

Acts 10 | The Gospel is given to the Gentiles | 2/19/16

- Introduction
 - The church in transition
 - Through these early years after the ascension of Christ we have seen the early church in a state of fluctuation as God is preparing the hearts and minds of those he has chosen to spread the Gospel.
 - The Apostles after receiving the Holy Spirit have realized their purpose which is to preach the Gospel and to be church planters.
 - Up until this point in Scripture the Gentiles had not yet been directly given the Gospel nor have they received the Holy Spirit.
 - Some may have heard it preached in the streets, but it had clearly been directed at the Jews in the beginning.
 - The we saw that after it was given to the Jews that God brought it to the Samaritans through Philip.
 - Now we have another turning point in Scripture where the Gospel and the Holy Spirit is given to the Gentiles.
 - Acts 14:27
 - “After they arrived and gathered the church together, they reported everything God had done with them and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.”
 - Up until this point the apostles still did not understand Jesus’s teachings that the Gospel would even be for the Gentiles.
 - So in this chapter we will see the confirmation that the Gospel and salvation is for everyone.
 - That it is not just for the Jew, but having faith in Christ is for everyone.
- Cornelius – the Gentile who feared God. | Acts 10:1-7
 - **Read Acts 10:1-7**
 - Cornelius the centurion
 - Cornelius was a centurion which meant that he was one of 60 Roman officers who commanded 100 men out of an entire legion.
 - He would have been well respected and battle tested for him to have been appointed to the position of centurion.
 - Cornelius feared God
 - Right away we find out what kind of man Cornelius was.
 - Scripture tells us that he was a devout man who feared God.
 - Cornelius unlike his fellow brethren had turned away from paganism.
 - He instead of worshiping the pagan gods that were primarily practiced by the Romans we see that he has instead turned to the God of Israel, to Yahweh.
 - He befriended the Jews and believed in their God.
 - He respected and believed in the one true God and even prayed.
 - Cornelius was as close as one could be to a proselyte.
 - A proselyte is someone who is not a Jew (like a Gentile) that converts to Judaism.
 - Cornelius feared God and followed Him, but to technically be a proselyte he would have had to have been circumcised.
 - In later Scripture we see that he had not done this.
 - Acts 11:2-3
 - So he would not have been allowed to have gone to the temple or participate with any of the Jewish rituals.

- He gave alms or performed acts of charity
 - Not only did he believe in God but was also a doer.
 - His giving of alms or acts of charity were done from the heart because he truly cared about others.
 - This would have been counter to his pagan friends.
 - God's plan for the Gentiles
 - It has always been God's plan to reveal His Gospel and to send the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles.
 - God's plan was always to give the gift of salvation and the Holy Spirit to the whole world regardless of who they were or where they came from.
 - Faith is all that is required.
 - **God chose Cornelius to use as the initial doorway to bring the Gospel and the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles.**
 - Acts 14:27
 - "After they arrived and gathered the church together, they reported everything God had done with them and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."
 - God chose Cornelius and He also chose Peter to be there when the Holy Spirit was given to this new people group.
 - Cornelius's prayers and good works stood out to God.
 - The sincerity of his heart was shown in his prayers and good works.
 - Cornelius was not following God out of necessity, he did it because he believed in Yahweh the God of Israel.
 - **Not only did he worship God but so did his household.**
 - Cornelius obeys God and sent men to Joppa to bring Peter.
 - **Why do you think God chose Cornelius to be the first Gentile that He "opened the door of faith" to (Acts 14:27)?**
- Peter's vision | Acts 10:9-16
 - **Read Acts 10:9-16**
 - We see an interesting vision that God gave to Peter.
 - Peter at this time did not know the meaning of the vision that God had given him, but he would soon realize after visiting the house of Cornelius what its true meaning was.
 - God gave him the vision to tell him that the Gospel and salvation was not just for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles.
 - God had established in Leviticus dietary restrictions upon the Israelites to set them apart from the rest of the world.
 - They were certain foods they could not eat and others could become defiled and make them unclean.
 - However, after Jesus came into the world these restrictions were no longer in place and in His vision he tells Peter to go and eat of various animals that he had originally had to stay away from.
 - Peter's initial reaction is quite sudden and a bit concerning to say "No, Lord!"
 - He was so set in his restrictions on the food that even when God told him it was OK he still didn't believe Him.
 - However, the greater purpose for this vision was to not just take a moment to speak about their dietary restrictions but to speak of their relation to the Gentiles and the Gospel.

- As the Jews were separated from eating certain foods they were also separated from the Gentiles.
 - Acts 10:28
 - Acts 11:2-3
 - Ephesians 2:11-12
- But now because of the cross there was no more separation between the Israelites and the Gentiles.
 - All could come to Christ and have a personal relationship with Him.
 - Ephesians 2:13-18
 - The cross was not just for the Jews it was for the entire world!
 - Romans 10:12-13
 - “for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, since the same Lord of all is rich to all who call on Him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
- This is part of the transition period that we see in the Book of Acts.
- Peter visits Cornelius | Acts 10:17-33
 - **Read Acts 10:17-33**
 - God calls Peter to visit Cornelius
 - The men went out obediently to find Peter to ask him to come to the house of Cornelius.
 - As the men approach the Holy Spirit tells Peter that he must go with these men because God sent them.
 - There was no “No Lord!” this time ☺ Peter was obedient.
 - Cornelius informs Peter why he was called
 - Peter upon entering the home tells Cornelius that normally it is forbidden for him to visit a Gentile, but he knew that God had called him there to his home for a purpose.
 - Cornelius recounts his vision that was obviously from God because that is the only way he would have know who Peter was and to bring him.
 - Then Cornelius also knowing that Peter was to bring them something says that they are ready to hear what it is that Peter was commanded by God to tell them.
 - **So what was it? It was the Gospel!**
 - They new and worshiped God but they did not yet know Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit.
 - Peter was called to tell them about Christ so that they could be saved.
 - Acts 11:14
 - “He will speak a message to you that you and all your household will be saved by.”
 - **Cornelius and his household were ready to hear this message that would bring them salvation.**
- Peter realizes the Gospel is also for the Gentiles | Acts 10:34-43
 - **Read Acts 10:34-43**
 - Peter’s eyes are opened and he now understands that the Gospel wasn’t just for the Jews or the Samaritans but it for everyone even the Gentiles.
 - **God needed to bring down the walls in the minds of the apostles so that they could see that God’s Word was for everyone.**
 - God used **Cornelius** who loved God **as the bridge** to show Peter and the disciples this great truth.
 - This fulfilled God’s promise from long before.

- Genesis 12:1-3
 - Verse 3...ALL the peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”
 - God does not reserve His Gospel for only a certain group
 - As Peter’s eyes were opened we are also given the same wonderful truth that God does not show favoritism in His children.
 - That anyone who fears Him, which is one who respects and believes in Him that they can also have that same saving faith to become a Christian.
 - God uses Christians like he used His apostles to witness to others.
 - This is a great example of how God seeks man and how man seeks God.
 - Luke 19:10
 - “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.
 - Jeremiah 29:12-14a
 - “You will call to Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you...”
 - We cannot find God if He does not seek us, but He Word tells us that He does and all Christians can say AMEN to that.
 - **There are modern day Cornelius’s in the world today that are searching for God, and need someone to share with them the Gospel.**
 - God will call us to witness to unexpected people at times.
 - Peter was not expecting to be called to witness to the Gentiles, but when he was called he was obedient.
 - God knows those who seek Him and we are his tools that He uses to bring His Gospel so that they can be saved.
 - **Does God call us to witness to unlikely people and at unforeseen times that are just waiting to receive the Gospel?**
 - Peter preaches the Gospel
 - Peter after acknowledging that God is seeking the Gentiles he proceeds to tell them about Jesus Christ.
- The Gentile conversion | Acts 10:44-48
 - **Read Acts 10:44-48**
 - As Peter was preaching the Gospel, true saving faith was being cultivated in the hearts of the Gentile listeners.
 - **Hearing the Gospel with an open and receptive heart will cultivate saving faith.**
 - Romans 10:17
 - “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.”
 - After hearing the Gospel these Gentiles had saving faith, they believed in their hearts that by believing in Jesus Christ that they would have forgiveness of sins.
 - Romans 10:8-9
 - “On the contrary, what does it say? The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart. This is the message of faith that we proclaim: If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”
 - The Gentiles upon their belief received the Holy Spirit.
 - Acts 11:15-16

- “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came down on them, just as on us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’
- The Gentiles spoke in tongues
 - This was like Pentecost all over again!
 - The Gentile believers received the Spirit of God in the same visible way that the Apostles had received before.
 - Why is that we might ask?
 - As we saw previously Peter was involved with each people group when they received the Holy Spirit.
 - Peter was there for the Jews and the Samaritans and God showed it to him with visible proof.
 - God did the same with the Gentiles to give proof that His spirit did live inside them as well.
 - This was a critical truth that Peter and the rest of the apostles needed to comprehend.
- The baptism of the Gentiles
 - Immediately Peter proclaimed that they should also be baptized since they received the Holy Spirit.
 - Peter treated these Gentiles and others since then with a different perspective knowing that they are all children of God.
- The period of transition ends in the early church.
 - With the Gentiles now receiving the Spirit of God we see this time of transition coming to a close.
 - God has broken down the barriers and Jews, Samaritans and Gentiles are now unified into the same body of Christ. **They are the universal church.**