

## The Gentile Controversy and the Emergence of New Covenant Christianity

--:part one:--

### Gentiles Begin to Enter the Church

1. Ethiopian Treasurer: (Acts 8.26–39)
  - A. He was a Gentile but he was probably either a God-fearer or a proselyte (why else would he have been at Jerusalem?) and thus possibly was already keeping the Mosaic Law. Either way he was on his way to Ethiopia and he would not likely be affecting Jerusalem Christianity.
2. Cornelius: (Acts 10–11)
  - A. Vision on roof of unclean animals
  - B. He accompanied the visitors back to Caesarea
  - C. Preached to them that Jesus “is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead...through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins” (Acts 10.42–43)
  - D. The holy spirit fell upon all those listening and they spoke in tongues and exalted God. In other words, while Peter was in the midst of preaching, God moved in a miraculous way that looked and sounded just like Pentecost to Peter. God had accepted these Gentiles.
  - E. Peter answered, “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the holy spirit just as we did, can he” (Acts 10.47)? In other words, if *God* has accepted them *we* must accept them too into the Christian community.
  - F. The next time Peter went to Jerusalem he was confronted and accused of entering the house of “uncircumcised men” and eating with them (Acts 11.3).
  - G. Peter retells the entire story from chapter 10 (Acts 11.4–17).
  - H. The conclusion of his story is as follows:
    - i. “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as *He did* upon us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup> “And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>17</sup> “Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as *He gave* to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?” <sup>18</sup> When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance *that leads* to life” (Acts 11.15–18).
3. The Antiochene Church (Acts 11.19–30; 12.25–13.3)
4. Paul’s First Missionary Journey
  - A. Cyprus: Sergius Paulus
  - B. Pisidian Antioch: (Acts 13.42–50)
  - C. Iconium: (Acts 14.1–7)
  - D. Lystra: (Acts 14.11–14, 18)

- E. Antioch: (Acts 14.26–28)
- 5. The crisis
  - A. Acts 15.1–4

## The Council at Jerusalem

1. Acts 15.5: it is necessary for the Gentiles to be circumcised and ordered to keep the law of Moses in order to be Christian
2. Acts 15.6: a council was called with the apostles and elders
3. Acts 15.7–11: Peter's remarks
4. Acts 15.12: Barnabas and Paul tell about the "signs and wonders [that] God had done through them among the Gentiles."
5. Acts 15.13–21: James' remarks
6. Acts 15.22–23: Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas chosen to deliver letter to the Gentile brethren in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.
7. Acts 15.23–29: the letter
8. Acts 15.30–35: the happy response in Antioch

## Tension at Antioch between Peter and Paul

1. Galatians 1.13–2.16
  - A. Peter used to eat with the Gentiles
  - B. Then certain men came from James
  - C. So Peter withdrew and would not eat with the Gentiles while these men were there
  - D. So Paul confronted him, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews" (Gal 2.14)?