



ACTS

Acts 9.32 –
Acts 12.25

KAUPAPA – ACTS 10.34-36

Then Peter replied, “I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”



KIA IINOI TAATOU | LET US PRAY

In you Lord, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female - we are all one. Grant us the grace to love one another as you love us; to extend the boundaries of our love beyond the comfortable. Help us see one another as you see us: without favouritism.

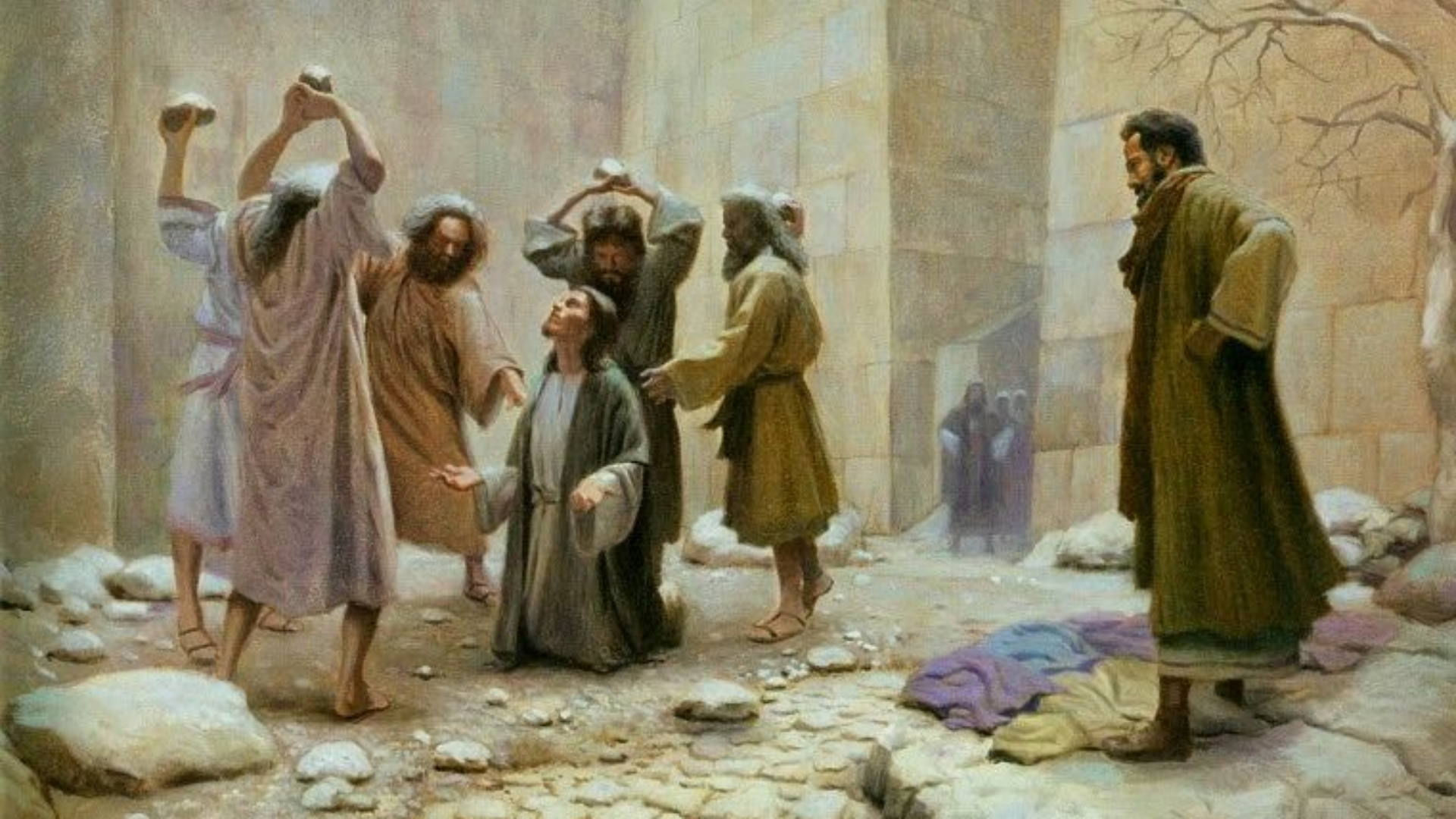


WELCOME | NAU MAI HAERE MAI

Today:

- Recap(itulation) - week six (part 2)
- Acts 9.32-12.25: Breaking Boundaries
 - Gentiles, Good News, Holy Spirit, Baptism
 - Peter's defence, imprisonment & escape





OVERVIEW 9-10

- **ACTS 9.32ff:**

The apostle Peter travels through Lydda and Joppa, where he performs two miraculous healings—curing a paralyzed man named Aeneas and raising a devoted disciple named Tabitha from the dead—which ultimately leads many in the region to believe in the Lord

- **ACTS 10:**

God gives the Apostle Peter a vision declaring all people clean, prompting him to preach the gospel to the Roman centurion Cornelius, which resulted in the Holy Spirit falling on the Gentiles and their subsequent baptism as full members of God's family.

OVERVIEW 11-12

- **ACTS 11:**

Peter defence of the inclusion of Gentiles into the Christian church. This leads to the rapid growth of the diverse church in Antioch (where believers were first called "Christians"), and the dispatch of relief to the brethren in Judea ahead of a prophesied famine.

- **ACTS 12:**

King Herod martyrs the apostle James and imprisons Peter, but God miraculously rescues Peter in answer to the church's earnest prayers. Herod is struck down with worms for arrogance. The word of God continues growing and multiplying the early church.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

ACTS 9:32-35

Meanwhile, Peter traveled from place to place, and he came down to visit the believers in the town of Lydda. There he met a man named Aeneas, who had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years. Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up, and roll up your sleeping mat!” And he was healed instantly. Then the whole population of Lydda and Sharon saw Aeneas walking around, and they turned to the Lord. (Sound familiar ...?)







CONTEXT

1

PURITY LAWS: Lev 11 & Deut 14

National and Cultural Identity:

Dietary restrictions (kosher) and bodily purity separated Jews from Gentiles. These practices turned everyday life into an ongoing expression of loyalty to God, especially crucial under foreign occupation.



PURITY LAWS: Lev 11 & Deut 14

Temple Readiness: The ultimate goal of the laws (deriving from Leviticus) was to safeguard the sanctity of the Jerusalem Temple. While originally applying primarily to priests, during the Second Temple period, many lay people adopted these practices to ensure they were spiritually fit to enter the Temple during pilgrimage festivals.



PURITY LAWS: Lev 11 & Deut 14

Symbolic System of Life and Death: Purity laws were not about "hygiene" or moral sin. Instead, they were part of a symbolic worldview contrasting life and death. Contact with death (corpses), skin diseases (leprosy), or the loss of vital fluids (blood) resulted in ritual impurity (tumah). Impurity did not mean a person was "bad," but rather that they were ritually unfit to enter holy spaces.



PETER'S DREAM / REVELATION

He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners. In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds. Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat them." (Acts 10)

- What's going on?

"Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean."

- Are we still talking about animals...?



PROCESS

The Vision (The Principle): God gives Peter a thrice-repeated vision of a sheet containing both clean and unclean animals. When Peter objects to eating what is forbidden, God commands: "What God has cleansed you must not call common". This signals the end of Old Testament purity distinctions.

The Revelation (The Application): Peter associates the vision with people, rather than food. He states: "God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean". Cornelius—a Roman centurion—is a "God-fearer" who was previously viewed as religiously and ethnically unclean.

PROCESS

The Crossing of Boundaries: Challenging centuries of religious customs, Peter enters a Gentile's home, sharing table fellowship and the gospel. He recognizes that "God shows no partiality", meaning human prejudices can no longer dictate who receives God's grace.

The Outpouring (Divine Confirmation): Before Cornelius is even baptized or circumcised, the Holy Spirit falls upon the Gentiles. This undeniable sign confirms that God Himself has accepted and "cleansed" them.

The Jerusalem Acceptance (Theological Finality): Peter defends his actions to the skeptical leaders in Jerusalem by recounting the Spirit's arrival. The church concludes: "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life".

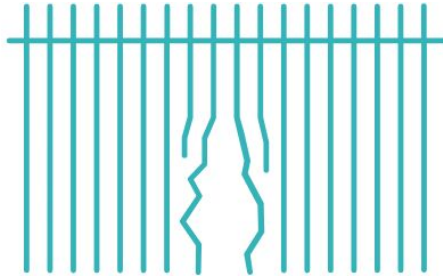
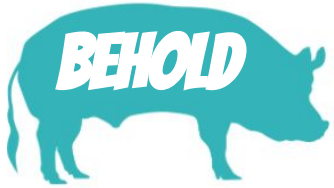
LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

“For Jewish Christians, the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God would have felt like an unbelievable **paradigm shift**. In Acts 11:1–18, the power of the gospel is seen in both the inclusion of the Gentiles into the people of God and in the church’s acceptance of them. There were many different outlooks on Gentiles among Jews during this time, but one cannot argue from the Old Testament that Gentiles (such as Cornelius, the Ethiopian eunuch, or the Roman centurion in Luke 7:1–10) are ignored or excluded by God. God had chosen Israel to be a people set apart, but they were meant to be a blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:3; 22:16–18; Isa. 42:6; 49:6). Associating with Gentiles was not “unlawful” (Acts 10:28) in terms of violating Old Testament commands but in the sense of not following the later customs of strict Jewish traditions about uncleanness. The Jewish traditions of purity made it virtually impossible for Jews to associate with Gentiles without becoming ritually unclean. Now Peter is shown that the same God who chose Israel is doing a new thing, bringing Israel’s vocation—to be a “light to the nations”—to its fullness by embracing the Gentiles through the perfect Israelite: Jesus, the Light of the world.”

(TGC)



PROCESS



Have you seen this process (or similar) used by the church since?



RELATED?

- Divorce
- Children admitted to Communion
- Ordination of women
- Approaches to same-sex attracted persons and their ministry



NEXT WEEK

Week 8: Paul and Barnabas Are Sent
(Acts 13:1–14:28)

