

Acts # 53 “No Longer Jews and Gentiles; now Christians” *Acts 11:1-18*

We cannot love God if we don't know Him and we cannot know Him without hearing of Him the way He has designed for us to do so.

Daily intake of biblical truth with emphasis on the mystery doctrine of the Church Age should be priority #1 for all believers.

Concentrating on priority # 1 means finding the right pastor-teacher to encourage your spiritual growth.

Organizing our lives around priority # 1 means attending Bible class and avoiding distractions.

This causes us to organize our thinking around priority # 1 so that we learn of all that God has provided for us to be successful in this life.

Learning to use God's grace provision should be the goal and purpose of every believer in Phase 2.

Our Christian life cannot proceed to spiritual maturity without the wisdom of biblical truth as our guide.

God has freely given us riches beyond our wildest dreams and only His Word reveals the treasures of His plan to us.

As we advance from babes in Christ to spiritual maturity; only then can we begin to fully understand and execute Phase 2 of God's plan and fulfill His mandate in *2nd Peter 3:18*: “Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

Faith-rest always relies on what God has done; He came to us in Jesus Christ Who died for us and gave Himself

to us and not only that, He also makes His eternal life available to us.

The book of Acts chronicles the working of God the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and we've reached the point where He's been working on the heart of a Gentile Roman centurion named Cornelius, along with his family and some co-workers, to receive the message of eternal life.

This is a monumental paradigm shift in Israel's thinking designed by God to cause the early church made up of Jewish believers to redirect their focus and drastically change their opinion of Gentiles.

So, the Church is made up of believers from many races with one thing in common, they're all equally in union with Jesus Christ.

This is why Paul tells us in *Galatians 3:28* that we're all one; “*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*”

But on the day of Pentecost, the Church Age began in one spot, Jerusalem with basically one race participating.

So there is a problem immediately because the Church began with Jews only and it looked as though it would be a Jewish monopoly just exactly like the Jewish Age.

We have equal opportunity for salvation and then equal opportunity for a successful spiritual life whether Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, male or female.

For anyone to seek human equality, acceptance or recognition is to aim far too low in God's economy which stresses spiritual equality over any man-made system.

In Christianity, the male has no privilege over the female, the Jew has no privilege over the Gentile and the rich have no privilege over the poor; Christianity is the only system on earth where there is true equality.

It's either equality of opportunity or equality of outcome; you can't have it both ways.

God shows no partiality; He's not a respecter of persons.

He receives anyone, anywhere, from any race, any background, any social class, any situation in life; it makes no difference who you are or where you've come from, God is willing to save you if you are.

He is not in favor of one race over another but someone says 'I thought Israel was God's favored nation.'

Only favored in the sense of being chosen or better yet, choice for the purpose of representing God to the nations, a responsibility Israel failed at and was disciplined for many times.

The first problem was the geographical limitation and the second problem was racial because on the Day of Pentecost, the Church began with Jews only and it appeared that the Age of Israel was to continue, just in a different form.

But this is not true; both Jew and Gentile believers are now classified as Christians as one in the body of Christ, with the middle wall of partition which had existed in the temple broken down spiritually and so, any person regardless of whether Jew or Gentile who receives Jesus Christ as Savior would be entered into union with Him

at the moment of salvation, in other words, regeneration is the only basis for equality in the human race.

The fact that Gentiles were integrated into the body of Christ came as a quite a shock to the Jerusalem church and a congregation that had every opportunity of being the leading church of all time, which missed its chance to be great.

In Jerusalem we have basically Jews only and many

of these Jews have lived all their lives under the Mosaic Law and now that they have accepted Christ, they go right back to living under the Law.

So, they simply accept the Law as the Christian way of life and they cannot accept the fact that the Gentiles have equal rights and equal privileges with them spiritually.