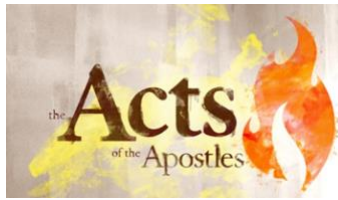


20180907 Acts 10:1-48 The Gospel is Extended to All



**"Acts of the Apostles: Lesson 17" by
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"The Gospel is Extended to All Peoples"



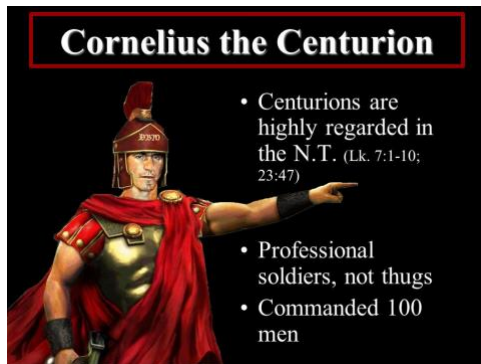
Today we're talking about Gentiles. Today, we take it for granted that gentiles are in the church. But, can you imagine what it would be like to be raised your entire life knowing you were God's chosen people and gentiles were just dogs on the earth. Look at the map to the left and you'll see Caesarea Maritima. This was the Roman center of political power in the land of the Jews.

Think about how we would feel if tomorrow our country was invaded and was subjugated. Imagine how we would feel if foreign troops of a government that professed only atheism, were right here in Whitehall, armed and watching everything that each of us did. Imagine if these troops were instructed to watch out for Christians and to give them no slack or mercy. Every time we passed the Whitehall store we would see armed soldiers, and we would be constantly reminded of what had been, and that our dignity and our identity were now of no political importance. We would come to our little church here, and we would probably just wonder why God had abandoned us to such wicked infidels and how it ever ended up like this.



That is how the Jews felt about the Romans. Probably every single Jew knew someone who had been used, abused, or killed by a Roman. The disgust had grown so deep that Jewish traditions made a person ceremonially unclean just by going into a Gentile home. Things were easy in a way for the first Jewish Christians because the new expression of the Jewish faith remained Jewish. But then things began to change. In the decades after the resurrection, God began to reveal His intent to bring others, including even the Gentiles, into His family to be called His people.

Remember we studied and saw Phillip go up to Samaria and there he preached the gospel to folks who were half Jewish and half Gentile. Then we studied about the Ethiopian Eunuch who may have been a convert, but he was still Jewish in his faith. But today we're going to see God open that final door. And guess what's behind that door? The behind that door is the provision for you and me to be saved and be part of the family of God.



Let's start with Acts 10:1-8, NKJV.

Cornelius Sends a Delegation

10 *There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, ²a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. ³About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius!”*

⁴*And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, “What is it, lord?”*

So he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.

⁵*Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. ⁶He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.” ⁷And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. ⁸So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.*

So at this point we see Cornelius, a powerful Roman soldier, who was a devout man who had influenced his whole family to worship Yahweh. The text tells us he gave offerings to the poor and he was continually in prayer. And God sent an angel, a special messenger of God, to this Roman at 3 o'clock in the afternoon one afternoon because his righteous deeds and his righteous heart had been remembered by Almighty God in heaven.

Peter's Vision



Acts 10 ~ Peter's Vision

⁹*The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. ¹⁰Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance ¹¹and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. ¹³And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”*

¹⁴*But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” ¹⁵And a voice spoke to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” ¹⁶This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again. (Acts 10:9-16, NKJV).*

This vision and the command that came with it were confusing to Peter as a Jew. His natural response was, NO! No Lord, I won't ever eat anything that is unclean. I never have and I never will. I think it's interesting that Peter heard the vision three times. Remember what else Peter

heard three times? I think sometimes God has to tell us truths multiple times. I think He loves me so much He tells me things again and again.

I want you all to understand that God is talking to Peter about a whole lot more than food in this vision. He is talking to Peter about how He sees humankind. He is telling Peter that God has brought a new kind of salvation to all of mankind at this point in history. Some theologians call this dispensationalism, which in a simplified way means that God dispenses certain biblical truths to mankind at different times. God is now saying to Peter that Gentiles are no longer unclean, but they are acceptable and the gospel of Jesus and His work on the cross extends even to them.

¹⁷ Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. ¹⁸ And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. ¹⁹ While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. ²⁰ Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them." (Acts 10:17-20, NKJV).

God was bringing the parties together and He was confirming to them that this was God speaking. I think God confirms things of great importance in the life of the believer. Sometimes when I'm wrestling with God over an issue, a word is spoken to me or I find a verse that speaks dead-on to the issue that I'm facing. I remember once years ago when the head of the Baptist Student Union told me that he thought God was calling me to foreign missions. I politely told him, "Thank you so much. I will pray about that." God never confirmed such a calling. If God hasn't confirmed a certain thing then be very careful. Always filter what others tell you through the Bible and what scripture tells you.

²¹ Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?" ²² And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." ²³ Then he invited them in and lodged them.

On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Peter Meets Cornelius



²⁴ And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man." (Acts 10:21-26, NKJV).

Peter had learned what a failure he was when he denied Jesus three times, but he was now humbled to the point where he was no longer tempted by such things. He lets Cornelius know that he was

just a man.

²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. ²⁸ Then he said to them, “You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. ²⁹ Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?” (Acts 10:24-29, NKJV).

Peter openly admitted that he had been wrong. Peter was quick to say that he now realized that God was calling him to be open and to accept all people. A lot of us can believe that God loves the whole world, but you know what? We really don't believe that He loves even each of us. Peter was learning that not only he was he loved and forgiven by Jesus, but all people in the world, both Jew and Gentile are loved.

³⁰ So 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, ³¹ and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. ³² Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ ³³ So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.” ³⁴ Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵ But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. (Acts 10:30-35, NKJV).

Peter now realizes that salvation is meant for all men. Verse 35 should bring a tear to each of our eyes, because Peter told Cornelius (that is you and me) that he now understood that God loves any and all who fear Him.

³⁶ The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ— He is Lord of all—³⁷ that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹ And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰ Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹ not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. (Acts 10:36-41, NKJV).

Peter then told Cornelius and the Roman group the pure and perfect gospel. This was the part that Cornelius was missing. Peter continues.

⁴² 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. ⁴³ To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.” (Acts 10:42-43, NKJV).

So dear reader, what does it take to be saved? Must we do good works? Must we get

baptized? No. It says that whosoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins. That my friend is the GOOD NEWS. The news isn't that you or I have to reach a certain amount of righteousness. Rather, it is good news that we only have to receive. There are people that come to church and come to church and they've heard the gospel over and over, but they've never responded. If you've never said, I want that and I believe that Jesus died for me and my sin, then you are missing that one thing. Coming to church won't save you. So what does it mean to receive it? You take it! It's God's gift of forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Let's see what happens in our story.

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ 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. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues (speaking in other languages they have never learned before) and magnify God. (Acts 10:44-46, NKJV).

So look what happened then. They believed and the Spirit fell on them, and they submitted themselves to be baptized.

Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days. (Acts 10:47-48, NKJV).

When were they baptized in water? They were baptized AFTER they have received the Holy Spirit. I want you all to realize there are Christians who say you can't receive the Holy Spirit before baptism. They quote Acts 2:38. Well, they are not interpreting all of scripture together. Now in Acts 10 we see people getting saved, receiving the Holy Spirit, and then getting baptized in water. Be very careful when someone tries to pass a doctrine onto you based on one verse. Don't fall for that! Always look at the entirety of God's Word. That is why I teach you the WHOLE Bible. The Bible balances itself. The Bible interprets itself.

In summary, let's see again how Luke described Cornelius. There were 5 things: (1) he was devout man, (2) he feared God, (3) his whole household believed, meaning he had great influence on others, (4) he gave alms to the poor, and (5) he prayed continuously. What was Cornelius missing? He needed the gospel and he needed to be saved. If good works got you into heaven then Cornelius was there! But it wasn't enough. God sent him an angel who led him to the truth. Has God sent you "an angel" and revealed the truth to you? He is not willing that any would be lost but that all would come to repentance.

Let us pray.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor Faber McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868. Tel: 936-825-1227 (Edited and proofed by Amanda Fryday - Webster, Texas.) All financial gifts to this ministry are tax-deductible as a 501 (c) (3) Corporation.