

Not Them!

"GENTILES"
Acts 10:1 – 11:18
April 23, 2017

What does it really take to be saved? Just Jesus.

- I. What Cornelius learned (10:5, 32; 11:13-14)
 - A. The fear of God isn't enough.
 - B. Doing good isn't enough.
 - C. You must believe that forgiveness of sins is through Jesus' name alone. (10:36-43)
- II. What Peter learned
 - A. God cleanses. (10:13-15)
 - B. God is not partial. Learn to love like Him. (10:34)
 - C. People don't need to become like us to become believers. (10:44-45; 11:15)
 - D. Even Gentiles are saved completely and equally. (10:47; 11:17)
- III. What helped the church to step over this final hurdle?
 - A. Prayer
 - B. Strip away barriers that separate us.
 - C. Hospitality
 - D. Stop resisting God's generous love and start glorifying God. (11:18)

How does this apply to me?

NEXT WEEK

"HELLENISTS"
Acts 11:19-30

Historical Timeline:

After Saul's conversion and subsequent training by Jesus in the wilderness, he went to Jerusalem where he was accepted by church leadership. It wasn't long before he had to move to his hometown of Tarsus because of threats against him. The faith began to reach the Gentiles during a period of peace.

Luke highlights how the gospel penetrated the city of Antioch because of its strategic importance to church growth. We are told that many Hellenists believed. "Hellenists" was a word used to describe people who had been highly influenced by Greek language, thought, and culture. Although there were Hellenistic Jews, Jews who had been influenced by Hellenic thinking, the reference here is probably to the primarily Gentile population that had adopted Greek thought.

Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire. It was an economic powerhouse and boasted a cosmopolitan culture and lifestyle.

Passage Overview:

As believers from Cyprus and Cyrene arrived in Antioch, they shared the gospel of Jesus and many Hellenists believed. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to see what was happening and to help ground these new believers in the truth. Barnabas sought Saul's help as the two of them remained in the city and taught the new believers for a full year.

The influence of the church was significant in the community. Their distinct faith, based in Jesus, required the populace to mint a term to describe them. So it was that the followers of Jesus were first called Christians in Antioch. Although this name was not always used in a positive sense, it clearly identified them as disciples of Jesus Christ.

As you read, ask yourself whether your life, and the life of our church, is distinct enough and culturally impactful enough to be called "Christian". Can you be described only by reference to Christ?

Reading for Next Week: Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12