

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON

WEEK 33

The Gentiles receive the gospel

Acts 10:1–11:18



DAY 1

Gentiles were seeking God • Acts 10:1–2

READ

Acts 10:1–33

EXPLAIN

The truth of Acts 10:1–2

Acts 10 is a massive step in God's salvation plan. Long ago, God chose to bless all nations through the descendants of one man, Abraham (Gen 12:1–3). Yet Israel failed in its mission to bless all nations (Isa 42:9), and still few Gentiles believed even after Jesus died for the world (1 John 2:2). But now in Acts 10, the 2,000-year-old promise began to come true, for God brought salvation to Gentiles. God prepared the way by preparing the heart of Cornelius. Cornelius was centurion in the Roman army. He was probably not Roman himself, but he was still a Gentile. As a centurion, he was in charge of about 100 soldiers, he was likely a strong, courageous, and responsible man. More importantly, he worshiped the true God. Although he was not a *proselyte*, *a full convert to Judaism*, he prayed to God and showed practical love to the people of Israel (Gen 12:3a). Like Cornelius, his whole family also worshiped God. That included not just immediate family members, but also slaves and others who lived or worked as part of the household. They were all ready to receive the gospel.

ASK

- Who was the centurion who prayed to God?
Cornelius.
- What is a centurion?
A leader in the Roman army in charge of about 100 soldiers.
- How do we know Cornelius was a worshiper of God?
He was "devout," "feared God," "gave alms generously," and "prayed continually to God."
- Who joined Cornelius in worshiping God?
His entire household.

DISCUSS

- How did God reveal that Gentiles were originally included in His salvation plan (Gen 12:3)?
- If you have repented, describe how God prepared your heart for salvation. If not, what kind of heart must you have in order to be saved (Jer 29:13)?

DAY 2

God prepared to save Gentiles • Acts 10:3–33

READ

Acts 10:1–33

EXPLAIN

The truth of Acts 10:3–33

God sent an angel in response to Cornelius' prayers and kindness. At the same time, Jesus and the Holy Spirit prepared Peter to respond to Cornelius' invitation. This was important, because Jews thought Gentiles were unclean. So Jesus gave Peter a vision of clean and unclean animals and told Peter to eat them. But what did this have to do with Gentiles? The old laws regarding food were not primarily about food to begin with. They were for keeping Israel separate from the people around them, guarding Israel against the nations' idolatry (Lev 20:25–26). But now Jesus had created a new community cleansed by His blood and kept holy by the Spirit on the inside rather than by laws on the outside (Gal 5:18; Col 2:20–23). Peter didn't quite understand this just from the vision, so the Holy Spirit spoke directly to Peter to help him make the connection. Now Peter understood: the same new covenant that made all food clean also made all people clean. So Peter went to Cornelius, and the preparation was complete. God had brought His obedient Jewish witness to an eager Gentile audience.

ASK

1. Who did God send to answer Cornelius' prayer?
Peter.
2. What did Jesus show Peter to prepare him to go to Gentiles?
A sheet full of clean and unclean animals.
3. What did Jesus say about the vision?
What God has made clean, do not call common.
4. What did the Spirit say this meant?
Go to the Gentiles. God offers salvation to them too.

DISCUSS

1. What is the lasting principle that the old food laws were about (Lev 20:25–26; 2 Cor 6:14–7:1)?
2. Why does that principle no longer prevent fellowship between believing Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:13–19)?

DAY 3

The gospel offers salvation to all people • Acts 10:34–42

READ

Acts 10:34–48

EXPLAIN

The truth of Acts 10:34–42

Peter preached to a new group of people, but he preached the same gospel. So what gospel did Peter preach? He preached the good news of peace through Jesus Christ. This is good news because all our problems come from not having peace with God. Jesus died to bear God's wrath against sin (2 Cor 5:19), so He turns enemies of God into friends (Rom 5:10). Jesus

is able to bring such total peace because He is Lord of all. While on earth, Jesus proved He is Lord of all. The Father, the Spirit, and His own righteous actions confirmed that He is Lord, even over Satan (1 John 3:8). Second, His death and resurrection prove that He is Lord. He is the Lord of life (Acts 3:15) and also the judge of the living and the dead (John 5:21–29). To some, judgment doesn't seem like "good news," but it is only bad news to those who reject Jesus. To those who love Jesus, it is just one more reason to trust Him with their lives. So the *gospel* is the good news that Jesus is Lord of all.

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. Did Peter preach a new gospel?
No. He preached to a new group of people, but he preached the same gospel.
2. How did Peter define the gospel?
It is the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.
3. Who are unbelievers at war with?
They are at war with God.
4. What are some things Jesus is Lord over?
Satan, life and death, judgment.

DISCUSS 

1. Do you rejoice that Jesus is Lord of all? Why is that such good news (Isa 9:6–7)? Can someone be saved without gladly accepting Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:9)?
2. How would you answer someone who says there are many ways to God (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)?

DAY 4*The gospel offers salvation through faith • Acts 10:43***READ** 

Acts 10:34–48

EXPLAIN **The truth of Acts 10:43**

The peace with God that Peter delivered to the Gentiles is the same **gospel** the prophets predicted (Isa 53:11): the good news of forgiveness by faith in Jesus. Forgiveness is good news, because we can never have peace so long as God holds our sins against us. But by His death, Jesus offers to wipe our sins away (Acts 3:19) and cancel the debt we owe God (Col 2:14). Because Jesus paid the price, forgiveness is a gift that we cannot earn. And since it is a gift, it only comes by faith (Rom 4:16). We must believe in Jesus, trusting in Him alone to save us, for there is no other name that saves (Acts 4:12). Because it is a gift, all boasting is excluded (Eph 2:9). We do not contribute to our salvation in any way. We simply receive what God has so graciously provided. And this gracious gift is ours the moment we believe (Rom 10:9). Finally, just as the prophets predicted, this forgiveness is offered to everyone (Isa 55:1–7). This is the gospel that Peter was now offering to Gentiles, without requiring them to become Jews first.

ASK 

1. What did Peter say is the only way to be forgiven?
By believing in Jesus.
2. Why is boasting excluded?
Salvation is by grace—it is a gift. We do nothing to earn it.
3. Is the gift of salvation offered to everyone?
Yes, just as the prophets predicted.

DISCUSS 

1. How is salvation like a gift? If you add works to grace, is it still grace (Rom 4:4)?
2. Since salvation is a gift, how does it affect the way you live now (Gal 2:20–3:3, 11)?

DAY 5

God saved Gentiles • Acts 10:44–48; 11:15–18

READ

Acts 10:34–48; 11:15–18

EXPLAIN

The truth of Acts 10:44–48; 11:15–18

Peter had not even finished when the Holy Spirit came on everyone who was listening. To make sure that Peter and the other Jews didn't miss it, the Spirit caused the Gentiles to speak in other languages. Peter realized that this sign, which did not normally happen, was meant to connect to what happened at Pentecost. The Spirit came in such a visible way to prove that the Gentiles really did have faith, repentance, and eternal life. Having the Holy Spirit is an essential part of what it means to be a Christian (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13). Since the Holy Spirit came on everyone in Cornelius' household, they were all true believers, and they all had been forgiven. Because Peter realized that they had all believed, he immediately had Cornelius' household baptized. He did this because baptism is the sign of faith. After that, Peter stayed a few days. This would have been unthinkable for him before, but now he saw that God cleansed both Jew and Gentile without distinction (Acts 15:9). He understood that since Jesus is our peace, there is no wall separating Jew and Gentile (Eph 4:12).

ASK

1. How do you know that Cornelius and his family believed?
The Holy Spirit came on all of them, and Peter had them baptized.
2. Why did the Spirit cause the Gentiles to speak in other languages?
To make it very clear to all the Jews that God had accepted Gentiles.
3. Why did Peter have them all baptized?
Baptism is a mark of faith, and because they all received the Spirit, Peter knew they all believed.
4. Did Peter leave right away?
No. He stayed a few days, a sign of the new fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers.

DISCUSS

1. While speaking in tongues was unique, all Christians show evidence of the Spirit (Gal 5:22–23). Is there evidence of the Spirit in your life? What must you do to see His work in you (5:25)?
2. What can you do to seek greater fellowship with all kinds of believers?

NEXT WEEK

God frees Peter from prison

Acts 12:1–24

