

Looking the Part

Acts 15

¹While Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch of Syria, some men from Judea arrived and began to teach the believers: “Unless you are circumcised as required by the law of Moses, you cannot be saved.” ²Paul and Barnabas disagreed with them, arguing vehemently. Finally, the church decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, accompanied by some local believers, to talk to the apostles and elders about this question.

Acts 15:1, 2 ^{NLT}

³The church sent the delegates to Jerusalem, and they stopped along the way in Phoenicia and Samaria to visit the believers. They told them—much to everyone’s joy—that the Gentiles, too, were being converted.

⁴When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them.

Acts 15:3, 4 ^{NLT}

Looking the Part

Genuine Believers Receive God's Grace
by Faith Alone

Acts 15:1-12

Genuine _____ is _____ by Our _____

Acts 15:13-21

⁵But then some of the believers who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees stood up and insisted, “The Gentile converts must be circumcised and required to follow the law of Moses.”

⁶So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue. ⁷At the meeting, after a long discussion, Peter stood and addressed them as follows:

Acts 15:5, 6 ^{NLT}

*⁷At the meeting, after a long discussion,
Peter stood and addressed them as follows:*

*“Brothers, you all know that God chose me from among
you some time ago to preach to the Gentiles so that they
could hear the Good News and believe.*

*⁸God knows people’s hearts, and he confirmed that he
accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he
did to us. ⁹He made no distinction between us and them,
for he cleansed their hearts through faith.*

Acts 15:7-9 ^{NLT}

*¹⁰So why are you now challenging God
by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke
that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear?*

*¹¹We believe that we are all saved the same way,
by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus.”*

*¹²Everyone listened quietly as Barnabas and Paul
told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done
through them among the Gentiles.*

Acts 15:10-12 ^{NLT}

²⁰For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. ²¹But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. ²²We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

Romans 3:20-22 ^{NLT}

²⁴Let me put it another way.

*The law was our guardian until Christ came;
it protected us until we could be made right with
God through faith. ²⁵And now that the way of faith has
come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.*

Galatians 3:24, 25 ^{NLT}

*¹So now there is no condemnation
for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*

*²And because you belong to him,
the power of the life-giving Spirit has
freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.*

*³The law of Moses was unable to save us because
of the weakness of our sinful nature.*

Romans 8:1-3a ^{NLT}

So God did what the law could not do.

He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins.

⁴He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

Romans 8:3b, 4^{NLT}

⁸God saved you by his grace when you believed.

And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.

*⁹Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done,
so none of us can boast about it.*

¹⁰For we are God's masterpiece.

*He has created us anew in Christ Jesus,
so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.*

Ephesians 2:8-10 ^{NLT}

²⁸Then Jesus said,

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

*³⁰For my yoke is easy to bear,
and the burden I give you is light.”*

Matthew 11:28-30 ^{NLT}

Looking the Part

Genuine Believers Receive God's Grace
by Faith Alone

Acts 15:1-12

Genuine Faith is Verified by Our Actions

Acts 15:13-21

*¹³When they had finished, James stood and said,
“Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴Peter has told you about the time
God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for
himself. ¹⁵And this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what
the prophets predicted. As it is written: ¹⁶‘Afterward I will
return and restore the fallen house of David. I will rebuild
its ruins and restore it, ¹⁷so that the rest of humanity might
seek the LORD, including the Gentiles— all those I have
called to be mine. The LORD has spoken—¹⁸he who made
these things known so long ago.’*

Acts 15:13-18 ^{NLT}

¹⁹“And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.

²⁰Instead, we should write and tell them to abstain from eating food offered to idols, from sexual immorality, from eating the meat of strangled animals, and from consuming blood. ²¹For these laws of Moses have been preached in Jewish synagogues in every city on every Sabbath for many generations.”

Acts 15:18-21 ^{NLT}

¹⁴What good is it, dear brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Can that kind of faith save anyone?

¹⁵Suppose you see a brother or sister who has no food or clothing, ¹⁶and you say, "Good-bye and have a good day; stay warm and eat well"—but then you don't give that person any food or clothing.

What good does that do?

James 2:14-16 ^{NLT}

17So you see, faith by itself isn't enough.

Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.

18Now someone may argue, "Some people have faith; others have good deeds." But I say, "How can you show me your faith if you don't have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds." 19You say you have faith, for you believe that there is one God. Good for you!

Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.

20How foolish! Can't you see that faith without good deeds is useless?

James 2:17-20 ^{NLT}

21 Don't you remember that our ancestor Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. 23 And so it happened just as the Scriptures say: "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." He was even called the friend of God. 24 So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.

James 2:21-24^{NLT}

*¹⁹Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters:
You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak,
and slow to get angry. ²⁰Human anger does not produce
the righteousness God desires. ²¹So get rid of all the filth
and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God
has planted in your hearts, for it has the power
to save your souls.*

James 1:19-21 ^{NLT}

²²But don't just listen to God's word.

You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror.

²⁴You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like.

²⁵But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

James 1:22-25 ^{NLT}

²⁶If you claim to be religious but don't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and your religion is worthless.

²⁷Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

James 1:26, 27^{NLT}