

The Jonah Saga

Acts 10: 34. 35.



“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.”

Acts 10: 34. 35.



I. Introduction

God's love is universal. He accepts everyone. His character cannot discriminate His children. Every child of God has place in His heart, especially sinners. We are invited to do the same.



"I have no country to fight for;
my country is the earth; I am a
citizen of the world."

Eugene V. Debs, *Writings of
Eugene V. Debs*



"Love by faith every one of your "enemies", everyone who angers you, ignores you, bores you or frustrates you. People are waiting to be loved with God's love."

Dr. Bill Bright, *Transferable Concept: How You Can Love By Faith*, co-founder of Campus Crusade for Christ.



“May it please God to grant this saving grace, not only to us, but also to all peoples and nations of the earth.”

Prayer of John Calvin, in Calhoun, “John Calvin: Missionary Hero or Missionary Failure”, 19, n. 23.



“O sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth.” (Psalm 96:1). The Apostle binds us together into this very structure, and fastens us when bound together in that unity, saying, Forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:2-3. Where there is this unity of Spirit, there is one stone; but one stone formed out of many. How one formed out of many? By forbearing one another in love... This house has increased greatly, and filled many nations: nevertheless, it has not yet prevailed through all nations: by its increase it has held many, and will prevail over all.”

Augustine, Psalm 96

“The heart of the commission is to make disciples. This imperative, of course, means, ‘to turn into disciples,’ and its aorist form conveys the thought that this is actually to be done. The verb itself does not indicate how disciples are to be made, it designates only an activity that will result in disciples. It connotes results not methods and ways.”

Richard C. H. Lenski, Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel, 1943. p. 1172



“That the one true God created all people and nations is emphasized again and again in the Bible. That He elected Israel from among the nations to be His peculiar possession is a basic theme: God reveals Himself as Israel’s creator and redeemer. His covenant with Abraham was reconfirmed in the Exodus and in the Conquest of Canaan. When the Hebrews were delivered from bondage in Egypt, ‘no people’ became ‘people of God’.

God didn’t abandon Israel... As John the Baptist rightly declared, only God’s electing love guaranteed Israel’s existence as His people, the children of Abraham. Finally, God sent His Son, Jesus the Messiah, to recapitulate Israel’s history in his own person, and to gather to himself the redeemed from all the nations of the world.”

James LaGrand, *The Earliest Christian Mission to 'All Nations' in the Light of Matthew's Gospel*, p. 251.

Fundamental Belief #14. Unity in the Body of Christ:

“The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children.”

II. Context



The text relating the baptism of Cornelius confirms that God's plan for His church was so vast and impressive that His disciples had hard time to perceive all of its beauty. The apostle Peter could not include Gentiles in his concept of God's love without a special vision and without being the witness of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is why his statement about God accepting all nations represents a powerful testimony of God's action in his heart.



The structure of Acts 10: 1 – 11: 18

I	10: 1 – 16	The Time of Visions
II	10: 17 – 23	Meeting at Peter's House
V	10: 24 - 48	Meeting at Cornelius' House
V	11: 1 – 17	The Time of Contestation in Jerusalem
V	11: 18	The Time of Glorifying God in Jerusalem

Two visions (vision of God to Peter, and vision of God to Cornelius) were necessary for the leaders of the apostolic church in order to accept that God loves everyone, including those who are part of other nations.



The structure of Acts 10: 1 – 11: 18

I	10: 1 – 16	The Time of Visions	
		a	Cornelius' Vision (1 – 8)
		b	Peter's Vision (9 – 16)
II	10: 17 – 23	Meeting at Peter's House	
		a	Outside at the Gate (17 – 18)
		b	Up on the Roof (19 – 20)
		c	Down at the Gate (21 – 22)
		d	Inside the House (23)
		e	Departure from the House (23)

The structure of Acts 10: 1 – 11: 18 (continued)

III

10: 24 – 48

Meeting at Cornelius' House

a

Entering to Caesarea (24)

b

Tentative of Worship and Peter's Refusal (25 – 26)

c

Peter's Question (27 – 29)

d

Cornelius' Answer and his readiness to listen (30 – 33)

e

Peter's Speech (34 – 43)

f

Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (44 – 46)

g

Baptism (47 – 48)

h

Postbaptismal fellowship (48)

The structure of Acts 10: 1 – 11: 18 (continued)

IV	11: 1 – 17	Time of Contestation in Jerusalem	
		a	Apostles and Brethren have heard the story of Cornelius (1)
		b	Contestation of Peter's visit to Cornelius (2 – 3)
		c	Report of Peter regarding events in Caesarea (4 – 16)
		d	Peter's Question: Who am I to resist to God (17)
V	11: 18	Time of Glorifying God in Jerusalem	

III. God loves all of
His children and is
preparing His
kingdom for those
who fear Him and
do what is right



1. God doesn't teach hate and discrimination

"I now realize how true it
is that God does not show
favoritism..."



“God does not show partiality or favoritism (Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9), and neither should we. James 2:4 describes those who discriminate as “judges with evil thoughts.” Instead, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves (James 2:8). Jesus Christ destroyed the dividing wall of hostility (Ephesians 2:14). All forms of racism, prejudice, and discrimination are affronts to the work of Christ on the cross.

Jesus commands us to love one another as He loves us (John 13:34). If God is impartial and loves us with impartiality, then we need to love others with that same high standard. Jesus teaches in Matthew 25 that whatever we do to the least of His brothers, we do to Him. If we treat a person with contempt, we are mistreating a person created in God’s image; we are hurting somebody whom God loves and for whom Jesus died.”

S. Michael Houdmann

“The good Samaritan story of Lk 10:25-27 was an attempt by Jesus to expose the wrongful attitude of racial intolerance that existed between the Jews & Samaritans during the time of Jesus. In Matt 28:19 Jesus told his followers to go out and make disciples of all nations and this would include all people groups. Jesus never said to only make disciples of some people groups, he said “all nations.” Also Paul in Gal 3:28 condemned racial intolerance in the church. As the article explains below racial discrimination should not be a part of the true regenerated Christian.

There is only one race, the human race... All human beings have the same physical characteristics (with minor variations, of course). More importantly, all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27). God loved the world so much that He sent Jesus to lay down His life for us (John 3:16). All of us.”

John Wolf

"[Children] are so quick to notice the injustice! And many adults are still wounded by the feeling that they were (or still are) on the short end of their parents' favoritism. Our sensitivity to partiality is an evidence of our desire for justice to be real. It is no small matter to us.

Nor is it a small matter to God. Through Moses he charged the people of Israel to believe and to remember his divine purity on this issue: "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes" (Deut 10:17).

That is why the oppressed could trust him, for it follows immediately that he "defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing" (Deut 10:18)."

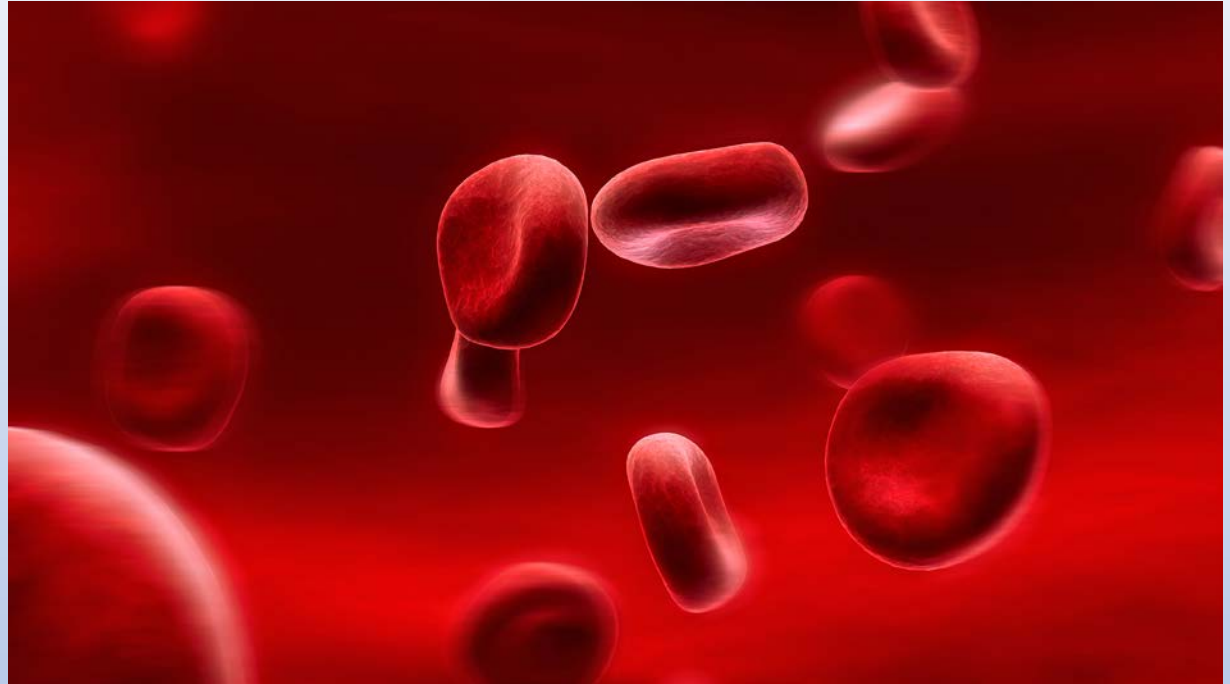
George M. Stulac, IVP New Testament Commentary.

2. All nations are
equal in God's eyes
"God accepts from every
nation"



“Everybody is a book of
blood; wherever we're
opened, we're red.”

Clive Barker, *Books of Blood*,
Volumes One to Three



“Jesus longed to unfold the deep mysteries of the truth which had been hid for ages, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews, and “partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 3:6. This truth the disciples were slow to learn, and the divine Teacher gave them lesson upon lesson. In rewarding the faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of Sychar, He had already given evidence that He did not share the intolerance of the Jews. But the Samaritans had some knowledge of God; and the centurion had shown kindness to Israel. Now Jesus brought the disciples in contact with a heathen, whom they regarded as having no reason above any of her people, to expect favor from Him. He would give an example of how such a one should be treated. The disciples had thought that He dispensed too freely the gifts of His grace. He would show that His love was not to be circumscribed to race or nation.” Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, p. 402.

“If equal affection cannot be,
Let the more loving one be me.”
W.H. Auden



3. To fear God is the best attitude for human beings

"those who fear him and
do what is right."



“I feel the most intense anguish for our youth. I warn you, as one who knows the danger, not to be entrapped by Satan through the little knowledge of science which you may have acquired. It is better to have a pure and humble heart than all the knowledge you can possibly gain without the fear of the Lord.”

Ellen G. White, Messages to Young People, p. 85.

“We must submit ourselves to
each other in the fear of God.”
Lailah Gifty Akita



“It makes every difference what material is used in the character building. The long-expected day of God will soon test every man’s work. “The fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is” (1 Corinthians 3:13). As fire reveals the difference between gold, silver, and precious stones and wood, hay, and stubble, so the day of judgment will test characters, showing the difference between characters formed after Christ’s likeness and characters formed after the likeness of the selfish heart. All selfishness, all false religion, will then appear as it is. The worthless material will be consumed; but the gold of true, simple, humble faith will never lose its value. It can never be consumed, for it is imperishable. One hour of transgression will be seen to be a great loss, while the fear of the Lord will be seen to be the beginning of wisdom. The pleasure of self-indulgence will perish as stubble, while the gold of steadfast principle, maintained at any cost, will endure forever. Ellen G. White, The Review and Herald, December 11, 1900.

V. Conclusion



"In the eyes of God, all of us in our wonderful particularity equally receive the invitation to "fear" and receive God (Acts 10:35). Fear is not often a way to relate to God that we stress in our churches, especially in a culture wherein fear leads us to isolate and protect ourselves from any encroachment. The fear of God differs from the fears that can so easily immobilize us.

In Luke and Acts, fear is often associated with the appearances of angels (Luke 1:12-13; 1:30; 2:9-10; 5:10; etc.); the natural human reaction is to quiver before such appearances, but rather consistently these messengers of God instruct those to whom they appear not to fear. That is, the fear of God is not terror or panic, but a profound acknowledgement that God's holiness, power, and love are simply beyond our comprehension. It is such fear linked with doing "what is right" which marks off the people of God (Acts 10:35)."

Eric Barreto

“Acceptance cannot be obtained on any other ground than that of the covenant of mercy, through the atonement of Christ; but wherever true religion is found, God will accept it without regarding names or sects. The fear of God and works of righteousness are the substance of true religion, the effects of special grace. Though these are not the cause of a man's acceptance, yet they show it; and whatever may be wanting in knowledge or faith, will in due time be given by Him who has begun it. They knew in general the word, that is, the gospel, which God sent to the children of Israel. The purport of this word was, that God by it published the good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ.”

Matthew Henry

"The religion of Christ uplifts the receiver to a higher plane of thought and action, while at the same time it presents the whole human race as alike the objects of the love of God, being purchased by the sacrifice of His Son. At the feet of Jesus, the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, meet together, with no thought of caste or worldly preeminence. All earthly distinctions are forgotten as we look upon Him whom our sins have pierced. The self-denial, the condescension, the infinite compassion of Him who was highly exalted in heaven, puts to shame human pride, self-esteem, and social caste. Pure, undefiled religion manifests its heaven-born principles in bringing into oneness all who are sanctified through the truth. All meet as blood-bought souls, alike dependent upon Him who has redeemed them to God."

Ellen G. White, Reflecting Christ, p. 29.

The Jonah Saga

Acts 10: 34. 35.

