

Biblical Notes — Acts 15:13-18

13-18 – After they had stopped speaking, James answered, saying, "Brethren, listen to me. [14] Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name. [15] With this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written, [16] 'After THESE THINGS I will return, AND I WILL REBUILD THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID WHICH HAS FALLEN, AND I WILL REBUILD ITS RUINS, AND I WILL RESTORE IT, [17] So THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES who ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,' [18] Says THE LORD, WHO makes THESE THINGS KNOWN FROM LONG AGO. (13. Μετὰ δὲ τὸ σιγῆσαι αὐτοὺς ἀπεκρίθη Ἰάκωβος λέγων· ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί, ἀκούσατε μου. 14. Συμεὼν ἐξηγήσατο καθὼς πρῶτον ὁ θεὸς ἐπεσκέψατο λαβεῖν ἐξ ἐθνῶν λαὸν τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ. 15. καὶ τούτῳ συμφωνοῦσιν οἱ λόγοι τῶν προφητῶν καθὼς γέγραπται· 16. μετὰ ταῦτα ἀναστρέψω καὶ ἀνοικοδομήσω τὴν σκηνὴν Δαυὶδ τὴν πεπτωκυῖαν καὶ τὰ κατεστραμμένα αὐτῆς ἀνοικοδομήσω καὶ ἀνορθώσω αὐτήν, 17. ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν κύριον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἐφ' οὓς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομα μου ἐπ' αὐτοὺς, λέγει κύριος ποιῶν ταῦτα 18. γνωστὰ ἀπ' αἰῶνος)

"When he speaks of the re-erection of the ruined tabernacle of David, he does not see this as the restoration of the Davidic kingdom, nor does he even see in it an image of the true Israel. He conceives it as adumbrating the story of Jesus, culminating in the Resurrection, in which the promise made to David has been fulfilled: the Jesus event that will cause the Gentiles to seek the Lord."

— Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 448.

"I would hold that the citation is merely to show that the tenor of Old Testament Scripture supports the idea of Gentiles coming to God without losing their identity. James was not ignoring the future restoration of Israel and equating the 'hut of David with the church; he merely said that one element of what will happen in the future was happening in this day."

— Heater, *Evidence from Joel and James*, 156-157.

"The point James appears to be making is that the Jews should not require Gentiles to be circumcised and become Jews because in the OT messianic texts it was predicted that Gentiles would become saved without becoming Jews. . . Thus, what we probably have here is a case of initial fulfillment of Amos 9. There is a real sense in which Gentile inclusion in salvation corresponds with what was predicted in the OT. . . The salvation of the Gentiles that Amos predicted is being fulfilled, but the future restoration of the Davidic kingdom to Israel is still to come (see Acts 1:6)."

— Michael J. Vlach, *Has the Church Replaced Israel?* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2014), 101.

"Thus James did not proclaim the complete fulfillment of Amos 9:11–12. Even as the complete fulfillment of the messianic promises is still future, so there are elements of Amos's prophecy that remain to be fulfilled. The restoration of the kingdom awaits the salvation of Israel in relation to the return of Christ (cf. Ro 11:25–26). Further evidence that we should understand the relation between Amos 9 and Acts 15 this way is seen in Paul's application of messianic kingdom passages concerning gentile salvation passages to the present salvation of Gentiles (Ro 15:9–16). Many of Paul's citations from the Old Testament have clear reference to the kingdom when Israel is in right relationship to her Messiah and he is reigning on earth (cf. Ro 15:10–12). These references cannot be interpreted as finding their complete fulfillment in the church. Nevertheless, they have an initial fulfillment because the times of the Messiah have come and his salvation is going out to the Gentiles."

— Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* - eBook, (Zondervan Academic, 2010), 66.

"The Gentiles, however, are being blessed with messianic salvation at present because the Messiah has come and has accomplished salvation. This is what James meant in his reference to Amos 9 during his address recorded in Acts 15."

— Robert L. Saucy, *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism: The Interface Between Dispensational and Non-Dispensational Theology* - eBook, (Zondervan Academic, 2010), 66.

"James first emphasizes what Simeon (Peter) has said concerning "no difference" (v. 9) between Jews and Gentiles in the church. To further stress this New Testament teaching before the council, James points out that this was in harmony th that which will happen during the kingdom age (as predicted by the prophet Amos) when there will be both Jewish believers and Gentiles believers (cf. vs. 16-17). The fact that James uses the words "To this agree the words of the prophets"-an introductory formula never used in the Bible to introduce an actual fulfillment-is an evidence that he did not mean to quote Amos' prophecy as an actual fulfillment. The prophecy of Amos is cited by James to unfold the sequence of God's future program. The argument of James is that, since even in the kingdom age there will be the categories of Gentile and Jewish believers, there is no reason why Gentiles should now be required to become Jewish proselytes."

— Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy*, (Rockville, Md., Assurance, 1984), 129.

"James was not quoting the prophecy as being directly relevant to the present. He was outlining the course of events as they were developing and would continue to develop Peter had declared one thing. He put 'no difference between' them (Acts 15:9). This was not out of harmony with those things which would follow according to Amos."

—— Charles Zimmerman, To This Agree the Words of the Prophets, Grace Journal, IV, No. 3 (Fall, 1963), 37.