

Sunday School Lesson

November 17. Lesson VII—Living With People of Other Races—Acts 10: 9-15; 30-35; Galatians 3: 28, 29. Golden Text—Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and whom worketh righteousness, is accepted with him—Acts 10: 34, 35.

- ANALYSIS.**
- I. AN INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP, Ruth 1: 1-18.
 - II. OVERCOMING NATIONAL PREJUDICE AND ILL WILL, John 4: 5-10; Acts 10: 1 to 11: 18; Gal. 3: 28, 29.
 - III. WHAT WE OWE TO OTHER RACES AND NATIONS, Rom. 1: 14.

INTRODUCTION—We have, in the Bible, some interesting examples of friendly intercourse and neighborliness between people of different races or nations. Such are Abraham's relations with Hittite communities in southern Palestine (Gen. 14: 13), the cordial welcome given Jacob and his sons by the king of Egypt (Gen. 47: 1-10); Moses with the Midianites (Exodus 2: 15-16), David among the Philistines (1 Sam. 27: 1-7), David and Solomon and the king of Tyre (1 Kings 5: 1-7). It is true that there are many wars in Bible history, but there are also bright instances of international friendliness. It will be remembered that Jeremiah counseled submission to Babylon, and spoke well of the king Nebuchadnezzar, chap. 27: 1-12. When Peter returned to Jerusalem, and what he had done became known, he had to defend his conduct against those who were same persons which he had found so difficult to overcome. It was to their credit as well as his that when they heard his story they held their peace and glorified God, chap. 11: 1-18. The spirit of Christ was working mightily in his mind and hearts of these strict observers of an ancient and venerated tradition. In him the nations are being made one—neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, all one in Christ Jesus (Col. 3: 22-23).

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II. OVERCOMING NATIONAL PREJUDICE AND ILL WILL, John 4: 5-10; Acts 10: 1 to 11: 18; Gal. 3: 28, 29.

The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans, and the Samaritans a real race, descendants of the few people of Israel who were left after the fall of that kingdom, and the carrying off of many captives by the Assyrians in B.C. 722, and the strangers from eastern and northern countries who were brought and settled there with them, 2 Kings, chap. 17. In religion as well as race they were a mongrel people, combining the worship of Jehovah with that of other gods, and with gross superstitions. They had asked to be permitted to share with the returned Jews in the temple of Jerusalem, but had been refused. Ezra 4: 1-3. Henceforward they were enemies. The climax was reached in B.C. 432, when Nehemiah drove from Jerusalem a man of high rank, who had married the daughter of a Samaritan noble, Neh. 13: 28. This man fled to his father-in-law in Samaria, and either then or within the following century temple was built in Samaritan territory on Mount Gerizim, which became a rival of the temple in Jerusalem.

In the story told in chap. 4 of the Gospel according to John, Jesus is seen stopping the bounds of Jesus' town, talking freely with a Samaritan woman, and visiting and preaching to the people of the Samaritan town of Sychar. Compare Acts 8: 5, 6, 25.

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has had a vision which he has been told by an angel to send to Joppa for Peter. While a soldier and two of his household servants are on their way to invite Peter to come to him, that dream or vision in which he is made to doubt whether there is any real value in the Jewish distinction between clean and unclean foods (Acts 10: 14; compare Leviticus, chap. 11). While his mind was occupied with this perplexing question the messengers of Cornelius arrived. Next day he went away with them and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

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panions went into the house of the Roman officer and met in a friendly way the company assembled there, they were doing what was not only very unusual, but was indeed unlawful. But the influence of Peter's dream remains with him, and he said, God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. He shows himself truly great in his willingness to learn. In every nation, he now learns, are men accepted of God.

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