
GOOD NEWS SPREADING

PART 3 · GENTILES

Acts – Chapters 9-12

The Good News of Jesus is faced with its biggest cultural barrier: moving from the chosen people of God – the Jewish people – to the Gentiles.

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” – Jesus (Acts 1:8)

We’re going to take a bird’s eye view of most of this passage, and there are some very interesting themes for us, which will speak into the season and place we are in right now, and the new season we’re stepping into – the realisation of promises!

Peter’s Gentile Mission

Acts 9:32-43

The Good News advances with signs and wonders.

Peter performs the same signs as those who had come before him: Jesus and the other disciples.

The Barrier Breaks

Acts 10:1-8

We meet Cornelius, the commander of the Italian Cohort.

Cornelius was a Gentile soldier – a ‘God-fearer’ – someone who believed in the Jewish God, but hadn’t gone the whole way to being a Jew.

Peter’s Vision

Acts 10:9-16

Everyone who was a part of “The Way” still obeyed all the Jewish laws, went to the synagogue (or temple), but they believed that Jesus was really the Messiah.

Peter Meets Cornelius

Acts 10:17-24

Cornelius and his entire household was considered off limits to strict observers of the Jewish law.

It was prohibited for a Jewish person to enter a Gentile's house, and under no circumstances could they eat together.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. – Galatians 3:28

What does this mean for us?

We are poised to move into a new area, a new social demographic from the one we are in now.

God has placed each of us in a unique frontline, with access to people all around us who have different beliefs, cultural perspectives, and sometimes wildly different priorities!

Response – The Church in Antioch

John Stott says: “Chapter 12 starts with James dead, Peter in prison and Herod triumphing, but ends with Herod dead, Peter free and the word of God triumphing!”

“...the word of God increased and multiplied.” (Acts 12:24 ESV)

Discussion Questions

1. Are there times in your life, or in your daily walk, where you are out of your own comfort-zone (in culture, practice or with people)?
2. How do you approach these times? Do you fear them or love them?
3. What would it look like to bring God into those situations?
4. Peter was faced with a massive paradigm change: his whole Jewish worldview was shattered by God's revelation. Has God ever spoken to you in a way that has challenged and/or changed your worldview?
5. Galatians 3:28 talks about the ethnic and cultural barriers being broken down in Christ. How does that sit with you? Have you ever had opportunity to experience being out of your ethnic or cultural comfort zone?
6. How did God interact with you in that place?
7. What God opportunities do you have on your frontline where you can act like Peter, and respond to God's leading to minister to those who are outside of your own relational circle?
8. God demonstrated His Good News by performing signs and wonders through His people, backing the declaration with demonstration. What is the balance like of these two elements in your own walk?
9. What would it be like to bring both of those elements to the forefront of your daily life?
10. Spend some time together ministering to one another, asking the Holy Spirit to work in power through each person in their daily life.
11. Close your time together by praying with the disciples from Acts 4:29b-30, "*grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.*"