

Acts 15:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness,
giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;

Analysis

Peter's description of God as 'which knoweth the hearts' establishes that divine acceptance bases on internal faith, not external ritual. His argument that God gave the Spirit to Gentiles 'like as he did unto us' places Jewish and Gentile believers on equal footing. This testimony proved decisive in the Jerusalem Council's deliberation.

Historical Context

At the Jerusalem Council (AD 49-50), Peter recounted the Cornelius incident (Acts 10) to defend Gentile inclusion without circumcision. His testimony from a decade earlier provided irrefutable evidence of God's acceptance of uncircumcised believers.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does God's knowledge of hearts teach about the basis for acceptance into His family?
2. How should this passage inform debates about requirements for church membership today?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ὁ καρδιογνώστης θεὸς ἐμαρτύρησεν αὐτοῖς,
And ^{G3588} **which knoweth the hearts** **God** **bare them witness** **them**
G2532 G2589 G2316 G3140 G846

δοὺς αὐτοῖς, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον καθὼς καὶ
giving **them** ^{G3588} **Ghost** ^{G3588} **the Holy** **as** **And**
G1325 G846 G4151 G40 G2531 G2532

ἡμῖν
he did unto us
G2254

Additional Cross-References

Acts 1:24 (Parallel theme): And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

Acts 10:47 (Holy): Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

Revelation 2:23 (Parallel theme): And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Acts 14:3 (Witness): Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

Acts 2:4 (Holy): And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

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