

Acts 10:38–43

- 38 God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.
- 39 And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree.
- 40 Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly,
- 41 not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.
- 42 And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.
- 43 To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

Peter's Gospel **Acts 10-11 and 15**

INTRO:

This sermon is background for the series in Galatians. To get our heads around what happened when Paul confronted Peter, we need to understand some church history from the book of **Acts**. My major goal is to help us see that Peter's Gospel is Paul's Gospel and this is God's salvation message to them then and to us today.

I. Peter at Cornelius' House (10:1-48)

II. Peter Called on the Carpet (11:1-18)

III. Insights from the Jerusalem Council (15)

I. Peter at Cornelius' House (10:1-48)

Acts 10:28 *“Then [Peter] said to them, ‘You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.’”*

A. The book of Acts covered Paul's conversion in **chapter 9**. Luke then returned to recount a vital turning point in history when God chose to send Peter to the Gentiles. In the first verses of **Acts 10**, we meet Cornelius, a Roman soldier, and the man who will be the first Gentile convert. We also catch up with Peter in Simon the tanner's house.

1. Peter has a vision. He was not sleeping. He fell into a trance and God lowered a sheet full of unclean animals and commanded him kill and eat. This happened three times so that Peter understood that he must go when the messengers from Cornelius came.

2. The next day Peter, six brethren, and the three who called on him traveled to Cornelius and his household. There Peter preached to Cornelius and those in the house with him.

B. One of the first things Peter spoke to them about was to explain how difficult this was for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile's house.

Acts 10:28 *“Then [Peter] said to them, ‘You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.’”*

This statement is important to understand the situation we will see in **Galatians 2**.

1. The word Peter used is not technically *“unlawful,”* as if it was contrary to the law of Moses. He said it is not permitted. This is precisely the problem the Jews had when they called Peter on the carpet in **Acts 11**. They did not say, *“Did these gentiles believe?”* Rather they said, *“And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, to those who were circumcised took issue with him, saying, ‘You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.’”* (Acts 11:2-3) The issue was not: did God send Peter? It was, *“Did you actually associate and fellowship with dirty rotten Gentiles?”*

2. Peter began to preach. Luke summarized his message in **verses 38-43**. The first part of these verses describe how Jesus came, lived, ministered and then He was hung on a cross. God raised Him from the dead. Peter concluded in **verses 42-43** *“And [the Lord Jesus] commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”*

Notice, Peter did not say, *“You have to be circumcised and become a Jew to be saved.”* Peter never taught that! He preached Paul's Gospel to them.

3. God did not wait until the end of the sermon to save them. Cornelius and the other Gentiles there believed. God poured out the Holy Spirit on Cornelius and his household.

Acts 10:45-48 *“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. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ‘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.”

C. How significant is this? Luke will show us in **chapter 11**.

II. Peter Called on the Carpet (11:1-18)

Acts 11:2-3 *“And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, “You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!”*

A. No sooner does the church in Jerusalem hear about what happened at Cornelius’ house than they call Peter to account. It is vitally important to recognize what the issue was associating with Gentiles. The circumcised Jewish Christians were victimized by the *“traditions of their Fathers.”* The ancient Jewish book of Jubilees contains a passage prohibiting contact with Gentiles.

“Separate thyself from the nations, and eat not with them: and do not according to their works, and become not their associate; for their works are unclean, and all their ways are a pollution and an abomination and uncleanness” Jubilees 33.16’ (an ancient Jewish book, not Scripture.)

B. In **Acts 11:4-10**, Peter re tells his encounter with the vision from God and the trip to Cornelius. In **verses 11-14**, Peter continued telling how the Spirit of God told him to go with the three Gentile men to Cornelius. Six Jewish Christian brothers went with Peter. Peter’s account is attested by witnesses!

C. *“And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, ‘John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?’ When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.’”* (Acts 11:15–18).

1. Peter described how he began to present the Gospel and God interrupted him by saving all the people there. *“The Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning.”* This event took place years after Pentecost. Yet, Peter pointed back to the church in Jerusalem’s initiation into the body of Christ. This event did not happen more than once before.

2. Peter did not circumcise them. He baptized them into the body of believers. Peter’ Gospel was the same Gospel Paul preached and it came from God.

III. Insights from the Jerusalem Council (15)

Acts 15:1 *“And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’”*

A. The probability is this group of Jewish believers described here in **Acts 15** is not the same group in **Galatians 2**. However, given the controversy described in **Galatians 2** they may have taught similar things. These folks overtly tried to trash the Gospel Peter, Paul, and the other Apostles taught. They *“taught the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’”*

B. In **verses 7-9**, Peter rehearses his experience at Caesarea and comes down strongly in support of Paul’s view of the Gospel.

“Peter rose up and said to them: ‘Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.’”

Peter’s Gospel did not differ from Paul’s.

C. One last point we need to see.

Acts 15:23–29 *“They wrote this letter by them: The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, ‘You must be circumcised and keep the law’—to whom we gave no such commandment—it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.”*

There are two important points in this.

1. First, they all agreed with Paul and Barnabas what constituted the only Gospel.
2. James and the church did not send the troublemakers no matter what they claim!

What Do We Take From This?

1. Peter and Paul did not differ as to what was the truth of the Gospel. Their problem was not a doctrinal issue. It was an unwise mistake on Peter's part.
2. We have the Gospel today because God took extraordinary steps to preserve it and to propagate it. We do not need to fear we believe a Gospel that has been tainted or changed. The Gospel was not made up by Paul. It was sovereignly and carefully given by God to His Apostles. Beware of those who wish to change it!
3. There is no difference between in God's eyes between Jews and Gentiles in the church of God.

Hymn #520 *Redeemed*