

GOD'S PLAN FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

ACTS 15

¹³ After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them **a people for his name**¹. ¹⁵ And with this the words of the **prophets**² agree, just as it is written,

¹⁶ “**After this I will return,**

and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen;

I will rebuild its ruins,

and I will restore it,

¹⁷ that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord,

and all the Gentiles who are called by my name,

says the Lord, **who makes these things**¹⁸ **known from of old.**’

¹⁹ Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, ²⁰ but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.

²¹ For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.”

¹⁶ “**After this I will return,**

HOSEA 3:5

Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the Lord and to his goodness in the latter days

JEREMIAH 12:15-16

¹⁵ And after I have plucked them up, I will again have compassion on them, and I will bring them again each to his heritage and each to his land. ¹⁶ And it shall come to pass, if they will diligently learn the ways of my people, to swear by my name, ‘As the Lord lives,’ even as they taught my people to swear by Baal, then they shall be built up in the midst of my people.

Known from of old

ISAIAH 45:20-22

²⁰ “Assemble yourselves and come;

draw near together,

you survivors of the nations!

They have no knowledge

who carry about their wooden idols,

and keep on praying to a god

that cannot save.

²¹ Declare and present your case;

let them take counsel together!

Who told this long ago?

Who declared it of old?

Was it not I, the Lord?

And there is no other god besides me,

a righteous God and a Savior;

there is none besides me.

²² “Turn to me and be saved,

all the ends of the earth!

For I am God, and there is no other.

¹This phrase implies ownership and possession, i.e., people who belong to God. See Deuteronomy 28:10, among many other examples.

²Note the plural.

LEVITICUS 17-18

THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE

17 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the people of Israel and say to them, This is the thing that the Lord has commanded. ³ If any one of the house of Israel kills an ox or a lamb or a goat in the camp, or kills it outside the camp, ⁴ and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it as a gift to the Lord in front of the tabernacle of the Lord, bloodguilt shall be imputed to that man. He has shed blood, and that man shall be cut off from among his people. ⁵ This is to the end that the people of Israel may bring their sacrifices that they sacrifice in the open field, that they may bring them to the Lord, to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and sacrifice them as sacrifices of peace offerings to the Lord. ⁶ And the priest shall throw the blood on the altar of the Lord at the entrance of the tent of meeting and burn the fat for a pleasing aroma to the Lord. ⁷ So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to goat demons, after whom they whore. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations. ⁸ “And you shall say to them, Any one of the house of Israel, **or of the strangers who sojourn among them**, who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice⁹ and does not bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting to offer it to the Lord, that man shall be cut off from his people.

LAWS AGAINST EATING BLOOD

¹⁰ “If any one of the house of Israel or **of the strangers who sojourn among them** eats any blood, I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from among his people. ¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. ¹² Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, No person among you shall eat blood, neither shall **any stranger who sojourns among you** eat blood.

¹³ “Any one also of the people of Israel, **or of the strangers who sojourn among them**, who takes in hunting any beast or bird that may be eaten shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth. ¹⁴ For the life of every creature is its blood: its blood is its life.[b] Therefore I have said to the people of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any creature, for the life of every creature is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off. ¹⁵ And every person who eats what dies of itself or what is torn by beasts, whether he is a native or a sojourner, shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening; then he shall be clean. ¹⁶ But if he does not wash them or bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity.”

UNLAWFUL SEXUAL RELATIONS

18 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² “Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, I am the Lord your God. ³ You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. ⁴ You shall follow my rules[c] and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the Lord your God. ⁵ You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the Lord.

⁶ “None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness. I am the Lord. ⁷ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. ⁸ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s wife; it is your father’s nakedness. ⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether brought up in the family or in another home. ¹⁰ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your son’s daughter or of your daughter’s daughter, for their nakedness is your own nakedness. ¹¹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s wife’s daughter, brought up in your father’s family, since she is your sister. ¹² You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s sister; she is your father’s relative. ¹³ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister, for she is your mother’s relative. ¹⁴ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father’s brother, that is, you shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. ¹⁵ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son’s wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness. ¹⁶ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother’s wife; it is your brother’s nakedness. ¹⁷ You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, and you shall not take her son’s daughter or her daughter’s daughter to uncover her nakedness; they are relatives; it is depravity. ¹⁸ And you shall not take a woman as a rival wife to her sister, uncovering her nakedness while her sister is still alive.

¹⁹ “You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness. ²⁰ And you shall not lie sexually with your neighbor’s wife and so make yourself unclean with her. ²¹ You shall not give any of your children to offer them[d] to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. ²² You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. ²³ And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion.

²⁴ “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, ²⁵ and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants.

²⁶ But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native **or the stranger who sojourns among you** ²⁷ (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), ²⁸ lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you.

²⁹ For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people.

³⁰ So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God.”

Commandments to resident aliens: Exodus 20:10, Deuteronomy 5:14, Leviticus 24:16-22.

Commandments to resident aliens “in the midst” of Israel: Leviticus 16:29, Numbers 15:14-16, 29; 19:10—all about Temple/Tabernacle worship.