

What Revival Looks Like  
How Revival Acts  
Acts 15:12-21

**FIRED UP**



Acts 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

# I. THE ORGANIZATION

## II. THE OPERATION

### III. THE OPERATIVES: THE FOUNDING EMPHASIS – SIMON,

### IV. THE OPERATIVES: THE FORWARDING EMPHASIS – STEPHEN,

### V. THE OPERATIVES: THE FOUNDATIONAL EMPHASIS –

### SAUL/PAUL THE PIONEER, 13:1-21:26

#### A. The First Missionary Journey: Exploration, 13:1-15:35

##### 1. The Commencement of the Journey, 13:1-3

##### 2. The Complications of the Journey, 13:4-14:20

##### 3. The Completion of the Journey, 14:21-15:35

###### a. The Furlough, 14:21-28

###### b. The Furor, 15:1-6

###### (1) The False Doctrine, 15:1

###### (2) The Furious Debate, 15:2a

###### (3) The Fair Decision, 15:2b

###### (4) The Faithful Delegates, 15:3

###### (5) The Final Destination, 15:4

###### (6) The Further Dissension, 15:5

###### (7) The Formal Discussion, 15:6

c. The Forum, 15:7-21

(1) The Realist Speaks with the Voice of the Highest Authority. Peter Deals with the Basic Issue. His Emphasis: The Lord's Will, 15:7-11

(a) How God Enlisted Him for a Very Great Task, 15:7

(b) How God Enlightened Him to a Very Great Truth, 15:8-11

i. God Loves All People, 15:8-9

ii. God Loathes All Pretense, 15:10-11

- The Undeniable Sign, 15:8
- The Undeniable Salvation, 15:9

- Peter's Acute Warning, 15:10a "Now therefore **why tempt ye God...**"
- The debate had greater ramifications than simple pride – **tempting God!**

Prov. 13:10 **Only by pride cometh contention:** but with the well advised *is* wisdom.

- Peter's Acquired Wisdom, 15:10b
- Peter's Actual Words, 15:11

As we begin verse 12, the Apostle Peter has finished speaking and two more will follow: Barnabas and Paul. Following them will be James, the half-brother of Jesus. The issue is regarding the role of the Gentiles in relation to the Mosaic Law.

(2) The Revivalists Speak with the Voice of Holy Audacity. Paul and Barnabas Deal with the Broader Issue. Their Emphasis: The Lost World, 15:12

Acts 15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

(3) The Religionist Speaks with the Voice of Human Austerity. James Deals with the Burning Issue. His Emphasis: The Living Word, 15:13-21

(a) He Upholds His Brothers, 15:13-14

i. The Tact He Displayed, 15:13

Acts 15:13 And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

Acts 12:17 But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, **Go shew these things unto James,** and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

Gal. 1:19 But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Gal. 2:9 And when **James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars**, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we [should go] unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. ...

12 For before that certain **came from James**, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

ii. The Fact He Discerned, 15:14

Acts 15:14 Simeon hath declared **how God** at the first did visit the Gentiles, **to take out of them a people for his name.**



## (b) He Upholds His Bible, 15:15-18

### i. He Speaks of the Word of God, 15:15-17

- As It Relates Implicitly to the Hebrews – One of God's Millennial Promises, 15:15-16

Acts 15:15 And to this agree **the words of the prophets**; as it is written,

16 **After this** I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

Amos 9:11 In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old:

12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this.

A close examination of this passage reveals that there is a progression of thought leading to James' conclusion:

- *First*, God visits the Gentiles, taking from them a people for His name.
- *Second*, Christ will return—*after* the outcalling of the people for His name.
- *Third*, as a result of the coming of the Lord, the tabernacle of David will be built again;
- *Fourth*, the residue of men will seek the Lord; that is, all the Gentiles will be brought to a knowledge of the Lord after the kingdom is established.

Isa. 2:2 And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and **all nations shall flow unto it.**

Isa. 11:10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; **to it shall the Gentiles seek:** and his rest shall be glorious.

Isa. 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and **all flesh shall see *it* together:** for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken *it*.

Isa. 66:23 And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, **shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.**

There have been three main interpretations of James' use of Amos' prophecy:

- First, some interpreters believe James meant that the inclusion of Gentiles in the church age fulfilled God's promise through Amos.
- Second, some interpreters believe James meant that God would include Gentiles when He fulfilled this promise to Israel in the future.
- A third view is that James meant that the present inclusion of Gentiles in the church age is consistent with God's promise to Israel through Amos.

- As It Relates Impartially to the Heathen – One of God's Magnanimous Promises, 15:17

Acts 15:17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

ii. He Speaks of the Wisdom of God, 15:18

Acts 15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

New International Version  
things known from long ago.

English Standard Version  
known from of old.'

New American Standard Bible  
SAYS THE LORD, WHO MAKES THESE THINGS KNOWN  
FROM LONG AGO.

Holman Christian Standard Bible  
known from long ago.

King James Bible  
Known unto God are all **his works** from the beginning of the  
world.

<http://biblehub.com/acts/15-18.htm>

Isa. 40:21 Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

Some think that the thought that the church age was the divinely intended replacement for the temple is probably to be seen in 15:16-18:

- The typical non-dispensational understanding of this text is that James was saying that the messianic kingdom had come, and that Amos' prediction was completely fulfilled.
- Progressive dispensationalists believe he meant that the first stage of the messianic kingdom had come, and that Amos' prediction was partially fulfilled.

- Normative dispensationalists view the messianic kingdom as entirely future. They believe Amos was predicting the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan, and that James was saying that the present situation was in harmony with God's purpose. Thus the Amos prediction has yet to be fulfilled.
- Deciding between these options depends first on whether or not one believes the church replaces Israel in God's plan.
- If it does, one will side with non-dispensationalists here.
- If one believes that the church and Israel are distinct in the purpose of God, then one has to decide if there is better evidence that Jesus has begun to rule over David's kingdom now (progressive dispensationalism), or not yet (normative dispensationalism).
- I believe the evidence points to the fact that David's kingdom is an earthly kingdom, and that the Lord Jesus Christ will begin reigning over it when He returns to earth at His Second Coming.



## (c) He Upholds His Beliefs, 15:19-21

### i. A Precautionary Statement, 15:19-20

- Jewish Believers Must Abstain from Tampering with the Freedom of Gentile Believers, 15:19

Acts 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, **that we trouble not them**, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

Original Word: παρενοχλέω

Transliteration: parenochleó

Definition: I trouble, cause disturbance to, annoy, harass.

*parenoxléō* (from *pará*, "from close beside" and *enoxleō*, "to disturb") – properly, to *disturb*, "hitting *close* to home." Used only in Acts 15:19

<http://biblehub.com/greek/3926.htm>

- Gentile Believers Must Abstain from Tampering with the Feelings of the Jewish Believers, 15:20

Acts 15:20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

- Such abstaining does not bring nor retain salvation, but emphasizes conduct conducive to an effective testimony.



To help Gentile converts not put a stumbling block in the path of Jews, James recommended that Christian teachers encourage their disciples to avoid ("abstain from") four things:

- First, the "things" (food, etc.) associated with "idols," or idolatry (cf. 1 Cor. 10:14-22);
- Second, "fornication" (Gr. *porneias*, all kinds of sexual aberrations).
- Third, avoid eating "strangled" animals (those with the blood not drained out);
- Fourth, "blood" (the essence of life;).

Lev. 17:11 For **the life of the flesh *is* in the blood**: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.

12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, **No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood.**

ii. A Pragmatic Statement, 15:21

Acts 15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

## Conclusion

Acts 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which **if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well**. Fare ye well.

1 Cor. 8:6 But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him.

7 Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and **their conscience being weak is defiled**.

8 But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.

9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.

10 For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols;

11 And through thy knowledge shall **the weak brother perish**, for whom Christ died?

12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and **wound their weak conscience**, ye **sin against Christ**.

13 Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.