

~~Council. Paul had been sent out to carry the Gospel to other countries and he had been actively engaged in preaching to Gentiles. No one has said that Gentiles may not enter the church. If that point had been raised many other excellent O.T. quotations could have been presented as much better evidence, at least much more obvious evidence on this point, than this quotation which James has given here. The question was something quite different. It was whether the Gentiles need to be circumcised or not.~~

On the idea that the N.T. has raised the Old to a higher level and here it is not speaking of a kingdom but a church, and simply bringing out the fact ^{that} ~~now~~ Gentiles are to be in that church, it is pretty hard to see what circumcision would have to do with the matter. Was James simply quoting a verse and saying, "Here's what I think you should do. Here's a verse of Scripture", and then people saying, "All right, James has quoted a verse of Scripture here, this conclusion must be right". Sometimes people use the Scripture in that way. We don't feel, however, that it is honoring to the Lord to do so. God wants us to consider exactly what the Scripture means. We can be quite sure that this is what James and the other members of the Council did.

Here it is interesting to notice the way in which James introduces his quotation from Amos. ~~He~~ First he refers to their practical experience. He says Peter has described how God ² visited ¹ the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And he refers back to the story of Peter and Cornelius, which ~~Peter had~~ ^{is} described in Acts which Peter repeated before the Council in Acts ... and ~~which~~ ^{is} Peter ~~here~~ ^{is} has made reference again. Here is a fact that God has taken Gentiles and received them directly into the kingdom. Now James says in doing this God is gathering together a people for His name. and to this agree the words of the Prophets. And then ~~so~~ he goes on to quote