



Controversy Comes to Antioch

Acts 15:1-41

The Issue

- 15:1-5 And certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.”
 - Rapid growth of Gentiles added to church
 - Men from Judea demand keeping law
 - Decision to send men to Jerusalem
 - Pharisees in church make same demands

Discussing the Issue

- 15:6-21 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter... (much disputing)
 - Peter speaks first (God gave approval to Gentiles)
 - Barnabas and Paul (God's work shown through them)
 - The judgment of James
 - Evidence of scripture confirms this experience
 - The prophets foretold inclusion of the Gentiles
 - Not trouble Gentiles, but write letter to clarify

The Letter to the Gentiles

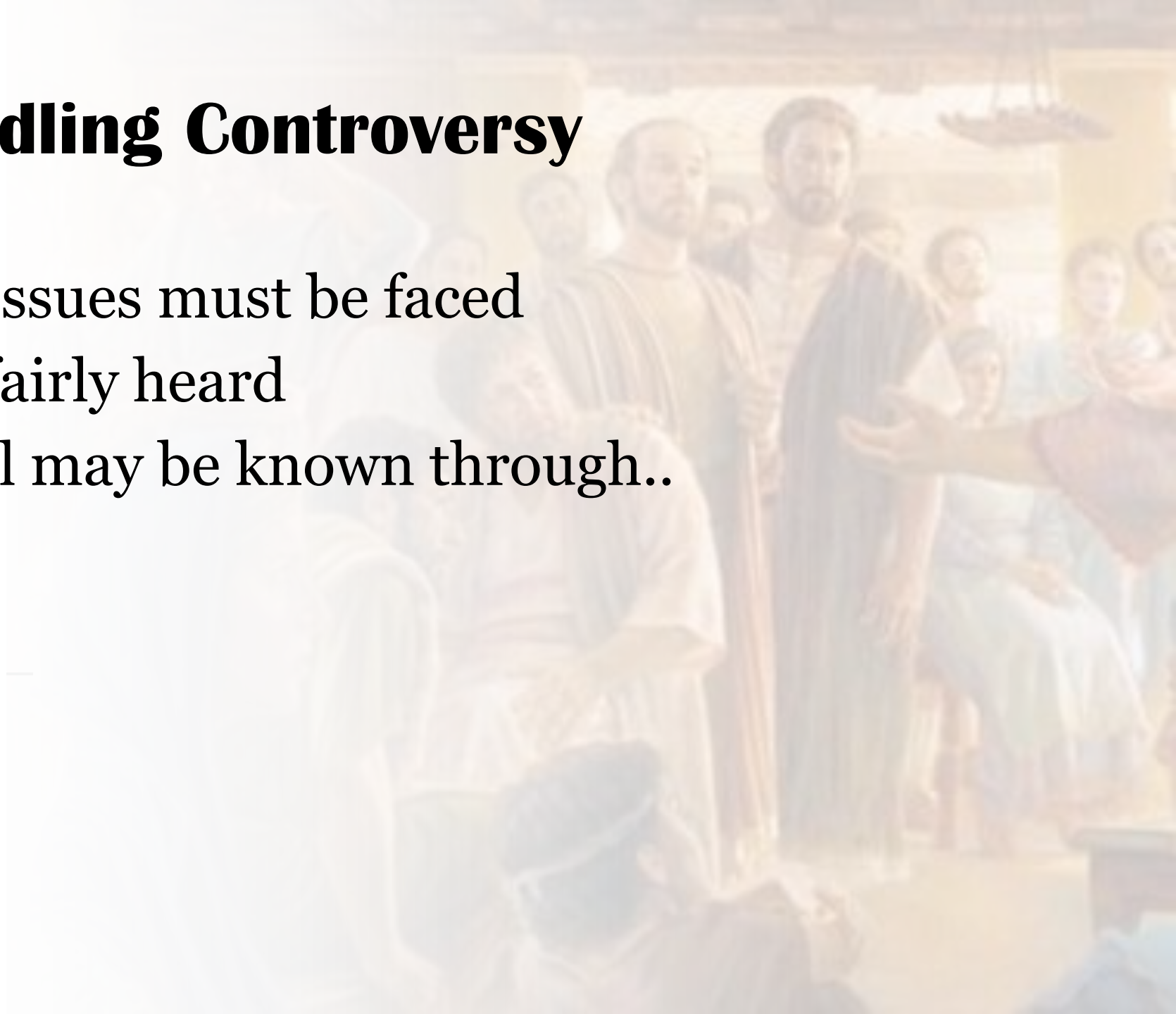
- 15:22-35 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch ..They wrote this *letter* by them:
 - The letter is clear and direct, not offensive
 - Distance themselves from the Judaizers
 - Send representatives in person to verify writing
 - Stress unity (unanimous decision)
 - The letter is well received

The Split between Paul and Barnabas

- Acts 15:36-41 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; ⁴⁰ but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God.
 - Difference of opinion.. Neither willing to compromise
 - As close as they had been, this separation was painful
 - God used this to form two teams to continue His work

Lessons for Handling Controversy

- Serious doctrinal issues must be faced
- All sides must be fairly heard
- God's revealed will may be known through..
 - Scripture
 - Experience
 - Reasoning
 - Love





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