

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon February 19, 2023
Acts 10: 1 – 48 “Epiphany: Pentecost for the Gentiles” –
Part 5: The Conversion of the First Gentiles v44-48

34 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. 36 The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all— 37 that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: 38 how 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.”

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 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. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 47 “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

1 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, 3 saying, “You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!” 4 But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying: 5 “I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. 6 When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying to me, ‘Rise, Peter; kill and eat.’ 8 But I said, ‘Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.’ 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, ‘What God has cleansed you must not call common.’ 10 Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. 12 Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 14 who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.’ 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. 16 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.’ 17 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?” 18 When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”

I. Introduction

- a. Acts 10: “Epiphany: Pentecost for the Gentiles”
 - i. Part 1: The Vision of Cornelius v1-8 – Jan 22
 - ii. Part 2: Peter’s Vision v9-23 – Jan 29
 - iii. Part 3: Peter and Cornelius meet v24-33 – Feb 5
 - iv. Part 4: Peter’s Sermon v34-43 – Feb 12
 - v. Part 5: The Conversion of the First Gentiles v44-48 - today
- b. “In a sense this scene is the book’s turning point, as from here the gospel will fan out in all directions to people across a vast array of geographical regions, something Paul’s three missionary journeys will underscore.”¹
- c. Part 5: The Conversion of the First Gentiles v44-48 – today
 - i. The Holy Spirit Fell v44
 - ii. The Astonished Jews v45
 - iii. Evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit v46
 - iv. Peter calls for water baptism v47,48a
 - v. They ask Peter to stay a few days v48b
 - vi. Questions to know, love and obey God

II. The Holy Spirit Fell Upon the Gentiles v44

- a. 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.
- b. Note the movement of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the preached Word. God poured out His Holy Spirit while Peter was still preaching the Gospel, before Peter finished his message.
 - i. “This visible sign representeth unto us, as it were in a table, what an effectual instrument of God’s power the preaching of the gospel is; for He poured out his Spirit as Peter spake, to the end He might show that He sendeth not teachers to that end, that they may beat the air with the vain sound of their voice, but that He may work mightily by their voice, and may quicken the same by the power of His Spirit, to the salvation of the godly. Thus doth Paul put the Galatians (Gal. 3:2.) in mind, that they received the Holy Ghost by the hearing of faith”²
 1. Galatians 3:1,2 “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”
 - ii. This should be a great encouragement to all preachers of the Gospel. The power is of God, not of men. Let us all be content to preach His Word and

¹ Darrell L. Bock, [Acts](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 380.

² John Calvin and Henry Beveridge, [Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles](#), vol. 1 (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 452.

leave the results with Him, praying and hoping for His Spirit to fall upon “all those” who hear His Word.

- c. Note these Gentiles received the Holy Spirit baptism before they received water baptism. God is not bound by forms or rites as to how and when He pours out His Holy Spirit.
 - i. “The Holy Ghost fell upon others after they were baptized, for their confirmation; but upon these Gentiles before they were baptized: as Abraham was justified by faith, being yet in uncircumcision, to show that God is not tied to a method, nor confines himself to external signs. The Holy Ghost fell upon those that were neither circumcised nor baptized; *for it is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.*”³
- d. Note this work of God occurs within the home of this hospitable, yet uncircumcised Gentile, Cornelius. The Holy Spirit cannot be kept out of any place where He is poured out by God. He will gather in His elect.
 - i. Psalm 139 “7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. 11 If I say, “Surely the darkness shall fall on me,” Even the night shall be light about me; 12 Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light are both alike to You.”
- e. Note the action is by the Spirit. The hearers are passive recipients of the work of the Spirit. They do not immerse themselves in the Spirit. The Spirit falls upon them from above. Note also the action of those who receive the Spirit: they are hearing the Word. Their part in this event is to hear the Word.
 - i. “They didn’t earn the Spirit, they received the Spirit; they didn’t take the Spirit, they received the Spirit. It was monergistic grace. Monergistic means that the action is with God alone.” (P Kayser: <https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/1241811482510.pdf>)
- f. Note the connection between the baptism of the Spirit and faith in Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. As they heard the Gospel, they believed the Gospel by the working of God’s Holy Spirit within them. Faith came to them via the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - i. Acts 10:43,44: ““To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.” 44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.”
 - ii. Peter later describes this in Acts 15. Note how Peter connects the Holy Spirit with faith and remission of sins: “purifying their hearts by faith”:

³ Matthew Henry, [*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2110.

1. Acts 15: 6-9 “Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. 7 And when there had been much dispute, 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. 8 So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, 9 and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.”
 - iii. Paul describes this reality to the Ephesians: “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.”
- g. Note the distinction between Holy Spirit baptism at justification and the ongoing filling of the Holy Spirit unto sanctification. This event in today’s text is an initial Holy Spirit outpouring, so it is their baptism in the Holy Spirit. But, bear in mind, ongoing outpourings of the Holy Spirit are not equated with baptism.
 - i. “For example, in Acts 2, on the day of Pentecost, both baptism of the Spirit and filling of the Spirit happen to the apostles in Acts 2. But they are never again said to be baptized by the Spirit. Every time the Holy Spirit falls upon them for empowering after that it is said to be a “filling.” And so in Acts 4:31 the apostles are gathered for another prayer meeting, and it says, when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. This was not a second baptism, but it was a second filling. And we need to have second, and third and fourth and fifth fillings. Ephesians 5:18 uses the Greek present tense to indicate that we need to keep on getting filled with the Holy Spirit. And so while theologians argue about when baptism takes place, everyone is agreed that we need to continually be seeking the Holy Spirit for His filling. We need Him for our empowering.”
 1. What does it look like to be filled with the Holy Spirit? It’s just more of what happens when we are baptized with the Holy Spirit. Paul describes this in Ephesians 5. Note how similar his description is to what happens with the Gentiles in today’s text.
 - a. “Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

III. The Astonished Jews v45

- a. 45 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.
- b. The Jews are astonished because they see the gift of the Holy Spirit also poured out upon the Gentiles. Why are they astonished? Because they are still not freed from the lingering false belief that a Gentile must first become a Jew in order to receive the Holy Spirit.
 - i. “and as for Peter, it may almost be said, that he is present only to be taught (with them) the lesson, that they must take the Gentiles in hand, and that they themselves are the persons by whom this must be done.”⁴
- c. Note God’s mode of baptism. God pours out His Spirit upon those He saves.
 - i. “The second thing that we see is that this baptism is monergistic. That’s a ten-dollar word that’s made up of two words: mono (or one) and the Greek word ergos or working. So it means “one working.” It means that man is passive and God alone is active. God does not baptize by immersion where the Spirit is passive and the man is active in going down into the Spirit and coming back up out of the Spirit. No, the activity is all with the Holy Spirit. Consistently in the book of Acts the baptism of the Spirit was by pouring. In verse 44 the Holy Spirit **fell** upon all those... God’s the one who takes the initiative. The movement is with the Holy Spirit, not with these men, women and children. In verse 45 it says, the Holy Spirit had been poured out... So this baptism was monergistic. It is God’s action, not ours.” (P Kayser: <https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/1241811482510.pdf>)
- d. This instructs us in considering the mode of water baptism, if our goal is for water baptism to best exemplify God’s Spirit baptism.
 - i. “...our water baptism should symbolize God’s Spirit baptism, shouldn’t it? John the Baptist said that his water baptism symbolized the coming Spirit baptism. If God baptizes by pouring, then so should we? Now, I was immersed. We accept immersion, but we believe that both the Old and the New Testaments consistently called for baptism by pouring or sprinkling. In fact, every Old Testament prophecy of Pentecost calls the coming of the Holy Spirit either a pouring out or a sprinkling upon the people. God starts the ball of spiritual life rolling by giving us the Spirit baptism without asking our permission. And instantaneously there is an empowering for service that happens. Spirit Baptism starts the empowering for kingdom living. Fillings continue that empowering.” (P Kayser: <https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/1241811482510.pdf>)

⁴ John Chrysostom, [“Homilies of St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Acts of the Apostles,”](#) in *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. J. Walker et al., vol. 11, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), 155.

IV. Evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit v46

a. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

b. The receiving of the Holy Spirit was evidenced by

i. Speaking in tongues

1. We have already studied this extensively in conjunction with the speaking in tongues mentioned in Acts 2. These Gentiles are given the immediate, miraculous ability to speak in (a) foreign language(s) they did not know. And, the purpose of miraculous new linguistic ability is always for the glory of God and His purposes in His kingdom.

a. *“They spoke with tongues which they never learned, perhaps the Hebrew, the holy tongue; as the preachers were enabled to speak the vulgar tongues, that they might communicate the doctrine of Christ to the hearers, so, probably, the hearers were immediately taught the sacred tongue, that they might examine the proofs which the preachers produced out of the Old Testament in the original. Or their being enabled to speak with tongues intimated that they were all designed for ministers, and by this first descent of the Spirit upon them were qualified to preach the gospel to others, which they did but now receive themselves. But, observe, when they spoke with tongues, they magnified God”⁵*

ii. Magnifying God

1. Magnify = μεγαλύνω = to make great, magnify; to make conspicuous; to deem or declare great; to esteem highly, to extol, laud, celebrate

a. In their great joy as poor sinners wash cleaned by Christ’s blood, experiencing the mercy of God, all of His grace, as undeserving recipients of God’s Spirit, they declare His greatness aloud to one another and to Him with one another. Their joy in God’s love, mercy and grace overflows unto much, much praise of God.

i. *“they spoke of Christ and the benefits of redemption, which Peter had been preaching to the glory of God. Thus did they on whom the Holy Ghost first descended, c. 2:11.”⁶*

ii. Acts 2:11 *“...we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”*

⁵ Matthew Henry, [*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2110.

⁶ Matthew Henry, [*Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2110.

- iii. Because these Gentiles spoke in new languages miraculously, and because the words they spoke were magnifying and praising God, Peter and the other Jews present had undeniable evidence that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles just like God had done upon the Jews at Pentecost. This astonished Peter and the other Jews because it had yet to really sink in that Judaism as the way to be restored to God's favor was no longer necessary.
 - 1. "... it surprised them exceedingly, and perhaps gave them some uneasiness, because *upon the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost*, which they thought had been appropriated to their own nation. Had they understood the scriptures of the Old Testament, which pointed at this, it would not have been such an astonishment to them; but by our mistaken notions of things we create difficulties to ourselves in the methods of divine providence and grace."⁷
- V. Peter calls for water baptism v47,48a
- a. Then Peter answered, 47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.
 - b. Because the Gentiles had received Holy Spirit baptism poured out upon them just like the Jews had received, Peter argues there is no reason to forbid immediately baptizing these Gentiles with water baptism. Peter now understands that the Jewish rite of bloody household circumcision has been replaced by bloodless household water baptism. Converts into the New Covenant in Christ have no need of old covenant signs.
 - i. "Baptism ... is available also for Gentiles who have received forgiveness of their sins through Jesus (v. 43) and who are ready to commit themselves to the name of Jesus, Israel's Messiah, in public (v. 48). God is no longer partial to Jews (v. 34) since the purity laws related to food no longer separate Jews and Gentiles (vv. 15, 28). Peter's instant willingness to baptize Cornelius and his household is impressive, given his earlier insistence that he does not cross the boundary between clean and impure things."⁸
 - c. Note Peter calls for baptism in the name of the Lord. How does this square with Trinitarian baptism formula of Matthew 28:19 "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"?
 - i. "*In the name of the Lord*; that is, in the name of our Saviour. But this does not imply [that they were not] baptized according to our Saviour's prescription, Matt. 28:19: but the Jews by their baptism were become

⁷ Matthew Henry, [*Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2110.

⁸ Eckhard J. Schnabel, [*Acts*](#), Expanded Digital Edition., Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), Ac 10:46c–47.

the Lord's, and had given up their names to Jesus Christ; under which title, *the Lord*, not only our Saviour, but the Father who anointed him, and the Spirit by whom he was anointed, is to be understood."⁹

- VI. They ask Peter to stay a few days v48b
 - a. Then they asked him to stay a few days.
 - b. The unity and communion of believers in Jesus Christ displayed immediately. The breaking down of the middle wall of separation has immediate, joyful consequences. A new era has begun.
 - i. "In sum, God directs an epoch-making event in which Gentiles are accepted in fellowship and receive the gospel. Their faith leads to the gift of the Spirit, the sign that the new era has arrived. In addition, they are not circumcised and yet table fellowship and full hospitality between Jews and Gentiles ensues."¹⁰
- VII. Question to know, love and obey God

⁹ Matthew Poole, [*Annotations upon the Holy Bible*](#), vol. 3 (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1853), 420.

¹⁰ Darrell L. Bock, [*Acts*](#), Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 401.