

THE GOSPEL IS ALSO FOR THE GENTILES

Lesson Aim: God will listen to Gentiles and Jews that fear Him, so we need to give the gospel to them.

Suggestion: Have the students read the Scriptures and answer the questions in the student lesson; then ask the following questions for class discussion.

Significant changes were made by God for the church age that will unite Jews with Gentiles. These changes are especially noticed in Acts 10-12. This passage literally bursts with changes in the church.

What kind of a Gentile was Cornelius who was accepted by God? 10:1, 2, 30

Cornelius was a centurion in the Roman army, an officer over one hundred men. He also was a devout man that feared God with his whole house. He had a positive influence on his family to fear God with him. God accepted them for their respect of Him and later gave them an occasion to hear the gospel. Cornelius' fear of God was evident in fasting, prayer to God always and giving much alms to the needy. He sincerely sought salvation. God took note of this in his prayers and alms and sent an angel to tell him to send for Peter, who would tell him how to be saved (11:14).

What was God teaching Peter in the vision about the wild beasts and birds? 10:10-28

God needed to teach Peter His concept of Gentiles, so He gave Peter a vision that puzzled him. He would learn best by solving this puzzle. God sent him a vision of wild beasts, creeping things and birds and commanded Peter to kill and eat them. Peter objected and told God that he had never eaten anything common or unclean. He was told that what God had cleansed, he was not to call common. This was repeated three times indicating the importance of this vision. While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit told Peter that three men (Gentiles) had come for him and he was to go with them without doubting, for He had sent them. God was teaching Peter that Gentiles were like the unclean animals, but He had cleansed them so he no longer was to call them common or unclean.

How has God cleansed the Gentiles? 10:15; 1 Jn 2:2

God paid the price for the cleansing of all people, Gentiles as well as Jews, by the death of His Son on the cross. His death is the propitiation for the sins of all people (1 Jn 2-2). Does that mean that all people are saved? No. All people must receive God's payment for their sins by faith (Eph 2:8-9) to make the cleansing effective. It is like a gift card that was bought and given to a friend. It must be received and used by faith to be beneficial. Now then, all people need to know about God's gift so they could receive it by faith and be saved. Peter was chosen to make God's gift known to the Gentiles.

In what way did God accept the Gentiles? 10:34-43

Peter began his message by saying that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he who fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him (is accepted to hear His offer of salvation). Then Peter preached a clear message of God's salvation to these Gentiles of Jesus' good works, of His crucifixion and of His resurrection. Then he said that whoever believes in Jesus shall have the remission of sins. These Gentiles heard the gospel like the Jews did on the day of Pentecost.

How did God show that He saved these Gentiles? 10:44-46; 11:15-16

The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles to baptize them into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). They praised God in foreign languages as the Jews had done, which astonished the six Jews that came with Peter.

Why were the other apostles alarmed when Peter preached to Gentiles? 11:1-8

Jews considered Gentiles the scum of the earth with no hope of salvation apart from becoming a proselyte Jew. They were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). But Christ changed all that for Gentile believers and made them equal citizens with Jewish believers in God's Kingdom (Eph 2:13-22). Peter treated Gentiles like Jews and met with them in Cornelius' house.

Where was the new center being formed for world evangelism among the Gentiles? 11:19-26

Antioch in Syria was becoming the center of evangelism under the teaching of Barnabas and Saul.