

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Turn your bibles with me to Acts 10 –

We have been studying this wonderful book that the Holy Spirit inspired Dr. Luke to write to the early church chronicling the work of the Holy Spirit within the early church.

Sometimes the book of Acts is referred to as the Acts of the Apostles – but in reality it is the Acts of the Holy Spirit – as the Apostles were simply responding to being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, two weeks ago, we looked at the first half of chapter 10 –

And I mentioned that chapter 10 ushered in a new day in church history – up to this time, all believers were either Jews or proselytes (someone who converted to Judaism).

However, two weeks ago – God began to work in the life a Roman officer – Cornelius.

A few things that we learned from him in the first half of the chapter was that -

Cornelius was a God fearing man –

Cornelius was a man of prayer –

Cornelius was someone who wanted to draw closer to God –

He was someone we would consider religious / a good person according to our standards – he didn't drink, smoke, chew or go with girls who did (that was a famous church saying long time ago)

Cornelius however, wasn't saved – the gospel had not been shared with him because he was a gentile.

So God begins a work in Cornelius by giving him a vision – to send some of his men to find Peter.

He then gave Peter a vision as well – a vision of a sheet coming down from heaven with a bunch of tasty animals and critters - trying to get through to Peter to show him that when He cleanses something, it shouldn't be considered unclean.

You see Peter had some prejudices he had to deal with – and we started to see those prejudices start to subside as he welcomed in Cornelius' servants into his house.

Chapter 10 is more than the transformation of Cornelius – we see the transformation of Peter – as he finally grasps God's plan of salvation for all mankind.

Let's pray...

**[Act 10:24-48 NKJV] 24 And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now**

**Cornelius was waiting for them**, and had called together his relatives and close friends.

So the very next day, Peter leaves with a small group up to Caesarea.

Keep in mind that he is taking with him Cornelius' servants – the ones that went looking for Peter and spent the night at his house.

And also, Peter is taking along other believers – possibly as witnesses to what is going to happen during the trip.

Because one of the things we are going to start seeing next week is that – not everyone was on board with salvation being made available to the gentiles.

So - when they get to Cornelius' house – notice that Cornelius was there waiting for them.

The picture is that Cornelius is outside the house expecting them to come any minute. He's waiting for them and wants to be the first to meet them.

**This shows his faith in God.**

He knew that God had moved him to send his servants after Peter – by faith, he waited for Peter to arrive – he knew God would bring that plan to completion.

Another thing that we see here in verse 24 is that Cornelius is not alone.

He had his family and close friends there – who he invited.

And the reason that he invited them is because we are told in the very next chapter (11:14) that when he received the vision telling him to send for Peter – the angel told

him that Peter was going to be the one who was going to tell them the words by which you and all your household will be saved.

Cornelius doesn't want to keep "the good news" to himself – he wanted to share what was about to happen with all those who are important to him –

He is thrilled at the possibility of his family and friends being saved!!!

And that is the same mindset that we should have.

We should be thrilled at the possibility of family and friends responding to the gospel – and for many of them, we are the ones that will share the gospel to them.

**25 As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped [him].**

So –

The first thing I want to point out is that what Cornelius is doing here – it is not the same thing that John did twice in the book of Revelation when he begins to worship the angel.

The word that is used here for worship is a different Greek word.

He is not praying to Peter, he is simply prostrating himself before Peter.

He has such reverence for Peter that he puts his head against the floor and begins to kiss the hand of Peter.

The word that is used here for worship is the word that describes a dog licking the hand of its master -

**26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man."**

To truly understand what is happening here –

Remember that Peter didn't want anything to do with gentiles initially – to the Jews, gentiles were dogs. They were lower than man.

However, what Cornelius is doing here – he is treating Peter as if he were above man.

So Peter is telling Cornelius – “Get up bro – I am just like you”

Peter refused to be seen as superior – he confirms it in his words and his actions - that is why he lifted Cornelius up.

On a quick side note -

There are churches that use the title reverend – I am totally against that.

Reverend means worthy to be revered – there is only One that is worthy to be revered and that is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

**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.**

Peter walks into Cornelius' house and begins to reveal to them that transformation that the Holy Spirit has done in his heart.

“According to the law, I shouldn't even be here right now” –

Actually, the law never prohibited the Jews from entering the home of a gentile, the law only prohibited them from intermarrying with the gentiles. (Deut 7:2-3)

The laws that Peter is referring to were added later on by the rabbis.

**Now, how did Cornelius and his household know these things?**

Because they must have experienced the prejudice – they had seen the way that the Jews acted toward the gentiles.

It must have been awkward seeing Peter in their home.

I also had you make a note where Peter stated that God had shown him that he shouldn't call any man common or unclean, when did this happen?

Because it didn't happen in the vision, right?

Because in the vision, he saw animals in the sheet – not men.

God never speaks directly to Peter about people – but somehow along the way to Caesarea, it all clicked.

“Peter, look around you, you are walking with gentiles. You are going to a house of gentiles”

“You see Peter, I sent a Savior for all people”

Salvation is for all people – not just the Jew!!!

Although, he received the vision – it all began to make sense as he made his way up from Joppa.

As a believer, sometimes you may come to church and listen to the study and as you hear the Word of God, it all makes sense.

But there will be other times, when you may walk out of here thinking that you didn't get anything from the study – man, Herb had an off day today.

and later on in the week, a situation occurs where it all comes together.

How does this happen?

It is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus promised that He would send the Helper – (John 14)

The Holy Spirit would come into our lives and teach us all things

The Holy Spirit will bring into our remembrance the things that were taught.

**29 "Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"**

Had Peter not received the vision, he would have never stepped foot inside Cornelius' house.

God had to prepare the heart of Peter first with the vision before he would come.

He still doesn't know why he is there???

**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."**

Cornelius retells his vision to Peter.

And we get a little more detail of Cornelius' vision that we didn't see two weeks ago.

I had you make a note that he was fasting while this occurred.

Question for you guys – as believers, are we required to fast????

Scripture does not command Christians to fast.

God does not require or demand it of Christians.

At the same time, the Bible presents fasting as something that is good, profitable, and beneficial.

As we continue through the book of Acts, we are going to see fasting and prayer linked together – especially before the believers were to make an important decision.

It is important to note that ....

We don't fast to punish our bodies and we certainly don't fast for the purpose of losing weight.

And we don't fast to force God to do what we want.

We fast because we want to focus completely on God.

And that is what Cornelius was doing when he received the vision.

So after retelling his vision story – Cornelius is ready to hear the gospel message.

**34 Then Peter opened [his] mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality."**

I had you make a note of the word perceive – because the word that is used here is the word for – to lay hold of, to come to a realization.

And the reason I had you make a note of it was that throughout chapter 10, we can follow the progression of Peter's thoughts on the idea of salvation being made available to gentiles.

Verse 17 – Peter doubted/wondered what the vision was all about – he was perplexed.

Verse 19 – Peter thought – he began to chew on it in his mind

Verse 28 – God showed me – the word that is used there is to expose.

And now he perceives – he sees the whole picture.

And that is that God is not impressed whether one is a Jew or a Gentile.

God looks inwardly at our hearts.

**35 "But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.**

Peter here declared God excludes no one.

That means – no nation is excluded

No man is rejected, whoever fears God and works righteousness is accepted by Him.

This doesn't mean that salvation is by works – because if it was, then Peter did not have to travel to Caesarea to preach the gospel –

Up to this point here in verse 35, Cornelius is still not saved. He hasn't responded to the gospel because he hasn't heard the gospel – Peter is getting to it.

it means that salvation is made available to those who follow in the footsteps of Cornelius, who responded to the measure of light he possessed.

Regardless of their nationality/race.

**36 "The word which [God] sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ--He is Lord of all—**

The peace that is spoken of here is the peace with God.

He is Christ "Cristos" the anointed Messiah reconciling sinner to God.

**[Rom 5:1 NKJV] 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**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.**

Turn with me to Isaiah 11 – because we are going to see the promise of this anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus Christ.

**[Isa 11:2 NKJV] 2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.**

So here in Isaiah 11 – we are seeing the spiritual empowerment of Jesus Christ.

As God, Jesus has all these attributes from eternity – however, when Jesus became flesh, He was still 100% God and 100% man but the scriptures tell us that He chose to empty Himself of some of the privileges or prerogatives of deity – for example, during His ministry, He couldn't be everywhere at once right.

So, during His ministry, Jesus chose to rely on the Spirit of the LORD.

That is why Jesus displayed the fruit of the Spirit to the uttermost because He was a perfect vessel (John 3:34)

**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.**

I want us to notice that Peter preaching to the gentiles was essentially the same as when he preached to the Jews.

The message didn't change.

He presented the person and work of Jesus Christ – with an emphasis on the resurrection.

**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."**

Jesus will one day judge the world.

That judgment will be based on one thing, whether or not we chose to trust Jesus to take care of our sins.

**[Jhn 3:16-18 NKJV] 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. 18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.**

**44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.**

The language here seems to indicate that Peter hasn't even finished speaking when he's interrupted.

In fact, later Peter will say that he was just getting started with his message when the Holy Spirit interrupted him (Acts 11:15)

Remember what Peter was preaching on – he was teaching them about salvation - **whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."**

And Cornelius and his family and friends were filled with the Holy Spirit.

We have the baptism of the Holy Spirit here.

Notice that there is no formula to receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Each time God poured out His Spirit, it came in a little different manner –

Waiting and prayer (Acts 1:4, 14; 2:1-4)

Prayer (Acts 4:31)

Persecution (Acts 7:55)

Prayer and Laying on of hands (Acts 8:15,17)

Laying on of hands by a non-apostle (Acts 9:17)

Here we see it - in the middle of a Bible Study (Acts 10:44)

**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.**

So we see something very similar that had happened at the day of Pentecost happened here in Caesarea – however, this time it is happening to Gentiles.

**46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. 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.**

The fact that the Holy Spirit had fallen upon them was evidence that they had opened up their hearts to the Lord, and had done what Peter had just told them about, receiving forgiveness for their sins by believing in Jesus.

The work of the Holy Spirit was proof that they had been saved and now Peter commands them to be baptized with water.

Remember - Baptism is only a sign of what God has already done for you. It doesn't wash away your sins, it is a way of showing that your sins have been washed away.

So we undergo baptism because we are commanded to be baptized, also because it is a way of making a public declaration the one is a follower of Christ and also, it is a way of helping us to make the truths related to baptism more real in life.

**[Rom 6:4 NKJV] 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.**

Just like the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8 – I am pretty sure that these new believers couldn't wait to be baptized – eager to demonstrate their acceptance of God's amazing grace that was vast enough to embrace even gentiles like you and me.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you. 25 May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. 26 May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

