

November 22 Answers

- 1) The Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. Peter stood up and reminded everyone of the conversion of **Cornelius** and his household. He said, “God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by **faith**” (Acts 15:8–9). If the council demanded more of the Gentiles than faith in Christ for salvation, they would be “putting God to the test,” that is, **questioning** His judgment in this matter. Furthermore, they would be “placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples” in the sense that they would be requiring them to seek salvation through **law-keeping** (Acts 15:10). At this point the assembly fell silent, and they listened as Paul and Barnabas told them what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James did a very important thing. He **validated** their words by quoting God’s Word. This teaches us that Scripture is the final **arbiter** of truth. Our personal experiences must be corroborated and **confirmed** by the Bible. James then recommended that they ask the Gentiles “to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood” (Acts 15:20). This was not an attempt to force the Gentiles to keep the law, but an appeal for sensitivity to **Jewish** concerns, as well as a reminder to avoid all associations with **idolatry**.