

Series: How Jesus Acts through Us Today; *Sermon:* **How God Defeats Religion;**
delivered by **Josh Moody**, senior pastor, on June 21, 2020

Bible text explored: Acts 11:1–18

¹Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, ³“You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” ⁴But Peter began and explained it to them in order: ⁵“I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me. ⁶Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey and reptiles and birds of the air. ⁷And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸But I said, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹But the voice answered a second time from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, do not call common.’ ¹⁰This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. ¹²And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. ¹³And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.’ ¹⁵As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” ¹⁸When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.” [ESV]

Review and application:

1. In this book, what (*Acts 1:8*) is Luke’s overall story line?
2. What wall of rules with biblical roots (*verses 7-8*, above) was Peter still committed to?
Had God intended for this barrier to other nations to be permanent?
(See *Genesis 17:5-7, 18:17-18; 22:18.*)
Who had already provided for removal of this wall?
(See *Romans 4:16-17a; Galatians 3:7-9; Ephesians 2:13-14.*)
3. The religion God defeats, Pastor Moody said, is a human invented religion which, when kept, build walls of hostility. How, instead, can biblical Christianity serve as an anti-virus vaccine?
4. Grasping the significant story arc of how God erased this lingering discrimination, Pastor Josh suggested, requires consistency in translation of the Greek word *diakrino*, appearing in the ESV as follows:
10:20— *hesitation*; substitute *making a distinction*.
11:2— *criticized*; substitute *made a distinction*.
11:12—(correctly rendered): *making no distinction*.
15:9—(correctly rendered): *made no distinction*.
How (in *verses 1-3*, above) does this clarify the issue being raised?

5. In Peter's recounting of his experience, what (*verses 4-12*) had the Spirit said to him?

And what (*verses 13-14*) had the Spirit said to Cornelius?

How, in our families and beyond, should we be recounting our own experience, to underscore the Scriptures (*2 Timothy 3:15*) that make us wise for salvation?

6. Peter concluded his narrative (*verses 17-18*) with an argument. What was its thrust?

What was its effect?

What confession and submission will open the way to life eternal for *anyone*?

In his *A Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade*, published in 1807, William Wilberforce wrote: "We are repeatedly and expressly told that Christ has done away all distinction of nations and made all one great family, [*and that*] all our fellow creatures are now our brethren." Are we, too, ready to glorify God for this outcome?