

"Peter's Ministry"

Part 4

Acts 10

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we started into Acts 10, which is a very important chapter. Some say that this is the most important chapter in the Bible because in this chapter the door is opened for the Gentiles to become members of the body of Jesus Christ. This is the fulfillment of Acts 1:8.

Acts 1:8

⁸ But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Notice the words of Boice:

"This chapter describes God's flinging open the door of His Church to Gentile believers and thus marking a key transition point in the spread of the Gospel in the Book of Acts. As noted in Acts 9, it is clear that God's Spirit was moving Peter step by step (from Lydda to Joppa to Caesarea) toward fulfillment of Acts 1:8 and the taking of the Gospel to the Gentiles. So, in Acts 8 we see the conversion an Ethiopian eunuch, a son of Ham, in Acts 9, the conversion of Saul, a son of Shem, and, in Acts 10, Cornelius, a son of Japheth. These represent the three divisions of humanity after the flood (Genesis 6:10)."

The importance of this chapter is seen in the fact that Luke mentions it three times in the book of Acts. Here in Acts 10.

Acts 11:1-3

And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

² And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

³ Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

Acts 15:7-9

⁷ *And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.*

⁸ *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;*

⁹ ***And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.***

Verse 9 here in Acts 15 is very important because it enlightens us as to what is happening in Acts 10.

Ephesians 2:12-14

¹² *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:*

¹³ *But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

¹⁴ *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and **hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us:***

Ephesians 3:3-6

³ *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,*

⁴ *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

⁵ *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;*

⁶ ***That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:***

The middle wall of partition was broken down when Jesus died upon the cross and was resurrected from the grave. As we come to chapter 10 of Acts, we see the fruition of what Jesus did as the Gentiles are brought into the body of Christ.

➤ **The Gentiles and the Body of Christ**
Part 2

Notice Acts 10:1-4

I will not go too far into a look at Cornelius because we did that last week. But I do want to remind you of something here that will erase much confusion in your mind. Many people struggle with what they read here in this chapter. We are told here that he prayed and his prayers came up to God for a memorial or in other words his prayers were heard. Then we read the words of John in John 9.

John 9:31

³¹ Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

But as we study this chapter, we see that Cornelius does not receive the Spirit until verse 44.

Acts 10:44

⁴⁴ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

So, we must ask the question, "How were his prayers heard before the Spirit came upon him?" The answer is that Cornelius was born again/he was saved but he was not a Christian until he received the Holy Spirit. The Apostles were the very same way because they were saved before Pentecost but they were not Christians until Pentecost. Cornelius was an Old Testament believer who became a New Testament believer/Christian. He was unique because there are no people like him today because the moment a person is saved today, they are given the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9

⁹ But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Notice Acts 10:5

Cornelius was instructed to send to Joppa to get Peter.

Notice Acts 10:1 again.

I want you to see where Cornelius was located. He was in Caesarea. There was someone else there also who could have come to him.

Acts 8:40

⁴⁰ But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

Why did God not use Philip? Because Philip was not given the keys to the Kingdom but Peter was.

Matthew 16:18-19

¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

¹⁹ And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Notice Acts 10:5-8

I want you to notice the influence that Cornelius had on those who served in his house. He sends a man who is identified here as a "DEVOUT" soldier that served him. The word "DEVOUT" tells us this man was also a believer and most likely there were others in Cornelius house that were believers also. Notice the words of Whitcomb on this thought:

"Notice that the particular soldier sent on this mission was also described as "devout." Here was at least one of the hundred soldiers who was a believer. The household servants were probably believers also. Cornelius had a godly influence over those that served under him. He had a relationship with the living God that they wanted also."

Application:

Here was a man that had great authority over many people and could have abused his authority. But instead, he used his position of authority to have a positive influence upon those who served him. Cornelius glorified God with what had been entrusted to him. God had placed him in the position he had.

Romans 13:1-2, 4

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

² Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

⁴ For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Whatever position we are given in life, whether it is a position of authority with the public or it is authority over our children while they are young, it is entrusted to us to glorify God in that very position.

Ephesians 6:5-9

⁵ Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

⁶ Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

⁷ With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

⁸ Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

⁹ And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Cornelius used his position to demonstrate the grace of God to them and some were believers because of this.

Notice Acts 10:9

The journey to Joppa was about 34 miles and as they were approaching the city Peter went up on the house top to pray and it will be while Peter is there that God will now prepare his heart for what is about to happen.

Application:

There are two points to consider from this:

1. When God lays upon our hearts to move in a certain direction because our heart is burdened for an individual then we must understand that God is working on the other person's end to prepare them for the meeting also.

So many times, God will place upon your heart to go and speak with someone and we look at the situation and think they will never listen or that they are not interested. But if the Lord is in it then we can be sure that God is working on both ends.

Let us notice another place where God worked on both ends.

Nehemiah 1:3-4

³ *And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.*

⁴ *And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,*

Nehemiah 2:1-6

And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

² *Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,*

³ *And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?*

⁴ *Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.*

⁵ *And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.*

⁶ *And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.*

2. The door of opportunity will not stay open forever.

Conclusion:

When God moves us, it is very important that we do what He is moving us to do at the very time He has opened the door.