

ACTS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Acts chapter 10 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we closed last time Luke tells us that Peter is in Joppa and through his witness there in Joppa, many came to saving faith. And Acts chapter 9 closed with these words, **“So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.”** Acts 9:43.

Now we might not think too much about that but for a Jew to stay at the home of a tanner was not kosher. What do I mean by that?

Think about it. A tanner worked with dead animals and thus, it made the Jewish people who came in contact with these dead animals or those who worked with dead animals ceremonially unclean!

And as big of a deal as that was, we are going to see tonight that God is going to stretch Peter even more as a door is going to be opened to the Gentiles.

Keep in mind that in Acts 1:8 we are told, **“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”**

Jesus divides the book of Acts up for us. In Acts chapters 1-7 we saw the Gospel spread through Jerusalem.

We are currently looking at how the Gospel is spreading through Judea and Samaria in Acts chapters 8 through 12.

And finally, we will conclude the book of Acts by looking at how the Gospel message spread to the end or the uttermost part of the earth and we will see that in Acts chapters 13-28.

And let me say this before we get to our text this evening. Our witness is so important. What people see in us. What they hear us speak. Let me share this with you and you will see what I mean. We are told,

Belonging to Christ should create in us a sense of responsibility. His glory should be our concern. We are His image in the world.

An American chaplain in the Civil War asked a wounded soldier, "Would you like me to read you something from the Bible?" The soldier said, "I'm so thirsty, I'd rather have a drink of water."

After he had drunk it he said, "Could you put something under my head?" The chaplain took off his overcoat, rolled it up, and placed it under the man's head as a pillow.

"Now," said the soldier, "if I had something over me. I'm so cold." The chaplain took off his jacket and covered the man.

Then the wounded man said, "For God's sake, man, if there's anything in that Book that makes a man do for another what you've done for me, let me hear it!"

Isn't that what the world needs today - Christians who exemplify Christ?

- Illustrations of Bible Truths

What prejudices are we holding on to that are keeping people from seeing Jesus in us? There should be none! Our attitude towards this world should be one of grieving over what we see, people walking in darkness and heading to Hell!

And, in response to what we see, we should be reaching out to them with the love of Christ. We are going to see tonight the sovereign preparation of not only Peter, but also a man named Cornelius. Walls of separation are going to come tumbling down!

And God is not done. Maybe it is you, maybe it is me who the Lord will work on in this area so we can speak to people without any prejudices!

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Acts chapter 10 beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

ACTS 10

VERSES 1-2

To help give you an idea where Caesarea and Joppa were located, Caesarea is sixty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem and thirty miles north of Joppa (Jaffa).

Caesarea was the capital of the Roman province of Judea and it was the place the procurator lived, (this was a title of certain officials (not Magistrates) in ancient Rome who were in charge of the financial affairs of a province, or imperial governor of a minor province).

We are introduced to this man named Cornelius. Cornelius was a centurion or in charge of 100 soldiers and part of the Italian regiment or cohort.

Think of it like this. A Roman legion consisted of 6,000 men, that was then divided into ten cohorts of 600 men, which again was broken down into 60 centurions who were in charge of 100 men.

Also, with Caesarea being the headquarters for the area, they had a large group of Roman soldiers in the area.

And listen to what this man was about. We are told in verse 2 that he was, "**a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.**"

As you read that you may come to the conclusion that Cornelius is saved. He was a man who feared God, along with his household. He was a good man. He took care of those in need. And he prayed to God.

Again, we may miss the significance of what is stated here. But keep in mind that, as Hughes tells us, “As a typical Roman he had been exposed to the Roman gods – Jupiter, Augustus, Mars, Venus, etc. – but found they had been exposed to the enlightened concepts of Judaism and had become devoutly monotheistic.”

Think about this. He moved from the pagan roots of Roman spirituality with their many gods to the God of Israel, one God! But he only could go so far because the Jews themselves were in the dark, they had deviated so far from what God desired that they even put to death their Messiah, Jesus, the one who was to save them!

And to the Jews, he did not convert to Judaism but was in a category of what the Jews called God-fearers; these were Gentiles who loved the God of Israel and were sympathetic to and supportive of the Jewish faith; yet they stopped short of becoming full Jews in lifestyle and in circumcision.

On Cornelius, Ryrie says, “A proselyte of the gate; that is, he believed in the God of Judaism and his government, but had not yet taken any of the steps to become a full-fledged proselyte.”

Here is the thing, Cornelius was living up to the light that he had, he wasn't saved yet but if a person is searching for the true and living God, God will give him more light so that he can be saved.

It is as Jeremiah 29:13 says, “**And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.**” Look at what takes place next.

VERSES 3-6

Here we see that Cornelius is praying, around 3:00 pm in the afternoon, the time of the evening prayer for the Jews. And as he is praying he has a vision of an angel who tells Cornelius that his prayers are going to be answered.

Now that is interesting because there are those that believe that God doesn't hear the prayers of unbelievers.

Obviously, that is not true because God hears everything. The thing we need to remember is that He is under no obligation to answer the prayers of unbelievers but will always respond to a heart that wants to know Him.

That should just make sense because He heard our hearts cry as we repented and asked Him to be Lord and Savior of our lives!

For Cornelius, he was seeking after the true and living God and God is going to reveal Himself to Cornelius, He is going to give him the light he will need to be saved!

You see, as much as he feared God, as sincere as he was, he could not be saved apart from Jesus as Peter tells us in Acts 4:12, "**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**"

Now why didn't this angel just proclaim the Gospel message to Cornelius and cut out the middle man, Peter?

Because, at this time, God desires to use human instruments to proclaim the Good News, the Gospel message.

Secondly, God was also dealing with Peter and some issues he had in his heart regarding Gentiles.

Yes, in Revelation 14:6-7 we are told, **“Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth - to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people - saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.’”**

But until that time, God will use us as His instruments to bring to people the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

VERSES 7-8

Look at the faith of this man. He was told to send men to Joppa, to a man named Peter, who is staying at the house of Simon the tanner. Most likely he knew nothing of Peter or Simon and yet he believed by faith and Cornelius explained everything to his servants and the soldier who was going to go and bring back Peter.

I like that. Cornelius did not hold back anything. He shared with his two servants and devout soldier who then went to Joppa to find this man named Peter who was staying at the house of Simon the tanner.

True faith has legs to walk and that is exactly what we are seeing here!

Now God is working with Cornelius and He is working with Peter and we will see that as we read on.

I like the way that Morgan looks at the events that are taking place here. He wrote, “Two men are thirty miles apart. They must be brought together. In order that they may meet, while Joppa is busy with its trade, and Caesarea with its great shipping interests, and will know nothing of what is going on; God within the shadows keeping watch above His own, sends the angel to Caesarea, and grants the ecstatic trance in Joppa. They were thus brought together.”

Let’s read on and see what takes place.

VERSES 9-10

Okay, I am going to date myself here. But I remember growing up and that old Batman television show! And on that show they said something like this, “*Meanwhile, back at police headquarters Commissioner Gordon and Police Chief O’Hara . . .*”

That, in a sense, is what is going on here. God was working with Cornelius there in Caesarea and He was working with Peter there in Joppa to bring these things into play. In other words, “Meanwhile, back in Joppa . . .”

Please understand this, it is important. If someone says to you “God told me we are to marry!” or “God told me you are to pack your bags and go to Africa as a missionary!” don’t do it unless God also speaks to your heart! He will speak to your heart and He may use others to help confirm it but if He is not speaking to you, don’t let others misguide you no matter how spiritual they may be!

Here in Joppa it is about noon, the time for prayer again, and Peter is on the roof, which was functional just as the roofs are in Israel today, like a patio.

According to Psalm 55:17 the Jews prayed three times a day, “**Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice.**”

Now, how many of you, when you are in prayer, become distracted? We all do from time-to-time! Here we see Peter praying and what happens? He gets a Big Mac attack! He is starving to death; his stomach is growling.

Peter is truly distracted, but God is going to get his attention by causing Peter to fall into a trance and what does he see in this trance? He sees food! He sees all kinds of animals come down on a table cloth! Let's read on and find out what this is all about!

VERSES 11-16

So as Peter is on the rooftop, praying, he becomes hungry. And he fell into a trance and as he is in this trance he is fully aware of what is going on. In fact, he is having a conversation with the Lord.

I like the way Lovett put it in regard to this trance that Peter was in and how he heard this voice of God. He said, "God does not need sound waves to fall on an ear drum to speak to a man. When it pleases Him to do so, He can speak directly to one's mind where all sound waves are finally interpreted." How true that is.

And now, as Peter's stomach is growling because of hunger, God gives him this vision of all these animals, birds, creeping things and-so-on that were all on this table sheet.

But Peter, being a good Jewish boy sees this as not being kosher because there are clean and unclean animals mixed together so he says to the Lord's command to "**Rise, Peter; kill and eat**" something that is common for Peter to say to the Lord. He said, "**Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.**"

Here is the thing, you can't call Jesus Lord if you then say, "No!" to Him. He is either Lord of all or He is not Lord at all!

What a lesson for us to learn – listen to the Lord and then obey the Lord because, as Samuel said to King Saul, “**. . . ‘Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.’**” I Samuel 15:22-23.

Now what is the Lord doing here? At this point, Peter believed that God spoke only about food. But shortly, God showed Peter that He was really getting at another point.

Listen again to what He said, “**What God has cleansed you must not call common.**” The Lord is preparing Peter for the arrival of these Gentiles and then his traveling with them to the house of Cornelius, a Gentile to present the Gospel message. He was breaking down the walls of prejudices as the Jews came to the conclusion that God only created the Gentiles to fuel the fires of Hell!

You see, the Law of Moses was a wall between the Jews and the Gentiles, and this wall had been broken down at the cross (Eph. 2:14–18).

But this was a very wrong concept they developed, for the way to God was open to all who will receive it as Isaiah 9:1-2 very clearly teaches, a door that is open to the Gentiles. We read, “**Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentiles. The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined.**”

Thus, Peter was going to be that bridge to help open the door to the Gentiles for God is making that which was common, that which was unclean, clean! Yes, food was no longer an issue for them, but this went far beyond the food that Peter could eat. And if he was struggling with the food, then how in the world would he be able to minister to people, to Gentiles!

And we may not see it as a big deal, but for the Jews it was. You see, even after this Peter struggled with this issue of Gentiles being brought together with Jews in the family of God.

In fact, Paul in Galatians rebukes Peter for what he did. Starting in verse 11 of Galatians chapter 2 we read, **“Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, ‘If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.’”** Galatians 2:11-16.

Peter refused to eat with the Gentiles when other Jews came to sit with him! Now we can be hard on Peter here for what he did, but who are you distancing yourself from? Who are you refusing to eat with? Let me say this, tear down those walls that you have built up and let the love of God be the driving force in your life. Don't say **“Not so Lord!”**

I think Spurgeon sums it up nicely for us as he wrote, “Shake yourself up a little, my brother. If you are too precise may the Lord set you on fire, and consume your bonds of red tape! If you have become so improperly proper that you cannot commit a proper impropriety, then pray God to help you be less proper, for there are many who will never be saved by your instrumentality while you study propriety.”

VERSES 17-20

Keep in mind that Peter wasn't sure of what this vision fully meant yet. So, as he was pondering these things, the men sent by Cornelius arrive at Simon the tanner's house looking for Peter and shortly, Peter will fully understand what God was saying as he is going to put into practice those things he was shown.

Again, I don't think we realize what a big deal this was for Peter or for any Jew for that matter, to come in contact with a Gentile. You see, every place that a Gentile would sit would be considered unclean! That meant if you would sit in the chair where a Gentile sat you would then be unclean! This ceremonial uncleanness could be transmitted by them touching you or by you touching something that a Gentile came in contact with. So, this was a big deal for Peter!

And the Lord does not leave Peter hanging out there, but He tells Peter, “**. . . Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.**”

That tells me that the Lord knew what Peter would be thinking as he saw these three Gentile men and He is telling Peter to go, don't stop, even though you might not fully understand these things yet.

What a great lesson for us, that when the Lord tells us to arise, to go, and not to doubt that we should heed His words to us. The Devil has a double-edged sword of doubt and discouragement to cause us to stop, to drop out, to quit. The thing is, why are we listening to him instead of the Lord?

Remember what the Lord told Joshua as he was going to lead the children of Israel into the Promise Land, **“No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. *Be strong and of good courage*, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. *Only be strong and very courageous*, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? *Be strong and of good courage*; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”** Joshua 1:5-9.

I love that the Lord told Joshua three times to be strong, to be courageous, to be very courageous! He was encouraging Joshua to trust in Him, and He speaks to us as well encouraging us in the work that He has for us. May we trust God’s Words and not be deceived by Satan’s lies!

Let me share these words with you as these lessons are obviously for us as well. We are told,

Do we see those around us as potential heirs of grace? Do we view those who are different from us and who do things we do not approve of as candidates for the kingdom? Our attitude makes all the difference. If we are anti-Semitic, we will never lead a Jew to Christ. If we have written off a relative, he or she may be written off for eternity. If we are elitists, most of the rest of the world will never experience grace through us. . . .

Peter's attitude changed that day. To be sure, there were still a lot of rough edges. Sometimes – for example, later in Antioch – he regressed. . . .

- R. Kent Hughes, Acts The Church on Fire, p. 147

If we are struggling in this area, may we not say, “*Not so Lord!*” but submit to His will in our life and reach out to those around us!

VERSES 21-23

The Lord told Peter, “**Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.**” And what does Peter do? He goes down to these Gentile men!

And what we see here is the wall of Jewish tradition and customs come tumbling down as Peter not only speaks to those Gentiles, but he invites them in and entertains them, has fellowship with them, cares for them, and then goes with them to Caesarea the next day to meet with Cornelius.

When it says that Peter “**. . . invited them in and lodged them**” it literally is speaking of *entertaining a guest!* Again, we are so far removed from this period of time and the attitudes of the Jews towards Gentiles, that we miss all that God was doing in Peter to break down those walls of division.

Boice put it like this, “Normally a Jew would have said, ‘Well, it is nice to meet you, but you need to stay out here in the street. You can’t come inside.’ Or he might have said, ‘If you go down the street a little way, I think you’ll find an inn where you can stay.’ No orthodox Jew would have invited Gentiles into his house. He would not have sat down at the same table with them. He would not have had fellowship with them. It was forbidden.”

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 2:11-22, “**Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh - who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands - that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in**

whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

What a beautiful picture of the body of Christ and Peter is being stretched here and he is also allowing God to soften his heart so he can be stretched in this area!

What area is God stretching you in? Allow Him to work in you so you too can be stretched in those areas. And like it is when you stretch your muscles, it may hurt some, but in the end, it is worth it!

One more thing here and that is found in verse 23 where we are told that **“some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.”** I love this. Other Jews went with Peter, went with these Gentiles. In other words, Peter influenced the lives of these Jews because of the way he was living out his faith.

May we influence other Christians by the way we live out our faith, and in a good way! You see, our witness does not only affect the unsaved but the saved as well!

VERSES 24-26

Keep in mind that Cornelius is not saved yet. The Lord told him to send for Peter at Joppa and now he is waiting for Peter to come. And as you read this you have to love this guy's faith, it was strong.

You see, he expected something great to happen, that God was going to do something great and what does Cornelius do? Cornelius invites his relatives and close friends to hear this man Peter tell them about the true and living God.

What a great lesson for us to learn from. Do you expect that of God? You should and thus, invite your family, invite your friends to church expecting to see God do great things and you will see that He does, and He will!

Secondly, as Cornelius sees Peter he falls down to worship this man of God, Peter. And what does Peter do? Peter allows this man to kiss his ring, right? Wrong! Peter says, “**Stand up; I myself am also a man.**” Peter did not want to be treated as a god nor did he treat this Gentile like a dog!

Now here is the thing, in Revelation an angel is talking to John and we read in Revelation 19:10, “**And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, ‘See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.’**”

We are not to worship anything or anyone but God! Tragically, there is a statue by Michelangelo of Peter at St. Peter’s Basilica and so many people have come to worship before this statue and kiss the foot of Peter that his right foot is missing, eroded away! Peter didn’t allow this kind of worship back then and he surely doesn’t want it today!

Of this, Pastor Chuck Smith wrote,

Refusing to receive the adulation or the worship of this man. Herein is a real problem. When a person has been used of God, a person has been gifted by the Holy Spirit, and has been an instrument through which God has brought help, blessing, sometimes healing to a person, it is very common for people to begin to hold that person in high regard. To sort of elevate them in their minds above others. Thinking that they are closer to God. Thinking that they have some special inroads to God. They sort of hold them in reverence and adulation.

In fact sometimes they even start calling them reverend or they start calling them the most reverend or the most right, reverend. They start adding titles to the titles as they are elevating that individual. Now the danger is when the individual begins to receive the adulation and tries to stand on the pedestal that they are building for him. Peter was always careful, as were the apostles, as not to allow people to hold them up on a pedestal, elevate them and exalt them above the others. Peter didn't say, kiss my ring, man. If he were the first pope. But he said stand up, I'm just a man.

- Chuck Smith

Be careful elevating yourself, getting the glory because the fall will be great!

Interestingly enough, in Matthew 8:1-2 we are told, **“When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’”**

In Matthew 14:33 we read, **“Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’”**

And, as we are told in Revelation 19:10 and again in Revelation 22:8-9 that we are to worship God alone, I think this clearly shows us that Jesus is God and not just a man or angel!

Look at what happens next!

VERSES 27-29

Notice that Peter went into this house filled with Gentiles, that which was common, that which was unclean, because he did not doubt what God had shown him in this vision. This is the work that was before him and he was going to do it.

This is awesome because we focus so much attention on the conversion of Cornelius and his family. But look at the transformation of Peter here!

A Jewish man would begin each day with a prayer thanking God that he was not born a slave, a Gentile or a woman!

So, this is a huge transformation on Peter's part. God was not only working in Cornelius for this, but in Peter also! And Peter tells them that this is not easy, but this is what God wants him to do.

What about you, has God called you to do something that may not be easy, is going to stretch you and you are refusing to rise, refusing to go, doubting what God has said? Learn the lesson from Peter and see the fruit that God will bring forth not only in you but through you!

And look again at the question that Peter gives to Cornelius. "**I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?**" You see, Peter didn't know the reason he was summoned by Cornelius, but I am sure he had some ideas. Listen to what Cornelius tells him.

VERSES 30-33

Cornelius is explaining to Peter what happened as he was in prayer to God, and I believe he was praying that he wanted to know God, a deeper relationship with God that the Jewish faith did not give to him. And thus, as he prayed God answered his prayer.

It is as Jeremiah 29:13 says, "**And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.**" If you are seeking after the true and living God, He will reveal Himself to you!

And listen to what Cornelius tells Peter, “**... Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.**” These Gentiles want to know more about God!

I can't tell you how blessed I am as a pastor to come and share God's Word with people that are hungry to know God. Tragically, what can happen in our lives is that we get so “*familiar*” with God that the zeal we once had for God, that zeal to study God's Word, that zeal to hear God's Word being taught is gone and then our zeal to tell others about Him is also gone!

I like the way that Boice put it. He wrote, “When you go to church, do you want to receive a good message? If so, the best way is to come with a prepared heart. I know that the preacher must be prepared too. But when God prepares the messenger as well as those who are to hear him, then tremendous things happen.” Absolutely!

VERSES 34-43

When Peter said, “**... ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality’**” those words went completely against the prevailing Jewish thought at that time. They did believe that God certainly *did* show partiality. This partiality was towards the Jews and against the Gentiles. In essence, many Jews of Peter's day thought that God loved the Jews while hating the Gentiles.

Thus, how powerful are these words that Peter is speaking! That God shows no partiality but loves all people. In Deuteronomy 10:17 we are told, “**For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.**”

Then, in the New Testament we are told, **“Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”** Romans 3:29-30.

Please understand that this verse is not teaching that God accepts all based on their sincerity and their works. If that were true why did Peter need to go to the house of Cornelius, he would have been already saved – but he wasn’t! There is salvation in no other name than Jesus!

Thus, as we have seen, God does not look at the color of a person’s skin, the nationality that they are, their height, their status in society, their wealth or their poverty. He looks at the heart!

That means we can only have peace with God through Jesus Christ and that is exactly what Paul tells us in Romans 5:1-2, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”**

You see, there is no peace with God outside of Christ and you cannot have the peace of God in your life until you first make peace with God! He is not just *LORD* of the Jews, but He is *LORD* over all!

Also, in verse 38 we are told, **“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power . . .”**

In other words, God the Father proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah and His earthly ministry was open for all to see and receive.

In fact, in Luke 4:16-22a we are told, **“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.’ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’ So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. . . .”**

Not only that but Peter and the others were eyewitnesses of what Jesus said and did. They were witnesses of His death and His resurrection. In fact, God choose those who would see the risen Lord and be able to testify of those things.

Paul said in I Corinthians 15:3-8, **“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.”**

What were they to do with that information?

Peter tells us, “**And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.**” Acts 10:42-43.

The message was not to be hidden or kept to ourselves, but it is to be preached to all because all men need to come to the saving power of Jesus Christ.

That means the rich and the poor, the black and the white, the young and the old, even the Jew and the Gentile for there is no other name under heaven by which we may be saved. He truly is **LORD** overall and **LORD** of all!

Notice the points that Peter has brought out in his message about Jesus to these Gentiles:

Jesus was baptized in identification with humanity

Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power

Jesus went about doing good and healing, delivering those oppressed by the devil

Jesus did this with the power of God, for God was with Him

Jesus did these things in the presence of eyewitnesses

Jesus was crucified

Jesus was raised from the dead, resurrected in view of many witnesses

Jesus commanded His followers to preach the message of who He is and what He did

Jesus is ordained by God to be Judge of the entire world

Jesus is the one foretold by the prophets

The key is how a person responds to the message of the Messiah! They must believe in Him and only in Him is found the remission or the forgiveness of our sins. Repent and believe!

How did they respond to this message? Let’s read on and see.

VERSES 44-46a

While listening to Peter, these people made a *secret* and *invisible* transaction in their hearts with God, by setting their faith in Jesus Christ.

These Gentiles heard the word of God spoken by Peter and they got saved. It is as Paul said in Romans 10:17, **“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** You see, faith comes by hearing the Word of God and thus, it is not surprising that Satan has deceived many leaders of churches to move away from the teaching of the Word of God!

Then, after they were saved, the Holy Spirit came upon them empowering them for service.

Once again we see the gift of tongues in operation as praise is given unto God. The problem here is those Jews that came with Peter had a hard time seeing Gentiles experiencing the same thing they experienced.

Notice their response once again, **“And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. . . .”** Acts 10:45-46a.

They were amazed that these Gentiles not only got saved but that the Holy Spirit had come upon them and empowered them for service.

But remember what Peter said in Acts 2:38-39, **“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission [because of the remission] of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’”**

The promise of this empowering with the Holy Spirit is for Jew and Gentile; it is for all who believe!

Now, notice what Peter does next.

VERSES 46b-48

We see here that as they are saved, they then are baptized in water. Remember that baptism is an outward expression to those around them of their faith in Christ. That the old life has been buried in the waters of baptism and they are coming up new in Christ!

Thus, these Gentiles were not saved by being baptized; they were baptized because they gave evidence of being saved.

I know that there are those that think baptism is needed for salvation, even baptizing infants. And yet, Paul makes it very clear that baptism is not needed for salvation. Listen to what Paul wrote in I Corinthians 1:14-17, **“I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.”**

If baptism is needed for salvation, then why in the world did God not send Paul to baptize people? That would be horrible, these people heard the Word of God, repenting of their sins and yet, they were not baptized and thus, they are not saved? Foolishness! And it is not Scriptural.

Notice what God sent Paul to do because it is what He has sent us to do, **“preach the gospel.”** Remember what we read this evening, **“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** Romans 10:17.

I am not saying that we should not be baptized, we should. But all baptism is doing is identifying you with Christ, it is not saving you!

And here we see the beginnings of the Gentile church as the Holy Spirit is drawing out a bride for Christ made up of both Jews and Gentiles!

Now don't think that this is a New Testament idea, because it is not. Back in Isaiah 60:1-3 we are told, "**Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.**"

Also, in Isaiah 49:6 we are told, "**Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'**"

Also, in Genesis 12:1-3 we see the blessings to all nations through the seed of Abraham, "**Now the LORD had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'**"

Thus, as we come to the New Testament we see Jesus say in John 10:16, "**And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.**"

And in John 12:32 we are told, “**And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.**”

Here we see the beginning of that promise being fulfilled!

As I close this evening we must remember that even though Cornelius was a good man, a religious man, he still needed Jesus to be saved and as true as that was back then, it is still true today. May we not forget that and continue to speak forth the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Gospel message to those who are lost and dying in their sins!

The Word of God is living and powerful and may we not forget that or let Satan cause us to doubt or become discouraged in the work!