



How Are People Saved? The Council of Jerusalem Peter's Speech Acts 15:1-12

Message dedicated to Pastor, and Author
Tim Keller, who passed Friday from
cancer at the age of 72.

Is it by faith alone in Christ, or is it by faith in Christ and works?

Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers:
"Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot
be saved."
Acts 15:1

Paul, Barnabas and others go to Jerusalem.

This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul
and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to
Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. ... When they came
to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to
whom they reported everything God had done through them.⁵ Then some of the
believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The
Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses."⁶ The apostles
and elders met to consider this question.
Acts 15:2,4-6

Peter's Proof #1 for salvation by grace alone:

Past revelation. You were there.

After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that
some time ago God made a choice among you that the *Gentiles might hear from my
lips* the message of the gospel and believe."
Acts 15:7

Acts Chapter 10 with Cornelius.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard
the message.⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished
that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles.⁴⁶ For they
heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.
Acts 10:44-46

Community Group Questions:

1. Which of these proofs of Peter was the strongest for you?
2. Have you ever had someone add a requirement to your salvation beyond God's free grace? (i.e. baptism, speaking in tongues, being a member of a certain denomination, keeping the 10 commandments.)
3. Romans 3:20 declares-Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. How would you explain this verse to someone who thinks we must do certain things in order to be found righteous in God's eyes.
4. Ephesians 2:10 says we will do "good works" but not as a result of rule keeping. How will we do "good works" then?

Peter's Proof #2 for salvation by grace alone:

They have the Holy Spirit just as we do.

God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. Acts 15:8

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. Romans 8:14

The Gentile hadn't kept the law of Moses; they we're not circumcised, but they had the Spirit.

19th chapter of Acts Paul ran into some interesting folks:

There he found some disciples ² and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." ³ So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. ⁴ Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Acts 19:1-6

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

Peter's Proof #3 for salvation by grace alone:

The Gentiles were forgiven their sins.

He did not discriminate between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Acts 15:9

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. Ephesians 1:7

Peter's Proof #4 for salvation by grace alone:

The Law of Moses never could save you.

Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? Acts 15:10

Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— Philippians 3:2,3

No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that **we (Jewish people)** are saved, just as **they (Non Jewish people)** are." Acts 15:11

Proof #5- for salvation by grace alone:

Miracles confirming salvation is by grace alone.

The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. Acts 15:12

After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. ²⁰ Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. Mark 16:19

This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. ⁴ God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. Hebrews 2:3,4

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Ephesians 2:8-10