

1943 - The GENTILE PENTECOST! - Acts 10:44-11:18

PRELIMS. Peter has met Cornelius and has introduced him to a household of Gentile God-fearers and explained about the '**new development**' in **God's programme** for the world - the gospel is now to be spread throughout the whole world *everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins* (43). Peter is **explaining** to them about **Jesus Christ** and His **role** in the history of redemption.

The GENTILE PENTECOST!

In the middle of Peter's sermon, there is an **interruption** - a **massive** interruption - by **God the Holy Spirit!** Peter doesn't get to finish his sermon - God the Holy Spirit took over!! That can happen - but not often! How we would love to see it today in all our churches - yes, people **overwhelmed** by the Holy Spirit! It is what we pray for, it is what we want - but we must learn that with such great times of revival there are also problems to solve! Notice 1st that **salvation** is **God's** work, **He** takes the **initiative!** God **begins** to work in people's hearts and there is a **response** to the work of the Spirit, which to all intents and purposes appears to be a human response - and **it is!**

An amazing **response** from the audience! *While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the Word* (44). This was a tremendous significant event. the Writer, Luke, **emphasises** it by repeating it in the next verse and adding ...**even** on the **Gentiles!** (45)

Reading this account of the Apostle's ministries outside Israel, and seeing the **amazement** of the Jewish believers at the coming of the Holy Spirit, **prompts the question, What** did the Apostles think the **purpose** of preaching **outside Israel** was meant to achieve - if it wasn't for the Holy Spirit to come on the Gentiles? Did they think that it was **only to Jews** they were to preach to, those living outside Israel? Did they not think that uncircumcised Gentiles were to be saved in exactly the same way and by the same means as Jews? Peter and the Jew's amazement (45) makes us wonder **what** was so **surprising** to them? Did they not **expect** this sort of thing? Maybe the answer is that it happened **so quickly** before the sermon was finished! **APP a lesson** for today's preachers **not** to be so **negative** about preaching the gospel to outsiders! God **does a preparatory work** on outsiders!

These things in Cornelius's home were just what the Spirit had done on **two previous occasions!** At **Pentecost**, and at **Samaria!** This was the **completion** and **confirmation** of Christ's command to preach His gospel **beginning** at **Jerusalem**, then **Samaria**, then to the **ends of the earth!**

Remember Jesus' *you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth* (1:8).

At **Pentecost** Peter clearly assured the Jews that the believers were **not drunk**, but fulfilled the prophecy of Joel *I will pour out My Spirit...And I will show wonders... signs...* (so that) *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved* (2:18-21), and at **Samaria** Philip was *preaching the Word...and the crowds...saw the signs that he did...many...were healed* and the whole community was affected as they *proclaimed to them the Christ* (8:4-7) And now up the coast, Lydda, Joppa, Caesarea, Peter has started to go slightly further afield to the ends of the earth!

So, the Holy Spirit coming on them was just the **fulfilment** of the **promise** made to **Abraham!** God works in the **long term!** God was always going to bless the **nations** through the offspring of Abraham. **All nations** were to be saved through the promised seed. And both Jew and Gentile would be saved by faith as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit! God's Word will stand!

It seems that the **identifying mark** was their **speaking in tongues!** *For they were hearing them speaking in tongues...* (46). I am sure it was a **known language** and not gibberish, so that the gospel could be spread abroad to foreign nations, just as at Pentecost. **No tongues of fire** this time!

However, the **main point** was what they **said** with their tongues! *what comes out of the mouth*

proceeds from the heart (Mat 15:17). You can tell a lot about a man by the things that he says, because that is what is on his heart! **What** people talk about can indicate the type of person they are! These people were *extolling God* (46). I like to think it was hearing about Jesus Christ - how He **fitted-in** to their concept of God! His **Person** and **character**, who He was, and what He did, and what **happened** to Him! Although not mentioned here - I am sure they were told **why** He died and rose again. Something, no doubt **'clicked'** in their hearts as Jesus was unfolded as the One promised of old and who was to come in fulfilment of the many Scriptural promises. Jesus **brings us to God** - and these people were God-fearers! The 'news' of Jesus led them to God!

Peter does a **very brave thing!** Peter the skeptic, has **no hesitation** in accepting their being chosen by God for he says *Can anyone withhold water for these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?* (47). That was a very big thing - **baptizing Gentiles** so quickly! **APP** it begs the question 'On **what evidence** do we baptize adults today? How quickly, how soon after profession?

It shows one thing: the **importance** of new believers **joining the church** - for that is the main point in baptism! It admits the recipient into the Church of Jesus Christ. Throughout the NT there numerous examples of immediate admittance into the Church. And, as we can see, right away, there was **fellowship** for they asked Peter if he would *remain for some days* (48). No doubt to learn more about the faith - and I guess about the Lord Jesus Christ. The Early Church were desperate to hear 'stories' about Jesus - that was how they spent **most evenings** with the Apostles and those who lived at the same time with Jesus - telling of the wonderful things He said - some things not recorded in the Bible! *Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book...Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written* (J20&21)

SURPRISE, SURPRISE

Almost invariably, when there is a work of God, especially when new believers are added to the Church, there will be **objections** from some sections of the Church! Look at what happened to Peter when he went to report to the Church at Jerusalem! *The circumcision party criticised him saying 'You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them'* (11:2,3). **Imagine!!**

Almost all missionaries will confirm the difficulties they have had **from the Church** regarding their work. Armchair critics! This is very 'testing' to called missionaries. Even **Lord Shaftesbury** (yes), objected to William Booth's Salvation Army saying it was the **Antichrist!** Some even said his name added up to '666'!! (**Read re Robert Morrison of Scotland - The Antioch Factor, page 68**)

However, it is **right** and **proper** that there **should** be some 'outside' body to **accredit** the **reality** of a **call** from the Lord, from a candidate for Mission, and not just a wish and longing from an individual! Also for those professing to be converted! The Scriptures here show that just as there was an oversight committee regarding the inclusion of the Samaritans, by sending Peter and John (8:14), so when the Gentiles were included here, had to be an overseeing what Peter had reported!

Look at how Dr Luke **defines the event:** *the Gentiles also had received the Word of God* (2). Peter says they *received the Holy Spirit* (10:47). So there we have it - **Word and Spirit!** **APP** We need God's Spirit and we need God's Word. To have one without the other is to be **imbalanced!** To be **all Spirit** and **no wisdom and Truth** to guide the heart, is as bad as to be all Head knowledge full of the Word but no heart or passion to apply the truth effectively.

There was "no further objections" in fact they **glorified God** (18) - and note to whom they attributed the work to: **God has granted repentance that leads to life** (18)! God is the Author of salvation! This is true repentance for it led to life in God.

There is no room for boasting - if we are saved, then it is by grace, undeserved grace.