

~ACTS~

Lesson 34- Salvation to the Gentiles (pt 4): One Body by One Spirit in Christ

We are continuing our study in chapter 10 and in this chapter, we have seen God working to bring His Salvation to the Gentiles. And this story in chapter 10 becomes a major milestone in the plan of redemption and also in Christian history, as the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile comes crashing down. We left off last week in verse 43 as Peter was preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to these uncircumcised Gentiles who had ears to hear the Word of God. Cornelius and his family were in faithful expectancy to hear the words of Salvation from Peter. And as we said last week, this sermon he preached was absolute perfection as Peter taught these Gentiles about the Man, Jesus Christ: our Savior, the Word who became flesh, our Kinsman Redeemer, Son of God and Son of Man, the Christ, the propitiation for our sins, our resurrected King who was ordained Judge over the living and the dead. And today we are going to see the results of this sermon as we look at the remainder of chapter 10, **Acts 10:44-48**.

In these verses, we not only see the Salvation of Cornelius and his whole household, but also the shocking effect this had on the Jews; that the same gift that was given to the Jews on Pentecost, has also now been poured out on the Gentiles as well, and the door of Salvation to the Gentiles has been thrust open by none other than God Himself. Let's start with verse 44...

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

Notice Peter didn't even finish his sermon. Luke says **while Peter was still speaking these words...** Peter says in Acts 11:15, *And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them...* Peter says I was just getting started! This just shows the eagerness and the faith that Cornelius had. But it also shows the eagerness of God. Can't you just imagine what God is doing up in heaven? He arranged this whole thing and now the time has come when they're hearing the Gospel and receiving it by faith and as soon as they believed, God sent the Spirit. This was just as exciting for God as it was for Cornelius.

Cornelius and his family had come with expectant ears to hear the message of Salvation. Notice the next phrase... **the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the Word**. That's the key, expectant ears... ears of faith ready to receive Salvation. As soon as they heard these words of Life from Peter about Jesus...that's all it took. Their faith had granted them Eternal Life, **John 1:12**; 3:16; Luke 7:50. There are two present active participles in verse 44 and notice the simultaneous action of these verbs... **while Peter was speaking...** the Holy Spirit fell upon **those who were hearing** the Word, the Logos. As they were hearing the Word, saving faith came up out of that Word they were hearing, and they were born again, Romans 10:17.

Notice the power that accomplishes Salvation in every believer... that is the Holy Spirit. **The Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the Word**. The Spirit comes upon them who believe, and those who believe are born again, born out from the Spirit, John 3:8, and the Spirit dwells in every believer, Romans 8:2, 9-11. The Holy Spirit is the power of the resurrection unto Eternal Life and He is given to us by our High Priest, Jesus Christ, **Ezek 37:4-14**; **John 6:63**; **7:37-39**; **Romans 8:11-16**; **Eph 1:13-14**. The Holy Spirit is the power unto resurrection life and is given as the guarantee of our inheritance to all who believe 2 Cor 5:5. So it is very clear that every believer has the Holy Spirit in them, but this gift of the Spirit doesn't stop there. Justification is just the beginning; the Holy Spirit is living in us to lead us and guide us into Sanctification. He is the Spirit of Holiness, Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, the Spirit of Sanctification. And as we yield ourselves to the working of the Spirit in our lives, He works in us Sanctification. This is the walk of Sanctification. And when we surrender to Him, the Spirit will empower us and lead us into a life of Sanctification, **2 Thess 2:13-14**; **1 Pet 1:22-23**; **2 Cor 3:18**. The Spirit is guiding us into all Truth, sanctifying us, and as we yield to Him, we become ambassadors for Him and His Kingdom and He will manifest His gifts in us for the sole purpose to glorify Jesus Christ as Savior of the world. This is the

objective of the Holy Spirit and He is working in and out through us to accomplish His will, **John 15:26; 16:7-14**. And as we yield ourselves to Him, the Holy Spirit works through us, manifesting His gifts to glorify Jesus as the Christ, **1 Cor 12:4-14**. And that is what happened on the Day of Pentecost. Remember what Jesus said just before He ascended into heaven, **Acts 1:8**. The Apostles were already born of the Spirit at that point when Jesus breathed on them in the upper room and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit," **John 20:22**. Then on Pentecost, the Spirit was poured out on them and they received power to be His witnesses to the world. The Spirit is involved in both occasions. First, we are born of the Spirit when we have faith in Jesus, and then as God wills, He bestows the Spirit by empowering those who will yield themselves to Him. And here with Cornelius we see both the rejuvenating work of the Spirit as well as the infilling of the Spirit happening almost simultaneously. And notice the reaction of the Jews who are with Peter in verse 45...

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.

The Jews who came with Peter from Joppa were believers, but they were still engrained in their Legalistic traditions and now they are seeing the gift of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the Gentiles as on the Day of Pentecost. Remember in Peter's sermon that day, he told them that this was the fulfillment of the prophet Joel saying, *I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh...* Acts 2:17. Then in Acts 2:33 he says, "*The promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out which you now see and hear.*" Now in Cornelius' house, the Jews are witnessing this same thing happening to the Gentiles. Luke says these Jewish believers are astonished **because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also**. This is exactly why God had Peter here with Cornelius along with these other six witnesses from Joppa. They were to be witnesses to the rest of the Jews that the Gentiles have now received Salvation just as they did.

But notice that it's not just Salvation that the Gentiles are receiving. They are also being filled with the Holy Spirit and the charismatic gift, the χάρισμα of the Spirit is manifested in the speaking of other tongues.

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

The specific gift of speaking in tongues was given to Cornelius as the evidence to the Jews that this was the same Spirit that was poured out on Pentecost. This was undeniable evidence. The gift of the Spirit is twofold: every believer is born of the Spirit by faith and receives the Holy Spirit as the seal of their inheritance, but in addition, as the Lord wills, the charismatic gifts of the Spirit are poured out to yielding hearts. Sometimes it happens immediately, sometimes it is later. The baptism of the Spirit is always "as He wills." 1 Cor 12:11, 18.

It is a common saying in Christianity to say that one is baptized with the Spirit "with the evidence of speaking in tongues." And speaking in tongues is certainly AN evidence, but it is NOT THE ONLY evidence. There are nine different manifestations of the gifts of the Spirit and it is God who chooses which one you will get and when you will get it. But the two conditions are you have to be born again and you have to have a willing heart, 1 Cor 12:4-11. The gift of tongues, as well as any of the nine gifts will always have one purpose... to give glory to God. Notice that is what this gift is doing here... **For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God**. God is the One who is being magnified with His gifts. Remember they are His gifts, they are the gifts of the Spirit, not gifts that we can wield on demand for our own glory. This is what got Simon the sorcerer in trouble, Acts 8:18-23, and what many hyper-charismatics are doing today.

The filling or baptism of the Spirit always follows Justification, and it is not just a onetime event. It is continual filling as He wills and as we yield ourselves to the Spirit to do His work, **Acts 4:31; Eph 5:18**. Up until this point in the book of Acts, this filling of the Spirit has always come days after they were born

again. Examples of this are Pentecost; the Samaritans; and the Apostle Paul. But now the infilling or baptism of the Spirit happened immediately following faith in Jesus, almost like it was one fluid motion, one leading right from the other... born of the Spirit and then immediately filled with the Spirit. Why was it different here with the Cornelius? I believe it was different because Peter was already there with Cornelius. Remember Peter has been the common witness to all the major barriers coming down, Pentecost, Samaria, and the Gentiles... same progression as the Gospel... Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth, Acts 1:8. Here in the house of Cornelius, Jesus has His witness already in position, therefore there is no need to wait like they did in Samaria. So, God chose to endow these Gentiles with the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues immediately for the sole purpose that Peter and the six Jews with him would be His witnesses to this major event. Now look at the response of Peter to this outpouring of the Spirit in verse 47...

Then Peter answered, 47) “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”

The six Jews are astonished at what is happening, and I am sure Peter is too, but Peter knows this is the will of God. God has been working on Peter’s heart for the last few days getting him ready for this moment. And Peter knows this is God working so he looks at the Jews with him and says, **Can anyone forbid water...?** It’s even more emphatic in the Greek because our English translation doesn’t translate the first word, μήτι. Surely not! Peter says, “Surely not, can we forbid anyone water to be baptized to those who have received the Holy Spirit just as we also.”

It is obvious that the same promise of the Spirit given on Pentecost has now been given to the Gentiles as well. Because Peter says, **who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.** Peter is speaking directly to the six and answering their astonishment from verse 45... They were astonished because they thought that the only way to salvation was through Judaism. How could these uncircumcised Gentiles receive Salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit? But God is breaking that barrier down.

After witnessing the outpouring of the Spirit, as a result of this Salvation, Peter immediately leads them to be water baptized. Notice how Peter takes control. The men from Joppa are standing in bewilderment, but Peter knows this is God working so Peter turns to Cornelius and his family in verse 48...

48) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

As we have discussed in other lessons, water baptism is not required for salvation, but it is an important step in our confession of faith. Water baptism is an outward sign of the inward confession of the heart, **1 Pet 3:21.** Water baptism doesn’t remove our sin, but it does solidify our confession of faith. It’s an outward display of dying with Christ and being resurrected with Him, Romans 6:3-4. This is why Peter had the 3,000 baptized immediately on the Day of Pentecost out in the open in the middle of the Temple, Acts 2:41. Our decision for Christ is personal, but that doesn’t mean that it’s private. Remember what Jesus said about confessing Him before men, **Matthew 10:32-33.**

So Peter commands these new Gentile converts to be baptized in water in the name of Jesus. It’s hard to say if the other six joined in to help or if they were still astonished and just watching everything happen. But notice that both, the baptism in water and the baptism of the Holy Spirit can happen in either order, but they both must follow Justification, Acts 2:41; 8:12, 36-38; 9:18; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 1 Cor 1:13-16.

And then look what follows the baptism in the remainder of verse 48... Fellowship with the brethren. **48) Then they asked him to stay a few days.** Fellowship with the brethren is the natural response to being born again. Everyone in that Gentile house was given new life and glorifying God in other tongues and they ask Peter to remain with them. So Peter stayed several days no doubt teaching them and building them up in Christ.

If you remember, this was Peter's mission when he left Jerusalem a couple of years ago at the end of chapter 9, Acts 9:31-32. He went on a journey throughout Galilee, Samaria, and Judea to edify the body of Christ, but little did he know this journey would involve bringing the Gentiles into the flock of God. This has been the plan of redemption from before the foundation of the world, that all nations of the world would be blessed in Jesus Christ, Gen 22:18; Gal 3:16; **John 10:14-16**. There is now one flock and One Shepherd, who is Jesus Christ. The middle wall of separation has been broken down and Salvation has been brought to the whole world, and all who believe in Jesus are baptized into one body, by one Spirit in Christ Jesus, **1 Cor 12:12-13**.