

The Gospel Refined

Acts 15:1-35

PART TWO

Introduction

The five stages to this event:

- I. **The Dissension (vv1-5);**
- II. **The Debate (vv6-12);**
- III. **The Decision (vv13-21);**
- IV. **The Delegation (vv22-29);**
- V. **The Delivery (vv30-35)**

II. The Debate – vv6-12

vv5-6

Four Validations for the Gospel of Grace

1st, the gospel of grace is validated by God's sovereign choice of Peter to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

v7

“much debate”

“Peter stood up”

“God made a choice”

The ongoing, unbroken theme of God's sovereignty over His redemptive enterprise.

“hear the word of the gospel”

2nd, the gospel of grace is validated by God's omniscience in knowing the human heart and revealing Himself to them.

v8a And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them,

“God, who knows the heart”

Acts 1:24

El Roi, the God of seeing

Jeremiah 20:12

1 Samuel 16:7

Hebrews 4:13

Jeremiah 17:10

Salvation is a gift from God, offered through sovereign intervention.

If God were looking for people who were seeking Him, no one would ever be saved.

Psalm 14:2-3

God is all-knowing and all-seeing.

1 Chronicles 28:9

Religious works are never done in a sincere attempt to please God.

The Judaizers were looking for outward religious signs. God is looking to change the heart.

- **God must replace our heart of stone with a heart of flesh** (Ezekiel 36:26-27).
- **God must make our hearts alive by His Spirit** (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:4-5).
- **God must incline our hearts toward Him** (1 Kings 8:57-58; 2 Thessalonians 3:5).

“Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!” Psalm 119:36

“Incline my heart to perform your statutes forever, to the end.” Psalm 119:112

Philippians 2:13

Third, the gospel of grace is validated by God giving them the Holy Spirit and cleansing their hearts by faith.

v8b-9 “giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us”

God-fearing Cornelius and his household received the Holy Spirit

Acts 10:44-47

Galatians 3:14

How did the blessing come to Abraham? *Through faith not circumcision!*

Romans 4:3-5; 13-14

Through Whom did the blessing of Abraham come? Through the Son of David, *Christ Jesus*.

Receiving the promised gift of the Holy Spirit validates genuine faith in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:13

v9

“he made no distinction between us and them”

Romans 10:10-13; cp 2:11

"having cleansed their hearts by faith"

Only the God-given internal Holy Spirit has the power to cleanse a human heart redeemed by faith in Jesus Christ (cf Titus 3:5; 1 John 1:9).

"What God has made clean do not call common." 10:15; 11:9

Acts 11:15-18

Peter confirmed that these Gentiles were converted by a sovereign act of God.

4th, the gospel of grace is validated by man's utter inability to save himself through good works.

v10

"yoke"

Romans 2:17-25; 28-29

Deuteronomy 30:6 (cp. Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25)

Matthew 23:1-4

v11

There is only one way to receive the forgiveness of God, one way to be made right with God, one way to be cleansed from all unrighteousness – "*believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus.*"

Ephesians 2: 4-5, 8-9

Matthew 11:28-30

v12

Hebrews 2:3-4