

The Gentiles Also—Acts 10:44-48—4/19/26
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As we return to the wonder of Gentiles receiving the blessings of the New Covenant in Acts 10, let me set the context with some **questions**.

Do you think **non**-citizens should control national elections?
→How do you feel about **foreign** influence or control?

Do you want your vote to count the same as **non**-citizens' votes so the government represents outsiders, perhaps even enemies of our nation?

People of all political positions share these concerns at times.

Our nation's **constitution** & the definition of a nation in general give priority commitment to its **citizens**, to those who belong to that nation.

Borders matter & some people are **without** citizenship rights.

There are differences in how citizens & non-citizens are treated.

That reality applies in our day & **also** in the context of Acts 10.

These issues can help us feel the tension in the transition to include **the Gentiles also** as God's people.

Citizenship debates can help us sense the **struggle for Jews** to accept Gentiles into the blessings that were promised to Israel.

As we've studied, God had made promises to **Israel** as a **nation**, to reunite & restore Israel & Judah, & to bless the **ethnic** Jews.

God gave the **New Covenant** to replace the **Old Covenant** He had made with Israel at Mount Sinai through Moses.

To expect to inherit God's blessings, anyone **outside** Israel needed to trust in the God of Israel & **become part of Israel**.

They needed to **enter the nation** by faith & **show it by circumcision** & other ceremonies of cleanness.

In a sense, they needed to become citizens & have proof of citizenship.

When you think of that, you can understand how Peter **mainly preached to Jews** as the ones who expected the Christ.

You can appreciate the **need for new revelation** to prove that God was bringing Gentiles freely into His New Covenant promises.

And you can **also marvel** at God's grace to open the doors of His blessings to those outside of Israel.

Of course, let's be clear that no one has a birthright to God's blessings because we are all sinners & the Jews had missed that.

God only & always gives His blessings by His grace.

But the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob could look to God's own words promised to **them specifically**.

Israel had an expected path to God's blessings, but that path was **not expected or clearly stated** for the Gentiles or nations.

So it was undeserved & only grace when Jews received such blessings, but it was undeserved & only grace & **also unexpected** for Gentiles.

Acts 10 reveals how God began to show that **superabundant grace**, abounding & overflowing **beyond what was promised**.

God could do this in a way that nations & states **cannot** do because God is infinitely all-sufficient & incorruptibly righteous.

Governments today **cannot** give endless benefits to **either citizens or non-citizens** because someone must pay for it.

That's why socialism & communism are fraudulent lies.

But God **can** hear the concerns of His people & meet all needs & righteously rule in ways that human governments cannot.

So God could **expand His borders of blessing** beyond Israel because He alone never runs out of blessing to give & never lacks supply.

And when God expands His bounds of blessing, **those who receive** His blessings overflow with praise.

When **non-citizens** outside of God's chosen nation received the **same benefits** of His promises, there is **rejoicing** in His amazing grace.

If you have ever experienced or witnessed receiving citizenship into a desired new country, you know that joy at that level.

And far more than gaining access to temporary privileges in an earthly nation is the **eternal** delight of access to God's **endless** goodness.

With God, it is **not** unfair or unjust to pour out promised New Covenant blessings on **the Gentiles also**—it is righteous grace.

God can do so because He is the Almighty Creator & yet He **did** have to give **new revelation to prove His new work** in the church.

And that's what we return to today in our study of Acts 10.

To answer any uncertainty about God blessing the Gentiles, God gave purposeful signs to both Jews & Gentiles that **united** them in Jesus.

Today we find God **accomplishing** what He had prepared for Peter & **proving** that new work to **everyone** there.

Since this was **new**, recall that God had prepared Peter to preach in the home of the **Roman** centurion Cornelius & the crowd he gathered.

An angel had appeared to Cornelius to prepare him & others to hear a message from God through Peter.

And God had shown Peter a vision declaring all foods clean & telling him to go to Cornelius **without reservations**.

So Peter began preaching Jesus as we studied before.

Then today we pick up in verses 44-48 to discover 3 ways God undeniably advanced His Gospel to bring blessing to the Gentiles also.

We'll marvel at **3 ways** God demonstrated His **unstoppable** plan to **include** Gentiles with Jews as His people in the church.

So turn to Acts 10 & let's read Acts 10:34-48. [READ]

As we covered from verses 34-43, Peter was preaching of Jesus

And before he finished his sermon—verse 44 says **during his sermon**, while he was still speaking these words—the Holy Spirit moved.

But **before** the miraculous work described in verses 45-46 was the miraculous work of **regeneration**.

The 1st work of God to note in this section is not the unique outpouring of the Spirit that **only happened four times** in the book of Acts.

We'll get to that as a 2nd point—the **1st point** is what is **still happening** all over the world every day since then.

What happened **first** was the **awakening work of the Holy Spirit** to cause Gentiles to be born again, to grant the gift of repentance & faith.

We'll phrase this 1st point like this—**God awakened Gentile converts by His Word**.

Peter's **preaching** of Jesus was **first**—that's what was **necessary first** as the means & instrument through which God causes conversion.

So note 1st that God awakened Gentile converts by His Word.

These were **converts**—meaning people who were **converted**, turned from sin & **changed** from the inside to trust & follow Jesus.

And these were **Gentile** converts—meaning they were **not Jews**, **not** from Israel as those expecting the New Covenant.

They were from the **nations**—Cornelius as a **Roman** soldier & his family & others from Caesarea & the regions around there.

They had no ethnic connection to God’s promises & they were **unclean** & unwelcome in the company of God’s people.

Yet God sent the Holy Spirit to **awaken** them spiritually to save them.

Read verse 44 again to see that. [READ]

Notice the emphasis on the speaking & hearing of God’s **Words**.

Peter was still speaking these words & this crowd was hearing or listening to the Word.

So don’t miss it—what did God use to save these Gentiles?

He used His Word—He used the speaking of His truths.

That was the philosophy of ministry that God designed for Peter & the early church even in a time of miraculously proven transition.

As Cornelius told Peter in verse 33, the Gentiles were gathered before God to hear all [he had] been commanded by the Lord.”

They were **not** gathered for an emotional or ecstatic experience.

God used spoken words that were heard & understood.

As Peter said in Acts 15:7, “*God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel & believe.”*

God had chosen to **send the Holy Spirit** to cause them to be **born again** like Jesus told Nicodemus was necessary in John 3.

This began what 1st Corinthians 12:13 later explained that, “*by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”*

As Romans 8:9, 16 & Ephesians 1:13-14 indicates, if they believed in Christ, they had the Spirit indwelling them.

And we know the Spirit awakened **faith** because in Acts 11:17 Peter mentions the miraculous display **AFTER** they also believed.

And in Acts 11:18, he mentions how “*God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.*”

So God **granted repentance & faith** to these Gentiles to **convert** them, to turn them from self & sin to trust in Jesus as Lord & Christ.

That’s a work of the Holy Spirit that passages like Ephesians 2:8-9 & 2nd Timothy 2:25 describe as **gifts** from God.

God took that **initiative**, as Jesus had said in John 6:44: “*no one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him.*”

Yet **how** could these Gentiles **hear** without Peter the preacher?

How could they **believe** in Him whom they had **not heard**?

And how would Peter preach unless God sent him first to break down the barrier for Jews to reach Gentiles with the Gospel?

Those questions point to what’s written in Romans 10:14-15 stressing the **necessity** of sending & going & preaching the word of Christ.

We rightly see **our** need to send & go & preach in Romans 10, but God had to start that trend when He sent Peter in Acts 10.

For the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to go to the nations, God had to give Peter **new, fresh, convincing, inescapable revelation**.

But even with that & with an angelic message to Cornelius, **God's means** of saving people was **still His Word**.

Don't miss that emphasis & significance.

What God would **prove** with a miraculous display was **begun** in the hearts of Gentiles who **heard the Word**.

That's our 1st point—**God awakened Gentile converts by His Word**.

As 1st Peter 1:23 says of all believers, “*you have been born again **not** of seed which is perishable but **imperishable**, that is, through the **living and enduring word of God**.”*

That's **powerful to behold** to remind us that **someone brought us** the Word & that the Word is all we need to **give** to others.

Isn't it **marvelous** that **supernatural** ministry is that **simple**?

And isn't it **delightful** that God sent His Word **to you**?

As Gentiles, **we had no claim** on inheritance promised to **Israel**.

Of course, **Jews** could **only** receive blessings **by grace through faith**, but **they had God's Word** given to them & **His Messiah** sent to them.

Yet God **also** sent His Word **through Peter** to Caesarea & then to **nations beyond** through the centuries **down to us**.

So praise God we have His Word & can **read & receive** His promises.

We rejoice in the **Risen Christ** as the **Savior of the world** that has included those of us who trust Him now!

Feel the **pleasure & rest** of that reality & be moved by the **weight** of that **privilege** to understand & proclaim His Word to others.

Let your **gratitude** for God's grace also **motivate** you to spread His message of salvation in Christ to all you know.

We know God works through His Word & we know He has chosen to save others **from the nations** because He **proved it in Acts 10**.

God proved His salvation of Gentiles **in the same way** He had proven His salvation of **Jews** who believed in Jesus in Acts 2.

Verse 44 describes that by saying “*the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the Word*”, meaning the Spirit came down on them.

That's the same language of **Acts 8:14-17** when the **Samaritans** received the Word of God & the Holy Spirit “*had not yet fallen upon any of them*.”

Peter & John were sent to confirm the faith of those first non-Jewish believers & prayed & the Samaritan believers received the Holy Spirit.

Such falling of the Spirit upon believers in Acts 8 **confirmed** receiving the Spirit **just as the Jews had** in Acts 2 at Pentecost.

& That's how Peter described this in **Acts 11:15** & again in **Acts 15:8**.

As Peter said here in **verse 47**, these Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit **just as we did**, referring back to the outpouring of the Spirit on the Apostles & other Jews at Pentecost **in Acts 2**.

Read verses 45-47 again to see how Luke described this. [READ]

Here's a 2nd way God worked to note today—**point #2—God affirmed Gentile converts by His Spirit**.

Verses 45-46 show how **God affirmed Gentile converts by His Spirit**.

We saw **1st** in verse 45 how God awakened Gentile converts by His Word & of course that required the work of His Spirit.

But above & beyond that work, the Spirit did **more** in this situation that we note 2ndly as God affirmed Gentile converts by His Spirit.

As we've said, this is **significant** because it was **not expected** for non-citizens to be treated the same as believers from Israel.

People who don't understand the context & overall flow of Scripture may open to this passage & assume this was normal for all Christians.

I've found people who use this as a **prooftext** for **their favorite emphasis** while missing the **unique emphasis** of the text itself.

If you wonder why I've spent a lot of time in this chapter, it's because this chapter is central to a right understanding of so many things.

In **Acts 2:33** Peter used the same word for *poured out* as in verse 45 when he described the Spirit being poured forth as the church began with the sound of wind & sight of tongues of fire.

You remember that display in Acts 2 was explained by Peter as the Spirit coming to begin the last days as predicted in Joel 2.

Then Peter preached Jesus as the expected Christ & Lord who should be trusted & called on to be saved & forgiven of sin.

So **that** is what Peter was referring to in verse 47 as receiving the Holy Spirit just as we did, just as when Jesus sent the Spirit to the Apostles.

That **fulfilled** what was promised in Acts 1:5, 8 & Luke 24:49.

That was a **special demonstration** of the Spirit's coming that **proved** the **promise** of Jesus & the Father had been **fulfilled**.

It was an **unmistakable sign** of God doing something new.

And here Peter was **equating** the Spirit's coming on the **Jewish** believers with the Spirit's **outpouring** on the **Gentiles also**.

Peter said that in verse 47 & Luke explained it in verse 45 as the **reason for amazement**.

They were responding to the **audible & visible** sign that God had **already given** as **objective proof** of **His** work.

You may be tempted to think they should not have been surprised that God saved Gentiles because of what He had just shown Peter or had promised that in the Abrahamic covenant.

But note that this amazement was over more than that—it was **because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also**.

And this amazement was **not primarily** for those who believed, though I'm sure they **were** amazed.

But verse 45 points to all the believers **out of the circumcision**, the ones with the qualification that **they came with Peter**.

Those were the ones who were **astounded** in a way like those in **Acts 2:7 & 12** who witnessed the Spirit's coming at first.

It's interesting that Luke described these **astonished witnesses** as believers **out of the circumcision** & not merely as Jewish.

That's setting up the **contrast in Acts 11:2-3** when those in Jerusalem who were circumcised took issue with Peter going to uncircumcised men & eating with them.

Circumcision was a stamp of citizenship & association with **Israel** that became a point of contention that had to be clarified in **Acts 15**.

So the circumcised believers most needed this proof of God's Spirit coming on Gentile believers just as He had on the Jews.

The Jewish believers were the ones who were most resistant to mixing with Gentiles, partly because of OT laws of cleanness.

These Jewish believers were some of the men from Joppa that verse 23 says **accompanied Peter & Acts 11:12** says there were **six** of them.

And **what was it** that amazed these circumcised believers?

It was **more than** the repentance & faith of those who heard the Word & **more than** the immediate love & joy & fruit of the Spirit.

Those are the evidences of the Spirit's work in every believer.

Galatians 5 & other passages teach such proof of faith as the norm.

But **more than that**, verse 46 says that they were **continually** hearing them speaking different languages & magnifying God.

They were **extoling God**, lifting Him up to be honored & glorified.

But they were doing so **in tongues**, different languages as the Apostles & others spoke in Acts 2 when the Spirit first came.

So this was a **miraculous display** of power to speak of God's mighty works in languages previously unknown that were **heard by others**.

This work of the Spirit was **more than** regeneration, more than giving the gift of repentance & faith & salvation.

This was **more than** drawing people to Christ to be saved by using the Word to bring conviction of sin & trust in Jesus as Lord.

This was **confirmation beyond** the good fruit that Jesus said proves a person is a good tree with a solid root in the truth.

This was a **distinctive event** that **also occurred in Acts 19** when disciples of John the Baptist in Ephesus were told of Jesus the Christ.

Get this—each time the Gospel spread to a new people group, to an expanded circle, there was this manifestation of the Spirit as **undeniable proof** that **God was leading** this advance.

Again, get those **4 exclusive events**—this happened in **Acts 2** with the **Jews first** & likely happened in **Acts 8 also** with the **Samaritans** although the speaking in languages is not explicitly mentioned there.

It occurred in Acts 10 & **finally in Acts 19** in the Gentile city of Ephesus when disciples of John the Baptist learned of Jesus.

So this was **miraculous confirmation** that God was spreading His blessings to outsiders beyond the bounds of His chosen nation.

God **affirmed**, confirmed, & proved His **same** salvation by the **same** work of the Spirit with the Gentiles also.

When this phenomenon first occurred in Acts 2, they spoke of the mighty deeds of God & verse 46 has a **similar** description.

This miraculous sign pointed to the **same** salvation in the **same** way without any external ceremony or alignment with Israel.

As Peter said in verse 47, the Gentiles had "received the Holy Spirit just as we did", like the non-citizens got the same gift we did.

Of course, this section does **not** mention the sound of wind or the sight of tongues of fire, but it **does note** the speaking in tongues as the **same sign** of the outpouring of the Spirit.

And the comparisons in this section & in Acts 11 & 15 highlight that **sameness** that equates Jewish believers with Gentile believers.

Since God had **awakened** these Gentile converts by His Word & **affirmed** these Gentile converts by His Spirit, it only made sense next for God to **accept** them into His church.

So let's note that as a **3rd way God worked** to highlight that sameness.

3rdly note that God **accepted** Gentile converts into His church.

Point #3—God **accepted** Gentile converts into His church, His people.

We've said (1) God awakened Gentile converts by His Word, (2) God affirmed Gentile converts by His Spirit, & now **(3) God accepted Gentile converts into His church.**

And remember—**how** were new converts accepted into the church in Acts 2 & in Acts 8 & at other times?

They were **baptized**, right?—like Jesus commanded in Matthew 28:19-20 when making disciples of Him.

Like the Ethiopian eunuch asked when believed in Jesus, so Peter here **clarified** that **no one could prevent the water for him to be baptized.**

If anyone was tempted to call these new believers unclean, God had provided more than sufficient proof that they were clean.

Since **the Spirit** had done the cleansing work internally, **no one should object or oppose** washing them externally to identify them with Christ.

Peter emphasized the **quality** of these Gentile converts—who were **such as had received the Holy Spirit just as we did.**

That was their quality qualification for baptism—that was the **reason no one could refuse** the water to baptize them.

God had **evidenced** His Spirit's baptism & so they were clearly cleansed from their sins, forgiven by faith in the name of Jesus.

So the only right response was to **baptize** them in the **name of Jesus Christ** to welcome them as **equal members of the church.**

Read verse 48 to see Peter command that. [READ]

Peter ordered the other 6 circumcised believers to do these baptisms, that's who must have been the object of Peter's command.

They were the ones **amazed at the same sign** of the Spirit's saving power from these Gentile believers as with the Jews.

And they were the ones **who most needed to welcome** these new non-Israelite, non-citizen, outsiders into the same faith community.

So the **6 men from Joppa** baptized the newly converted Gentiles **in the name of Jesus Christ**, identifying with Jesus as their Lord who washed them clean from their sins.

The **name** of Jesus Christ involves all that Jesus is as God the Son who became a Man to live perfectly & miraculously & wisely in all ways.

He is the Christ, the Promised Savior who came to crush Satan & to bring freedom & forgiveness from sin.

He died for sin & rose again & ascended back to the Father & sent the Spirit to save & sanctify His people until He comes again in glory.

And He will return as the righteous Ruler in His kingdom.

All that & more are bound up in baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

And this baptismal formula was **not different** from what Jesus commanded in the name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

What Jesus stated in Matthew 28:19 is not different from the frequent baptisms in Jesus' name in Acts—it's always the **same one name.**

And by the way, the order of baptism here **after** the Spirit came shows how Acts reports the history **as it was unfolding.**

So we must **guard against errors** that claim Acts **2 or 8** as reasons for a second baptism of the Spirit when **this** passage has a different order.

The Spirit's indwelling does **not** require laying on of hands as in Acts 8 when Peter & John brought Apostolic affirmation.

The differences in order of faith & the Spirit's coming & baptism in various passages shows that Acts was **transitional** as each situation advanced a **different, but related** purpose in God's plan.

Remember that Acts is a narrative, not necessarily a declarative description of all that remains normative for all church history.

The pattern that emerges in the whole NT is that people **receive the Holy Spirit when they believe**, but that is **not** accompanied by **signs** like speaking in tongues except in a few special cases.

In those cases, the miraculous sign of speaking languages was a **group** phenomenon, **not** an **individual** experience.

God used the sign in those groups to prove His **newly revealed mystery** of the multiethnic, multinational church in these last days.

And then the pattern is that **after** people believe, they are baptized & added to the church as is evident here.

Baptism is the first step of obedience to identify with Jesus as Lord & Christ & to join with His body.

That body lives in local churches that make up the universal church from every tribe & tongue & people & nation.

What a treasure & joy to gather each week as that supernatural indwelling of the Spirit by salvation in His Son!

And what a privilege to pray & send & go & support the preaching of the Gospel to save souls & plant churches & train church leaders for the future!

God is so wise & gracious to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ by gathering redeemed sinners into His family to serve Him together!

Praise God for His design to make us fruitful in His church!

And as Peter began his sermon—God is not one to show partiality—so anyone from any nation, including you here today, can come to Christ.

You can hear that your sins separate you from God & that Jesus died to pay sin's penalty for you & rose again to prove it.

The Spirit of God can awaken you as you hear of Jesus the promised Christ, who is the true Lord & the only trustworthy Savior of sinners.

So I urge you to trust Him & let us know how we can help you.

Acts 10 shows equal membership of all who trust Jesus—insiders or outsiders—we are all one in Christ Jesus as Galatians 3:28 says.

Whether you were born into a family of faith & nurtured your whole life in the truth or you just heard about Jesus yesterday or somewhere in between, we all come together in the church.

Jesus has designed that His followers should be discipled & taught in the church as His family & corporate dwelling of the Spirit.

So if you have come to Christ, then come into His church & never falter in making His church your priority.

It appears that a new local church was begun in Cornelius's house & they **asked Peter to stay for some days** to disciple & establish them.

Peter **obeyed** Jesus' words not to hesitate or resist.

So Peter **fellowshipped** with them as brothers & sisters by the **same Spirit** with the **same faith** in the **same** Lord & Christ.

He likely even stayed in Gentile homes & ate with them.

He did not merely preach once & then stay separated from them.

Peter treated the new Gentile believers as cleansed by God.

It seems Peter learned the lesson the Lord had taught him & God used him to accept Gentile converts into His church.

That's what God did for the first time **without any** requirements of circumcision or ceremonial cleanness to be welcomed with His people.

God had awakened, affirmed, & accepted **the Gentiles also**.

He had done so **just as He had with the Jews** who believed in Jesus.

That was **historic** as it **begun** what is explained in Ephesians 2-3 as Jews & Gentiles coming together in **one body**.

It was **historic** as the new revelation of how ***all the families of the earth*** would be blessed in Abraham & his ultimate Seed.

And it was **undeniably proven** by God just as He had done at the beginning in Acts 2.

So let's learn from the awakening, affirmation, & acceptance of Gentile converts & be motivated to share the Gospel freely & widely.

We can participate in that by going, sending, giving, praying, training, supporting & serving in any number of ways.

So let's pray God will continue to make us fruitful as a church in that work for the glory of Christ for generations to come.

Pray with me as we close.