

Church – The Beginnings, Part 28
Peter and Cornelius – Gospel to the Gentiles – Part 2
Acts 11:1-18 | 05/07/2017
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Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. (11:1)

Observation: How did they hear so fast ... or was it so fast...? Maybe Peter stayed in Caesarea for a while before returning to Jerusalem. (see Acts 10:48) There must have been the need for follow-up and some basic beginner discipleship or the starting of such. That takes some time

The Jewish Yeshua Believers in Judea understood that Gentiles “received the Word of God” ... that meant Gentiles became believers in the Messiah of Israel, the Savior of the World. But I am not sure that they had the whole story until Peter told them it.

² And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those who were circumcised (i.e. Jewish) took issue with him, ³ saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.”

Traditions are engrained deeply – prejudices, etc. We can see that these Yeshua believers, these Jewish background believers, still had **deep cultural issues with Gentiles**. Eating with them, associating with them, being close to them, lodging with them, etc.

What CHAINS like this might we have, today, that hold us back from sharing God’s Word with the lost world around us? God had to send a Vision to Peter and Speak to Him (reference Acts 10) and a corresponding vision to Cornelius (the Gentile Roman Centurion) to get Peter to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles for the first time.

***** **GOD is the Initiator of the Gospel to the Nations ... Matt. 9:35-38; 28:18-20** *****

So, now, Peter recalls with a brief overview of what we saw last week in Acts 10 →

⁴ But Peter began speaking and proceeded to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying, ⁵ “I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object coming down like a great sheet lowered by four corners from the sky; and it came right down to me, ⁶ and when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air. ⁷ I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸ But I said, ‘By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹ But a voice from heaven answered a second time, ‘What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.’ ¹⁰ This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky. ¹¹ And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were staying, having been sent to me from Caesarea. ¹² The Spirit TOLD ME TO GO with them without misgivings. These SIX brethren also went with me and we entered the man’s house. ¹³ And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; ¹⁴ and he will SPEAK WORDS TO YOU BY WHICH YOU WILL BE SAVED, YOU AND ALL YOUR HOUSEHOLD.’ ¹⁵ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them JUST AS HE DID UPON US AT THE BEGINNING. ¹⁶ And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ Therefore if God gave to them the SAME GIFT as He gave to us also AFTER BELIEVING in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” ¹⁸ When they heard this, they QUIETED DOWN and GLORIFIED God, saying, “Well then, God has GRANTED to the Gentiles also the REPENTANCE THAT LEADS TO LIFE.”

Peter answers their questions and their upset attitude → with God's Miraculous Gospel Intervention toward Cornelius and his household. → ¹⁸When they heard this, they QUIETED DOWN and GLORIFIED God, saying, "Well then, God has GRANTED to the Gentiles also the REPENTANCE THAT LEADS TO LIFE." → Gospel Salvation is the focus here.

Peter explains to them that God is the one who orchestrated this from start to finish and Peter likens what happened to Cornelius and his household to what happened in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost to **original 120 – AT THE BEGINNING** (see Acts 2) →

¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be **baptized with the Holy Spirit.**' ¹⁷Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also **after believing** in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

Lessons Learned:

1. **Mission is from God Himself, it is His MISSION – His Harvest.**

In fact, the whole Bible is a Missions Handbook on our Mission to reach the Lost, How to Disciple those that become followers/disciples of Christ, and so on ...

From Genesis 10 and onward, we see God dividing and conquering ...

Languages, Peoples, Nations, Tribes – after the Tower of Babel (Genesis 10 & 11)

2. God **CHOSE** a people group: through Abram (Abraham → Isaac → Jacob) to bless all the other people groups on earth. The Blessing of Salvation. The Messianic People Jesus said, "... Salvation is of the Jews ..." John 4:22

God's aim and purpose for choosing Israel (Exodus 19:6) was to use Israel to reach the Gentiles. Let's look at some Passages in Scripture that show this.

a. Genesis 12:3 (Promise to Abraham and his genetic descendants)

"... and in you all the FAMILIES of the earth will be blessed."

(a parallel to Genesis 12:3 – from Isaac to Jacob → Genesis 27:29)

b. Isaiah 49:6 (read the whole context on your own)

Israel was to be the Light (of God) to the nations -

"so that My Salvation may reach to the end of earth."

All the Apostles (including Paul) were Jewish / Israeli believers in their Messiah – the Messiah of Israel, Yeshua (Jesus Christ) who also is Jewish. For about the first 20 years after Pentecost (Acts 2) the church was completely made up of Jewish believers in their Messiah. We know that there were some Samaritans (see Acts 8), as well. It wasn't until Acts 10 that we see Gentiles coming to Christ.

Jesus Himself is our Model (see Philippians 2:5-10) as a Missionary. He came from Heaven to Earth, as a Jewish person (not His native home, language or culture). He was the First Cross-Cultural Missionary reaching an unreached people group. He is the very First Pioneer Missionary to the Lost.

Therefore, it is the Responsibility of all those who have been reached, to continue to further the reach of the Gospel even more, until He returns for us.

3. Just like the Jews ("the circumcision") in Judea that took issue with Peter "eating with Gentiles" – sometimes there are hindrances in our own lives that can hinder God using us to reach the lost. What are they? Maybe they are: Fears, Cultural Hangups, Prejudices, feelings of inadequacy, thinking you have to know more before sharing, "you just don't like other people" ... etc. Sometimes they are small and sneaky little concepts or ideas that we are OK with, but in fact do hinder the Gospel through us.