

***Study of Acts 15***  
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***Acts 15:1-41***

As always when you are teaching the Pure Word of YHVH there will be those who want to corrupt it with their man made theologies and or doctrines. This is no exception, it says that certain men came from Judea and taught that **UNLESS** you are circumcised you **CANNOT** enter the kingdom of Elohim, which means you cannot be saved. We have to realize that nowhere in Scripture is that statement supported in any way, **BUT** these men took it upon themselves to add to the Word of Elohim and put conditions upon the Word of Elohim, conditions that according to them have to be fulfilled in order to receive the gift of salvation that has been offered so freely by our heavenly Father to His children.

Is circumcision a Commandment of Elohim? The answer is a resounding **YES IT IS!** The next question that we have to ask therefore is **DOES** your salvation depend on you being circumcised? The answer this time is a resounding **NO**. From the very beginning, Elohim was after Adam's heart in the same manner that He is after **ALL** of our hearts and His quest to win our hearts over has never dimmed. YHVH has put rules and regulations in place so that we could govern ourselves by His infinite Wisdom and **NOT** by our own finite wisdom. Since YHVH **IS** omniscient He knows the evil that **is in men's hearts** and the evil that men are capable of, the evil that they often display when they rely on their own understanding instead of relying on the infinite wisdom found in the Torah of Moses. We as believers in the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob have to understand that the Father's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life which people have come to believe are YHVH's rules and regulations **ARE** for our own benefit and **NOT** Elohim's benefit. We are the ones that benefit when we obey them, and the only thing that our heavenly Father gets out of us obeying His Commandments **IS** the joy of a Father who knows that His children are being obedient and because of their obedience to His Word they will live eternally at His side.

Elohim wants all of His people to be circumcised in their heart. What does it mean to have a circumcised heart? In circumcision there is a cutting away of unwanted and unnecessary flesh. That my friends **IS** what YHVH is after. He is after those who willingly choose to forsake their own flesh, their own desires as Messiah did in the garden of Gethsemane, and then willingly and lovingly turn to YHVH and be directed by His righteousness, His Torah (*Deuteronomy 6:25*) and **NOT** by our own fleshy desires.

Since YHVH wants our hearts to be circumcised does that mean that the Law of physical circumcision has been done away with? Elohim forbid, for physical circumcision **IS** an outward manifestation of an obedient heart, **IF** one has undergone the procedure with love in his heart. The commandment given to us by YHVH is that our sons are to be circumcised on the eighth day after their birth; therefore a person might say, well they were only eight days old when they were circumcised, they were only babies, how could they consent. While that is true, their parents were obedient to YHVH's commandments which indicates that they had surrendered obedient hearts to Elohim and that they willingly chose to obey His Commandments to circumcise their sons and they also committed to diligently teach the Torah of YHVH to their children while the children were under their roof, in order that their children could learn to also surrender their hearts to the Elohim of

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That is how our heavenly Father set it up, the father and mother were to teach their children the ways of YHVH, His Torah of Life, and when the children matured and had children of their own, then they too were to teach their children the ways of YHVH, His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah, His directives for everlasting life. In YHVH's salvation plan, parents who love YHVH and His paths of righteousness are to teach their children the ways of YHVH and the love that YHVH has for all His creation.

Next we are told that this **FALSE** teaching of having to be circumcised to be saved created great dissension among the brethren and they determined to send Paul and Barnabas and certain others to the apostles in Jerusalem to get this matter dealt with.

On their way to Jerusalem they passed through Phenice and Samaria and **DECLARED** to All believers Jews and Gentiles alike that **NOW** the Gentiles were being converted to the ways of YHVH.

We can't just discount this as just words that were tossed in to fill a space in Scripture. These words are very important to show the state of mind that the believers in the Elohim of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were in, in those days. It says that it caused **GREAT JOY** unto **ALL** the brethren, Jew and Gentile alike.

When was the last time you rejoiced because someone that you didn't even know accepted the Word of YHVH as their Lord and Saviour? Can you sense through these words in the text the euphoria they felt and their joyful state of mind? They wanted to be obedient to the Word of Elohim and because of their **LOVE** for YHVH they in turn **LOVE** what YHVH **LOVES**, they **LOVE** His created beings and they rejoiced greatly when someone turned from their wicked and Torahless ways and accepted the Gift of Life from our heavenly Father, they rejoiced greatly **AS IF IT WAS** a member of their own family, for we are indeed one family in YHVH.

It is very important that we understand that they were seekers of the **TRUTH**, Elohim's Word, His Torah (*Psalms 119:142*)

Next we see that they are in Jerusalem and they are greeted by James, the Apostles and the assembly and Paul recounts how and what YHVH has done through them, for the Gentiles. But what **IS** the first thing that happens when Paul speaks of the good that Elohim has done through him and others to bring gentiles to the knowledge of Elohim?

We are told in *verse 5* that they came under attack, and who **IS IT** that attacks their report? It is the religious leaders of the day. Now **IT IS** very important that we understand what is actually said in *verse 5* **But there rose up certain OF THE SECT OF THE PHARISEES WHO BELIEVED, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to KEEP THE LAW, the Torah of Moses.** As I mentioned above what **IS** important for us to understand **IS** that the Scriptures say that these Pharisees **BELIEVED** and **YET** they taught other believers that they **NEEDED** to be circumcised and that they needed to follow the Law of Moses **TO BE SAVED**, which of course is **NOT** correct. Now please, please, **DON'T misunderstand** what I am saying, we **DO NOT NEED** to be circumcised or keep the Law of Moses **TO BE SAVED**, because **SALVATION is a GIFT** and there **IS ONLY ONE** that can give us that Gift and it is our heavenly Father; **BUT**, once a person willingly and lovingly surrenders their will to YHVH, He then fills that surrendered soul with His Holy Spirit who causes every willing Heart to **LOVINGLY OBEY, FOLLOW and KEEP and DO** the

Father's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His torah of life. It is of Paramount importance that we understand what Paul and **ALL** the Apostles, Disciples, Prophets and Messiah were teaching is that every surrendered soul to the Father **WILL GLADLY KEEP FOLLOW OBEY and DO** the Father's Torah out of **LOVE for Messiah and for our heavenly Father**, for both Messiah and our heavenly Father have stated, **IF YOU LOVE ME KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS**.

The Pharisees that taught that believers had to be circumcised and keep the Torah, the Law to be saved were taught as young boys that it was **THEIR OBEDIENCE** to the Torah that **SAVED** them and now Messiah comes along and says that **HE IS** the only begotten Son of the Most High Elohim, **HE IS** the living Torah and that **the ONLY** way to salvation **IS TO PARTAKE OF HIM**. Now we have to understand that these Pharisees did indeed believe that Messiah was the son of the Most High Elohim **BUT**, because of their indoctrination into the oral Torah of Judaism, the traditions of the fathers as it is called, they could **NOT** let go of the oral torah instructions, the traditions of the fathers that were drummed into their heads as little children and teenagers, and therefore they believed that they **HAD TO DO THE TORAH** by their own strength to be saved. My friends we have to understand what Paul tells us in *Romans 3:23* that **ALL PEOPLE HAVE SINNED AND FALLEN SHORT OF THE GLORY OF ELOHIM** and *Romans 6:23* Paul says, *For the wages of SIN, the wages of transgressing the Torah IS DEATH; BUT the GIFT of Elohim, is His salvation, which is eternal life through Yeshua Messiah, the Living Torah our Adonai.*

Now I want to emphasize that according to Scripture Salvation **IS** clearly **A GIFT** of Elohim. At the beginning of time YHVH gave us the opportunity to **KEEP AND DO** His Torah in and by our own strength, and our forefather Adam failed, and was tossed out of the Garden of Eden because of it, and from that point on until the advent of Abraham people relied on their own understanding and walked contrary to the Word of YHVH, His Torah of Life and YHVH flooded the whole world with water and destroyed most of all the living things except for eight people and a certain group of animals. At Mount Sinai after delivering Israel out of bondage to Egypt YHVH again gave Israel the opportunity to obey His Torah, His Commandments by their own strength and within forty days of giving them His Torah from the Mountain, they polluted themselves and worshipped other gods for a long period of time.

As you can see, nothing much has changed today, for the Pharisees, the Shepherds and pastors the religious leaders of today **ARE STILL** teaching the traditions of the fathers, whether it is the tradition of the Christian fathers, or the tradition of the Jewish fathers. In other words they are teaching their **OWN** man made **DOCTRINES** which of **COURSE IS** called the traditions of their fathers by Messiah and although the message has changed somewhat over the years, the theme of the message **IS** the very same, and that **IS THAT** the Torah of YHVH according to them has either been done away in whole or in part and that believers of today are to follow the man made **DOCTRINES** of these religious fathers. I am sure that many of you have experienced this phenomena since you came to this Messianic understanding of Scripture and I am just as sure that many of you continue to experience this phenomena of being rejected, rebuked and accused of being in bondage for **OBEYING** the inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions of YHVH, His Torah of life, His directives for everlasting Life.

The pharisees or religious leaders insisted that these **NEW** believers needed to be circumcised and commanded to **KEEP THE LAW** of Moses **IN ORDER TO BE SAVED**. They argued and argued over this and then Peter rose up and said a few words. He said **IT IS** Elohim that chose to have this

message preached to the gentiles by our mouth, **IT IS** Elohim that knows men's hearts and gave them of His Own Spirit, in the same manner that He gave us of His Own Spirit. Peter went on to say that Elohim has put no preference between the Gentile and us Jews **BECAUSE**, He is the Creator of us **ALL**, and Elohim has purified their hearts **BY FAITH, BY BELIEVING**.

The word purified **IS** the Greek word Katariso, καθαρίζω \*n καθαρός Strong's number 2511 which means to make clean, to cleanse, to be or become clean from disease; and of the disease, to be purged away. It is from the Hebrew word Tahor, which means *to cleanse, to be clean, as making a difference between the pure and the profane*.

If the Greek word purified means to be cleansed, if it means to be Tahor, then we had better understand what it means to **BE TAHOR!** To be clean or to be Tahor means to be without blemish, and to be without blemish means to be without sin, and to be without **SIN MEANS** to be obedient to and Follow the inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions of our heavenly Father, His Torah of life. Therefore to be Tahor means to have a surrendered obedient heart that **IS** willing to believe, obey and follow and **DO** the Torah of Moses as it was given to Moses by YHVH at Mount Sinai, without adding anything to it or taking anything away from it.

Now Peter says something very profound that all religious leaders should learn from. He says *why should we tempt Elohim who has invited these Gentiles into His family by putting our own **MAN MADE RULES** upon these Gentiles to enter the family of Elohim? Is that **NOT** up to Elohim Himself to decide?*

Peter says, **ALL** these laws, rules and regulations that our forefathers have put upon us, we Jews have for centuries been **UNABLE TO KEEP**, and **NOW** you want to impose upon these new comers what **WE** have **NOT BEEN ABLE TO KEEP** so that they can learn that they cannot keep them either, and thereby drive them away from our heavenly Father.

Peter makes another profound statement, he says **WE** believe that through the **GRACE** of YHVH, represented by Yeshua our Messiah, who died on the Cross for our salvation, we shall be saved even as they, these Gentiles have been offered salvation. This is quite a paradigm shift for these religious believers.

All their lives they have believed that it was by **KEEPING and DOING** the Law, their oral Torah that they would be saved. In other words they believed in their minds, that the Law, obedience to their oral Torah, the traditions of the Fathers **IS WHAT** brought them salvation. But Peter says in *verse 10* that neither our fathers nor we, were able to obey the Law imposed upon us by our religious forefathers. Peter said that it is only by the grace of YHVH, our Messiah that we are saved and **NOW** that we know the **TRUTH**, which we learned from Messiah, we see that instead of the Law of Moses being a burden we find it to be a joy, because the Spirit of Elohim that indwells us causes every willing heart to keep the Father's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life and shows us the beauty and the exhilarating joy found in keeping obeying and doing Elohim's Torah and pleasing our heavenly Father

Next Paul and Barnabas speak and recount **ALL** the miracles that Elohim performed **THROUGH THEM** for the Gentiles. The people or the multitude were awed by the report and kept silent wanting to hear every detail.

Then James stood up after all had been said, and all the stories had been told and said Peter has declared that Elohim has visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name. By itself it would be easy to glance over this statement, but I want you to consider the implications of the statement that James has just made. It doesn't say Peter or Paul or Barnabas or other Apostles visited the Gentiles, it says **ELOHIM VISITED THE GENTILES**. Yet we know that it was Peter, Paul and Barnabas or other Apostles and or disciples that actually went and spoke to these Gentiles and told them about YHVH and His Messiah, told them the Good News, **BUT** the Apostles are **NOT** mentioned in this statement, it says that Elohim visited the Gentiles.

This means that the Apostles and Disciples that went to the Gentiles were so surrendered to our heavenly Father that our heavenly Father Himself makes **NO** distinction between them and Himself, they were fully indwelt by the Holy Spirit and their was **NO SELF** left in them. *Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Messiah: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Messiah lives in me: (the Living Word of our Father has taken over my Life) and the life which I now live in the flesh I LIVE BY THE FAITH OF THE SON OF ELOHIM, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.* That my friends **IS HOW** these Apostles and Disciples lived; for the Living Torah, the Living Word of our heavenly Father was **LIVING** in them and causing their surrendered obedient hearts to obey His Torah of Life, obey His directives for everlasting Life.

I was always puzzled by the statement that says I live By the faith of the Son of Elohim. I always thought I had to have my own faith and that through my **OWN** faith in Elohim, He would do things through me. But this statement here in Galatians is now so meaningful and beautiful and expresses to me the love that Elohim has for us. This means that **IF** we surrender our wills to the Living Word of the Father, His Messiah, then **IT IS** the faith of Messiah that carries me through and **KEEPS** me on the right Path of Righteousness, and that is why Elohim says in *Acts 15:14* that it is Elohim that visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people onto Himself.

Our Elohim is so gracious and loving that He will guide us **BY** faith through His Living Word our Messiah, who of course **HAS** flawless, and unshakeable faith in the Father and His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life. When we willingly and lovingly surrender our hearts to YHVH we no longer have to rely on **SELF** for He through His great love and mercy towards us will do it for us.

James goes on to say that the Torah, the Words of Elohim and the Prophets agree with what has just happened through Peter and the Apostles. In other words these events of the Gentiles coming to faith had been prophesied in the Word of Elohim, *Amos 9:11-12 and Amos 9:14-15*.

Now after all these reports of what has happened, James comes to a conclusion and he states that we are not to trouble the Gentiles that have turned to Elohim except to instruct them to have no idols or graven images of other gods, Commandments 2 and 3; abstain from fornication, *Leviticus 18-19*, and abstain from things strangled, and from blood, *Leviticus 11*.

James says to the Gentiles that these are three of the basic tenets of YHVH's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life, **IT IS** the starting point for the Gentiles to get involved in understanding, believing, obeying and doing the Word of our heavenly Father. Then James says that **IF** you want to learn more about the Word of Elohim, **THEN** make a commitment to come to the synagogue every Sabbath where the Torah of Moses **IS** taught every Sabbath. If you follow through with your commitment, **THEN** you will learn **ALL** the other things that Elohim has instructed His

people to do through His Word, His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His directives **FOR EVERLASTING LIFE.**

Let me ask you a question; do you remember what it was like when you first accepted Yeshua, the Living Torah as your Lord and Saviour into your heart, do you remember how much **YOU** longed to know **MORE** about Him? Well it was the very same thing for these new believers back then, they too were eager to learn more of what Elohim wanted and expected of them and therefore to make a commitment to come and learn more about what they had just experienced was not difficult for them to commit to..

We are the same today, we don't go from **NOT KNOWING** Elohim to **KEEPING** and **DOING** His inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions, His Torah of Life overnight, it is a process and a long one at that, and everyone that accepts the Living Word of Elohim as their Lord and Saviour, **WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE SAME PROCESS**

These three basic things tell us how we are to worship Elohim and Him alone, how we are to live our lives in purity and self control, how and what we are to eat, because we now know that Elohim has created us and because He loves us, He tells us what is good to put in our bodies and what is **NOT**. Not specifically mentioned but understood in the text is the observance of the Sabbath.

These new believers are told that **IF** they want to learn more about Elohim, the Creator of **ALL** things, that loves you, and wants you to live with Him for eternity, then come and listen to the Words and Commandments of YHVH including the importance of dedicating the seventh day, the Sabbath to worship YHVH Elohim.

Now James sends out chosen men to deliver this message of the basic requirements of the ways of Elohim and how one can grow in the knowledge of Elohim by coming every Sabbath to the synagogue to receive instructions in the Word of Elohim.

It says that the people rejoiced at the news, and so should we, we should rejoice that we serve such a gracious loving Elohim who has so much patience and mercy with us to allow us time to learn to walk in His ways, time to learn about His Righteous ways at every Sabbath celebration held every week on the last day of the week. This therefore stresses the importance of attending the Sabbath services in a believers development in order that he come to the full knowledge of Elohim's **TRUTH**, His Torah of Life (*Psalm 119:142*) in order that He can eventually experience the **FREEDOM** that the Torah affords us, for the Scripture emphatically states that the **TRUTH**, YHVH's inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions His Torah of Life **WILL SET US FREE**. Furthermore it implies that **IF** a person doesn't come on Sabbath, **THEN that person will NOT learn** the inerrant and everlasting teaching and instructions of YHVH, His Torah of Life and that person will indeed perish because of it.

It is very important that we understand the importance of the message here about the Sabbath. It seems to say or at least imply that **IF you don't KEEP Sabbath IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE for you to LEARN the fulness of Elohim's teaching and instructions, which gives you Life and without Life THERE IS ONLY DEATH.**

Some might think that I am over emphasizing the importance of the Sabbath based solely on the mention that the Torah of Moses **IS** taught every Sabbath, **BUT** I don't think so, because observance to the Torah is emphasized throughout Scripture..

From the very beginning of Scripture Elohim has emphasized the importance of His Sabbath, as the first of His appointed times for us to meet with Him on that very special day, the day that the Creator of the universe has hallowed and set apart to meet with us; and said that **IT IS** a sign between Him and us that we are in covenant with Him. Therefore based on the importance that Elohim has placed on His Sabbath, I believe that the mention of Sabbath here in *Acts 15* is extremely important.

Now we switch gears, and we have just seen how devoted the Apostles were in carrying out Elohim's will and you would think that after experiencing the presence of Elohim as they did that everything from then on would be great and fantastic, but this **IS NOT** the case.

There arose an argument between Paul and Barnabas about the suitability of John, whose surname was Mark. Paul did **NOT** want to bring him along and Barnabas did. This created a rift between Paul and Barnabas and they went their separate ways with new partners.

Elohim has **NOT** hidden anything in His Word about the humanity of His people. He shows **ALL** their successes and their failures and this is an example of a failure. Lack of communication and lack of forgiveness. What is the purpose of letting us know that there was disagreement among the brother believers. It is so that we will learn how to deal with it when it happens. Although we are **NOT** told here what happened, later on we are told that the two of them reconciled their differences and forgave each other.

Arguments are inevitable **BUT** how we resolve them is a measure of our faith and trust in YHVH, and that **IS** the message of this short story of what happened between Paul and Barnabas. It would be better if these disagreements never happened, but since they do, and Elohim IS aware that they will happen, He has given us instructions on how we are to handle them. Thank Elohim that we serve such a loving caring compassionate Creator that knows us so well. Amein.

*Studying and keeping Torah together as a community.*

*Have a great Elohim blessed week and may Yahweh bless your every thought,  
and your every deed. Until we meet again, שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, Shalom Aleykem. Amein*