

# 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 ἀν 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' οὓς 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

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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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

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ὅπως ἀν 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

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**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 astonished, 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.

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