

Acts 9 Discussion Guide

General Discussion Questions:

- What statement or illustration from the message stuck out to you and why?
- What attributes of God were on display in the passage?
- What encouraged you?
- What point of action/application did you walk away with?

Topics for Discussion:

- The Early Church
- Jew/Gentile: animosity → unity
- Peter
- The Law
- Cornelius
- Repentance

Discussion Questions:

? - Why was it so difficult for Peter to understand his vision?

- What theological significance did the sheet full of animals and Peter's comments have in relation to Cornelius (and the other Gentiles) salvation?
- How was Peter convinced?
- What insights into Peter's character are found in chapters 9–12?

? – Talk about Dustin's Cubs V Cardinals illustration. How does it illustrate the issue in Acts 10?

? – Why was Cornelius' friends' conversion such a problem? Why was it so difficult for the Jews to understand the inclusion of Gentiles?

- Leviticus 20:23–26
- It took a while for the early church to recognize that salvation was available to the Gentiles. The Jewish Christians who fled the persecution in Jerusalem went into the Gentile regions of Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, but they were "spreading the word only among Jews" ([Acts 11:19](#)). Peter was hesitant to bring the gospel to a Gentile household, but God made it plain that Cornelius was also one of the elect ([Acts 10](#)).
- "Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too" ([Romans 3:29](#)). Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, but He had come to offer salvation to everybody. The Messiah was to be a "light for the Gentiles" ([Isaiah 42:6](#)).¹ **See Also:** Is 49:6. 51:4-5. 60:1-3. Lk 2:32. Jn 8:12. Ac 13:47²

? - Read **Ephesians 2:11–22** - This passage, written by Paul under inspiration of God's Spirit, gives a theological explanation of the historical events recorded in chapters 10 and 11. **What is the gist of Paul's argument? What is he saying?**

- What truth was Peter beginning to grasp when he remarked that God shows no partiality (10:34)?
- What evidence or lines of argument did Peter use to calm his Jewish brothers who were alarmed and outraged by the influx of Gentiles into the church (11:1–18)?
- Other Verses to consider: Deuteronomy 10:17; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Job 34:19; Romans 2:11; 3:29–30; James 2:1

? - Read & Discuss the quote that Dustin referenced: *"The fundamental emphasis of the Cornelius story is that, since God does not make distinctions in his new society, we have no liberty to make them either. Yet, tragic as it is, the*

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-Jews-only.html>

² Jerome H. Smith, [The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge: The Most Complete Listing of Cross References Available Anywhere- Every Verse, Every Theme, Every Important Word](#) (Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 791.

church has never learned irrevocably the truth of its own unity or of the equality of its members in Christ. Even Peter himself, despite the fourfold divine witness he had received, later had a bad lapse in Antioch, withdrew from fellowship with believing Gentiles, and had to be publicly opposed by Paul (Gal.2:11ff). Even then, the circumcision party continued their propaganda, and the Council of Jerusalem had to be called to settle the issue (Acts 15). Even after that, the same ugly sin of discrimination has kept reappearing in the church, in the form of racism (colour prejudice), nationalism ('my country, right or wrong'), tribalism in Africa and casteism in India, social and cultural snobbery,⁴⁴ or sexism (discriminating against women). All such discrimination is inexcusable even in non-Christian society; in the Christian community it is both an obscenity (because offensive to human dignity) and a blasphemy (because offensive to God who accepts without discrimination all who repent and believe). Like Peter, **we have to learn that 'God does not show favouritism' (10:34).**⁴³

? - How might God be leading you to cross racial or cultural barriers with the love of Christ? What are some specific actions you can take?

Discuss these Summary Points:

- We must relentlessly protect the purity of the Gospel
- We have such a tendency to add to the Gospel – Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone!
- We must refuse to make distinctions between the people of God
- Don't booger this up! 😊

⁴⁴ Jas. 2:1ff.

³ John R. W. Stott, [*The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World*](#), The Bible Speaks Today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 197.