

Church of God Sunday School

PETER'S MESSAGE TO THE GENTILES (CORNELIUS)

Acts 10:1-48

God made every one of us different. We might have different eye color or hair color or skin color. We might live in different cities, states, or even countries. Although we have many differences, did you know that God loves all of us? God does not love one person more than another. He does not have favorites.

In the Bible we often read of two groups of people: the Jews and the Gentiles. The Jews were the descendants (children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so on) of Abraham. Everyone who was not a Jew was called a Gentile.

In the Old Testament the Jews were to keep separate from the Gentiles. They were not to marry, eat with, or worship with the Gentiles.

Jesus and His disciples were all Jews. Once Jesus returned to Heaven, His disciples began to preach to other Jews about Jesus. But they were leaving out the Gentiles. This was not what Jesus wanted. Jesus wanted the whole world to be saved, not just the Jews.

Cornelius (*Kor-NEEL-yuhs*) was a "centurion," a captain in the Roman army. He was "a devout man [who] . . . feared God with all his house." Cornelius was a Gentile, but God heard his prayers. God was going to use Cornelius in a very special way!

God sent an angel to Cornelius, telling him to "send men to Joppa" (*JOP-uh*) and ask for Peter. God told Cornelius where his men would find Peter. He told him that Peter "shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do." Cornelius obeyed the angel. "He called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier . . . [and] he sent them to Joppa."

As these men drew near the city, Peter "went up upon the housetop to pray." (Houses were often built with flat roofs, a good place to relax or to pray.) It was about noon, and Peter was hungry. "But while they made ready, he fell into a trance [a vision or a dream]."



God wanted to show Peter something very important.

While in this "trance," Peter saw "heaven opened," and a "great sheet knit at the four corners" coming down. In this sheet "were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." Peter then heard a voice that said, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat."

Peter answered, "Not so, Lord." Some of the animals in this sheet were unclean, which the Jews were forbidden to eat (Leviticus 11). Peter had "never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." Peter heard the voice speak again, saying, "What God

hath cleansed, that call not thou common."

This happened three times, and then the sheet went "up again into heaven." While Peter was wondering "what this vision which he had seen should mean," the men from Cornelius came to the door and asked for Peter.

God's Spirit said to Peter: "Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." Peter obeyed the Holy Spirit, and the next day he went with the three men to Caesarea (*Ses-uh-REE-uh*) where Cornelius was waiting.

When Peter met Cornelius, Cornelius began to tell Peter how he had fasted and prayed. He told Peter how an angel instructed him to send for Peter. Now Peter could understand the vision God had sent to him.

Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." Peter then preached the Gospel to the people. Although Cornelius and his family were Gentiles, God wanted them to hear the Gospel too. Peter was obedient to what God showed him, and many people were saved that day.

God showed Peter that He does not favor one

person over another, and He did not want Peter to either. The Bible says, "If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin . . ." (James 2:9).

All people are "one [or the same] in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). "God is no respecter of persons." (A respecter of persons is someone who favors one person over another.) If God doesn't do this, should you?

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Then Peter . . . said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons."*

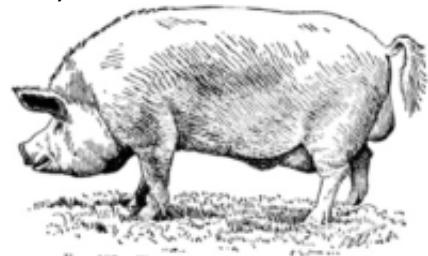
—Acts 10:34  
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Old Testament Unclean Animals

(Fill in the Missing Letters)



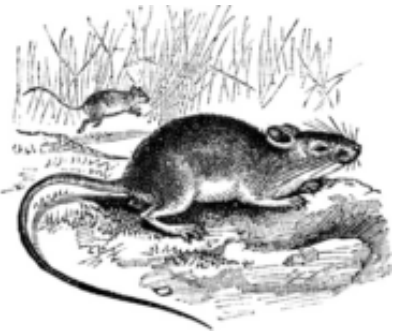
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I Perceive That



What word is missing?

What does "respector of persons" mean?

A respector of persons is someone who favors one person over another.

If God doesn't do this, should we?

God Is No

of Persons