

Holy Spirit Is For Everyone

³⁴ Then Peter replied, “I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. ³⁵ In every nation, He (God) accepts those who fear (honor, reverence) Him and do what is right (righteousness). ³⁶ This is the message of Good News (Gospel) for the people of Israel—that there is peace (reconciliation) with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. ³⁸ And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. ³⁹ And we apostles are witnesses of all He did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put Him (Jesus) to death by hanging Him on a Cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised Him to life on the third day. Then God allowed Him to appear, ⁴¹ not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be His witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. ⁴² And He ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the One appointed by God to be the Judge of all—the living and the dead. ⁴³ He is the One all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in Him will have their sins forgiven through His Name.”

⁴⁴ Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter asked, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?” ⁴⁸ So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ. Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days. Acts 10:34-48 (NLT)

God loves all people – Jews and Gentiles (non-Jews) (e.g., see John 3:16; Romans 5:8; Ephesians 2:4; 1 John 4:9-10). Acts 10 reveals God’s eternal love and care for everyone who seeks and honors Him. God knows and searches everyone’s heart and nothing is hidden from Him (e.g., see Acts 1:24; Acts 15:8). Everyone who seeks goodness and not evil and diligently trust and calls on the Name of the LORD receive His blessings, life, and salvation (e.g., see Isaiah 1:16-17; Joel 2:32; Amos 5:4, 6, 14-15; Micah 6:6-8; Romans 10:10-13). There is only one true God, the Father, who created everything, and there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom God made everything and through whom we have been given life (see Romans 3:30; 1 Corinthians 8:6). Even more, Acts 10 reveals the Holy Trinity (Godhead) – God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Spirit. Acts 10 interweaves God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and God the Spirit to bring about salvation to Gentiles.

Acts 10 begins with Luke, the author of the book of Acts, telling the story of a Gentile Roman officer named Cornelius (Acts 10:1). Cornelius was devout, righteous, and God-fearing Gentile from Caesarea, as was everyone in his

household (Acts 10:2, 22). He was respected by all the Jewish people (Acts 10:22). Cornelius gave generously and liberally to the poor and prayed regularly to the true and living God (Acts 10:2; see also Matthew 7:7-11). Luke notes four significant aspects of Cornelius's character: (1) he actively sought God, (2) he honored God, (3) he gave generously in meeting other people's needs, and (4) he prayed to God regularly. Amazingly, these are significant character traits of Jesus – honoring God, praying regularly, giving and helping others (e.g., Matthew 9:35-36; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12). Cornelius is an example that God “rewards those who earnestly seek Him” (see 1 Chronicles 28:9; Hebrews 11:6). Those who sincerely and actively seek God will find Him!

One afternoon while praying, Cornelius had a vision in which he saw an angel of God (Acts 10:3, 30). The holy angel told Cornelius that God had received his continual prayers and gifts to the poor as a memorial offering to Him (Acts 10:4, 31). Next, the holy angel told Cornelius to send for Simon Peter, a close disciple and eyewitness of Jesus's public ministry (Acts 10:5, 32; see also Matthew 4:18-20). Cornelius obeyed the holy angel's instruction and sent for Simon Peter now living in Joppa (Acts 10:5-7, 33).

On the next day as Cornelius' associates were traveling to Joppa, Simon Peter fell into a trance and had a vision while he was praying (Acts 10:9-10, 16; see also Acts 11:4-5). Peter saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet came down with all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds (Acts 10:11-12; see also Acts 11:5-6). Then, the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ announced to Peter, “**Get up, Peter; kill and eat them**” (Acts 10:13, NIV; see also Acts 11:7). Peter declared to Jesus, “Surely not, Lord! . . . I have never eaten anything impure or unclean” (Acts 10:14, NIV; see also Acts 11:8). As a Jew, Simon Peter knew the Mosaic Law prohibited the eating of certain unclean and impure animals (see Leviticus 11:2-47; Leviticus 20:25-26; Deuteronomy 14:4-20). However, Jesus was teaching Peter a lesson about people (see Acts 10:28). Then, Jesus announced to Peter again a second time, “**Do not call anything impure that God has made clean**” (Acts 10:15, NIV; e.g. see also Matthew 15:11; Mark 7:14-15, 19; Acts 11:9; Romans 14:2, 14-20; 1 Timothy 4:4-5). Peter had this same vision repeated three times and then the sheet was suddenly pulled up to heaven (Acts 10:16; see also Acts 11:10).

After the vision, Peter was confused and perplexed as to the meaning of the vision (Acts 10:17, 19). Just then, the men sent by Cornelius found Peter's house where he was staying (Acts 10:18; see also Acts 11:11). As Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them” (Acts 10:19-20, ESV; see also Acts 11:12). So, Simon Peter went down and informed the three men, “I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?” (Acts 10:21, ESV). The three men informed Peter that a holy angel instructed Cornelius, a Gentile Roman officer, to call Peter to his house so that he can hear Peter's message of salvation (Acts

10:22; see also Acts 11:13-14). So, Peter invited the three men to stay for the night and the next day Peter went with the men to Cornelius's house (Acts 10:23).

Upon arriving at Cornelius's house, Cornelius had called together a large gathering of other Gentile relatives and close friends to meet Peter and receive a message from the Lord (Acts 10:24, 27, 33). Cornelius greeted Peter by falling at Peter's feet to worship him, but Peter informed Cornelius that he was a fellow man like him (Acts 10:25-26). At first, Peter informed Cornelius that his Jewish customs prevented a Jewish man to associate with Gentiles (Acts 10:28). However, Jesus had shown Peter that he must no longer think of anyone as common, impure, nor unclean (Acts 10:28; see also Acts 10:14-15; Acts 15:8-9). The true and living God, who knows the heart, welcomes and saves all people through faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ (see Acts 15:8-11). Through faith in Christ Jesus, we are all children of God (see John 1:12-13; Romans 8:14-16; Galatians 3:26). There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female for we are all one in Christ Jesus (see John 17:11; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 3:11).

Then beginning with verse 34, the Apostle Peter gave Cornelius and the listening Gentiles a concise summary of Jesus' ministry and the Gospel message (Acts 10:34-43; see also 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). In Acts 10:34-43, the Apostle Peter gave the essentials of the Gospel: Jesus' sinless life of service for others; obedience to God, His sacrificial death on the Cross; His resurrection from complete death, personally eyewitnesses by many; Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures; and the necessity of personal faith in Him.

Next, the Apostle Peter explained to Cornelius and everyone listening that God welcomes and loves all people of every nation who honors Him, does good deeds, and does righteousness (Acts 10:34-35; see also Acts 15:9). Both Old Testament and the New Testament clearly state God wants all people living honest, virtuous, and good lives and not doers of evil and unrighteousness. Moreover, the true and living shows no favoritism, prejudice, nor partiality because He the true and living God of all people (Acts 10:34; e.g., see also Deuteronomy 10:17; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Romans 2:11; Romans 3:29; Ephesians 6:9). For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who honor and call on Him in faith (e.g., see Samuel 2:30; Psalm 91:14-15; Proverbs 8:17; John 14:21; Romans 10:12).

Then, the Apostle Peter gave the Good News—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all (Acts 10:36; see also Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:36; Romans 5:1-5). The Good News of peace has spread throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached (Acts 10:37; see also Mark 1:14-15). John the Baptist came preaching repentance and bearing good fruit (see Matthew 3:2, 8; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3, 8), and Jesus continued John's message of repentance and bearing of good deeds (see

Matthew 4:17; Matthew 5:13-16; Mark 1:14-15). The apostles continued Jesus' message throughout all Judea, and to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by their good deeds (fruit) (see Acts 2:38; Acts 14:15; Acts 26:20; Galatians 5:22-23).

Next, the Apostle Peter informed Cornelius and everyone listening that Jesus of Nazareth was anointed and consecrated by God with the Holy Spirit and with strength, power, and ability (Acts 10:38; see also Isaiah 61:1-3; Matthew 3:16-17; Luke 4:18-19; Luke 6:19; John 1:32-34; Acts 2:22). Jesus went around doing good with compassion and healing all who were oppressed by evil for God was with Him (Acts 10:38; e.g., see also; Matthew 14:14; Luke 4:18-21; John 10:32). The New Testament Gospels are filled with Jesus' healing and restoration of people suffering with diseases, severe pain, and seizures caused by disabling evil spirits (e.g., see Matthew 4:24; Matthew 9:35-36; Mark 1:32-34; Mark 9:25-26). For example, Jesus gave healing and restoration to a woman suffering with severe back pain caused by a disabling evil spirit (see Luke 13:10-13). Even more, the simple statement, "He went around doing good and healing," is a profound summary of Jesus's life, and an ideal to which all Christians would do well to aspire (Acts 10:38; see also Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 11:29).

At that moment, the Apostle Peter informed Cornelius and the listening crowd that he and the other apostles were personal eyewitnesses to Jesus's good works throughout Israel and in Jerusalem until the Jewish and Roman officials murdered Him on a Cross (Acts 10:39; see also Acts 5:30). However, the true and living God resurrected and freed Jesus from complete death on the third day because it was impossible for death to hold Jesus (Acts 10:40; see also Matthew 16:21; Luke 9:22; Luke 24:7; Acts 2:24). God caused the resurrected Jesus to be seen by certain witnesses God had selected but not to the public (Acts 10:40-41; see also 1 Corinthians 15:5-11). The Holy Scriptures teaches that the following faithful disciples witnessed and interacted with the resurrected Jesus:

- Mary Magdalene and other women (Mark 16:9; John 20:11-18; Matthew 28:8-10; Mark 16:9-10);
- Apostle Peter (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5);
- Eleven apostles in the upper room (John 20:19-29; Mark 16:14; Luke 24:36-43);
- Seven disciples beside the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-24)
- Two men on Emmaus Road (Mark 16:12-14; Luke 24:13-35);
- Apostle Paul (Acts 9:3-6, 17; Acts 22:6-11; Acts 26:12-18);
- Over 500 brothers and sisters including James, the Lord Jesus's half-brother (1 Corinthians 15:5-7); and
- Those who witnessed Jesus's ascension into the glory-cloud (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:19; Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-12).

Then, the Apostle Peter instructed Cornelius and the listening crowd that the resurrected Jesus commissioned and commanded His disciples to preach the Good News everywhere and to testify that Jesus is God's ordained Judge of all — the living and dead (Acts 10:42; see also Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:1; Romans 14:9-10). Even more, the Apostle Peter announced that all the Old Testament prophets have written about Jesus, saying that everyone who believes in Jesus and calls upon His Name will have their sins forgiven and be saved (Acts 10:43; e.g., see also Isaiah 53:11; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Luke 24:25-27, 44-49; John 3:15-16; Acts 13:38; Romans 10:9-13).

Importantly as the Apostle Peter was explaining the Good News, the Holy Spirit fell upon Cornelius and all those listening to Peter's message about Jesus (Acts 10:44; see also Acts 11:15-18). All the Jews that accompanied Apostle Peter were amazed that God had given His free gift of the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and the other listening Gentiles who believed in His Son, Jesus (Acts 10:45, 47; see also Acts 11:15-18; Acts 15:8). Cornelius and the other Gentiles had come to saving faith in Jesus and had received the new covenant power and fullness of the Holy Spirit as the Jews. All this demonstrated, especially to the Jews that accompanied the Apostle Peter, that God accepts and blesses Jews and Gentiles equally with the Holy Spirit who believe and accept His Son, Jesus Christ (Acts 10:43). John baptized with water, but Christ Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Acts 11:16). The true and living God cleanses, saves, and works in everyone's hearts by faith in His Son, Jesus (Acts 15:9-11; see also Acts 16:30-31; Romans 3:22-24; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 2:5, 8-9; Ephesians 3:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:9).

Next, the Apostle Peter heard Cornelius and the other Gentiles speaking in tongues and praising God (Acts 10:46; see also Deuteronomy 10:21). So, the Apostle Peter baptized Cornelius and the other listening Gentiles since they received the Holy Spirit of God just as the Jewish disciples of Jesus (Acts 10:47). Baptizing these people would be an outward sign of an inward work of God in their hearts and their personal commitment to Jesus (see Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38). So the Apostle Peter baptized Cornelius and the other Gentile believers in the Name of Jesus Christ (the Messiah) (Acts 10:48; see also Acts 2:38).

Soon the news reached the other Jewish apostles and believers in Judea that the Gentiles had received the word of God (see Acts 11:1). Many believing Jews accepted that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life through faith in His Son, Jesus (see Acts 11:18). In the books of Acts, God was making it clear that the Good News of Christ is for all people!

References

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