

Acts 15:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

James quotes Amos 9:11-12 to demonstrate that Gentile inclusion was prophesied in Scripture. The phrase **ὅπως ἂν ἐκζητήσωσιν** (hopōs an ekzētēsōsin, 'so that they might seek') expresses divine purpose—God's plan always included the nations. The term **οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων** (hoi kataloipoi tōn anthrōpōn, 'the remnant of mankind') echoes prophetic language about a preserved, faithful group. The phrase **πάντα τὰ ἔθνη** (panta ta ethnē, 'all the Gentiles') is emphatic—not some nations, but ALL nations.

The clause **ἐφ' οὗς ἐπικέκληται τὸ ὄνομά μου** (eph' hous epikeklētai to onoma mou, 'upon whom my name is called') indicates covenant ownership—these Gentiles bear God's name, making them His people. This was revolutionary for Jewish believers who viewed Gentiles as unclean outsiders. The authority statement **λέγει Κύριος ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα** (legei Kyrios ho poiōn tauta, 'says the Lord who does these things') emphasizes God as the active agent in this inclusion. The perfect tense of **ἐπικέκληται** (epikeklētai) indicates a completed action with ongoing results—God's name has been called upon the Gentiles and remains upon them, establishing permanent relationship and identity.

Historical Context

The Jerusalem Council (around 49-50 AD) addressed the explosive question of whether Gentile converts must observe Jewish law, particularly circumcision. This

was the first major theological crisis in church history. James, the half-brother of Jesus and leader of the Jerusalem church, presided over the council. His quotation from Amos (written around 760 BC) was strategic—he used the Hebrew prophets, authoritative to his Jewish Christian audience, to prove that Gentile inclusion was God's ancient plan, not a new innovation. The Septuagint (Greek translation) James quotes differs slightly from the Hebrew text, but both versions support his argument. This decision liberated the gospel from cultural boundaries and enabled Christianity to become a universal faith rather than a Jewish sect.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. How does this verse demonstrate that God's plan for the Gentiles was prophesied long before the church age?
2. What does it mean for God's name to be called upon the Gentiles, and what are the implications?
3. How did James's use of Scripture resolve the theological crisis at the Jerusalem Council?
4. In what ways does this verse challenge cultural and ethnic barriers in modern Christianity?
5. What does the phrase 'the residue of men' suggest about God's purposes for humanity?

Interlinear Text

ὅπως	ἂν	ἐκζητήσωσιν	ὁ	κατάλοιποι	ὁ	ἀνθρώπων	ὁ	
That	G302	might seek after	who	the residue	who	of men	who	
G3704		G1567	G3588	G2645	G3588	G444	G3588	
κύριος	καὶ	πάντα	ὁ	ἔθνη	ἐπ'	οὓς	ἐπικέκληται	
the Lord	and	all	who	the Gentiles	upon	whom	is called	
G2962	G2532	G3956	G3588	G1484	G1909	G3739	G1941	
ὁ	ὄνομά	μου	ἐπ'	αὐτούς	λέγει	κύριος	ὁ	ποιῶν
who	name	my	upon	G846	saith	the Lord	who	doeth
G3588	G3686	G3450	G1909		G3004	G2962	G3588	G4160
ταῦτα	πάντα							
these things	all							
G5023	G3956							

Additional Cross-References

Zechariah 2:11 (References Lord): And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.

Isaiah 65:1 (Parallel theme): I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.

Hosea 2:23 (Parallel theme): And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

Jeremiah 16:19 (References Lord): O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.

Malachi 1:11 (References Lord): For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every

place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 43:7 (Parallel theme): Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Isaiah 11:10 (Parallel theme): 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.

Jeremiah 14:9 (References Lord): Why shouldest thou be as a man astonied, as a mighty man that cannot save? yet thou, O LORD, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not.

Genesis 22:18 (Parallel theme): And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Genesis 49:10 (Parallel theme): The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.