



WEEK 4: The Church—it's not who you'd expect!

1. Prelude to Acts 10 and 11

- Gentiles have always been a part of God's plan.
 - In the Old Testament (Gen 12:3; etc.)
 - In the Gospels (Luke 4:25-29; John 10:16; etc.)
- The Book of Acts reveals an increasingly diverse Church.
 - Fishermen, Tax collectors and Zealots (Acts 1:13)
 - Males and females (Acts 1:14)
 - Galileans and Judeans
 - Hebraic and Hellenistic Jews (Acts 2:5, 9-11, 41)
 - Alms-beggars (3:2-11) and Property owners (4:34)
 - Converted Sadducees (6:7b) and Pharisees (9:18; cf. 15:5)
 - Samaritans (8:12)
 - Magicians (8:13)
 - Ethiopian Eunuchs (8:38)
 - Persecuted saints and their persecutors (Acts 9:26)
 - Etc.

2. Gentiles in the Church?! (Acts 9:32—11:26)

Cornelius (9:32—11:18)

- Peter's miraculous ministry:
 - Aeneas healed (9:32-35; cf. 3:6-8; Matt 9:6; Mark 2:11; Luke 5:24; John 5:8)
 - Tabitha raised (9:36-43; cf. Jesus and Jairus' daughter, Mark 5:41; Luke 8:51-56)
- Cornelius' vision (10:1-8)
- Peter's vision (10:9-16; cf. Mark 7:14-19 for food cleanness and John 21:15-17 for threefold repetition; see also Jonah in Joppa)
- Peter and Cornelius (10:17-43)
- The Gift of the Holy Spirit (10:44-48)
- Peter's report in Jerusalem (11:1-18)

The Church at Antioch (11:19-26)

- Initial Evangelism (11:19-21)
- Barnabas (11:22-24)
- Barnabas and Saul (11:25-26)

“...and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” 11:26

3. Postlude to Acts 10 and 11 (Acts 11:27—12:24)

Famine (11:27-30; cf. 6:1-7)

- Famine predicted (vv. 27-28a)
- Famine occurred (v. 28b)
- Famine relief sent (11:29-30; cf. 4:32-37)

Persecution (12:1-23)

- James (the Apostle) martyred (12:1-2)
- Peter arrested (12:3-6)
- Miraculous escape (12:7-11)
- Peter at Mary’s house (12:12-17)
- Consequences (12:18-23)
 - Guards executed
 - Herod dies

“But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied.” (12:24)

APPLICATION:

- God extended His grace to you, an undeserving sinner.
- God wants to use you to extend His grace to other undeserving sinners.
- Would you stand in the way of God’s plan to reveal His grace and glory through the diversity of the Church?

Who are you expecting to see at church this Sunday?

Is your sinful perspective causing you to see certain individuals as “unworthy of God’s favor,” “beyond the hope of redemption,” or “unfit for participation in the Church”?

Next Week: “The Church—it’s not business-as-usual!”

Homework: Read Acts 12:25—15:35 and Paul’s Letter to the Galatians (for extra credit)



WEEK 4: The Church—it's not who you'd expect!

All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. – Acts 10:45 NASB

There's a long-running debate between dog-lovers over the advantages and disadvantages of owning purebred or mixed-breed animals. Typically, the owners of purebred dogs appreciate the relative predictability of size, shape, color and temperament. However, such breeding processes can result in decreased genetic diversity within breeds which can lead to breed-related genetic deficiencies. In other words, sometimes you get predictability at the cost of health and average lifespan. On the other hand, even though mixed-breeds (aka mongrels or mutts) are relatively unpredictable in terms of physical traits, they enjoy increased genetic diversity and a lower susceptibility to some of these breed-specific deficiencies. Owners of mutts also tend to appreciate their dog's "one-of-a-kind" appearance. Believe it or not, this dog debate has application for the Church. The Church is a mixed-breed. We see this from the very outset of the Church's expansion: Hebraic Jews, Hellenistic Jews, converted pharisaical persecutors, Samaritans (or "half-Jews"), Gentiles, Roman Centurions, pagan sorcerers, masters and their slaves, businesswomen, jailers, Greek philosophers, and even members of Caesar's own household. So why do we sometimes get so fixated on establishing a predictable look and feel within our local congregations today? God isn't concerned about your pedigree. He's concerned about your holiness. He wants unity without uniformity, and diversity without division. Such a "one-of-a-kind" look brings Him much glory!

- WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY?

Acts 9:32—12:24

- Peter Heals Aeneas (9:32-35)
- Peter Raises Tabitha (9:36-43)
- Peter and Cornelius (10:1-48)
- Peter's Report (11:1-18)
- The Church at Antioch (11:19-30)
- Persecution Continues (12:1-23)
- *Summary* (12:24)

