

**God Shows No Partiality**

Acts 10

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Overview: The spread of the gospel to the Gentiles was not a new idea in the New Testament; rather, it was intended by God as early as the Old Testament. In this vein, Luke introduces us to Cornelius, a good man by worldly standards but not a follower of the one true God. Thus being in need of the gospel, the Lord showed mercy to him and revealed that he should send for Peter. For his part, Peter had not yet understood that Gentiles were equally able to embrace the gospel and be on the same footing as Jewish Christians. The Lord corrected Peter's misunderstanding through a vision and a command. When Peter encountered Cornelius, it became evident that one gospel applied to all people, thus making all believers equal in the eyes of God.

01. The gospel is for all people, which reminds us that all people need the gospel.

02. The gospel is for all people, which requires us to exchange comfortability for obedience.

03. The gospel is for all people, which repels from us all forms of racism and xenophobia.

04. The gospel is for all people, which reflects for us Christian unity even in diversity.

This Promise is for You and for All

1. Who do you know that is like Cornelius, good by worldly standards but still in need of the gospel? What clues from the text prove that Cornelius was in need of the gospel? Why is it important for Christians to insist on the exclusivity of the gospel (i.e., people need the gospel in order to be saved) in a world that prefers inclusivity (i.e., believe what you want as long as you are sincere)?

2. What clues does Luke provide in 10:44-48 that indicate Peter and Cornelius are on equal footing as brothers in the Lord? Why were these clues necessary for both Peter and Cornelius? How might the gospel have been weakened if primacy were given to certain groups of people but not all in the church? See Ephesians 2:11-22 for further insight.

3. Are there any people who you have closed off with respect to the gospel? In what ways does this text challenge you to embrace those who need the gospel? In what ways can this text be misread to assume all boundaries are human constructs, and therefore neither repentance nor faith is necessary to be justified before God? See Romans 3:9-20 for further insight.

4. Read Galatians 2 and note how Paul explains the fact that God shows no partiality between Jews and Gentiles. How might this argument apply to the church today? In light of Galatians 2:11-14, why do you think Peter relapsed into his pre-Acts 10 ways? How did Paul confront him in the matter? Are any of us ever above such duplicitousness in our own lives? See Galatians 6:1-3 for further insight.

5. Have you ever experienced a similar change in your worldview as Peter did with regard to the gospel audience and its implications? Have you ever worshipped with a people group that challenged your comfort level? Pray that the Lord will give you a heart to love those who love Him in such a way that cultural boundaries are minimized in light of the gospel.

For Further Reading: Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson, eds. *Faith Comes by Hearing: A Response to Inclusivism* (IVP Academic, 2009).

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