



## Decade of Availability The Spirit Guides the Church

The Holy Spirit guides the Church through a crisis.

### A. The Disagreement vv. 1-5

**1. Jew and Gentile:** Ten years after Pentecost the Church was still mostly Jewish. Then the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter that the Gospel was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

**2. Law or Grace?** Some of the former Pharisees who were now believers insisted that to be 'saved' the Gentiles had to be circumcised and follow the law.

### B. The Discussion vv. 6-12

**1. Much disputing:** v. 6 The Greek word means to 'examine' 'debate' 'discuss' — this was done in the Yeshiva style making truth statements from the Torah, the Prophets or experience.

**2. Peter's experience:** vv. 7-11 Peter starts with God's choosing and ends with God's grace. The **Holy Spirit** is central to Peter's account. His speech was so captivating that the entire group fell silent

**3. Barnabas and Paul's experience:** v. 12 Luke does not go into what was shared except to say that Paul and Barnabas detailed the signs and wonders done in and through them by the power of the Spirit while among the Gentiles.

-God striking a magician blind 13:8-11

-Man healed in Lystra 14:8-10

-Paul delivered from stoning 14:19-20

### C. The Declaration vv. 13-21

**1. Who was this James?** This was the brother of Jesus who at first doubted that He was the Messiah.

**2. The core argument:** James quotes the Septuagint version of Amos 9:11-12 (vv. 16-17) Here is the KJV based on the Hebrew Masoretic text:

*"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: That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, Which are called by my name, Saith the LORD..."*

**3. The Holy Spirit-led decision:** vv. 19-21; 28

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

This was a Spirit inspired decision that draws from the Torah (Leviticus 17-18) regarding the 'stranger' [Gentile] which according to vs. 21 would be well known to observant Jews.

The decision also appealed to Gentiles to refrain from Pagan practices that both offended the Jew and God.

### Acts 15:1-21 (KJV)

**1** And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

**2** When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. **3** And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. **4** And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. **5** But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.

**6** And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. **7** And when there had been much disputing, **Peter rose up,** and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

**8** And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the **Holy Ghost,** even as he did unto us; **9** And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. **10** Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? **11** But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

**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.

