

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

2Timothy 2:15

Store In My Heart

Acts 1:7-8

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

In Luke's second letter to Theopolis giving the history of Jesus and His Church, he elaborates on the ascension of Jesus before chronicling the beginning of Christ's Church in the Acts of The Apostles.

The verses above tell us how this story will unfold. Beginning with the Pentecost sermon in Jerusalem the Word was spread to the ends of the earth by the Apostles and those who believed on Jesus at their teaching. In this book we read what Jesus expects of those who believe and how to work together to accomplish the work He has given us.



Establishing Authority - 1

Max Dawson

Last week we saw a turning point in understanding for the church leaders in Jerusalem. They came to the conclusion that Gentiles were not to be held to the standards of the law of Moses (**Acts 15:1-35**). The occasion that prompted the discussion at Jerusalem was a claim that Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the customs of the law of Moses (**Acts 15:5**).

This claim was being pushed by former Pharisees who had become believers in Christ. Some of these teachers had traveled as far as Antioch insisting that Gentiles must be circumcised in order to be saved (**Acts 15:1**). This false teaching threatened to overthrow the very gospel that Paul and the other apostles were commissioned by Jesus to preach.

In **Acts 15:6** the apostles and elders at Jerusalem came together to discuss the matter. The record shows that there was much disputing over this issue. Finally, Peter stood up and reminded them that God had chosen him to go to the house of Cornelius (**Acts 10**) and preach the gospel to Gentiles. Peter argued that since God "acknowledged them" by giving the Gentiles the Holy Spirit, that meant that He made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Peter further argued from this example that since God accepted Cornelius without circumcision, that the only logical conclusion was that God did not require circumcision of Gentile converts. This example as well as the implication in this case proves Gentile believers are accepted as Gentiles without being converted to Judaism (**Acts 15:6-11**).

Next, Paul and Barnabas spoke of the many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles

(Acts 15:12). They spoke of the preaching and miracles that took place on their recently completed missionary journey. The miracles confirmed the message they preached (see **Mark 16:20**). It was a message that did not require circumcision of the Gentiles who believed! The miracles confirmed it to be so. If that was true in this case, then the implication is that it would be true in all such cases!

Finally, James brings the matter to its conclusion: He quotes a passage of Scripture that supports what Peter said (in **Acts 15:10**). He quoted **Amos 9:11-12**. That text said that when the tabernacle of David (that had fallen down) was raised up again that Gentiles would call upon the name of the Lord. Indeed, the house of David had been raised up, with Jesus sitting on David's throne as king. And now, Gentiles were part of that grand kingdom, just as Amos had said! The point is, the Gentiles were accepted as Gentiles without converting to Judaism, and without being circumcised. James used a direct statement of God from the Old Testament Scripture to make his point.

Thus, the Jerusalem church leaders concluded that Gentiles were accepted by God without keeping Moses law! Note, that no new revelation was given to bring them to this truth. Rather, the brethren were forced to come to their conclusions from the information they already had--from the two examples and their implications, and from the words of Amos.

In this chapter, we learn something of how God authorizes us to act today. We see the power of apostolic examples and what they imply and, of course, we see the power of direct statements of Scripture. More on this next week.

(This is part of a series on Acts Brother Dawson is writing in his Kingdom Leaders blog. I find it a good explanation of establishing authority for our teaching and practices. I will print his second article on this topic next week. Study well, apply with diligence. DLH)

Contact Us

We like opportunities to speak with others about the Lord.

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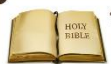
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The
CHURCH OF CHRIST

MEETS HERE



10:20 AM • Sunday Worship Service
5:00 PM • Sunday Night Bible Study
7:00 PM • Wednesday Bible Study

For Our Information

Deberah Brooks is doing physical therapy for her knee surgery.

JoBeth Henderson has chemo again on May 5.

Tommy Robinson has a consultation Tuesday. He has 15 more radiation treatments for the right lung.

Sue Soliday is released from physical therapy.

Bill Venable leaves for a visit with Tina this week.

Hudson Wright has a fractured ankle.

Leta Rivera is having difficulty breathing.

Next Week Sunday - **Isaiah 55** Wednesday - **Revelation 18**

Spring Meeting - Terry Sumerlin - Starts Next Today!