

Acts 15 | The Nations & the Kingdom

Date: July 13, 2025

Text: Acts 14:1-18

A. TEXT

(Acts 15:13, CSB)

13 After they stopped speaking, **James responded**, “Brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has reported how God first [BHT, “**came to the aid** of the Gentiles] to take **from the Gentiles a people for his name**. 15 And the words of **the prophets agree** with this, as it is written: 16 After these things **I will return** and [BHT, “**restore the mighty kingdom of David, which is in shambles**”] **I will rebuild its ruins and set it up again**, 17 so that the rest of humanity may seek the Lord—**even all the Gentiles who are called by my name**...

B. INTRO

(Acts 14:27, CSB)

27...they reported everything God had done with them and that he had **opened the door of faith to the Gentiles**.

Gentiles will inherit eternal life, not by becoming Jewish, but as gentiles, just as the prophets foretold.

C. THE ARGUMENT IN ANTIOCH

15 Some men came down **from Judea** and began to teach the brothers, “Unless you are **circumcised according to the custom prescribed by Moses, you cannot be saved.**”

- 1) They’re aiming to be obedient to God.
- 2) They want the Gentiles to be saved from the wrath to come!

Paul and Barnabus know that *gentiles will inherit eternal life AS GENTILES*, so they push back.

2 After Paul and Barnabas had engaged them in **serious argument and debate**, Paul and Barnabas and some others were appointed to go **up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem** about this issue.

(Dt 17:8, CSB)

8 “If a case is too difficult for you...then go up to **the place the LORD your God chooses...**

D. GATHERING SUPPORT

3 When they had been sent on their way by the church[assembly], they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria,[BHT, “telling people the whole story of **how the gentiles had turned to God**”] , and they brought **great joy** to all the brothers and sisters.

4 When they arrived at Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the [assembly] , the apostles, and the elders, and they **reported all that God had done with them.**

E. THE ARGUMENT IN JERUSALEM

5 But some of the **believers** (!) **who belonged to the party of the Pharisees** stood up and said, **“It is necessary to circumcise them and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”** 6 The apostles and the elders **gathered to consider** this matter.

Jesus didn’t clarify these things for them. He didn’t leave a gentile discipleship manual. **But he did leave the Holy Spirit and promised that the Spirit would lead them into truth.**

F. PETER TESTIFIES ABOUT THE SPIRIT

7 After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you are aware that in the early days God made a choice among you, that **by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the gospel message and believe.**

“You guys remember Acts 10?”

8 And God, who knows the heart, **bore witness** to them by **giving them the Holy Spirit** (the downpayment, the deposit, the token of the age to come), **just as he also did to us.**

The Spirit falling on us testifies and bears witness to us that, should we continue in the grace of God, we will be raised from the dead on the last day to inherit eternal life.

“And God testified to the gentiles in the same way.”

- Without circumcision.
- Without eating kosher.
- Without sabbath observance
- Without becoming Jewish, God gave them the Spirit.

9 He made ***no distinction*** between us and them , ***cleansing their hearts by faith.***

God is saving Jews as Jews and gentiles as gentiles and ***the gift of the Spirit is the proof.***

10 Now then, why are you (Pharisaic believers) testing God by ***putting a yoke*** on the disciples' necks that ***neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear?***

11 On the contrary, we believe that ***we*** (Jews) ***are saved*** (from the wrath to come) through the grace of the Lord Jesus ***in the same way they*** (gentiles) ***are.***

12 The whole assembly became silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul describe ***all the signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.***

G. JAMES' CONCLUSION: THIS IS WHAT AMOS SAID

13 After they stopped speaking, ***James responded,***

“Brothers, listen to me. 14 Simeon has reported how God first [BHT, “***came to the aid*** of the Gentiles] to take ***from the Gentiles a people for his name.***

15 And the words of ***the prophets agree*** with this, as it is written:

16 After these things (which in Amos, “these things” is a lot of judgement. The suffering before glory, the tribulation before redemption, the birth pains before the birth) ***I*** (the God of Israel) ***will return*** and

What will the Lord do when He returns?

[BHT, “**restore the mighty kingdom of David, which is in shambles**”] **I will rebuild its ruins and set it up again,**

And...

13 the plowman will overtake the reaper...The mountains will drip with sweet wine, and all the hills will flow with it. 14 **I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel.,** They will rebuild and occupy ruined cities, plant vineyards and drink their wine, make gardens and eat their produce. 15 **I will plant them on their land, and they will never again be uprooted from the land I have given them**

This is Acts 1, right?

17 **so that the rest of humanity** may seek the Lord—**even all the Gentiles who are called by my name....**

H. ISRAEL & THE NATIONS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

(Psalm 102:13-22, CSB)

13 [God] will rise up and have **compassion on Zion,**.... 15 Then **the nations** will fear the name of the LORD, and **all the kings of the earth** your glory, 16 for **the LORD will rebuild Zion;** he will **appear in his glory**...21 so that they [Israel] might declare the name of the LORD **in Zion** and his praise **in Jerusalem** 22 when **peoples and kingdoms** are **assembled to serve the LORD.**

(Is. 2:2, CSB)

In the last days **the mountain of the LORD's house** (the temple in Jerusalem, restored by God's Messiah) will be established... **All nations** (the gentiles) will stream to it...

(Is. 11:1-2, 10, CSB)

10 On that day the root of Jesse (the Son of David, who we find out later is Jesus) will stand as **a banner for** (not just Israel, but) **the peoples. The nations** will look to him for

guidance, and **his resting place** (a restored, glorified, beautified, Jerusalem) will be glorious

(Is. 60:1-3, 14, CSB)

2...the LORD will shine over you, and his glory will appear over you. 3 **Nations will come** to your light, and **kings** to your shining brightness...14 The sons of your oppressors (gentile nations) will come and bow down to you; all who reviled you will fall facedown at your feet. They will call you **the City of the LORD, Zion of the Holy One of Israel.**

The prophets looked ahead to the day when the gentiles, the nations, the kings and their peoples, would make their pilgrimage to Zion to worship Israel's Messiah.

(Matthew 8:11, CSB)

11 I tell you that many will come **from east and west** (the gentiles) to share the banquet (the Isaiah 25 banquet of the resurrection with well aged wine and fatty meats) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob **in the kingdom of heaven.**

So James just comes to the same conclusion Peter came to **Acts 10** and Paul came to In **Acts 11-14.**

- The Kingdom will be restored to Israel.
- Jews will inherit eternal life as Jews by faith.
- And gentiles will inherit eternal life as gentiles by faith.

The wrinkle is that those eschatological gentiles, those gentiles of the future, that Amos, Isaiah, and Jesus spoke about, ***are showing up early.***

James essentially says:

“God is taking a people for his name from among the gentiles now that will approach Him then, and we’re looking at ‘em.”

I. APPLICATION

1) BECOME AN ESCHATOLOGICAL GENTILE

2) MAKE SOME ESCHATOLOGICAL GENTILES (& JEWS)

3) READ THE PROPHETS