**Series: Acts: Spirit. Mission. Drama**

**Today: A Controversy of Large Proportions**

Speaker: Ronnie Norman, Senior Minister

1. Drama: How Is Salvation Received?

***Acts 15***

*Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” 2This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.*

*3The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad. 4When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.*

*5Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, “The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses.”*

1. *Mission: God’s Grace is for all!*

*6The apostles and elders met to consider this question. 7After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: “Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. 8God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. 9He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. 10Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? 11No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”*

*12The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.*

*13When they finished, James spoke up. “Brothers,” he said, “listen to me. 14Simonhas described to us how God first intervened to choose a people for his name from the Gentiles. 15The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:*

*19“It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.*

1. Spirit: God Works Through His Church.

*28It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: 29You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.*

1. Protect The Message Of Grace Through Conviction.

*We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.”*

1. Protect The Community Of Faith Through Concession.