

Solid Rock or Stumbling Stone?
Matthew 16:13-23

Review:

1. The Church is built on the rock of Peter's faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God
2. Unfaithful Christians can cause people to stumble if we focus on the things of this world
3. The faithful Church participates in Jesus' judgment and discipline, as we accurately reflect and apply God's standards to one another and to the world
4. The faithful Church participates in Jesus' conquest of death and Hell, as we embody His sacrifice for the salvation of the nations

Reflect:

1. Is the way you are living giving others a bad impression of what it means to be a Christian? What changes do you need to make to keep from being a stumbling stone for unbelievers?

Go further: Read Acts 15:1-22

1. What are the Judean believers teaching in verse 1?
2. Who disagreed with the Judean believers?
3. How did the people of Antioch decide to settle the dispute?
4. According to verse 4, to whom did Paul and Barnabas report?
5. What did the believers who were Pharisees say was necessary for all Christians to do?
6. According to verse 6, who gathered to make a decision about this dispute?
7. In verse 8, how did Peter say God had blessed the Gentiles?
8. In verse 9, how did Peter say God purifies the hearts of men?
9. In verse 10, what does Peter remind the assembly that none of them have been able to do?
10. In verse 11, how does Peter insist that people are saved?
11. What did Paul and Barnabas describe for the assembly in verse 12?
12. After the debate was over, who does verse 13 say rose to speak?
13. How does James summarize Peter's report in verse 14?
14. Who does James say in verse 15 agrees with Peter?
15. In verses 16 and 17, James quotes from Amos 9:11-12. What does God promise He will rebuild?
16. What is the reason that God says in verse 17 that He will restore the dynasty of David?
17. In verse 18, what does James say that God knows?
18. What four things does James suggest will be sufficient for the Gentiles to stay away from?
19. What does James say about the Law of Moses in verse 21?
20. Who does verse 22 say made the decision about what to write to the Gentiles?
21. Who did the assembly send back to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas? Why was this a good idea?

Summary and Application:

1. Why would requiring that Gentile believers follow all the ceremonial Law of Moses have been a stumbling block to them? What sorts of incorrect teaching have you found to be a discouragement to your own faith?
2. Given the way the early church made decisions, who do you think should be responsible for making decisions in the church today?
3. What kinds of evidence did the Acts 15 assembly use to determine God's will for the Gentile believers? How can we seek truth from the same sources today?