

Acts 15:19-29

By Re'uel Dillon

Acts 15:19-20 - Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood.

This Scripture is talking about new, immature, idol worshipping Gentile believers in Messiah who are just turning to God. They expected the Gentiles to catch on to the rest of God's instruction (Torah) after they came to Messiah through faith. After Ya'akov (James) makes the statement in Acts 15:19-20, he says something interesting in the very next verse;

ACTS 15:21 – For Moshe (Moses) has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.

Why would he say that? Selah...Does he really expect the Gentiles to attend synagogue on the Sabbath? I believe that they expected these new believers to learn the rest of our Heavenly Father's instructions at their own pace by going to the local Synagogue, as it would be beneficial for their growth as taught in 2Timothy 3:16-17.

All of the commands listed in Acts 15:20 are those that were most often broken when a Gentile was involved in idol worship (idolatry). I believe these four things should really be viewed as unit as a restriction on idol worship. Ya'akov (James) mentioned only these commands as necessary for the time because sexual immorality, things strangled, things polluted by idols and blood were often associated idol worship. And, as we know we cannot partake of the table of Demons and the table of Messiah at the same time. Sha'ul (Paul) makes this clear in 1 Corinthians 10:14-22, and he is mainly speaking to the Gentiles;

1CORINTHIANS 10:14-22 - Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Messiah? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Messiah? For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread. Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake

of the Lord's table and of the table of demons . Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?
Are we stronger than He?

At first, it may seem that these verses are saying that if you are a Gentile, you are only required to do four things in your walk with Messiah. I don't know any Christian that truly believes this! This particular scripture is not saying that they shouldn't walk according to God's laws...the passage in question is communicating that it was not necessary to be totally Torah observant before one could be saved (although, you could not come to Messiah and continue to worship idols). This is the subject matter and context of the chapter (Acts 15:1) that sets the tone for the following chapters and many other letters written by Sha'ul (Paul).

These verses fail to mention whether the Gentiles can murder, steal, bear false witness, honor their mother and father, covet their neighbors goods, or take the Lord's name in vain. Of course, Sha'ul (Paul) and the The "Counsel" expected the Gentiles to catch on to these other important instructions of God...

"For Moshe (Moses) has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."(Acts 15:21)

When is that last time you attended your local Messianic Synagogue to hear the Torah read?