:4; 4:17, 27; 6:23; 9:8, 19; 10:24; 11:4, 47, 49-50; 13:28; 16:16, 29, 31; 24:25, 27, 44; Acts 2:16, 30; 3:18, 21, 24, etc.)

Acts Chapter 15

**Key people**

* Paul, Barnabas, Pharisees, Peter, James
* We don’t often hear of James having as strong a leadership role as Peter and John (the one who Jesus loved), but in this chapter James displays a lot of leadership
  + An important way of understanding leadership is influence, which James demonstrates in this chapter

**Key themes**

* Fulfillment
  + Of the law – Matthew 5:17, it is my opinion that when Jesus said he was coming to fufill the law. The expansion of the Kingdom of God’s people (with the inclusion of the Gentiles is one measure of that fulfillment. See Acts 15:16-18
* The Council at Jerusalem / Apostolic Council
  + Pharisaic legalism – 15:1; 15:5 – refers to the same encounter, one experienced in person, the second recounted for the apostles in Jerusalem
  + Apostolic Acceptance of the Gentiles – 15:7-11
  + Apostolic Guidance for the Gentiles– 15:19-31

**Preparation for the Council – Acts 10-11**

* Peter’s conversion of Cornelius and his household and his communication of that to the Jews

**Impact of the Jerusalem Council**

It allows Luke to do the following (writer of Gospel of Luke and Acts):

* Formally legitimize the Gentile mission
* Define the basis for of legitimacy using faith as the basis of salvation
* Stress the essential continuity of the stages in the divine plan
  + The inclusion of Gentiles doesn’t mean the replacement of Israel but it’s expansion
  + The elimination of Mosaic customs for the Gentiles doesn’t mean the elimination of the Torah but the fulfillment of its prophetic intention

**Decision-Making in the Church – the articulation of faith**

The Jerusalem Council is an example of Decision Making in the Church - The articulation of faith was a process of the discernment of God’s activity.

1. This occurs through the faith narratives. Witnessing and then sharing about what was witnessed.
2. The reinterpretation (reapplication) of Scriptures (Amos 9:11-12). Note: James says “the prophets agree with this” rather than “this agrees with the prophets.” Note: The text of Scripture does not dictate how God should act. Rather, God’s action dictates how we should understand the text of Scripture.
3. Conflict and debate are legitimate and perhaps even necessary elements in the process of discernment. (Acts 15:2, 7)

Acts 15:1-4

* Antioch continues to be a place that is attracting other believers and agitators as well (compare protestor / counter protestors in today’s society
* Vs. 2-3 indicate how debate urges clarification
* V4 – reminder of not to loss purpose while seeking clarification of beliefs

Acts 15:5 – Pharisaic opposition

* A problem can only be addressed when it is communicated
* (Proverbs 27:5) – open rebuke is better than hidden love

Acts 15:6-11 – Peter addresses the Church Leaders

* His comments remind him of his own position on Gentiles and how that changed prior with his vision of the sheet and animals and the conversion of Cornelius and his family (see Acts 10)
* V. 11 – Peter’s comment was a reminder that it wasn’t the observance of Torah, but belief in Jesus through faith that Jews and Gentiles are saved. This verse also sets tone for Paul and Barnabas to talk about the signs and wonders in v. 12.

Acts 15:12 – Barnabas and Paul speak about signs and wonders

* Acts 2:19, 22, 43; 4:16, 22, 30, 5:12; 6:8; 8:6, 13; 14:3

Acts 15:13-21 – Jerusalem Council Recommendation Articulated

Acts 15:22-35 – Jerusalem Council Recommendation Presented

Acts 15:36-41 – Disagreement with other believers doesn’t mean the loss of a calling or God’s gifts or one’s purpose