

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 4-17-16 AM NOTES
"THE GOSPEL FOR EVERY PERSON"
ACTS 10:1-48
#14 in Series, "Acts: The Spirit, the Church, and the World"

The three sons of Noah were Shem, Ham, and Japheth

All People Groups Share a Common Dilemma.

Romans 5:12 (NASB) "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."

Genesis 5:3a (NASB) "When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image..."

Isaiah 53:6a (NASB) "All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way..."

1 Corinthians 15:22 (NASB) "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."

All People Groups Share a Common Desire

All People Groups Share a Common Deliverer

I. The Preparation for the Gospel Going to the Gentiles (vv. 1-23)

A. The Preparation of Cornelius (vv. 1-8)

B. The Preparation of Peter (vv. 9-23)

Galatians 3:28 (NASB) "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

II. The Declaration of the Gospel Going to the Gentiles (vv. 24-43)

A. The Meeting Prepared (vv. 24-33)

B. The Message Preached (vv. 34-43)

1. Introduction (vv. 34-35)

2. The Main Theme (vv. 36-42)

"Christianity does not say, 'Come and keep these commandments'; or, 'Observe these ordinances'; or, 'Review these relics'; or, 'Perform these penances'. Christianity says, 'Come and meet the Man!'"

□John Phillips

3. The Conclusion (v. 43)

III. The Salvation That Resulted From the Gospel (vv. 44-48)

A. The Outpoured Spirit (v. 44)

Acts 8:14-17 (NASB) “¹⁴ Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 11:17 (NASB) “Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as *He gave* to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?”

B. The Outward Sign (vv. 45-48)

First Baptist Church Powell 4 17 2016 AM Sermon 14: The Gospel for Every Person Series: The Spirit, the Church, and the World Acts 10:1-48

Acts 10 is a pivotal chapter in the book of Acts. We have seen the Gospel going to the Jews and then the Samaritans, but now we see the Gospel taking the huge step of going to the Gentiles.

Before we get into the text, allow me give you some basics of world history. All the people groups (often erroneously called “races,” but in reality there is only one race – the human race) of the world can be traced back to the three sons of Noah. The flood in Noah’s day was not a myth or a folktale. There was a literal worldwide flood. The evidence for this fact of history is abundant. As a result of God’s judgment, all humanity died in the flood with the exception of Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives. All of the current people (ethnic) groups originated from these three sons of Noah.

After God confused the languages at the Tower of Babel, where the people rebelled and refused to scatter over all the earth as God commanded, it is believed that the descendants of Shem settled in the Middle East. The word “Semitic” is literally “Shemitic.” Saul of Tarsus was a descendent of Shem.

Another son of Noah was Ham. Most scholars believe that Ham’s descendants settled in Africa. The Ethiopian eunuch was almost certainly a descendent of Ham.

The other son was Japheth. It is widely believed that his descendants settled largely in Europe. Cornelius, who we will examine in this message, was almost certainly a descendent of Japheth.

In Acts chapters 8, 9, and 10, we see representatives of all three major categories of the basic people/ethnic groups in the world. By way of introduction, let me show you something that is true about all mankind – every descendent of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

1. All People Groups Share a Common Dilemma

While one was a descendent of Shem, one of Ham, and one of Japheth, all were descendants of Adam. That causes a real problem. The Bible says in Romans 5:12: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned [in Adam].” Adam opened the door to sin. We were in Adam when he sinned. The consequences of Adam’s sin were passed on to his descendants. When we were born physically, we were born in Adam’s image. Genesis 5:3a says “When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image...” To be born in Adams image, means that we were born with a spirit that was dead to God. We were also born with a nature that pulls us toward sin and defiance of God. Isaiah 53:6a: “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way...” Because of our position – in Adam, and our condition – with spirits dead to God, there was a serious consequence. 1 Corinthians 15:22a: says “For as in Adam all die...”

Sin coming into the world through Adam brought both ultimate physical death and immediate spiritual death to Adam and all of his descendants. Every descendent of Shem, Ham, and Japeth is in reality a descendent of Adam and even though their body may be healthy, their spirit (that part of us that allows us to know and have fellowship with God) is dead to God.

2. All People Groups Share a Common Desire

All three of these men in Acts chapters 8, 9, and 10, shared a common desire though they were perhaps not able to articulate it. They had a deep desire to fulfill the deepest longing of their souls. For example, Saul found the Judaism, that he had poured his life into, to be empty. He tried to turn up the effort, and even persecuted the church which he saw as the enemy of Judaism. However, something haunted Saul. It was Stephen’s example. Even as he watched Stephen die a martyr’s death, Saul knew that Stephen had something that he did not have. As for the Ethiopian eunuch, he had traveled all the way to Jerusalem (some 700 miles) searching for something to fill the void in his life. All of the riches and honor of a high position in the government could not fill the deepest longing of his soul. Cornelius obviously had an emptiness in his own soul, and he sought to fill that emptiness through being associated with Judaism and its morals and its belief in one God but, as we will see in the message, he stopped short of becoming a full Jew (being circumcised). He obviously was not fulfilled by the polytheism most common in Rome. He began to worship the God of the Jews, but did not know Him.

3. We Share a Common Deliverer

Saul met Jesus on the road to Damascus, and for the first time in his life the hunger was satisfied. The Ethiopian eunuch met Jesus in the desert as Philip shared with him and we are told “he went on his way rejoicing.” Cornelius met the Lord Jesus Christ and came to know the God he knew about in a personal way. We can see how Cornelius met the Lord Jesus Christ and how the gospel crossed over the huge barrier to go to the Gentiles.

I. The Preparation for the Gospel Going to the Gentiles (v 1-23)

Allow me to introduce you to Cornelius. We are told that he was a Roman centurion probably from Italy originally. A Roman legion was made up of 6000 men. In a legion there were ten cohorts of 600 men each. In a cohort there were six centurions who commanded 100 men each. The centurions were called the *backbone* of the Roman army. When verse 2 describes Cornelius as “one who feared God,” it was speaking of an actual category related to Judaism. A person who drew close to Judaism but failed to be circumcised was called a “God-fearer.” Cornelius was a God fearer. Cornelius was living up to the light that he had, and God was about to give him much more light.

A. The Preparation of Cornelius (v 1-8)

It was about 3 PM when an angel appeared to him. The Bible says that Cornelius was alarmed. He knew this was a supernatural being. The angel gave him instructions about sending messengers to get Peter in Joppa. It is interesting that Cornelius followed to the letter every instruction he was given. The instructions by the angel were very specific – it included who he was to contact and where he was staying in Joppa. As soon as the angel left, Cornelius sent two of his servants and a loyal soldier on the thirty-mile journey to find Peter.

Why did God send others to get Peter and bring him thirty miles back to see Cornelius? Why didn't He just have the angel share the gospel with Cornelius? The reason is that while the angel was competent to share the gospel, God had chosen to do this salvation work through human instruments.

B. The Preparation of Peter (v 9-23)

It was considerably more complicated to prepare Peter than it was to prepare Cornelius. It would help us to understand some of the background that explains Peter's reluctance. In first century Judaism, there had developed hatred of all Gentiles. There was a deep sense of superiority of the Jews over the Gentiles. We have records of one Rabbi who made this statement, "God created the Gentiles to fuel the fires of hell." Before the gospel could go to the remotest parts of the earth (Acts 1:8), the gospel had to go over this barrier of reaching the Gentiles. A small gain had been made when the Ethiopian eunuch came to Christ, but he returned to his distant land and did not remain to fellowship with Jewish believers. When we come to Acts chapter 10 it is God's providential timing to reconcile Jews and Gentiles in the church. This reconciliation, however, would require God to forcefully send Peter.

While Peter was waiting for a meal to be prepared, God put him in a trance like state, and gave him a vision. What is described is God invading the consciousness without the aid of the eyes. In the vision the sky opened up and an object like a great sheet came down to the ground and there were in it all kinds of animals. In the Old Testament law, God had given his people a list of clean animals that they could eat, and a list of unclean animals that they could not eat. There were probably some health issues involved here, but primarily the dietary laws were to keep Israel separate from their pagan neighbors. But now God tells Peter to eat of the animals-even the unclean ones. Peter is very confused. Peter seems to have a tendency of speaking before he thinks. He answers the Lord by saying, "not so Lord" (NKJV). This unwise answer given by Peter reveals the tremendous struggle that was going on inside him. To say "not so Lord" is illogical. If we say "not so" then he is not Lord. If we call him Lord, "not so" is not an option. I read about a young believer, facing the choice of obeying the call of God to go to the mission field or of continuing in a rewarding and comfortable business position, who consulted a veteran missionary. He explained how clearly God had called and yet how hard it was to make the choice to go. The missionary opened his Bible at this passage and pointed out to the young person Peter's words, "not so, Lord." "You cannot say that." The wise older man explained, "It is either 'not so' or it is 'Lord'. The two words put together are a contradiction in terms. Take my Bible and take the pencil and sit down here and pray about it. Then cross out one of the expressions. Cross out the words not so and leave the word Lord, or cross out the word Lord and leave the words not so. You cannot have it both ways."

What was this vision communicating to Peter? God was showing Peter that the old covenant was now replaced by the new covenant. Under the new covenant, brought about by the shedding of Christ's own blood on the cross, both Jews and Gentiles were a part of the one body that is called the church. The regulations of the law concerning separation from Gentiles were no longer in effect. This voice came to Peter a second time. He was told, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy." Finally, after this scenario was repeated three times, the sheet with the animals was taken up into the sky. The message from God was this: the Old Testament dietary restrictions are now abolished. In fact, all of the laws that separated the Jews from the Gentiles were abolished with the coming of the New Covenant. Both Jews and Gentiles were now members of the same body – the body of Christ, the church. Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." In God's sovereign timing, just as the vision was completed the messengers from Cornelius arrived at the door and began to knock.

II. The Declaration of the Gospel Going to the Gentiles (v 24-43)

In this passage we see the gospel – the message that changes the world - one person at a time. It can change any descendent of Shem, Ham, or Japheth.

A. The Meeting Prepared (v 24-33)

When Peter and the six men who traveled with him arrived at Cornelius' home, there was a crowd already gathered. These friends and coworkers of Cornelius were anxiously waiting to hear from Peter. Cornelius was so glad to see Peter that he fell at his feet and began to worship him. That really scared Peter. He told Cornelius, "Stand up; I too am just a man." In verse 29 Peter asked them why they had called for him. Cornelius tells about his encounter with the angel, and then says to Peter, "Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." Wow! What a God prepared situation Peter has come into. There is a group of hungry nonbelievers who are simply waiting for Peter to tell them how to be saved. I can only imagine how excited Peter was.

B. The Message Preached (v 34-43)

Like any good message, this one is organized.

1. Introduction (v 34-35)

From verse 44, we see that prejudiced Peter finally understands. God loves the Gentiles just as much as he loves the Jews. While God had a special purpose for the Jews, He does not love one people group over another. Many of the Jews never understood this truth. The fact that God had a special purpose for the Jews does not mean that He did not love those who were not Jews.

In verse 35, we see that wherever there is a seeking heart responding to the light they have, God responds. In verse 35, Peter is simply expressing the reality that there is a work of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the sinner. That work produces a person who reverences God and is willing to do what is right and therefore is welcome or acceptable to God. One commentator put it this way, "The meaning is not that such persons are thereby saved (Acts 11:14) but rather that they are suitable candidates for salvation." [Everett Harrison, *Acts: The Expanding Church*, page 182]

2. Main Theme (v 36-42)

Again, as he did in his two previous sermons, Peter simply focuses in on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He spotlights Christ's life in verse 38. "... and how he went about doing good..." He spotlights his death in verse 39: "They also put him to death by hanging him on a cross." He spotlights Christ's resurrection in verse 40. Acts 10:40: "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible." John Phillips summarizes this well: "Christianity does not say, 'Come and keep these commandments'; or, 'Observe these ordinances'; or, 'Review these relics'; or, 'Perform these penances.' Christianity says, 'come and meet the Man!'" [John Phillips, *Exploring Acts, Volume 1*, page 208]

3. The Conclusion (v 43)

The means of receiving saving grace is to believe in Him. Every part of this verse is vitally important to the Gospel. "Everyone" speaks of the universal offer of saving grace. "Who believes in Him" – the means of receiving saving grace is believing on Jesus Christ. There are three elements in saving belief:

First, to believe requires one to know the facts. You cannot believe what you do not know.

Second, saving faith requires that we accept the facts as true.

Third, saving faith means that we not only know and accept as true the facts of the Gospel, we also rest on, rely on, and completely commit and entrust ourselves to those facts and that Person as our only hope.

The last important phrase in that verse is "receives forgiveness of sins." These are the words that Cornelius longed to hear. Oh the joy of true forgiveness! That word "forgiveness" means to send away. He has sent our sin away. Hallelujah.

III. The Salvation That Resulted from the Gospel Going to the Gentiles (v 44-48)

It is almost humorous that before Peter could finish his sermon, when Cornelius and those with him heard how to be saved, they didn't wait for an invitation at the end; they believed and were saved. When they heard the facts about his life, death, and resurrection, they accepted the facts as true then trusted in and committed themselves to Jesus, totally trusted and relied on Him and the price he paid for them on the cross. All they needed to know was, "What do I do?" One of the exciting things about sharing Christ with

others is that sometimes we run into a Cornelius who is so ready. All they need is for somebody to tell them what to do.

A. The Outpoured Spirit (v 44)

I want to be careful not to make this point overly complicated. In the book of Acts, when the gospel crossed over a barrier it was essential that the apostles see it to confirm that the gospel had now gone where it had never gone before. For instance, when the Samaritans came to Christ, it was Philip who was preaching the gospel and no apostle was in the area. As soon as possible, Peter and John came to verify the salvation of the Samaritans. Acts 8:14-17:

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they *began* laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.

The text doesn't say that the Samaritans spoke in a language that did not know, but it is insinuated in that there was something that made the apostles know that they had received the Spirit. When the gospel crossed over the barrier to the Gentiles, there was no delay in receiving the Holy Spirit because the apostle Peter was there when it happened. There was apostolic confirmation that the gospel had crossed the barrier and now had gone to the Gentiles. Later when Peter was questioned about the Gentiles being included in the church, he answered this way in Acts 11:17: "Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as *He gave* to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

B. The Outward Sign (v 45-48)

How did the apostles know that the Holy Spirit had come? The Holy Spirit did the same thing he did on the day of Pentecost. He enabled these new Gentile believers to speak in a language they had not naturally learned. The word translated "tongues" in verse 46 is the common word used for languages. This speaking in languages not naturally known was never meant to be the norm for the church. Tongues were used in unique situations in the book of acts to give evidence that the Holy Spirit had truly come to indwell believers.

When it was obvious that these new believers had truly been saved and had received the Holy Spirit, they publicly professed their faith in Christ through believers' baptism (v 47-48).

Conclusion

The gospel had now crossed its final barrier. The Gentiles who trusted in Christ were a part of the church. There would be no Gentile church and Jewish church; there was simply the church made up of Jews and Gentiles. The gospel is for everyone: for those from every tongue, tribe, and nation.