

Gentiles Too!

Acts 10:34-48

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Introduction

Last week, in Acts 10:1-33, we looked at one of the most important events in history.

- The whole world is totally different than what it would have been without it.
 - We saw that our Lord took down the wall He had erected to separate His people from the other nations—the Gentiles.
 - It was not a wall of stone, but it was a wall that was made of commandments contained in ordinances...
 - commandments that were expressly designed to keep God's people Israel separate from the nations that the Lord had turned over to darkness until the coming of Christ.
 - It included laws of purification related to Israel's worship such as food laws which forbade them to eat certain foods or even from food prepared in vessels that been used to cook such foods.
 - When one people group can't eat with another people group, it obviously creates a significant barrier.
- But God had declared through the prophets that when Messiah came, He would take down this wall...
 - And indeed, when Jesus Christ was crucified, there was an end put to the law of Moses with all of its ritual regulations.
 - Now instead of ritual worship led by priests offering sacrifice at the temple, Christ had been offered once for the sins of many.
 - The ceremonies with their regulations no longer had a place in the worship of God.
 - Now worship was to be in spirit and truth...
 - in spirit—rather than in fleshly ordinances of washings and burning incense on altars...
 - in truth—rather than in ceremonies that were only shadows of the truth—the offering of animals that only represented Christ the true Lamb that takes away the sin of the world.
 - Jesus was the real offering, and after His sacrifice had been accepted for sin, worshippers could draw near by this new and living way.
 - It was a tremendous change for all Israel!
 - But they did not immediately understand the change.
 - God had to take them by the hand, as it were, and lead them out of these long established customs.

- In effect, as long as the apostles (and the New Testament church with them) continued to practice the law of commandments contained in ordinances,
 - the wall of separation continued to stand.
 - As long as Israel continued to live in the way that had been designed to keep them separate from the Gentiles, the Gentiles continued to be excluded.
 - The Apostles needed to be shown that they were no longer to practice the ordinances of separation so that they would be able to effectively take the gospel to the Gentiles and receive them into the church.
- And in Acts 10:1-33, we saw how the Lord directed Peter step by step into living in the reality that Christ had abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances and changed the customs handed down from Moses...
 - He began by giving Peter a vision about food when Peter was hungry.
 - In this vision, Peter saw a great sheet let down from heaven contained all kinds of clean and unclean beasts...
 - And he heard a voice from heaven commanding him to arise, kill, and eat!
 - When Peter refused, the voice declared, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.”
 - As Peter was trying to understand the vision, three Gentiles came to the door of the house where Peter was staying...
 - And immediately Peter received divine revelation, instructing him to go with these men without misgivings—even though they were Gentiles.
 - And Peter soon learned that these Gentiles had been sent to him by a Roman centurion named Cornelius—a God-fearing man who prayed and fasted and gave alms to the God of Israel, but was yet uncircumcised.
 - Peter learned that the Lord had sent an angel to Cornelius to tell Cornelius that his prayers and alms had been received as a memorial offering...
 - and that he was to send for Peter who would tell him what he must do!
- We saw that Peter did what would have been unthinkable to do before he saw the vision...
 - He went with these Gentiles and entered the house of Cornelius the Gentile.
 - And when he got there, he found that Cornelius had gathered his relatives and friends together to hear what Peter had to say to them from God.
 - They were very eager!
 - And well they should have been!
 - When God Almighty deigns to speak to us, we should be very eager to hear what He has to say!
 - We ought to come to the Bible in this way each day!
 - We ought to come to hear the Word preached in this way each week!
 - God Almighty is willing to speak to us!

- We ought to pray that we will hear!
- We ought to pray that we will learn and obey!
 - It is so sad to see how cold and indifferent professing believers can be.
 - But Cornelius was not like that!
- God had taken notice of him and was ready to speak to him because he was ready to hear!
 - Hanani the prophet told Asa when he foolishly did not seek the Lord that:
 - **2Ch 16:9: the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.**
 - Now of course this loyalty to God does not come from ourselves, for we are corrupt and sinful and there is no one that seeks after God,
 - but it comes from above—it is a work of grace in us...
 - But it comes to God's elect even as it came to Cornelius.
 - God stirs us up to seek Him and to be loyal to Him—He brings us to our senses to prepare us...
 - And then when we are found seeking Him, as Cornelius was, He comes to us.
 - No one who truly seeks has ever been rejected.
 - It no longer matters what nation we are from.
 - Peter declares that God has clearly shown this to him in verse 34-35:
 - **Acts 10:34-35: 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.**
 - The word *partiality* is literally receive faces—in this case, made a distinction between a Jewish face and a Gentile face.
- The Lord, you see, has taken down the wall of separation because now He is going to call the Gentiles into His kingdom.
 - He had to take down the wall and He had to convince Peter that He had taken down the wall and show Peter what that meant,
 - else Peter would not have been willing to go to Cornelius.
 - There was a lot involved, you see, in sending Peter to take the gospel to this man!
- And so the Lord comes to Cornelius the Gentile by means of Peter, His faithful ambassador, to declare to him and his house the good news of Jesus Christ.
 - God had prepared Peter and God had prepared Cornelius.
 - Cornelius was ready to receive the message from God.

- I wonder, are you here with such an attitude today?
 - What the Lord says to Cornelius completely changed his life as well as the life of his friends and relatives!
 - But it is also God’s message to us and to the whole world!
 - Today, we will look at the message and at the effect it had upon these Gentiles when they received it.
 - Will it have any effect on you?
 - It will, if and only if God’s grace is at work in you to dispose you to receive it.
 - If you will not receive it, you may learn something, but you not be changed as you ought to be.

So let us begin by looking at the message that God had for Cornelius and those with him as well as for us...

I. The Lord (through Peter) declares what He has done for Israel.

- You see that in v. 36. Peter says:
 - **v. 36: “The Word which God sent to the children of Israel...”**

A. Why, in preaching to Gentiles, does the Lord tell them what He did for Israel?

1. It is because Jesus came as had been promised to redeem Israel.
 - The gospel went to them first. It was those from among them that were first brought into the kingdom.
 - Here we see God’s promise to His covenant people fulfilled.
 - Here we see His gracious salvation to them.
2. But this has much to do with the Gentiles!
 - Through God’s dealings with Israel, they are able to see God’s abundant mercy...in saving His people!
 - They are able to see it in such a way that it will make them yearn for it—even for crumbs of this great mercy!
 - You see, it was never God’s intention to devise some new way for the Gentiles to be saved.
 - It was His intention to establish His salvation among a remnant of His people and then call the Gentiles to join them as one body.
 - There are not different ways to God, different baptisms, different bodies of Christ—but one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.
 - It is God’s intention not to do something else to save the Gentiles, but to unite them with the remnant of His people as one body.
 - They are to come into the salvation that is already affected for Israel.
3. So as Gentiles, we ought to take a great interest in what God did to redeem Israel.
 - Psalm 117 exhorts the Gentiles to praise God’s mercy to Israel.

- They are not brought into our salvation, but we are brought into theirs.
 - Gal 3:26-29 makes this clear:
 - **(Gal 3:26-29) ²⁶ For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**
 - It is not that the Gentiles are brought to Israel when Israel is under the law of Moses...
 - It is that they are brought to Israel after Israel has been redeemed to Christ and the ceremonies of the Old Covenant are abolished.
 - They become a part of the new Israel that God has formed through Jesus Christ.

B. So look at what Peter says that the Lord has done for His people—

- and so for us if we will become His people through faith in Jesus.
- 1. First, that the Lord came preaching peace through Jesus Christ.
 - Peter speaks of:
 - **Acts 10:36: The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ**
 - a. **Peace** is nothing less than *total blessing!*
 - That we be forgiven and fully reconciled to God
 - That we be made holy and free from sin
 - That we be made whole, physically whole, to live forever
 - That our enemies be destroyed
 - That the creation be completely renewed (with no more curse)
 - b. This message of Peace through Jesus broke into the world through the preaching of John the Baptist.
 - Even these Gentiles in Caesarea knew about that so that Peter says—in verse 37:
 - **Acts 10:37: that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached:**
 - 1) John preached that men should repent because the kingdom of God was at hand.
 - The kingdom was, of course, the kingdom of peace that I have just spoken about...
 - And John kept telling everyone that the Christ was coming and that He would be the author of this peace to all who repent.
 - but that He would destroy those who refused to repent.

- 2) He boldly called the leaders in Israel a brood of vipers and warned them to flee from the wrath to come...
 - They were to flee from wrath by repentance and baptism...
 - In repentance, turning away from and against their sin...
 - And in baptism, looking to God to cleanse them from their sin.
 - It was a message of tremendous hope for those who were baptised.
 - John promised that the Messiah who was to come would baptise them with the Holy Spirit.
 - Just think, God Himself would cleanse them!
 - All these ceremonial washings would be fulfilled in the cleansing that God Himself would do.

2. Peter goes on to declare how Jesus showed Himself to be fully able to bring peace to His people...
 - a. First, that He was seen to be God's Anointed One—that is, the Messiah or the Christ.
 - Verse 38 says that it has been reported:
 - **Acts 10:38: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power,**
 - 1) The word *Messiah* means *anointed one*, and so does the word *Christ*.
 - God's anointed one is the one He has set apart to an office—to do work for the salvation of His people.
 - The prophets had said that Jesus would be anointed with the Holy Spirit as the ultimate prophet, priest, and king!
 - As prophet, to speak the word of life to us and to guide us into God's ways...
 - They said that He would be a prophet like Moses, and that if we hear Him, we would live, if not we would perish.
 - As priest, to make the one offering for sin that would take away our sin and to effectually pray for our acceptance with God...
 - They said that he would be priest forever after the order of Melchizedek...ever living to make intercession by one offering... and in Isaiah 53 we are told that He would offer Himself to take away our sin.
 - As king, to bring us under the rule of God and to deliver us from all of our enemies—from Satan and even from death.
 - The prophets said that He would reign until all of His enemies are brought under His feet.
 - 2) It was at His baptism that God visibly anointed Jesus—when He was baptised by John despite the protests of John who knew that Jesus did not need cleansing...

- He was baptised because of His identification with His people as their head—as the head of a body that certainly did need cleansing.
 - And you will remember that when He came up from the river after being baptised,
 - the Holy Spirit visibly descended on Him in the form of a dove.
 - And the Father spoke from heaven, saying,
 - **Mat 3:17: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**
 - How encouraging those words!
 - The Father was not pleased with the wicked fallen sons of Adam, but He was pleased with His Son who came in their flesh to represent them!
 - Now there was one Person who could establish a righteous kingdom in the world!
 - God was pleased with Him and God anointed Him to do the work of redemption for us!
 - The Righteous One was now fully prepared to do His saving work.
- b. And so it was that as soon as He was anointed,
- He began to show by His works that He had come to bring peace...
 - And that He had *power* to bring peace...
- 1) He showed this by going about and doing good (v. 38).
 - He did not do miracles to make a show...
 - Things like turning a tree into stone or making water flow uphill...
 - He rather did things that showed that He had come to reverse the curse for His people...
 - He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, caused the lame to walk, and cleansed lepers.
 - He calmed the storm and sea and He fed the 5000...
 - He showed that He had come to bring peace—to bring *shalom*—to end the curse for His people.
 - These miracles were just tokens...
 - 2) He also wrought violence against the demons (the end of v. 38)...
 - They cried out before Him for mercy and pleaded with Him not to torment them before the time.
 - He cast them out of those who were oppressed by them.
 - He showed that He had power to overthrow Satan and to crush his head as God has promised from the beginning.
 - 3) Peter declares that he and his companions were witnesses of these things (v. 39).

- He went around with Jesus for about three years and saw Him do thousands of miracles with his own eyes, all showing that He was the Prince of Peace.
- Peter stands before Cornelius and tells him that these things are so—that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power.
 - That He has the power to bring peace to His people.

TRANS> And having shown that Jesus was truly the anointed One who is able and whose will it is to bring us peace,

3. Peter next declares what Jesus did to purchase our peace...

a. Yes, it had to be purchased—at a very great cost—

- with His own peace, with His own honour, with His very life-blood...
 - To gain our peace, He had to exchange His peace for the curse...
 - To restore our honour as the image of God, He had to exchange His honour for the shame of the cross—charged as a criminal rejected of God
 - To obtain life for us, He had to pour out His precious blood in great pain and agony as a bloody piece of carnage.
 - What a high price was paid for our sin!
 - He who knew no sin had to become sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God.

b. Peter puts this work in very simple terms—

- at the end of v. 39:
 - **whom they killed by hanging Him on a tree...**
- That tells it all...
 - These God-fearing Gentiles knew that in Deuteronomy 21:22, it says that “He who is hanged on a tree is accursed of God.”
 - By these words, Peter is showing that Jesus was cursed for us...
 - That He bore the shame that belongs to us...
 - That He underwent death that is the portion of the sinful soul.

c. But this was not to be the end of Him!

- He was not to be forever rejected! Verse 40 says:
 - **v. 40: Him God raised up on the third day!**
 - He was raised up because He was dying for His people’s sins as He had been commanded, and God accepted His offering as promised!
 - It was impossible for Jesus to see corruption because there was no sin in Him and God would not allow His holy one to see corruption.
- His resurrection showed that the Father had accepted His sacrifice...

- It meant that He was indeed the Prince of Peace in a way that He had not been before He died and rose...
 - Because now He had secured the pardon of His people!
 - With His own precious blood, He had purchased what was needed in order that He might bestow eternal life upon all His people.
- Peter is an official witness that Jesus really was raised up from this cursed death!
 - Jesus ate and drank with Peter and the others, showing that He was not a mere spirit, but that His body had been raised...
 - a true resurrection from the dead!!

TRANS> As soon as Jesus had done this great work as Redeemer,

C. Peter and the other apostles were commanded to preach Him...to proclaim that He is Lord and Saviour!

1. First, they are to preach that He is judge of all.
 - You can see that in verse 42-43:
 - **Act 10:42-43: 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.**
 - a. This is something that is repeatedly found in the apostolic gospel, but often left out when men pretend to preach the gospel in our day.
 - b. Declaring that He is judge of all makes it clear that He is the Son of God—fully divine—for God reserves ultimate judgement for Himself alone...
 - No mere human has the ability to discern the hearts of men and proclaim this one forgiven and that one condemned.
 - Only the omniscient God can do that!
 - c. That He is judge also reminds us that we must be reconciled to Him.
 - We dare not come to Christ on the last day as His enemies.
 - We dare not die in our sins and meet Him on the last day to be sentenced to God's wrath and curse.
 - No! Prepare yourself to meet your God!
 - Make peace with Him before it is too late!
 - Put away your bitterness and your grudges.
 - Are you bitter because of your hardships?
 - Are you bitter about the hardships of those you love?
 - That bitterness will eat you up—do not let it be so...
 - Those hardships are sent by God on account of our sin.
 - If you are proud and bitter, they will harden you...

- If you are humble, they soften you and cause you come to God for mercy and forgiveness.
 - Do not be so foolish as to fight with Him in your pride.
 - He has done you no wrong, it is you have wronged Him!
 - You are the one who needs to repent.
 - God has declared Him to be the righteous One, and there is only one reason for that...
 - Because He is the righteous One!
2. But do you understand why He went to the cross?
- a. It was so He could procure righteousness for you too!
 - As the Son of God, His death on the tree is able to atone for the sin of all His people.
 - Will you keep yourself on the outside?
 - Will you remain in your unbelief because you are too proud to let go of your grudge against God?
 - Are you so arrogant that you will not come to this gracious Saviour?
 - b. Peter assures you that if you will come to Him and trust in Him, you will receive the full pardon of sin!
 - He did not go to the cross and pay the awful price in vain!
 - Verse 43:
 - **Act 10:43: To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.**
 - Did Isaiah not say, “By His stripes we are healed?”
 - Did Daniel not say that He would make atonement for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness?
 - Did Zechariah not say that by Him a fountain would be opened up for sin and for impurity?
 - Did all the ordinances of Moses not point to Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?
 - There is no need to die in your sin and face Him as an angry judge...
 - The prophets were right when they declared full remission of sins through faith in His name.
 - Come to Him, and your soul shall live!

TRANS> That is just what Cornelius and His friends did!

- No sooner did Peter get these wonderful words about Christ’s saving work out of his mouth and they believed!

II. See how these Gentiles become God’s people.

- A. That is what happens here—they become His people.

1. Do you remember how Peter began his discourse, talking about what God had done for His people Israel?
 - **verse 36—“the word God sent to the house of Israel preaching peace through Jesus Christ?”**
 - I explained that Jesus came first to them to give them peace, and that it was never God’s plan to go and start a new salvation somewhere else...
 - but rather to bring the nations into *this* salvation—into Israel’s salvation...
 - so that both Jews and Greeks who believe become the seed of Abraham and heirs according to the promise.
 - He reconciles both Jew and Gentile to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.
 - In this respect, we all have to come to Jerusalem to be saved...
 - but we do not come to Israel under the Old Covenant but under the New and living way established by Jesus Christ.

2. So you see that this whole account is not so much about God taking His salvation to the Gentiles as it is about bringing the Gentiles to His salvation.
 - Sons from the east and the west come to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God.
 - God sends the gospel out to them, but they are then incorporated into the body of Christ...
 - not into Israel under the law, with circumcision and the ceremonies,
 - but to the true Israel of God that like their names’ sake see their need of salvation from God and refuse to let Him go until He has mercy...
 - Those who are not ashamed to have a Saviour like Christ—
 - with such radical measures taken as a Son of God crucified—
 - because they see that they really are that desperate.
 - I fear that many of you may not see that...
 - You don’t have a foundation of true brokenness and desperation that causes you to rejoice in Jesus...
 - O be sure that you really do know Him!
 - Superficial trifling with Him will not cut it...
 - You must come to Him in desperate need.
 - Do not as one who wants to hold on to your sin and trifle with Him.

TRANS> But you will say—how can I? How can I change my heart?

3. From start to finish it is all God’s work...
 - It is He who first worked in the heart of Cornelius to make him a true God-fearing Gentile who put his hope in Israel’s God even though he was excluded from many of the privileges that Israel had...

- As we saw last week—he was happy to have the crumbs of the great mercy that might fall from their table...
 - It was also the Lord who came to Peter so that he would be willing to go to the house of a Gentile...
 - and the Lord who send His angel to Cornelius to tell him to send for Peter...
 - And of course above all, it was the Lord who did all that Peter spoke about to procure salvation for His people...
 - And now, here in verses 44-48, we see that it is the LORD who incorporates the Gentiles into His kingdom—
 - It is His initiative!
 - It is His gracious work!
 - It is He that saves and it is ours to but look to Him!
- There are two things that the Lord does to incorporate these Gentiles into His Kingdom of Righteousness and Grace...
- He pours out His Spirit upon them as He did upon the Jews who believed...
 - He incorporates them into the visible church through baptism.
 - Let's look at each of these...
- B. First, that He pours out His Spirit upon them as He did upon the Jews at Pentecost...
1. Even while Peter was still speaking the wonderful words of Christ's saving work, the Holy Spirit *fell* upon those who believed...
 - Look at verse 44:
 - **Act 10:44: While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.**
 - When it says *upon all who heard*, the word *heard* is equivalent to the word *believed*...
 - It is the same way that Jesus uses the word in John 5 and John 10 when He says that those who hear His voice will have eternal life.
 - It is hearing in the sense of receiving what has been said.
 2. Notice that the Holy Spirit fell on them in a way that was conspicuous.
 - a. Usually the coming of the Spirit is not something you can see.
 - It is an invisible, but radical, powerful work that transforms us so that we embrace the gospel.
 - The fruit can be seen, but initial coming of the Spirit cannot ordinarily be seen.
 - It is the work that enables us to embrace the gospel of Christ.

- As I mentioned before, coming to Jesus is not something we decide to do from within, it is a work of God from above—
 - It is the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - We are not capable of truly acknowledging our sin until the Holy Spirit has done His work.
 - We may come to Christ for help with problems, but not for the remission of sins when that remission is only available through the cross!
 - That is just too offensive to the natural man in his pride—until he has been transformed by the Spirit.
 - How thankful we ought to be for the Holy Spirit!
 - His work is quiet and inconspicuous, but extremely powerful and life-changing...
- b. But here in this account is something quite visible, quite discernible to Peter and the Jews who were with him...
- In verse 45 & 46 it says:
 - **Acts 10:45-46: 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.**
 - These Gentiles were able to speak languages that they did not know and to praise God in those languages.
 - The Jews were from all over world, so Peter's companions may have known various languages...
 - Or perhaps these Romans began to speak in Hebrew...
 - Whatever the case, it was very evident that they were praising God with supernatural power.
- c. The Lord made the coming of the Holy Spirit conspicuous here for a very good reason...
- 1) In order to make it clear once and for all that Gentiles are fellow heirs of Christ's salvation.
 - The gift of the Spirit is sometimes spoken of as *the gift* of the New Covenant...
 - As we have just seen, it is the outpouring of the Spirit that enables the natural man to believe instead of calling the cross foolishness...
 - And it is the working of the Spirit that causes God's law to be written in our hearts so that we delight in it and begin to live a new life—now for the Lord!

- And so it is obvious that anyone who receives this gift has been fully incorporated in the kingdom of God!
 - This is what so astonished the Jews...
 - That these uncircumcised Gentiles could be fully incorporated into the kingdom!
- 2) The coming of the Spirit needed to be made conspicuous in this case, or else the Jews would never have believed that the Gentiles had been saved...
- The coming of the Spirit, you will recall, was made conspicuous with the Samaritans for the same reason...
 - to show that even Samaritans could be saved...
 - And at Pentecost it was made conspicuous because that was the initial coming,
 - And it was very helpful for everybody to be able to see it...
 - And so there were the tongues of fire that came down and there was the sound of the rushing wind, and there were the languages...
 - All this was done to assure the church in all ages that the Spirit was given as promised at that time.
 - And now it is done with the Gentiles to assure the church that the Gentiles, even without circumcision,
 - are full heirs of Christ's salvation.

TRANS> It is this very assurance that leads Peter to receive these Gentiles into the visible church...

C. See how Peter receives them into the visible church.

1. After seeing that the Holy Spirit has been poured out on them, Peter says (verse 47):
 - **Act 10:47-48: "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.**
 - Peter's logic is clear...
 - He deduces that if they have received the promise of the New Covenant, they ought to be given the sign of the New Covenant.
 - The sign of the New Covenant is baptism which actually portrays the work of the Spirit, as John the Baptist declared...
 - **"I baptise you with water, but He (Jesus) will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."**

- Water is used in baptism because water is not only the universal agent of cleansing—
 - everybody uses water to wash things—
 - but also because water was used for purification rites in the Old Testament...
 - So when God gives us the sign that represents His saving work, a symbol of cleansing is the best work there is.
 - It corresponds very much to the cleansing that the Spirit does when He comes to us in salvation.
 - When we are baptised with the Holy Spirit, we are cleansed in two ways...
 - Because the Spirit attaches us to Christ so that we trust in Him for forgiveness of sin,
 - We are cleansed by His atonement for His people—cleansed from guilt...
 - And because the Spirit, as we have seen, writes God’s law in our heart so that we become His servants,
 - We are cleansed from our corrupt way of life to live for God.
 - So Peter says,
 - “Who can forbid the sign to those who have the true cleansing of the Holy Spirit?”
2. The sequence of things here is interesting...
- At Pentecost, the disciples had all been baptised and then they received the Holy Spirit...
 - But here, the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes first and then water baptism...
 - This teaches us that God is not tied to the sacraments.
 - He can pour out His Spirit with or without baptism...
 - He is not tied to the sacraments, but we are—because He has commanded us to make use of them.
3. Peter here administers the keys of the visible church—to open and shut the door according to God’s directives...
- He understands that God has clearly directed that the Gentiles are to be received by giving them the Holy Spirit,
 - so Peter obediently orders that they be baptised.
 - And what has been bound on earth has already been bound in heaven.

Conclusion...

- Now these Gentiles are fully incorporated into the kingdom of God,
 - with both the baptism of the Holy Spirit and with the sign of baptism.

- They are full members, heirs of the covenants of promise, the true seed of Abraham!
- And this reaches far beyond these Gentiles!
 - They are the firstfruits of the harvest of the nations...
 - Many, many more Gentiles will come and take their place in the kingdom with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—
 - yea, much more, they will sit down with the Lord Jesus Christ!
- Have you truly come to Him?
 - Are you feasting at His table?
 - Are you a partaker of the Holy Spirit?
 - Have you been baptised in His name?
 - Have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ?

How thankful we should be that Christ is for Gentiles too.