

New Mount Moriah AMEC
Bible Study, 2 June 2026
Acts 15: 6-21NKJV

Introduction: In last week's lesson, we discussed the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us. Tonight, we will see that same Holy Spirit showing up as evidence in Peter's presentation to the Council that God had already accepted the Gentiles. Please note Peter's testimony on the Gentiles receiving the Holy Spirit and James statement on God's knowledge from eternity past

Lesson Outline:

- Vs. 6-9 **By Faith**
Vs. 10-11 **God Has Spoken**
Vs. 12-17 **They Belong to God**
Vs. 18-21 **All Knowing**

Lesson Review:

- Vs. 6-9 **By Faith:** *Apostles*, meaning sent ones, were commissioned by Jesus. *Elders* were the overseers of the church. **Much dispute** (syzetesis) to seek/examine together. Intense earnest inquiry, not arguing. Keep in mind the means of salvation are being debated, and their decision continues to impact on the church today.

Scripture reference: Ephesians 2:8-9

Genesis 15:6

- “That by my mouth the Gentiles (Acts 10: 44-48) should hear the word of the gospel and believe.” **To believe:** to trust, rely upon, or place confidence in. “ **Knows the heart.**” God knows our motives, intentions, thoughts, desires, and our faith. 1 Samuel 16:7d reads, “For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”
- “**Purifying their hearts by faith.**” katharizō, the same word used for cleansing lepers, for ritual purification under the law. It indicates a complete, decisive act, not an ongoing process. God already did it. The argument is settled.

Life Application: What religious 'yokes' do we sometimes place on people today that God never required?

- Vs. 10-11 **God Has Spoken:** **Test** (peirazete) to put to the challenge. Do we put God to the challenge when we place the yoke of religion on folks **to be saved or attend church? As stated by Peter, yokes that we could not bear! Believe:** To trust, rely upon, or place confidence in. **Saved** (sothenai) to rescue, deliver, preserve.

Supporting Scripture: Romans 3:24-25

Vs. 12-17

They Belong to God: *The MacArthur Study Bible* states, "Wonders describe the amazement people experience when witnessing supernatural works." Signs point to the power of God behind miracles. Miracles have no value unless they point to God and His truth. **Visited** (episkeptomai), God purposefully turning his attention to a people. **A people** (Laos), a people belonging to God (Israel), is now applied to the Gentiles. Agree (symphoneo) root of symphony. James says the prophets harmonized in agreement with what Peter reported.

Supporting Scripture: Amos 9: 11-12

- James is stating if Gentiles can be saved without being Jews in the Kingdom of God, there is no need for them to become proselytes in the Jewish faith.

Life Application: Does your understanding of salvation change by knowing that Gentile inclusion was part of God's plan from the beginning of creation?

Vs. 18-21

All Knowing: Known to God from eternity are all His works," is the foundation of James' argument: It was not an accident that the Gentiles were saved; it was all a part of God's plan from the beginning.

Trouble (parenochleo) further. James refuses to add unnecessary obstacles to Gentile believers. **Turning to God-** a decisive turning away from idols toward the living God.

Abstain (apecho): keep away from.

- James and the leaders of the Jerusalem church did not want the gentiles to revel in their freedom in church, which could become an obstacle to the Jews. They instructed them to turn from four practices by pagans.
 - Polluted Idols- Food offered to pagan gods and sold in temple butcher shops.
 - Sexual Immorality – Sexual sins
 - Things strangled and from blood- Leviticus 3:17 and 7:26
- Please note, these are not requirements for salvation; they were guidelines for the community of faith for united fellowship. They were the foundation for Jewish and Gentile believers worshipping and eating together without offending each other.

Life Application: Are there any church traditions that may be a barrier to someone coming to God?