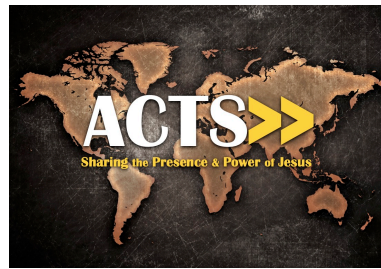


# SEQUOIA NOTES

## Today's Sequoia Message...

### God's Grace for All

With Ryan Dawson - Lead Pastor  
August 31, 2025



Acts 15:1-21 (NLT) While 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.”<sup>2</sup> Paul 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.<sup>3</sup> The 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. <sup>4</sup> When 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.<sup>5</sup> But 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.” <sup>6</sup> So the apostles and elders met together to resolve this issue.<sup>7</sup> At 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.<sup>8</sup> God knows people’s hearts, and he confirmed that he accepts Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us.<sup>9</sup> He made no distinction between us and them, for he cleansed their hearts through faith. <sup>10</sup> So why are you now challenging God by burdening the Gentile believers with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? <sup>11</sup> **We believe that we are all saved the same way, by the undeserved grace of the Lord Jesus.**”

<sup>12</sup> Everyone listened quietly as Barnabas and Paul told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. <sup>13</sup> When they had finished, James stood and said, “Brothers, listen to me. <sup>14</sup> Peter has told you about the time God first visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for himself.<sup>15</sup> And this conversion of Gentiles is exactly what the prophets predicted. As it is written: <sup>16</sup> ‘Afterward I will return and restore the fallen house of David. I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, <sup>17</sup> so that the rest of humanity might seek the Lord, including the Gentiles— all those I have called to be mine. The Lord has spoken—<sup>18</sup> he who made these things known so long ago.’ <sup>19</sup> “And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. <sup>20</sup> Instead, 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. <sup>21</sup> For these laws of Moses have been preached in Jewish synagogues in every city on every Sabbath for many generations.”

**What is grace and why does it matter?**

### • Grace alone saves:

#### Grace is different from Religion...

Religion says, “I obey, therefore God accepts me.”

Grace says, “God accepts me through Jesus, therefore I obey.”

Galatians 3:10-14 (NLT) But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God’s Book of the Law.” <sup>11</sup> So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.” <sup>12</sup> This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, “It is through obeying the law that a person has life.” <sup>13</sup> But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” <sup>14</sup> Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.

### • Grace sets us free:

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

*“Only when Jesus becomes our true treasure do other treasures lose their power over us.” Timothy Keller*

### • Grace welcomes all:

<sup>16</sup> ‘Afterward I will return and restore the fallen house of David. I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, <sup>17</sup> so that the rest of humanity might seek the Lord, including the Gentiles— all those I have called to be mine. The Lord has spoken...’

### • Grace transforms life:

<sup>19</sup> “And so my judgment is that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. <sup>20</sup> Instead, 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.

**Big Idea: Live in the grace of Jesus—let Him save you, free you, include you, & transform you.**

Ephesians 2:8-9 (AMP) For it is by grace [God’s remarkable compassion and favour drawing you to Christ] that you have been saved [actually delivered from judgment and given eternal life] through faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [not through your own effort], but it is the [undeserved, gracious] gift of God; <sup>9</sup> not as a result of [your] works [nor your attempts to keep the Law], so that no one will [be able to] boast or take credit in any way [for his salvation].



Sequoia Impact Communities are where we  
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To get plugged in email:  
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**God's Grace for All**  
**#18 of 22 - August 31, 2025**

- 1) Read Acts 15:1-21. What is the **Context** for this passage? Who is the writer and who is the recipient? What is the purpose for writing? What has happened prior to this passage?
- 2) **Observation:** What do you notice about this passage? Why was this discussion needed?
- 3) What is the **Meaning** of this passage? Reading v. 11, what did the leadership of the Church decide and why does this matter?
- 4) How would you explain grace to a friend who doesn't know anything about Jesus? How is grace different than religion?
- 5) Read Galatians 3:10-14. How did Jesus provide grace for us? What is God's part and what is our part in this?
- 6) How does grace "dethrone the idols" of our heart? What does it mean to make Jesus the treasure of our heart? *"Only when Jesus becomes our true treasure do other treasures lose their power over us." Timothy Keller*
- 7) Read Ephesians 2:8-9 (AMP). What does this reveal to us about the Gospel of Jesus Christ? How does this make you feel?
- 8) **Application:** How will you apply this message and what next step is God asking you to take today?



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