

ACTS LESSON 10

Acts Chapter 10

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Memory verses for this week: *Phil 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; Phil 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Introduction: In Chapter 9, we got to see the miraculous salvation of Saul as he traveled on the road to Damascus. He was soon found in the synagogue teaching and preaching about Jesus Christ. The disciples at first questioned his sincerity, since he had bound Christians and taken them back to Jerusalem to be imprisoned. But his salvation was real, and God began to show him what great things Paul was to suffer for Christ's sake. In Acts 10, the gospel goes out to the gentiles. This week we begin by covering the conversion of Cornelius and his family.

I. Cornelius' Vision

Acts 10:1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,

Twenty-eight miles up the coast from Joppa was the Roman city of Caesarea. Caesarea was a gentile city occupied by Roman government officials and a contingent of the Roman army. The city was named "Caesarea" by Herod the Great in honor of the Caesar of Rome. It was the city in which the Roman Procurator of the region made his residence and headquarters making it the official seat of the Roman occupation government and its military.

It also, by virtue of the fact of its Roman and Greek populace, was a gentile city and was despised by any observant Jew of the time. In Caesarea at the time was a Roman officer named Cornelius, "a centurion of the band called the Italian band." The Romans garrisoned loyal Italian soldiers in provinces thought unstable and prone to rebellion as Judea.

A band was usually comprised of a tenth of a legion (6,826) or about 680 men.) Cornelius was one of many senior military officers at Caesarea. He was an officer likely in charge of five or six other centurions.

Acts 10:2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave

much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.

Cornelius is described spiritually as being “a devout man.” The word translated as devout has the sense of a ‘godly man.’ When used in describing a gentile, it usually implied one who, if not officially a proselyte to Judaism, at least one who was unofficially so. These were called ‘proselytes of the gate’—gentiles who though uncircumcised believed in the God of Israel.

In any event, Cornelius evidently was a man who believed in and worshiped the God of Israel. He was “one that feared God with all his house.” It is noteworthy that this gentile not only himself was a worshiper of God and feared Him, but also saw to it that his entire household did so. This implies not only his family, but also his household servants. Cornelius “gave much alms to the people.” He not only was a man sensitive to helping others, but also as a gentile who evidently directed this toward Jewish people. Cornelius prayed to God always. The thought is he was continually in prayer. Indeed, he was a godly man.

Verse 1 declares that Cornelius was a captain of a roman band which might have been the bodyguard of the emperor. We see some important things about Cornelius.

- I. He was a devout man.
- II. It states that he feared God (All of his house feared the Lord.)
- III. He gave much alms to the people.
- IV. He prayed to God always.

Cornelius’ prayers had went up before God as a memorial. (verse 4) He knows all things about all people, but God does not approve of everything that He sees. Some people believe that Cornelius was already saved before this encounter with Peter, but a person does not have to be saved to receive a vision from God. As a matter of fact, we have many records in God’s Word where lost people received visions. And Acts 11:14 declares that Cornelius was lost at this time.

Acts 11:13 And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

Acts 11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

Acts 10:3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

Acts 10:4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

Cornelius saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. The ninth hour was one of the hours prescribed by the Jews for prayer time (3 pm.). It might be inferred that Cornelius had gone aside for prayer at that hour and while so doing, God granted him the vision described.

In the vision, an angel of God came to him and called his name. Fearful, Cornelius asked what the angel desired. Sweetly, the angel informed him that his prayers and alms had ascended up as a memorial before God. What may be implied is that Cornelius' continual prayer and service to others caused God to be mindful of him.

Of the multitudes who prayed to Him daily, God took special note of Cornelius because of his continual coming and his godly life. The events which follow very well may be a fulfillment of what Jesus taught in John 7:17 where Jesus said, *"If any man is willing to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."* Cornelius, a devout gentile, though without Christ, certainly sought the God of heaven. God saw to it that the gospel of salvation was brought to him.

The difference in Cornelius and many religious people today is that he knew that his religious devotion was not enough to save him. Many religious people today are satisfied that their character and good works will get them to heaven, and they have no concept either of their own sin or God's grace. Cornelius was asking God to show him the way of salvation. In reading in Warren Wiersbe's book about Acts, he told the story of John Wesley. He said that "John Wesley was like Cornelius. He was a religious man, a church member, a minister, and the son of a minister. He belonged to a "religious club" at Oxford, the purpose of which was the perfecting of the Christian life.

Wesley served as a foreign missionary, but even as he preached to others, he had no assurance of his own personal salvation. On May 24, 1738, Wesley reluctantly attended a small meeting in London where someone was reading aloud from Martin Luther's commentary on Romans. "About a quarter before nine," Wesley wrote in his journal, "While he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, and Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." We know what a great revival soon broke out in Britain after this man got saved.

Some examples of men who had visions or dreams from the Lord are in Daniel and Genesis.

Dan 2:1 And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him.

Dan 5:1 Belshazzar the king made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand.

Dan 5:2 Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.

Dan 5:3 Then they brought the golden vessels that were taken out of the temple of the house of God which was at Jerusalem; and the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, drank in them.

Dan 5:4 They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.

Dan 5:5 In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote.

Gen 40:2 And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers.

Gen 40:3 And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound.

Gen 40:4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward.

Gen 40:5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison.

Acts 10:5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:

Acts 10:6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

The angel directed Cornelius to send messengers to Peter at Joppa for further instruction. The angel of the Lord came about the ninth hour. This was the hour when the Jews went to the temple to pray. We see that the angel told Cornelius that his prayers had come up as a memorial before God. It is important that we understand that God does not answer the prayers of the lost, except for one prayer. And that is for salvation.

Once we are saved, we then have access direct to the Father through Jesus Christ. Several years ago, a leader of the Southern Baptist Convention, Bailey

Smith, caused a huge uproar in the media when he stated that the Lord did not hear the prayer of the Jews unless it was a request to be saved. Many were very upset with his narrow viewpoint. The reality is that his statement was correct, and it is true of all mankind, not just the Jews. We must first come to Jesus Christ for salvation, and then all of our prayers are heard by the Father that are prayed in Jesus' name.

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

In verses 5 and 6, we see the angel tells where Peter may be found and give a command for them to go and retrieve him. Peter would tell them what they ought to do. And every Christian, if we are doing the Lord's will, will preach that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. When Paul saw the city of Athens given over to idol worship, he preached unto them Jesus. Jesus is the answer to a person's sin sick soul, and He is the answer for the problems of today.

Acts 17:16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

Acts 17:17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

Acts 17:18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

II. Cornelius Sends for Peter

Acts 10:7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

Acts 10:8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

As soon as the angel departed, Cornelius called two faithful servants along with a devout soldier and sent them to Joppa. We see that like Saul who was obedient to the heavenly vision, Cornelius is also obedient to his vision and he sends two of his servants and a soldier to find Peter and to bring him back.

III. Peter's Vision of the Great Sheet

Acts 10:9 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

Acts 10:10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

Acts 10:11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

Acts 10:12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

The delegation from Caesarea journeyed to Joppa. Peter, on the next day, had gone to the housetop to pray near the noon hour. Homes of Palestine of this era often had flat or near flat roofs frequently with a parapet wall added for privacy. People would resort there for meditation, sleep, and privacy.

As Peter was there, he became very hungry, perhaps because of the noon hour and the aroma of cooking food reaching his nostrils. No doubt God also saw to it his hunger was accentuated. The reference to him falling into a trance would be comparable to swooning or fainting—entering a state of the subconscious.

In that state, he saw a vessel descending unto him from heaven. The word vessel and its ensuing description of a “great sheet” would indicate that God allowed him to see a great cloth or sail type of entity held at its four corners. In the vessel “were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.”

What is clearly implied is that this vessel held the creatures specified in the Levitical law as unclean animals. Peter, no doubt, saw creatures that were repugnant to Jews as pigs.

Acts 10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

Acts 10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

Acts 10:15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

Acts 10:16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

Peter heard a voice from heaven saying, “Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.” Peter refused, protesting he had never in his life eaten a creature which was “common or unclean.” The words translated as common (koinovkoinos) as well as

unclean (akayartov akathartos) were how the Jews viewed gentiles. They were the common ('vulgar' in Latin) and unclean races of the earth.

The reply from heaven was, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." To indelibly impress this upon Peter's mind, this sequence was repeated two more times and the vessel was "received up again into heaven." It is noteworthy that the same word analemfye analemphthe is used of the ascension of the Lord in Acts 1:22.

What God clearly was impressing upon Peter was not the validity of now eating pork, though that no doubt was a secondary import of the vision. The purpose and greater truth was that Peter, as a believing Jew, ought not view gentiles as common or unclean, particularly spiritually. Peter was about to be confronted with what the Jews of that day considered to be the most hated and detested of gentiles—ethnic Romans.

We know that the Jews had been taught through the law that they were not to eat of the unclean animals. God had given specific rules as to which were classified as clean and which were unclean. Peter was simply trying to follow the rules he had been taught from his Jewish traditions. God was using this to break down his prejudice against the Gentiles. The Gentiles were looked upon as dogs to the Jews who were God's chosen people.

But because the Jews rejected the message of salvation of Christ, God was opening up the church to both Jews and Gentiles. This vision of the sheet with all kinds of animals was God's way of showing Peter that all, both Jew and Gentile, could be saved and come into fellowship with God. When God told Peter to kill and eat, God was showing him that it was no longer an unclean thing to go into the house of a Gentile.

Paul and Barnabas told the church at Antioch that God hand opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, of which Paul was called the apostle.

Acts 14:27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Acts 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Matthew Henry said this about Peter and Cornelius.

The vision itself, which was not so plain as that to Cornelius, but more figurative and enigmatical, to make the deeper impression. 1. He fell into a trance or ecstasy, not of terror, but of contemplation, with which he was so entirely swallowed up as not only not to be regardful, but not to be sensible, of external things. He quite lost himself to this world, and so had his mind entirely free for converse with divine things; as Adam in innocency, when the deep sleep fell upon him. The more clear we get of the world, the more near we get to heaven: whether Peter was now *in the body or out of the body* he could not himself tell, much less can we, 2 Co. 12:2, 3. See Gen. 15:12; Acts 22:17. 2. He *saw heaven opened*, that he might be sure that his authority to go to Cornelius was indeed from heaven—that it was a divine light which altered his sentiments, and a divine power which gave him his commission. The opening of the heavens signified the opening of a mystery that had been hid, Rom. 16:25. 3. He saw *a great sheet full of all manner of living creatures, which descended from heaven, and was let down to him to the earth*, that is, to the roof of the house where he now was.

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IV. Peter and the Messengers of Cornelius

Acts 10:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

Acts 10:18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

Acts 10:19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

Acts 10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Acts 10:21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

Meanwhile, Peter was trying to sort out “what this vision which he had seen should mean.” As he contemplated in his mind what he had just seen, the messengers from Cornelius arrived at the front door. Note how they had made “enquiry for Simon’s house.” They no doubt had to ask questions throughout the city to find the place. The word translated as called (fwnew phoneo) implies they shouted through the door “whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter were lodged there.” It is evident, they would not be deterred until they found Peter.

As Peter thought on all of this, The Spirit of God revealed at the same time that three men were seeking him and that he ought to go with them “doubting nothing; for I have sent them.” Peter went to the front door and inquired what they

1Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Bible*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers) 1997.

wanted. Peter, no doubt, upon sight and hearing their accent immediately picked up on that they were Romans.

Acts 10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

The messengers explained to Peter that their commander, Cornelius, was “a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews.” They proceeded to inform Peter that God had sent an angel to Cornelius, instructing him to send for Peter “to hear words of thee.” We may well surmise that Peter gathered to what end God wanted him to speak. Upon arriving at Cornelius’ home, he immediately preached the gospel of Christ to him.

We see that Peter was questioning in his mind what this vision meant, and while he was searching for the meaning, these three men were outside looking for him. Peter had a heart that tender to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and he listened to what God would have him to do. He is instructed to go with them and to not doubt whether it was of God or not, for He had sent them.

When we can come to that point in our life where we totally depend upon the Lord, we realize that even the negative things that happen to us are for a reason. We may not understand, but we know it is in God’s plan. And how many blessings we may miss if we do not listen for the Spirit’s direction when it comes to doing God’s work.

V. Peter Goes to Caesarea

*Acts 10:23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.
Acts 10:24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.*

The fact Peter invited these Roman gentiles into the house and lodged them for the night indicates that he was beginning to understand the vision he had seen earlier. It was unthinkable for an observant Jew of that day to so extend hospitality to gentiles, much less ethnic Romans. (See verse 28.)

The next day they began their journey to Caesarea (28 miles). Cornelius who was anticipating their arrival had gathered his entire family and even his friends to hear what Peter had to say upon his arrival.

We see that Peter did not tarry, but went with the men knowing that God had a work for him to do in this town. They travel into Caesarea, and find Cornelius and his kinsmen waiting for them. In verse 25, we see Cornelius worshipping the wrong one. Peter declares that it is God who should receive the honor and glory.

VI. Peter Goes to Caesarea

Acts 10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.

Acts 10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

Acts 10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

Upon Peter's entrance, Cornelius fell down and worshiped him. Peter quickly rebuked or corrected him saying, "I myself also am a man." Cornelius then took Peter into his house and to Peter's surprise "found many that were come together."

Acts 10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

Acts 10:29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

By introduction, Peter reminded his hearers that "it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation." It should be noted that there is nothing in the Scripture itself with that injunction. Rather, rabbis along the way had added this custom as one of their traditions.

The Jews were taught that the traditions of the elders were of binding force just as the Law itself. Having had a full day to reflect upon his perplexing vision, Peter came to realize the primary application of it was that he "should not call any man common or unclean."

Again, though there no doubt was application to the permission to eat all animals, the greater application was of interacting with gentiles, particularly for the gospel's sake. Peter recounted how he immediately came and asked why they had sent for him.

We see that Peter did not tarry, but went with the men knowing that God had a

work for him to do in this town. They travel into Caesarea, and find Cornelius and his kinsmen waiting for them. In verse 25, we see Cornelius worshipping the wrong one. Peter declares that it is God who should receive the honor and glory. It is very easy as an ambassador of the Lord to have much praise poured upon you when in reality we have done little, but just been vessels used of the Lord. Pride needs to be eliminated, and God glorified in all cases. If it were not for the Grace of God, we would not be even worthy to be used. Just clay in the potters hands is what each of us are who are saved.

Mat 4:10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

John 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Acts 10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

Acts 10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

Acts 10:32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

Acts 10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Cornelius answered Peter. He recalled that four days earlier at about the same time of day (the ninth hour being the equivalent of three in the afternoon), a man in bright clothing had appeared to him as he was fasting and praying. Cornelius added details not noted in verse 4. Here, he commented that his prayers had been heard as well as being in remembrance before God. God does hear prayer!

Cornelius then stated how he was instructed to send for Peter which he promptly did. Cornelius did not know what God's message to him from Peter would be. However, he informed Peter that they all were "present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." To Peter, that must have been all he needed to hear.

Peter asks Cornelius why he sent for him in verse 29. When people desire something from us, we are wise to ask why they are coming to us. It may be a great window of opportunity that God has opened, but it also might not be something God would want us to do. In this case, there was clear indication that all of this, from Cornelius' vision through the sheet that Peter saw come down from heaven, to the call of Peter to this place, it was all of God. Cornelius tells Peter that it was "To hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

I believe when a man or woman is a devout person, and they are seeking God, that God will send a messenger to preach the Gospel to that individual. We've mentioned before that man who was in the remote part of Mexico, and a missionary, Milton Martin, walked for days to get back to the village where he lived, and that man was saved. And from that man's preaching, many preachers were raised up in Mexico by the Lord. The man wanted to know the true and living God, and the Lord sent Brother Martin to him. Cornelius had a desire to know God, the all things of God, and God gave him the desires of his heart. When we gather together in church on Sunday, it should be to here ALL things that God has to say.

VII. Peter's Sermon to the Gentiles in Cornelius' house

Acts 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

Acts 10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

In reflecting upon the events of the last several days, Peter had come to the conclusion that "God is no respecter of persons." For a devout Jew (notwithstanding a believer in Christ), this was a profound admission. The Jews had been taught from antiquity that God had interest only in the Jewish nation.

Though God indeed had chosen Abraham and blessed through his lineage, the Jews had distorted that fact to assume that God had no interest whatsoever in the remainder of the pagan, godless, unbelieving gentile world. Peter was going through an unlearning process. God had to divest him of the distorted Jewish traditions with which he had been so thoroughly indoctrinated.

Peter had come to understand that "in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." A fine point of distinction is at hand. Those who fear him and work righteousness, regardless of nationality, never are sufficient for salvation. Rather, what Peter is alluding to is that God is pleased when sinful men of whatever nationality are willing to fear him, seek him, and live righteously.

God, according to John 7:17, will send the gospel to such searching hearts. It was God's pleasure to send the truth to Cornelius, so He sent Peter with the gospel. As we shall see, there also was a greater epoch transition in the works as the gospel for the first time went out to the gentiles. The gospel had gone to the Samaritans, in accordance with Jesus' instruction in Acts 1:8, the tradition of the Jews would continue to blind the members of the early church without God's intervention.

Philip's leading the Eunuch to Christ was a foreshadow of what would come to be. Now, in fulfillment of Christ's commission, the gospel of Jesus Christ was about to be presented formally, officially, and for the first time to an assembly of gentiles—Romans, at that.

Acts 10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

Acts 10:37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

Peter begins his discourse by briefly rehearsing the ministry of our Lord. The word translated as preaching here literally means 'evangelizing.' Notice also the message of that evangelism—"peace by Jesus Christ," for he indeed is Prince of Peace as well as Lord of all. The peace of which Peter refers to identifies with what Paul wrote in Romans 5:1, that in being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Only from this position in Christ, one can then know the peace of God.

Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

The anointing of the Holy Ghost alluded to here is essentially synonymous with the fullness of the Spirit of which our Lord fulfilled His ministry. That fullness resulted in Him being anointed "with power." The fullness of the Holy Spirit and the power of God spiritually are intrinsically related. Moreover, we receive insight into how our Lord's ministry was in and through the power of the Holy Ghost in distinction to His own power which he had voluntarily laid aside.

Additionally, Peter related to his gentile audience how Jesus "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." The word translated as healing (iaomai iaomai) literally means 'to make whole'. The word translated as oppressed (katadunasteu/katadunasteuo) literally has the sense to 'exercise harsh control over,' or to 'use one's power against.'

The thought may not be so much of Jesus casting out demons as He delivered people from the power of the devil in saving them. We, to that degree, all have been so oppressed by the devil. Praise God, he has made us whole in Jesus. Indeed, Jesus' ministry was empowered as "God was with him."

Acts 10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

Acts 10:40 Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly;

Acts 10:41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

Peter recounts how he and the other disciples were witnesses of our Lord's entire ministry. He places much emphasis on the resurrection. The reference to him being hanged on a tree speaks of crucifixion which his Roman audience clearly understood. In reply to Jehovah Witnesses who delight in trying to have Jesus hanging in a tree, the word so translated (xulon xulon) can literally and in most instances where used in the bible mean timbers which indeed the cross was.

He further makes note that Jesus' resurrection was made clear to those who knew Him most intimately—His disciples who ate and drank with Him. They, of all people, would know the veracity of whether it was the Messiah. Peter again mentions the resurrection to emphasize the point.

Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

It is significant that the apostles realized they had been commanded of Jesus "to preach unto the people, and to testify." By extension through the Great Commission, that command applies to us even today. No Christian is exempt! And indeed, the imperative to witness is found on numerous occasions in the New Testament. The phrase "of quick and dead" literally means of living and dead. However, it may be idiomatic referring to the Jews and gentiles. In any event, Jesus has been ordained by God to be Judge of all mankind.

Verse 43 show the anthology of the Old Testament prophets as they witnessed of Christ. As foretold in Joel 2:32, "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." The word translated as remission (afesiv aphasis) is commonly translated as 'forgiveness' and has the sense of being released from the guilt, condemnation, and bondage of sin.

Indeed, as men so believe, they are released from the burden of their sin with all its consequences. This may have been particularly pleasing to Cornelius and his household. They could find salvation simply by trusting Jesus Christ rather than by becoming official Jews as they perhaps had been led to believe (and which he as a Roman officer could not do). Though, it is not so expressly stated, they evidently did in simple faith turn to and trust in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

We see that as soon as Peter opened his mouth, he begins to speak of God. What is important in our lives is what we will speak. Out of the treasure of the heart the mouth speaketh.

Luke 6:45 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Peter's desire was to preach the Gospel, and he proclaims Jesus as the Savior for all mankind, both Jews and Greeks, and Gentiles.

Some of Peter's points were:

- a. God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost and Power
- b. It was God that raised Jesus from the dead.
- c. God ordained that Jesus was to be the judges of the saved and lost.
- d. Peter declares that all the prophets preached that through Jesus' name that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.

VIII. The Holy Spirit is given to Gentile Believers

Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Acts 10:45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

Then answered Peter. For "while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word." They additionally spoke in tongues, verifying the presence of the Holy Ghost in them. The significance of a visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit, including speaking in tongues, is as simple as it is profound.

As recorded, the Jewish companions present with Peter (“the circumcision”) were utterly astonished that “on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.” It was unthinkable to the prevailing Jewish mentality of the day that God could or would directly indwell or fill with His Spirit the vulgar race called gentiles. Yet, they were witnessing with their own eyes that very phenomena.

Acts 11:12 points out that there were six Jewish brethren present with Peter. That is no coincidence. God wanted no question of what they witnessed. The significance of the visible manifestation of the Holy Spirit, including the speaking of tongues by the new gentiles believers, was a clear indication of God’s blessing upon the gospel going to the pagan gentile world.

A monumental milestone in the history of the early church had been reached. Heretofore, the gospel, as recorded above, had gone only to Jews or those associated with Judaism (i.e., Samaritan and Ethiopians). Now, not only had the gospel gone to the gentiles (Roman ones at that), but God’s clear blessing had been witnessed thereon exactly as had been upon the infant (Jewish) church at Pentecost.

Acts 10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

Acts 10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

It is noteworthy once again, that salvation was conveyed and the Spirit of God was received prior to baptism. Those who advocate baptism as a part of being saved should take note. Once again, baptism followed faith in Jesus Christ. Notice further that Peter commanded baptism, for indeed it is a command for new believers. Let’s read the Great Commission given to the church in Matthew 28:18-20

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

This is the first record we have since the beginning of the church where someone received the Holy Ghost without the laying on of the hands of an apostle. The Gentiles were now being given the gift of the Holy Ghost that the Jews received on the day of Pentecost when around 3,000 were saved. Like on that day, they

spoke in tongues. It is an important thing to notice that the Holy Ghost was given prior to them being baptized. Lost people do not receive the Holy Ghost, thereby a proof of how salvation is totally of Grace and of Christ, not of baptismal waters.

Those that were saved were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord. After this, these believers ask Peter to tarry with them certain days. It is such a joy to be around other Christians, especially those with whom you have had a part in preaching the Gospel to see them saved. In J. Vernon McGee's commentary on Acts, he points out a very interesting point about the three representative conversions we have in the book of Acts. The Ethiopian eunuch that Philip preached to was a son of Ham. Saul of Tarsus was a son of Shem. And Cornelius was son of Japheth. In each instance, the Holy Spirit moved, using a man of God and the Word of God. These three were the descendants of Noah's three sons, from which all the world descended after the flood.

Gen 5:32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Gen 6:1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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