

How to Read the Bible for All its Worth

Lesson 6e: Acts 9:32-12:25 – Opening the Door to the Gentiles

Introduction

Racism is not a new phenomena, but has existed in different forms for thousands of years. One such example is the attitude the Jewish people had towards Gentiles (non-Jews) during the Biblical times. Coming out of a racist culture is a hard mental transition for anyone. That is exactly what God leads Peter to do in this passage of Scripture. He takes not only Peter, but a whole group of people out of bigotry and into a mode of reaching out to a people who they had previously despised. Only God can make a change like that!

Acts 9:32-43 – Peter's Journeys in Lydda, Sharon, and Joppa

What effect did the healing of paralyzed man have on Peter's ministry there?

How can we see this same principle at work today?

Why did Peter pray before reviving Tabitha?

Acts 10:1-23 – Cornelius the Gentile, and Peter's Vision

What was Cornelius' nationality and why is that significant to this passage?

How could Cornelius' spiritual life be characterized?

What was Cornelius' position in society?

What was significant about God telling Peter that he could eat four-footed animals, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air? See Leviticus 11:9-31.

Why did Peter have this vision three times?

Why did God work in both Peter and Cornelius to bring this meeting to pass?

Why did Peter take some of the brethren from Joppa with him to Caesarea. See 2 Cor. 13:1,

How to Read the Bible for All its Worth

Lesson 6e: Acts 9:32-12:25 – Opening the Door to the Gentiles

Acts 10:24-48 – The Gospel Preached to Cornelius and Friends

What connection did Peter make between his vision concerning the unclean foods and God's intention towards Gentiles.

Peter makes a very profound statement concerning the Gentiles in verses 34 and 35. What does this mean and what are the implications of this statement?

Is Peter's call to go to Cornelius consistent with what Peter stated in verses 34 and 35?

The answer to the question of whether Cornelius was already saved is very important to our understanding of the place of the gospel in salvation. Was Cornelius saved before the gospel was preached to him? Is the gospel really necessary for salvation? See also Romans 1:16.

The key principle to understand regarding God calling all men to repentance is that everyone has some level of revelation. Whether it is being raised in church or being in a remote village in the heart of a pagan nation, God reveals Himself to all men. Read Romans 1:18-23. How does God reveal Himself outside of His Word?

While Peter was still preaching, the Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles gathered there and they began to exhibit spiritual gifts, particularly speaking in tongues. What had just happened here?

Why was the Gentiles receipt of the Holy Spirit different than the Samaritans in Acts 8:14-17?

Acts 11:1-18 – The Gentiles Accepted by the Brethren

What was the response of the Jewish Christians back in Jerusalem?

How did the Lord communicate to Cornelius to arrange this meeting?

How did the Lord communicate to Peter to arrange this meeting?

How to Read the Bible for All its Worth

Lesson 6e: Acts 9:32-12:25 – Opening the Door to the Gentiles

Why is the difference significant?

What was the response of the Jewish Christians to Peter's explanation?

Acts 11:19-30 – *Growth of the Gentile Movement*

This passage begins by taking us back to the martyrdom of Stephen in Acts 7, and picks up with many of the Jewish Christians that scattered because of the persecution that came from the Jews. They went northward to Phoenicia, the island of Cyprus (about 60 miles off shore from Tyre and Sidon) and about 200 miles past Tyre and Sidon to Antioch, the 3rd largest city in the Roman empire. Antioch was known for its great education, liberal studies, pagan idolatry, and sexual immorality.

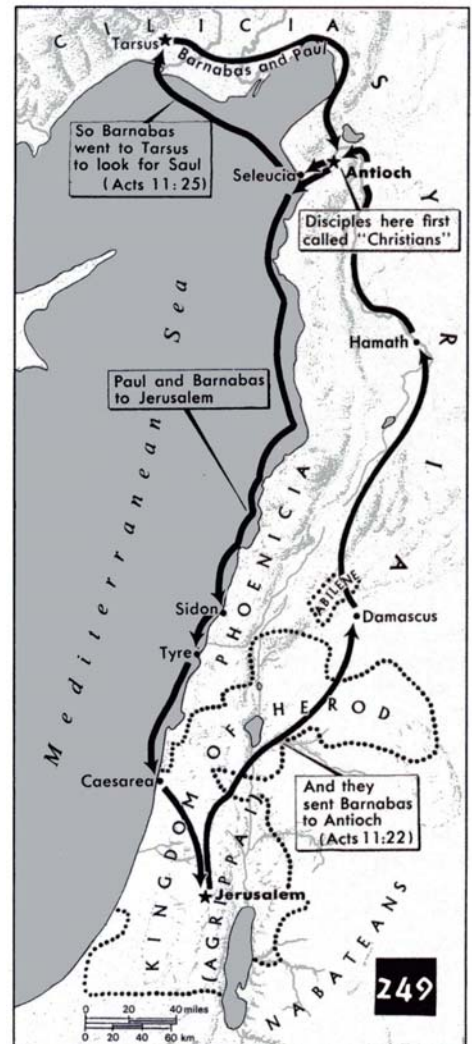
The Jewish Christians that left Jerusalem only preached to other Jews while other Jews of Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to Gentiles in Antioch. Why do you suppose these men were willing to do this?

Who was Barnabas and why was he a good choice to send to Antioch?

1. (Acts 4:36)
2. (Acts 4:37)
3. (Acts 9:26-27)
4. (Acts 11:22-23)
5. (Acts 11:24)

Why would Barnabas go and seek out Saul to help him with this ministry? See Acts 9:15-16

What did Barnabas and Saul do in Antioch? What relevance does this have to this work?



What does the name, "Christian" reflect about the focus of this people?

How to Read the Bible for All its Worth

Lesson 6e: Acts 9:32-12:25 – Opening the Door to the Gentiles

What was the role of prophets in the early New Testament church?

In what manner was a collection taken from the Church at Antioch?

Acts 12:1-19 – Renewed Persecution and the Release of Peter

Concerning the death of James, it is said, “When this James was brought to the tribunal seat, he that brought him and was the cause of his trouble, seeing him to be condemned and that he should suffer death, was in such sort moved therewith in his heart and conscience that as he went to the execution he confessed himself also, of his own accord, to be a Christian. And so were they led forth together, where in the way he desired of James to forgive him what he had done. After that James had a little paused with himself upon the matter, turning to him he saith, ‘Peace be to thee, brother;’ and kissed him. And both were beheaded together, A.D. 36”¹

What was Herod’s motivation for executing James and arresting Peter?

Why did he pick the time of Unleavened Bread (Passover) to do this?

Note: quaternions consist of four soldiers, yielding a total of 16 that were guarding Peter

What does Peter’s deep sleep on the night of his execution teach us about faith? See John 21:17-19, and 1 Peter 5:7.

What was the church’s response to Peter’s imprisonment?

What do verses 14-15 teach us about angels and the saints?

Who is the James spoken of in verse 17? Why is this significant?

Acts 12:20-25 – King Herod’s Death

What is ironic about the timing of the angel of the Lord striking Herod?

What object lesson can we learn from the death of Herod?

Assignment:

Read Acts 13:1 – 15:35 in preparation for the next lesson

¹ Foxe’s Book of Martyrs by John Foxe, 1570, pg 6