

# Abounding Grace Christian Church

## The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 49

### I. Exposition of Chapter Fifteen (Continued).

A. Verse 12 – “Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles.” – It seems apparent that Peter’s speech got people’s attention and caused them to think. The “...multitude kept silent and listened...” as Paul and Barnabas follow Peter with testimonies of the miracles and wonders God had been doing through them amongst the Gentiles. Stanley Horton writes:

“By this they implied that the miracles showed God’s concern for winning these Gentiles to Christ and establishing them in the faith. As Paul later wrote to the Corinthians, he preached to them ‘with a demonstration of the Spirit’s [mighty, miracle working] power’ so their faith might not stand on men’s wisdom ‘but on God’s power’ (1 Cor. 2:4–5).”<sup>1</sup>

B. Verse 13 – “And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, ‘Men *and* brethren, listen to me:...” Now it is James’ turn to speak. This was James, the Lord’s brother (cf. Galatians 1:19). In other words, this was Jesus’ half-brother, the son of Joseph and Mary who, during Jesus’ ministry on earth, did not believe but later became not only a believer but the leader of the Jerusalem church. He also is the author of the Epistle of James. (cf. Matthew 13:55; John 7:5; Acts 1:14). NOTE: The Apostle James had already been killed (cf. Acts 12:1-2).

C. Verse 14 – “Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.” – “Simon” is referring to Peter which was his older Jewish name. Thomas Constable states: “Simeon’ was Peter’s older Jewish name. James’ use of it would have emphasized Peter’s Jewishness as well as implying affection for him. Peter had related the salvation experience of Cornelius, and James’ reference to ‘first’ was to that experience near the beginning of the church.”<sup>2</sup>

1. “...at the first visited the Gentiles...” – As pointed out above, this is referring to Peter’s ministry to Cornelius and his family. So, James is trying to emphasize, for one thing, that this outreach to the Gentiles is nothing new. The word “visited” means; “to care for or look after, with the implication of continuous responsibility”<sup>3</sup> The Word Study Dictionary adds: “To look upon with mercy, favor, regard.”<sup>4</sup>

2. “...to take out of them a people for His name.” – This was always a part of God’s plan. Notice what Dr. Bob Utley writes:

“This is the universal emphasis of the OT prophets (ex. Isa. 45:20–23; 49:6; 52:10). The people of God were always to include both Jews and Gentiles (cf. Gen. 3:15; 12:3; Exod. 9:16; Eph. 2:11–3:13). The phrase “for His name” may be an allusion to Jer. 13:11 and 32:20 or Isa. 63:12, 14.”<sup>5</sup>

“Assemble yourselves and come; Draw near together, You *who have* escaped from the nations. They have no knowledge, Who carry the wood of their carved image, And pray to a god *that* cannot save. Tell and bring forth *your case*; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? *Who* has told it from that time? *Have* not I, the LORD? And *there is* no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; *There is* none besides Me. ‘Look to Me, and be saved, All you ends of the earth! For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.’”  
Isaiah 45:20-23

D. Verses 15-17 – James appeals to the Old Testament Scripture, Amos 9:11-12 to make his case.

1. Verse 15 – “And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:...” – It seems possible that this is only a portion of what James actually spoke of because he uses “prophets” in the plural. Luke, being inspired by the Holy Spirit includes the quote from Amos.

<sup>1</sup>Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 266.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Acts* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2019), 306.

<sup>3</sup>Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 462.

<sup>4</sup>Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*. (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)

<sup>5</sup>Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 184.

**“Let the reader note that it was not Peter’s vision of ministry to the Gentiles, Barnabas’ and Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles, but the Old Testament Scriptures became the final court of appeal to the Council convened at Jerusalem.”<sup>6</sup>**

**2. Verse 16 – “After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up;”**

- a. James states that the Gentiles coming to Christ was a fulfillment of God promising to **“return”** and **“rebuild”** the **“Tabernacle of David”** which was fallen down and in ruins.
- b. This building of the Tabernacle of David is to be understood in a **spiritual sense** as opposed to a **literal sense**.
- c. As far as I understand from the Word of God, there is only **ONE THING** God is interested in building under this New Covenant. That one thing is the **CHURCH!!**

**“...I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18**

- d. This tells us that the LITERAL Tabernacle of David, found in the Old Testament was a **“picture”, “illustration”, “shadow” or “type”** of the Church of the New Testament.
- e. **A look at David’s Tabernacle** - God placed upon David’s heart to bring the **“Ark of the Covenant”** back to Jerusalem. (**I Chronicles 13:1-3; I Chronicles, chapters 15 and 16**). Notice in **I Chronicles 15:1** the Bible says;

**“David built houses for himself in the City of David; (this was Zion; I Chronicles 11:5-7) and he prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched a tent for it.” (parenthesis mine).**

**The “tent” David pitched for the Ark of the Covenant was also referred to as the Tabernacle of David.** The **“Ark of the Covenant”** was a rectangular chest (3 ¾ ft long, 2 ¼ ft. wide and 2 ¼ ft. high) made out of wood and overlaid with gold. On top of the ark was a lid which was called the **“mercy seat”**. Gazing toward each other and down upon the mercy seat were two **cheribums** (angels) made out of gold.

- f. **God told the children of Israel that He would meet with them and commune with them from above the mercy seat (Exodus 25:17,21-22.)** Other Scriptures show us that the **Mercy Seat** between the golden cherubim was actually the **place of where God’s presence was.** **“I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat” - Leviticus 16:2**

**“The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubim.”**  
**I Samuel 4:4**

**“The Lord reigns; let the people tremble: He sits between the cherubim; let the earth be moved.”**  
**Psalms 99:1**

- g. The Ark of the Covenant represented:
  1. The Throne of God on the earth.
  2. The Presence of God amongst His people.
  3. The Glory of God revealed.<sup>7</sup>
- h. **The Tabernacle of David is a picture of the Church and the Ark of the Covenant is a picture of the Presence of the Godhead dwelling IN and AMONGST His Church.**
- i. In the New Testament, the Church is called the temple of the Living God and the dwelling place of God. **I Timothy 3:15; I Corinthians 3:16; II Corinthians 6:16.**
- j. In **Romans 3:25**, Jesus is called the **“propitiation”** for our sins by His blood. The word **“propitiation”** literally means; **“mercy seat”**.<sup>8</sup> **Jesus Christ is our Seat of Mercy!!**

**3. Verse 17 – “So that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord, even all the Gentiles who are called by My name, says the Lord who does all these things.” – James continues quoting from Amos 9:12 (Septuagint).**

<sup>6</sup>Kevin J. Conner, *The Tabernacle of David* (Portland, OR: Bible Temple-Conner Publications, 1976), 27.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 85.

<sup>8</sup>Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, (AMG Publishers; Revised edition, 1993)