

Gospel for Everyone

Gentiles are made part of the family

READ ACTS 11:19-30

INTRODUCTION

The Jews were not fans of the Gentiles. This was largely because of the persecution of their people from very early on in their existence. (See most of the Old Testament) There was little interest by the Jewish people for the Gentiles to be allowed into worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He was their God and He was exclusively for them to worship. This is also one of the reasons why they crucified Jesus. He was claiming salvation for all people and He even made it clear that one day, the Gentiles would be welcomed into the family of God. (Matthew 24:14) The Gospel of Christ was to be shared with all nations and that means that every person, Jew or Greek (Gentile), would have the path to follow Christ.

Because of their distain for the Gentiles, it is no wonder that they were not open to the idea of sharing salvation with them. Their desire would be that the Gentiles would be used to fuel the fires of hell, not to be saved from them into God's reward. In Acts chapter 7, we see Stephen share with the Jews the Gospel and point out that they had always been unwilling to hear from those who God sent to save them (Jesus included) and this caused such a fury in them that they stoned him to death. Here, in chapter 11, we see that the believers were scared of what the Jews had done and they were scattered and they still were only sharing the Gospel of Jesus with the Jewish people. This was not God's intention. Christ's offer of salvation was given to the entire world and He began to change the hearts of the early church to begin sharing with those who were outside of their traditional faith.

When Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch, many Greeks started believing the Gospel and Paul and Barnabas were able to formalize a church there that was built of mostly Gentile believers. This would have been uncomfortable for the Jewish believers but, again, Jesus' Church is for everyone. Anywhere that the Gospel is preached, we see people coming to faith in Christ and the Church of God growing into what it is intended to be: a multicultural blessing to the nations that seeks to glorify the One true God. This has been the message since the beginning of Jesus' ministry to present day and will continue being the message of the Church to the world until time ceases and eternity is ushered in.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Thinking of the Old Testament, what are some of the events that happened that would make it hard for the Jews to welcome in others outside their faith? Have you ever been tempted to be unwelcoming to people who aren't "like" you?
2. Read Matthew 24:14. What does this verse say about the world coming to know Christ? Why was it important for Jesus to point out that His message was for everyone?
3. What were objections the Jews had to Stephens message in Acts chapter 7? Why would this message be worthy of stoning?
4. Do you ever think that someone is not worth saving? Why or why not?
5. Why is the Church so important in the world we live in? What does the Church bring to the world that is different from what it has to offer?

WRAP UP

In Matthew 28, we have clear instruction from Christ to be sharing the Gospel with the entire world, regardless of what they believe or have done. It is a command directly from Christ. This means that we are not allowed to be gate-keepers of the Gospel. It is our duty to share, share, and share some more. Go into all the world. Share what Jesus has done. Don't rest and wait for His coming, be about His business and pursue His righteousness. In this, you will be blessed.