

Why a raceless gospel?

In Acts 10 and 11, we learn that the early Christians had a problem with sharing their faith with persons they deemed “other.” They wrestled with the false binary of us and them, of including the Gentiles in this new community of faith. Because of the work of the Holy Spirit and the witness of baptism, they learned that Christianity is a faith outside of their comfort zone, their circle of influence and their friend group.

It is a faith that they cannot claim to have a hand in. It is not for the Jews alone.

The Holy Spirit makes the difference. The presence of God fell on the Gentiles and thus, includes uncircumcised believers. Therefore, there is no distinction.

The Christian believer would be known not for a mark of the flesh but of the Spirit. Baptized by water and the Holy Spirit, Jesus’ followers would be baptized and not circumcised believers.

Christians would bear a watermark.

The Raceless Gospel takes the initiative, reminding Christians that our identity lies in baptism and not a physical mark or distinction made by race. It also takes to heart the words of Peter: “The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us” and those of Paul, believed by many scholars to be a repetition of the church’s first creed:

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:27-28, NRSV).



Acts

11:12, NRSV

“The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and US.”