**Acts of the Apostles
A Study of New Testament History**
**Lesson 10
Acts 10:1-48**

**Introduction:**

Up to this time in the history of the early church the disciples of Jesus Christ had only been Jews or Jewish proselytes (Gentiles who converted to Judaism). However, there are numerous prophecies in the Old Testament, as well as a number of teachings of Jesus that point to a time when Gentiles will become part of the family of God. Many Jews who read these Old Testament prophesies assumed it meant Gentiles would convert to Judaism when the Messiah came to establish a kingdom on earth – which was a common misconception among Jews during the last two centuries leading up to the time of Christ. The kingdom for which many Jews hoped for was an earthly kingdom over which the Messiah would rule from His throne in Jerusalem, and that He would subdue all the nations, and they would convert to Judaism. Jesus did not come to establish that kind of kingdom (John 18:36). His kingdom was purely spiritual in nature. The kingdom would be within the heart of every man and woman in whom Jesus Christ reigned as Lord of lords, and King of kings (Luke 17:20-21).

One of the most prominent prophecies concerning all nations of the earth coming to "the Lord's house" is found in the familiar prophecy of Isaiah.

*Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths."For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.* (Isaiah 2:2-4)

Another prophecy of Isaiah speaks of Christ becoming the light to the Gentiles to open their blinded eyes and free them from the imprisonment of their sins.

*"I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the prison house."* (Isaiah 42:6-7)

When the parents of the infant Jesus brought Him to the Temple to offer gifts according to the Law, they were approached by a man named Simeon. When he saw Jesus he took Him in his arms and prayed the following prayer, proclaiming this Child was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

*"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."* (Luke 2:29-32)

In His famous discourse about the Good Shepherd (John 10), Jesus made a veiled reference to Gentiles who would soon become part of His sheepfold, and over which He would be the True Shepherd.

*"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd."* (John 10:16)

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven He gave His apostles the great commission to preach the gospel to all nations – to Jews first and then to Gentiles.

Then He said to them, *"Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."* (Luke 24:46-49)

On the day of Pentecost, when the gospel of Christ was first preached, Peter's sermon included prophecies that speak of "all flesh" – including the Gentiles who were "afar off" – receiving the promises of God through Jesus Christ.

*"But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they shall prophesy. . . And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'"* (Acts 2:17-21; from Joel 2:28-32)

*Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."* (Acts 2:38-39; see Ephesians 2:14-22)

However, it's not until we come to the tenth chapter of the book of Acts do we find the fulfillment of all the prophecies concerning the conversion of Gentiles. Peter would be the man whom God chose to take this message to the household of a prominent God-fearing Gentile, Cornelius – a Roman centurion. However, to prepare Peter for this mission, the Lord revealed to Peter in a vision than nothing the Lord has "cleansed" from this time forward shall be considered "unclean" – whether foods or men. Peter soon realized:

*"In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."* (Acts 10:34-35)

**Memorization:**

*"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.* (Acts 10:47-48)

Key Events of Acts 10:

* The vision of Peter on the housetop.
* The conversion of Cornelius and his household.

**Link to Online Bible Study Tools:**

These websites contain numerous Bible Versions and Translations, Concordances, Dictionaries, Lexicons and many other useful tools: http://biblos.com/ and http://www.biblestudytools.com/ (Click on "Our Library" at the top of the home page)

**The Exposition:**

**I. The Lord prepares Peter to preach the gospel to a Gentile (Acts 10:1-23)**

**A. Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8)**

1. What was Cornelius' occupation?

2. How does Luke describe the character of Cornelius?

3. Why would Cornelius be praying at the ninth hour in a manner customary to Jews?

4. What did the angel of the Lord tell Cornelius about his prayers? What does this suggest about the character of the man?

5. What did the angel tell Cornelius to do? Where do we read a similar statement concerning the conversion of Saul?

**B. Peter's vision (Acts 10:9-15)**

1. Where was Peter at the time he fell into a trance, and what was he doing?

2. What did Peter see, and what did the voice tell him to do?

3. What was Peter's reply?

4. What did the voice say in response?

5. What foods were "unclean" according to Leviticus 11:2-47?

6. How many times did this vision occur?

**C. Peter is summoned to Caesarea (Acts 10:17-23)**

1. Did Peter immediately grasp the meaning of this vision?

2. What did the Spirit say to Peter regarding the men who were seeking him?

3. How do the men describe Cornelius?

4. What is implied by the statement that Cornelius was "one who fears God"?

5. Although we are not told, can you think of some reasons why Peter would have wanted to take brethren from Joppa along with him?

**II. The conversion of Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:24-48)**

**A. Peter and Cornelius meet (Acts 10:24-33)**

1. What is it in verse 24 that indicates Cornelius was eager to hear Peter?

2. What did Cornelius do when he first met Peter?

3. What did Peter do, and what did he say?

4. Read the following passages and explain in what ways it was "unlawful" for Jews to associate with Gentiles? (Leviticus 18:24-30; Deuteronomy 7:3-12; Ezra 9:10-12)

5. When does it seem that Peter finally understood the meaning of the vision he had the day before?

6. What had Cornelius been doing for four days since the angel of the Lord appeared to him? Why do you think he was doing this?

7. How did Cornelius describe the purpose for his relatives and friends assembling together on this occasion?

**B. Peter preaches Christ (Acts 10:34-43)**

1. What fundamental fact does Peter establish at the beginning of his lesson?

2. According to Peter, who does God accept?

3. How does Peter describe Jesus?

4. According to Peter, how did Cornelius known about Jesus Christ prior to this occasion?

5. When did Peter say the preaching of the gospel of Christ begin? Compare Matthew 11:13 and Luke 16:16.

6. What is the first piece of evidence Peter offers to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? Where is the first time Peter offered this same evidence?

7. What is the second piece of evidence Peter offers to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? Where is the first time Peter offered this same evidence?

8. What evidence does Peter offer to prove he and the others who saw Jesus resurrected from the dead weren't simply seeing a vision?

9. How does Peter summarize the mission Jesus gave to Peter and the other apostles?

10. What had all the prophets testified about Jesus?

**C. The Holy Spirit is poured out on Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48)**

1. Who did the Holy Spirit fall upon?

2. How does Luke describe those who had come with Peter, and what was their reaction?

3. How did those of "the circumcision" know that God had poured out His Spirit on these Gentiles?

4. What was the question Peter posed to the group (those of the "circumcision")?

5. What is meant by the statement, "who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have"?

6. What did Peter command?

7. In Acts 10:48 Peter commanded them to be baptized "in the name of the Lord." In Acts 2:38 Peter commanded the people at Pentecost to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ." Is there a difference? Explain your answer?

8. If baptism "in the name of the Lord" is baptism in water (Acts 10:47-48), how do we know baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38) is also baptism in water? Explain your answer.

**Application:**Be prepared to discuss what lessons can learn from these events, and how those lessons can be applied to present-day situations.