

Acts Class 9 Notes

Acts Chapter and verse:

12.2 Martyrdom of St. James the Greater.

12.5 A Biblical example of intercessory prayer

12.25 Saul and Barnabas "fulfilled their ministry," lit "plirosantes tin diakonian," they fulfilled their diakonate or ministry (they were sent out as Apostles in 13.2).

13.1 Certain prophets and teachers. The word "teacher" in Patristics applies first and most strictly to the Bishop.

13.2 Literally, they were "offering liturgy unto the Lord and fasting." The Holy Spirit made known the time to "separate" Sts. Paul and Barnabas for episcopal Apostleship. The Spirit, nevertheless, did not Act above the Church, but through it, since it is the Body of Christ our God. Therefore, He commands them to separate them through the laying on of hands, that is, through ordination. This is one example for the basis of practicing *economia* with regard to the canonical age for priests given by St. Innocent of Rome. For St. Paul was a young man, perhaps 23 or 24 when ordained in this passage. St. John the Apostle was probably younger than this when given Apostleship. Likewise, St. Athanasius was raised to the Episcopal Throne of Alexandria when 25 yrs of age, etc. etc. Thus, the canon that gave the required age of 30 was given the status of conveying the normal age (as 11 of the 12; as most of the 70, etc.), but not intended upon giving an absolute age, or else our Lord Himself, the Apostles, and several Saints would have been in violation of it, which is nonsense since the Lord Jesus is the Lord of Canons, and indeed is the true canon by His example of ordaining the Apostles. In other words, by the Lord's example, the canon is normally to ordain those to the priesthood who are 30, but to ordain some exceptional men prior to this age.

13.49 The word of God was published throughout the region, a necessary aspect of true evangelism.

13.51 They shook the dust from off their feet to those who did not receive them, even the Jews to whom it was first preached, as Christ also commanded them.

14.23 They ordained presbyters in every church.

15.5 Some among the Apostles and elders were Pharisees. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimethea were Pharisees, and certain others who believed in Christ, but seemed to cling to old notions rather than the fulfilled type. They are corrected here.

15.9 Peter takes charge, stating that in Christ there is no longer any difference between those of other descents in Christ, which according to 15.7 is by God's own choice.

15.10 Peter suggests that among matters of practical asceticism, the leadership of the Church ought not tempt God by putting yokes or burdens too hard to bear upon the necks of the believers.

15.13 St. James the Just, the brother of the Lord, 'answers' with the decision of the council. St. James is the President of the Church in Jerusalem. According to tradition, this episcopal see was given the highest honor from the beginning. The only one who had greater authority were those able to bestow this honor: St. Peter in accordance with the rest of the Twelve.

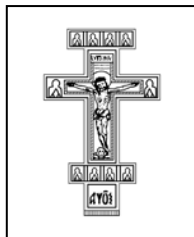
15.19 St. James gives the sentence of the council, being the president of the Jerusalem Church. As St. Clement of Alexandria states, "We should select and possess what is useful out of all cultures." Only doctrinal and moral things are necessary (cf. vs. 28), the rest, in this case, are undue customary "burdens."

15.24ff The Apostolic messenger sometimes might add more burden than the Apostolic message had entailed. The Apostles never ordered that the Gentiles needed to follow the Law of Moses after those things which are fulfilled types. And so they are to disregard that message of the messenger in favor of the Apostolic synodical letter.

15.28 "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us" to lay upon the people no greater burden than the necessary things of the law and continue in the same form in Christ, which are the matters of morality (.29). Vladimir Lossky says of this passage, "Although the councils bear witness to tradition by their binding and objective decisions, the truth itself which they declare is never subjected to canonical forms. Tradition, in fact, has a pneumatological character: it is the life of the Church in the Holy Spirit" (Myst. Theol. 188).

15.30 The synodical letter is read to the assembled people, even as it is done today.

17.26 "He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on the face of the earth..." We are all descendants of Adam and have the same ancestral blood from the beginning. But greater than this: we all have the same spiritual blood of Christ our God flowing through our veins through the Holy Communion of the Orthodox Church, to which all men are called, and to which we must help draw them. For we are members of the Apostolic Church, those same Apostles through whom "the whole world is drawn into Thy net O lover of man glory to Thee." (Pentecost Troparion).



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