

Summary to:

Peter Defends God's Acceptance of the Gentiles

by R. Don Wright

"Peter Defends God's Acceptance of the Gentiles" is a fun, Abbott-and-Costelloesque reinterpretation of a conversation the apostles Peter and James no doubt did *not* have, but very well could have, in their respective historical context. The main message is God's grace—God is willing to change an evangelical strategy for outreach, so long as it is about inclusion.



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"Peter Defends God's Acceptance of the Gentiles"

by R. Don Wright

Text: Acts 11:1-18

Themes: Inclusion vs. Exclusion, Acceptance

Time Needed to Perform: 8 – 12 minutes

What going on? Peter and James are having a discussion how God is now including the Gentiles in the new ministry of Jesus Christ.

When is it all happening? In the past, but with modern language (and humor).

Who are the characters? The Apostles Peter and James.

How should this play be performed? There are many ways you can pull this off. If participants will be reading from the scripts, both can be standing at podiums. Another option would be the two characters standing and speaking the lines memorized.

What props will we need? Minimal. Could clothe both characters in period garb. A bed sheet for Peter's illustration, if desired.

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Setting: In the past, but the conversation spells out the context.

Characters: James and Peter

SCRIPT:

- 1 **JAMES:** Hey Peter! I hear the Gentiles have accepted the word of
2 God. Is that true?
- 3 **PETER:** Yes it is. It is indeed. True. Quite True.
- 4 **JAMES:** Ok. Well. Accepting the word of God is one thing, did they
5 agree to be circumcised?
- 6 **PETER:** Well, uh, no. Not exactly. I hadn't really thought that was
7 going to be necessary.
- 8 **JAMES:** Not necessary! Keeping the Torah not necessary? Keeping
9 the Covenant of God not necessary? What?! Have you
10 stopped being a Jew? Have you gone heathen? Don't tell me
11 you've been eating with them?
- 12 **PETER:** Well, yes I was.
- 13 **JAMES:** Was what? Eating with them?
- 14 **PETER:** Yes.
- 15 **JAMES:** Pork?
- 16 **PETER:** Pork, four-footed animals of *all* kinds, beasts of prey,
17 reptiles, bird of the air...
- 18 **JAMES:** Oh quit it. You're making me sick. How could you do such a
19 thing?
- 20 **PETER:** Well, I was thinking about Jesus.
- 21 **JAMES:** Jesus?!
- 22 **PETER:** Yeah, Jesus. He ate with tax collectors and sinners. He
23 welcomed everybody. He welcomed and ate with us.

1 **JAMES:** True.

2 **PETER:** And besides I had a revelation.

3 **JAMES:** A revelation?

4 **PETER:** Yes, a revelation.

5 **JAMES:** Aren't revelations John's thing?

6 **PETER:** I suppose, but you can't control these things. God just
7 revealed it to me.

8 **JAMES:** What?

9 **PETER:** Ok. I'll explain it to you step by step. *Simply.* It was like this: I
10 was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a
11 vision.

12 **JAMES:** You were in a trance?

13 **PETER:** Yes, but like I said, these things just happen. You can't do
14 anything about it. Now, stop interrupting! I saw a vision.
15 There was something like a large sheet coming down from
16 heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close
17 to me. As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals,
18 beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a
19 voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' But I replied,
20 'By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever
21 entered my mouth.' But a second time the voice answered
22 from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call
23 profane.' This happened three times; then everything was
24 pulled up again to heaven. At that very moment three men,
25 sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we
26 were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a
27 distinction between them and us.

28 **JAMES:** Ok. Wait. Hold on a minute ... the Holy Spirit said, "What God
29 has made clean you must not call profane."

30 **PETER:** Yes. Exactly.

- 1 **JAMES:** But God told Moses some of those things are unclean.
- 2 **PETER:** Maybe God has changed God's mind.
- 3 **JAMES:** God can do that?
- 4 **PETER:** Sure. 'You gonna tell God that the Creator of the Universe
- 5 can't make a decision as God sees fit?
- 6 **JAMES:** No.
- 7 **PETER:** Ok. May I continue?
- 8 **JAMES:** Ok.
- 9 **PETER:** So these three guys arrived from Caesarea and the Spirit
- 10 *[told me to go with them]*
- 11 **JAMES:** *[INTERRUPTING]* Wait, wait, wait. The Holy Spirit said not to
- 12 make a distinction between them and us?
- 13 **PETER:** Yes.
- 14 **JAMES:** Them Gentiles and us Jews.
- 15 **PETER:** Yes.
- 16 **JAMES:** *[Getting a bit redneck and judgmental]* Them lawless infidels
- 17 who don't know their right hands from their left... Them
- 18 pagan idolaters who don't know God, who don't know the
- 19 Law and the Prophets, who do not possess the promises
- 20 made to our ancestors... Them, them?!
- 21 **PETER:** Yes.
- 22 **JAMES:** Why?!
- 23 **PETER:** Well, I didn't ask, but if I had to guess, it would be because:
- 24 "God makes the sun rise on the evil and on the good, and
- 25 sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous."
- 26 **JAMES:** Wait, wait, wait. Did you get that from that Paul guy?! I don't
- 27 trust that dude.
- 28 **PETER:** I was quoting the Lord.

- 1 **JAMES:** Oh. Ok then. Nevermind. So, 'no distinction?'
- 2 **PETER:** No distinction. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory
3 of God; they—*them*—are now justified by grace as a gift,
4 through the redemption that is in Jesus, the Anointed One."
- 5 **JAMES:** That's Paul!
- 6 **PETER:** That's Paul!
- 7 **JAMES:** Ah hah! Got it.
- 8 **PETER:** No distinction between them and us.
- 9 **JAMES:** Ok ... I guess.
- 10 **PETER:** May I continue?
- 11 **JAMES:** [*waves him on*]
- 12 **PETER:** So, three guys from Caesarea, no distinction.
- 13 **JAMES:** [*waves him on*]
- 14 **PETER:** These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the
15 man's house.
- 16 **JAMES:** Six! I thought there were three.
- 17 **PETER:** Three guys and ALSO six brothers. Geeze!
- 18 **JAMES:** Fine. Sorry. Go ahead.
- 19 **PETER:** We entered this man's house. He told us how he had seen the
20 angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and
21 bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message
22 by which you and your entire household will be saved.'
- 23 **JAMES:** Him and his entire household?
- 24 **PETER:** I'm not making this up! It's just what the angel said!
- 25 **JAMES:** Even the slaves?
- 26 **PETER:** Even the slaves.
- 27 **JAMES:** Even the babies?

- 1 **PETER:** Even the babies.
- 2 **JAMES:** The whole entire household.
- 3 **PETER:** Yup.
- 4 **JAMES:** Wow.
- 5 **PETER:** And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just
6 as it had upon us at the beginning.
- 7 **JAMES:** On the day of Pentecost.
- 8 **PETER:** Right.
- 9 **JAMES:** Did they get the little tongues of fire thing, too?
- 10 **PETER:** Of course.
- 11 **JAMES:** Did they speak in other languages?
- 12 **PETER:** Yes.
- 13 **JAMES:** God's Holy Spirit? Upon the Gentiles?
- 14 **PETER:** Them.
- 15 **JAMES:** Wow.
- 16 **PETER:** Just like us.
- 17 **JAMES:** No distinction. None at all!
- 18 **PETER:** Right.
- 19 **JAMES:** I think I'm getting it.
- 20 **PETER:** Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said,
21 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the
22 Holy Spirit.' If then God gave them the same gift that God
23 gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I
24 that I could hinder God?"
- 25 **JAMES:** So what do you think is going on? Do you think God is trying
26 to tell us something?
- 27 **PETER:** Well, two things.

- 1 **JAMES:** One. [*holds up one finger*]
- 2 **PETER:** One. "What God has made clean you must not call profane."
- 3 **JAMES:** And that applies to Gentiles, not just food.
- 4 **PETER:** Right!
- 5 **JAMES:** And two? [*holds up two fingers*]
- 6 **PETER:** Two. We're not supposed to make a distinction between
- 7 them and us.
- 8 **JAMES:** [*points away with finger*] Them?
- 9 **PETER:** Them.
- 10 **JAMES:** [*points at self*] And us?
- 11 **PETER:** And us.
- 12 **JAMES:** [*points with fingers, each time*] Them and us—no
- 13 distinction?!
- 14 **PETER:** Right.
- 15 **JAMES:** God has made them clean?
- 16 **PETER:** God did it.
- 17 **JAMES:** How?
- 18 **PETER:** How did God make them clean?
- 19 **JAMES:** [*nodding*]
- 20 **PETER:** By grace, you idiot! Same as us. What'dya think?!
- 21 **PETER:** That was a sin! That was a sin! You sinned! You're a sinner!
- 22 You're unclean!
- 23 **PETER:** I'm sorry. I really am. I lost my patience. Please forgive me.
- 24 **JAMES:** [*pause, then giving in*] All right. I forgive you.
- 25 **PETER:** You forgive me my sin?
- 26 **JAMES:** Yes.
- 27 **PETER:** And I am no longer unclean?

1 **JAMES:** Yes.

2 **PETER:** By grace.

3 **JAMES:** Yes.

4 **PETER:** I don't have to do anything? Just believe you when you say it?

5 **JAMES:** Yes.

6 **PETER:** That's precisely what happened to the Gentiles!

7 **JAMES:** What?!

8 **PETER:** God declared that all their sins were truly forgiven, for Jesus'
9 sake.

10 **JAMES:** And they believed it?

11 **PETER:** Wouldn't you?

12 **JAMES:** Yes.

13 **PETER:** So did they.

14 **JAMES:** Them?

15 **PETER:** Them.

16 **JAMES:** Like we do...

17 **PETER:** Like we do.

18 **JAMES:** No distinction...

19 **PETER:** None. Whatsoever.

20 **JAMES:** Then ... I guess God has given even them the repentance that
21 leads to life.

22 **PETER:** No more "them."

23 **JAMES:** No more them? Just ... *us*?

24 **PETER:** Just us.

25 **JAMES:** Wow.

26 **PETER:** [*nods*] Indeed! - END -

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