# The Gospel and the Gentiles – Acts 10



"Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all." (Acts 10:34-36)

## Lesson 9 of the series "The Beginning of an Unfinished Work"

"**<u>At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius</u>**, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly." (Acts 10:1-2)

- ✓ Cornelius was a leader in the Roman military, and we are told by Luke that he was a centurion which would mean he oversaw 100 soldiers in a total regiment/cohort of 600 men.

  - ➢ A Roman legion at full strength consisted of 6000 men made up of 10 regiments

  - ➢ In a Roman legion there were a total of 60 centurions, and they made up the backbone of the Romans army. They were very trustworthy and get the job done type men. They would rather die at their post than surrender to the enemy.

  - ➢ The New Testament presents a centurion in a favorable light in most cases. (Matthew 8:5-10, Mark 15:44-45)

"**At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius**, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. **He and all his family were devout and God-fearing**; **he gave generously to those in need** and **prayed to God regularly**." (Acts 10:1-2)

- ✓ Typically, a Roman soldier would have followed the pagan practices of his ancestors in which they would have worshipped and or paid homage to multiple gods who they (the Romans) felt watched over and protected them. Often, they worshipped various idols and often had "shrines" within their home they would pray to.
- ✓ This Roman centurion (Cornelius) must have abandoned those pagan practices and instead chose to worship (in a practical and real way) the One True God (Jehovah).
- ✓ He probably worshipped in the Jewish Synagogue but as we are told in Acts 11, he was uncircumcised (as such not a full-fledged Jewish proselyte)
- ✓ Both he and his family are identified here as "devout and God fearing", giving alms or offerings to care for the Jewish people and praying regularly to God.

"One day at about **three in the afternoon he had a vision**. He **distinctly saw an angel of God**, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" Cornelius stared at him in fear. "**What is it, Lord**?" he asked. The angel answered, "**Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God**." (Acts 10:3-4)

- ✓ Although we are not told specifically that Cornelius was praying when he had this vision, Luke tells us that this was "three in the afternoon" which was the "ninth hour" and the customary time of prayer for Jews.
- ✓ This was a vision (rather than a dream), in which God chose to speak to Cornelius directly. It made such a significant impact that it caused great fear in the heart of Cornelius. Rightfully so as this was Almighty God speaking to him.
- ✓ Although Cornelius was a Gentile, his genuine concern and care for the Jews was recognized by God and Cornelius was now going to be used by God to help break down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles. God does this by showing He has no partiality and that salvation in Jesus Christ is for all peoples and nations.

"**Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter**. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." When the angel who spoke to him had gone, **Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier** who was one of his attendants. **He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa**." (Acts 10:5-8)

- ✓ God instructs Cornelius to bring Simon (Peter) to meet with him and will orchestrate a divine appointment for both men which marks a pivotal moment in time where God will begin the first major step in opening the door of salvation to the Gentiles.

- ✓ Verse 5 tells us that the angel instructs Cornelius to send some men (2 servants and a soldier) to Joppa and find Simon Peter who happened to be staying with man also named Simon whose occupation was that of a tanner (someone who turns animal hides into leather)

- ✓ The quick response by Cornelius shows his obedient faith

"About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, **Peter went up on the roof to pray**. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, **he fell into a trance**." (Acts 10:9-10)

- ✓ While the men sent by Cornelius were on their way to Joppa to find Peter, Luke tells us that Peter had gone up to the roof top to pray.
- ✓ This means that both men (Cornelius and Peter) were under divine supervision (God's direction) and will receive (in essence) the same instructions and guidance to achieve divine results (God's will) which would be the salvation of Cornelius and his household.
- ✓ It was not unusual for Peter to go to a specific place for prayer as that is what Jesus often did, and Peter learned that from him. This is somewhat contrary to how the Pharisees would pray – we are told they would often pray in public for all to see.
- ✓ While waiting for his food – Peter falls into a trance. Probably best understood as a supernatural intervention by God allowing Peter to receive a vision from Him.

“**He saw heaven opened** and **something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners**. It **contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds**. Then **a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat**.” “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” The voice spoke to him a second time, “**Do not call anything impure that God has made clean**.” This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.” (Acts 10:11-16)

- ✓ The vision was an object lesson showing a simple comparison of unclean food to that of unclean people. Peter is instructed that both are acceptable in God’s eyes.
- ✓ The deeper intended meaning here is not the focus of Jewish dietary laws, but that God was abolishing ceremonial and dietary divisions between Jews and Gentiles. Taken to its fullest extent – God was opening the door of salvation to the Gentiles.
- ✓ The vision was repeated three times – perhaps in similar fashion as to when Jesus asked Peter; “Do you love me”, “yes Lord he said”, to which Jesus said, “feed my lambs”. Though Peter objected at first – he will come to understand its meaning.

"**While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision**, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. **They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there**." (Acts 10:17-18)

- ✓ Luke's account here doesn't seem to indicate that Peter doubted that the vision came from God, but probably more than likely Peter was trying to discern its meaning and practical application.

- ✓ While Peter was pondering the meaning of the vision, the three individuals sent by Cornelius show up looking for him. Given that these three men were Gentiles, it may have prompted Peter to realize that God was telling him that in the same way that the animals in his vision were not to be considered unclean any longer, then neither should he perceive that Gentiles were unclean in God's eyes.

- ✓ Peter's obedience will be tested as to what he will do next. Devout "Jewish custom" did not permit Gentiles to enter or be invited into their homes.

"**While Peter was still thinking about the vision**, **<u>the Spirit said to him</u>**, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So, get up and go downstairs. **Do not hesitate to go with them, for <u>I have sent them</u>**." Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" (Acts 10:19-21)

- ✓ The Holy Spirit reveals to Peter that this situation is under the control of the Lord and to be patient in understanding that the vision and the visit by the three men had a divine purpose - which is salvation for Cornelius and his household
- ✓ When the visitors arrived, Peter was probably still processing the full understanding and intended meaning of the vision, but he was at least open to discussing the purpose of their visit.
- ✓ Ultimately Peter is obedient to the command of the Holy Spirit which is a significant shift in his "cultural" thinking and our assumption is that he recognizes this vision as a significant shift in breaking the barrier between Jews and Gentiles as far as the Gospel is concerned and it will begin with Cornelius.

“The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. **The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along**.” (Acts 10:22-23)

- ✓ This encounter on the surface seems like a contradiction given the cultural and religious divisions between the Jewish people and the oppressive occupying empire whom Cornelius belonged to.
- ✓ God had plans to bridge that gap and Peter would be the one whom God used to begin the process of bringing the gospel to the Gentiles which will change the world!
- ✓ Peter will leave the town of Joppa, along with six other people and will head to Caesarea to meet with Cornelius.



"The following day he arrived in Caesarea. **Cornelius was expecting them** and had **called together his relatives and close friends**. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." (Acts 10:24-26)

- ✓ We are told by Luke that Cornelius was expecting Peter. Given they did not know each other previously, the Holy Spirit must have impressed upon him that the sovereignty of God would prevail, and Peter would obey and come.
- ✓ Cornelius (through an obedient heart) was so confident that Peter would come that he prepared a greeting party made up of his family and close friends.
- ✓ When a person is obedient to the call of God something changes internally because faith in the Lord has a way of radically transforms the heart.

"**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**. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, **because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**" (Romans 5:1-5)

"The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. **As Peter entered the house**, **Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence**. **But Peter made him get up**. "Stand up," **he said, "I am only a man myself**." (Acts 10:24-26)

- ✓ Cornelius was "all in" and his decision to have his family and close friends there to show his commitment to God was evidence of that.
- ✓ This action by Cornelius (bowing prostrate before Peter) was a sign of reverence and respect. It was a way for Cornelius to show he recognized Peter as a "holy man" or someone who was a representative of God. Luke doesn't tell us that he was instructed to do so by the Holy Spirit but the actions by Cornelius would have been consistent with the culture of that time.
- ✓ Peter's reply would also be consistent with how he was taught by Jesus. Only God is to be worshipped in this fashion, and Peter was merely a humble servant of the Lord who was there to do the will of God.

"**While talking with him**, **Peter went inside** and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: "**You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile**. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?" (Acts 10:27-29)

- ✓ The full conversation between Peter and Cornelius is not recorded here by Luke but we are told that the two men had been talking. We just don't know the full record of what was said.
- ✓ This was a monumental and transformative meeting where a Jewish man (although a Christ follower) chooses to ignore everything he had learned as a child growing up (culturally, socially, and religiously) that Jews did not engage with Gentiles and furthermore they were forbidden from entering the house of a Gentile (a non-Jew)
- ✓ In doing this (entering the house of Cornelius), Peter is demonstrating the plan of God to completely change those old social, ceremonial and religious laws.

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- ✓ Peter references the vision that he had received earlier on the rooftop in which he was told not to call anything impure that God has made clean. Although the vision involved unclean animals, Peter must have concluded that the vision he saw was declaring that no human being is to be viewed as “unclean” based solely on their ethnic background. All are worthy to hear the gospel!

- ✓ Peter acknowledges his willingness to come but probably didn’t yet know the heart of Cornelius as the Lord did, which is why God brought the two of them together in this moment. God prepared the heart of Peter to present the gospel, and he also prepared the heart of Cornelius to receive it.

"**Cornelius answered**: "**Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour**, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, **God has heard your prayer** and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' So, I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us." (Acts 10:30-33)

- ✓ Luke doesn't provide the specifics of what Cornelius prayed or what he may have asked for. He may have had the desire to hear the gospel or to know the Lord in an even more meaningful way. Perhaps Judaism was insufficient in meeting that need
- ✓ As a belief system – Judaism lacks one important component which is faith in Jesus Christ as the One and Only sacrifice for our sin in order to reconcile us to God.
- ✓ Luke does tell us Cornelius was a devout and God-fearing man. This lends itself to the idea that he was sensitive to the prompting of the Lord.

“Cornelius answered: “Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, ‘Cornelius, **God has heard your prayer** and **remembered your gifts to the poor**. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.’ So, I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. **Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us**.” (Acts 10:30-33)

- ✓ God was actively preparing the hearts of both men to assist in breaking down these centuries old ethnic and religious barriers between Jews and Gentiles.

- ✓ The spiritual hunger displayed by Cornelius to hear the message that Peter had for them was also evidenced in his leadership. He wasn’t looking for just a casual visit with Peter, but he instead wanted himself, his family and his friends to hear “everything the Lord had commanded him to preach”. Peter will set out to share the gospel (the Good News of Salvation) with all who were present.

**“Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that <u>God does not show favoritism</u> <u>but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right</u>.** You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached — how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” (Acts 10:34-38)

- ✓ This is nothing new as far as God is concerned. God has never excluded himself from Gentiles nor has he excluded Gentiles from himself.

“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. **<u>I will bless those who bless you</u>**, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

Jonah preached to the people of Ninevah that they should repent of their evil ways and this was the result; “Then **God saw their works**, that **they turned from their evil way**; and **<u>God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it</u>**.” (Jonah 3:10)

“Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. **You know the message God sent to the people of Israel**, **announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all**. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached — how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” (Acts 10:34-38)

- ✓ It is true that the Old Testament teaches that the Jews were God’s chosen people and the special recipients of His promises and revelations.
- ✓ What Peter will declare is that Jesus gave them (the Apostles) the special task of preaching the “Good News” that Jesus Christ is “Lord of All” and the One responsible for removing any barriers that exist between Jews and Gentiles
- ✓ In other words – all are welcome to hear the gospel and either accept the message that Jesus is the savior or choose to reject it.

# Everyone is equal when it comes to sin and the need for a Savior

"What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God." (Romans 3:1-2)

"What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! **For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin**. As it is written: "**There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God**. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; **there is no one who does good, not even one**." "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet are swift to shed blood; ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know." "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. **Therefore, no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law**; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. (Romans 3:9-20)

"But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. **This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe**. **There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**, and **all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus**. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—**to be received by faith**. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished — he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:21-26)

# Everyone is equal when it comes to sin and the need for a Savior

"**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. And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. **But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (Romans 5:1-11)

"What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; **but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith**, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." (Romans 9:30-33)

"**Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved**. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. **For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness**, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. **For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes**. (Romans 10:1-4)

“Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. **You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea**, **<u>beginning in Galilee</u>** after the baptism that John preached — how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.” (Acts 10:34-38)

- ✓ Although there was no newspapers, cable television, or internet during this time, the knowledge of the events surrounding the life of Jesus were well known, especially among the ranks of the Roman military.
- ✓ It is probable (though not recorded here by Luke) that the conversation between Peter and Cornelius contained a more detailed historical account of the life of Jesus given Peter was an eyewitness and an Apostle of Jesus. He will later dictate those events to Mark who will record them in the Biblical record - The Gospel of Mark.

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- ✓ Luke records Peter's summary of the life of Jesus making a special notation how "**God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and power"**. Although the Jews were expecting more of a political or military leader to deliver them from Roman occupation – Jesus instead went about "**doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him**".
- ✓ In making this declaration; Peter made the connection to the words spoken by Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-3) to the actions and life of Jesus.

“**The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me**, because **the Lord has anointed me** to **proclaim good news to the poor**. He has sent me to **bind up the brokenhearted**, **to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners**, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion — to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.” (**Isaiah 61:1-3**)

“**Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit**, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. **He went to Nazareth**, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. **He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him**. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “**The Spirit of the Lord is on me**, because **he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor**. He has sent me to **proclaim freedom for the prisoners** and **recovery of sight for the blind**, to **set the oppressed free**, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. **He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing**.” (Luke 4:14-21)

“Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: **It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, **whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead**, **that this man stands before you healed**. Jesus is the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone. **Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved**.” (Acts 4:8-12)

"**<u>We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem</u>**. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:39-43)

- ✓ Peter further corroborates his message by declaring some very powerful truths:
  - First, he states; "***We are witnesses of all these things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem***".
  - This would include the healings and miracles performed by Jesus and the Apostles (eyewitnesses) affirmed them as fact.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. **<u>They killed him by hanging him on a cross</u>**, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:39-43)

- ✓ Peter further corroborates his message by declaring some very powerful truths:
  - Second, he states; "***They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross***".
  - It is another claim that the crucifixion was a historic event. It's important to note that there was no recorded evidence from that time that anyone ever disputed the crucifixion as being false or never taking place.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, **but God raised him from the dead on the third day** and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:39-43)

- ✓ Peter further corroborates his message by declaring some very powerful truths:
  - Third, he states; "***God raised Him on the third day***"
  - It is another declaration that the resurrection did in fact take place. No one at that time disputed this as being false, for no one ever claimed that they had produced Jesus' body – proof that he rose from the dead.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and **caused him to be seen**. **He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead**. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:39-43)

- ✓ Peter further corroborates his message by declaring some very powerful truths:
  - ➢ Fourth, he states that God made Jesus visible, "***not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead***"
  - ➢ This is an affirmation that the Apostles were the recipients and guardians of the Gospel message. They spoke with authority which was granted to them by Christ.

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **He commanded us to preach to the people** and **to testify** that **he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead**. All the prophets testify about him that **everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name**." (Acts 10:39-43)

- ✓ The lesson here is that the ministry of Jesus Christ will result in one of two things:
  - ✓ Judgement to those who reject him
  - ✓ Forgiveness and salvation to those who accept him

"***Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved***" (Acts 4:12)

"**While Peter was still speaking these words**, **the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message**. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that **the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles**. For **they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God**. Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. **They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have**." **So, he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ**. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days" (Acts 10:44-48)

- ✓ Some refer to this as the "Gentile Pentecost" as it mirrors some of the same events as described in Acts 2.
- ✓ It is somewhat of a turning point for the New Testament Church as the Holy Spirit is "poured out" on "non-Jewish" people for the first time in recorded biblical history
- ✓ There is no other formal requirements needed (i.e. Jewish circumcision) to affirm their faith and belief in Jesus – the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was all the evidence that was needed. In recognition of their faith – Peter commanded them to be baptized, which officially welcomed them into the fellowship of the early church.

# Concluding Thoughts

- ✓ Although the thought of Gentiles coming to faith may have been an unusual idea to a Jew – Peter will later claim; "***Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way***" (Acts 11:17)

- ✓ By Cornelius and his household coming to faith in Christ it opens the door to the uncircumcised – something the Apostles will need to deal with later.

- ✓ The conversion of Cornelius is affirmed by Peter remaining with him; probably for the purposes of further instruction.

- ✓ As to the life of Cornelius the Centurion; Some early traditions (including Egyptian Coptic accounts) state that Cornelius retired from the Roman military, remained in Caesarea, and was eventually ordained as a local bishop and died a natural death