

**1. The challenge for the early Christian church**

- a) Acts 13:42–49, why would the conversion of many Gentiles create a challenge for the early Christian church?
- b) Acts 15:1–5, the basic question: should Gentile Christians be required to follow all the Jewish laws, including circumcision?
- c) Acts 15:11, here is a clear confession that salvation comes by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why then is there such an insistence by some religious leaders regarding ceremonial laws?
- d) Why does Paul speak so sternly about these Judaizers? Galatians 1:7; 2:4

**2. Circumcision**

- a) Genesis 17:9–14, a sign of the covenant
- b) Exodus 12:43–49
- c) Why did Paul see an insistence on circumcision for Gentiles as a distortion of the Gospel? Galatians 5:6, Romans 3:28–30
- d) How can we avoid the trap of thinking only people who are just like us can be saved?

**3. The lively discussion at the Jerusalem Council**

- a) Acts 15:6–7, why is vigorous discussion and active involvement important in the Christian church? (see also Acts 6:2–6; 13:1–3)
- b) Acts 15:7–11, what impresses you the most about the testimony of Peter?

- c) Acts 15:12, why is it important to listen and not just speak when you are seeking a solution to a potentially divisive problem?
- d) Acts 15:13–21, what solution did James propose?
- e) When disputes arise, how can we learn to listen to each other love and respect, and work through the issues with a spirit of humility?

**4. The Letter from Jerusalem and the Apostolic Decree**

- a) Acts 15:22, what indication do you see that the group had arrived at a meaningful consensus?
- b) Acts 15:23–28, what impresses you about the way the letter is written?
- c) Acts 15:29, why do the apostles, elders, and brethren highlight the four prohibitions listed in this verse? (renunciation of paganism, outlined in Leviticus 17–18)
- d) Do these prohibitions imply issues like no idol worship (2nd commandment) or remembering the Sabbath day (4th commandment) no longer apply?
- e) Acts 15:30–33, how did the Christian believers respond to this letter from the Council in Jerusalem?
- f) What lessons can we learn from this process when dealing with challenges in the church today?

