

BEYOND THE DIVIDE

Race • Justice • Generations • Culture • Community • Faith

WEEK 4 | WHEN GOD CHALLENGES OUR PREJUDICES

Acts 10:1–48 | Thursday Evening Bible Study | 6:00 PM

LET'S REVIEW THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Mark each statement True or False, then complete the fill-in review on page 2.

A. TRUE OR FALSE — Acts 8–9

1. [Acts 8:1] Following Stephen's death, persecution scattered many believers into Judea and Samaria.

_____ True _____ False

2. [Acts 8:5] Philip went to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to the people.

_____ True _____ False

3. [Acts 8:18–19] Simon offered money in an attempt to obtain the apostles' authority to confer the Holy Spirit.

_____ True _____ False

4. [Acts 8:26] The angel told Philip to remain in Samaria instead of traveling toward Gaza.

_____ True _____ False

5. [Acts 8:35] Philip began with the Scripture the Ethiopian official was reading and preached Jesus to him.

_____ True _____ False

6. [Acts 9:3–6] Saul encountered the risen Jesus on the road as he traveled toward Damascus.

_____ True _____ False

7. [Acts 9:17–18] After hearing the Lord's instructions, Ananias refused to visit Saul.

_____ True _____ False

B. FILL IN THE BLANK — Acts 8–9

WORD BANK

Ananias • Barnabas • Damascus • Philip • rejoicing • Simon • Tabitha

1. [Acts 8:5] _____ went down to Samaria and preached Christ to the people.
2. [Acts 8:18–19] _____ offered the apostles money for spiritual authority.
3. [Acts 8:39] After his baptism, the Ethiopian official continued his journey _____.
4. [Acts 9:3] A light from heaven shone around Saul as he came near _____.
5. [Acts 9:10–17] The Lord sent a disciple named _____ to minister to Saul.
6. [Acts 9:27] _____ brought Saul to the apostles and told them of his encounter with Jesus.
7. [Acts 9:36–41] In Joppa, _____, also called Dorcas, was raised to life after Peter prayed.

ACTS 8–9 AT A GLANCE

PASSAGE	WHAT HAPPENS
Acts 8:1–4	Persecution scatters the believers, who continue preaching the word.
Acts 8:5–25	Philip preaches in Samaria; many believe and receive the ministry of the apostles.
Acts 8:26–40	Philip explains Isaiah to an Ethiopian official and baptizes him.
Acts 9:1–19	The risen Jesus confronts Saul; Ananias visits him in Damascus.
Acts 9:20–31	Saul preaches Christ, escapes opposition, and joins the disciples.
Acts 9:32–43	Peter ministers in Lydda and Joppa; Aeneas is healed and Tabitha is raised.

WEEK 4 – WHEN GOD CHALLENGES OUR PREJUDICES

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE

Acts 10:1–48

CONTEMPORARY FOCUS

Race • Cultural prejudice • Stereotypes
Equality • Reconciliation

SERIES

Beyond the Divide

MEETING TIME

Thursday Evening Bible Study • 6:00 PM

OPENING GROUP ASSIGNMENT

“WHERE DID I LEARN THAT?”

Without naming specific individuals, discuss:

1. What are some stereotypes society teaches about people based on race, age, neighborhood, education, income, or nationality?

2. Where do people usually learn these assumptions?

3. Can good people carry prejudices they have never seriously examined?

4. What helps a person change?

The purpose is not to accuse one another but to recognize that everybody is influenced by culture.

INTRODUCTION

Acts 10 records one of the most important transitions in the early church. God sends Peter, a Jewish apostle, into the home of Cornelius, a Gentile Roman centurion. Peter must recognize that God is doing something larger than Peter's previous assumptions allowed him to imagine. God prepares both men before they ever meet. The lesson reminds us that following Jesus includes allowing God to challenge attitudes we may have carried for years.

KEY VERSE • KEY WORDS • WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

KEY VERSE — Acts 10:34–35 KJV

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:
But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”

KEY WORDS

Word / Term	Meaning in the Passage
Respecter of Persons — <i>prosōpolēptēs</i>	One who shows partiality or inappropriate favoritism. Acts 10:34.
Nation — <i>ethnos</i>	A people, nation, or ethnic group. Acts 10:35.
Perceive — <i>katalambanō</i>	To grasp, comprehend, or come to understand. Acts 10:34.
Peace — <i>eirēnē</i>	Wholeness and reconciliation accomplished through God. Acts 10:36.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

Prejudice is not always loud or malicious. It can be inherited through family, culture, community experiences, or long-standing assumptions. Christians must continually allow Scripture and the Holy Spirit to examine how we view people who differ from us. Acts 10 teaches that spiritual growth sometimes requires admitting, “God is changing the way I see people.”

BIG IDEA

God challenges our prejudices so that we learn to see people through the gospel, not through inherited labels, and welcome into fellowship all who belong to Christ.

NOTES

LESSON OUTLINE

1. GOD PREPARES US TO SEE PEOPLE DIFFERENTLY

Acts 10:9–20

- Peter's vision disturbed categories he had lived with for years.
- God was preparing Peter before Peter ever entered Cornelius's house.
- Sometimes changing our behavior requires God first changing our perspective.
- Christian maturity involves being willing to ask, "What assumptions am I carrying that God may be challenging?"

TEXTUAL TRUTH

Peter later explained what God had shown him: "that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28 KJV). The vision prepared him to enter a Gentile home.

STUDENT NOTES

2. GOD DOES NOT MEASURE HUMAN WORTH BY OUR CATEGORIES

Acts 10:34–35

- Peter declares that God is no respecter of persons.
- Ethnicity, nationality, social standing, or cultural background does not determine a person's value before God.
- This does not mean every culture or behavior is automatically righteous. It means no ethnic or social group possesses superior human worth.
- Every human being bears God's image and stands in need of God's grace.

GOSPEL CLARIFICATION

Acts 10:35 does not teach that good works earn salvation. Peter goes on to proclaim forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 10:43).

TABLE QUESTION

How can a church affirm equal human dignity while remaining faithful to the teaching of Scripture?

THE GOSPEL BRINGS PEOPLE TO THE SAME TABLE

3. THE GOSPEL BRINGS PEOPLE TO THE SAME TABLE

Acts 10:44–48

- The Holy Spirit comes upon the Gentile believers.
- Peter can no longer deny what God has clearly done.
- The gospel transforms strangers into brothers and sisters.
- Biblical reconciliation requires more than polite tolerance. It creates fellowship, relationship, and shared spiritual identity.

LOOK AGAIN AT THE TEXT

When the Holy Spirit was poured out, Peter asked whether anyone could forbid baptism (Acts 10:47). He then remained with these new believers (Acts 10:48). God's work led to real fellowship.

STUDENT NOTES

HOW TO APPLY THIS TO LIFE

- Ask God to reveal stereotypes you have accepted without examination.
- Refuse racial jokes, ethnic insults, and degrading generalizations.
- Build relationships across cultural boundaries.
- Listen to experiences different from your own.
- Teach children and grandchildren the biblical equality and dignity of all people.
- Do not confuse racial reconciliation with pretending historical injustices never occurred.
- Let the gospel determine how you see people.

THIS WEEK I WILL...

CLOSING REFLECTION

What attitude, assumption, or relationship might God be calling me to examine and change?