

Acts 060
Gentile Salvation—Part 5
Acts 10:34-43
November 20, 2024
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Let us take our Bibles this evening and open them to Acts 10, as we continue our verse-by-verse study in the Book of Acts. Peter, in Joppa, has performed two major miracles. He brought someone out that had been bedridden for eight years (Acts 9:33-34). He brought someone back from the dead (Acts 9:40). He is on a roll, I would say. The whole trajectory is to get him up north to Caesarea, where he is going to lead the first full-fledged Gentile to Christ.

This unit from Acts 10:1-11:18 is all about how the first Gentile got saved, which is a huge step forward in the development of the church. All the converts at this point have either been full Jews, proselytes, or half breeds like the Samaritans. Here, what is going to happen is the first Gentile is going to be brought to Christ.

The man reading this is Theophilus, who is wondering if Christianity is for him because everything looks so Jewish. You can imagine the impact this would have on him, confirming him in his faith, because he too is a Roman Gentile, as we have talked about. I think that is why Dr. Luke spent so much time on this initial conversion of the first Gentile.

What has happened thus far? Thus far Cornelius, the Gentile who is about to be saved, got a vision from God that Peter was going to come and give him the gospel. Simultaneously, God is communicating to Peter—Cornelius is in Caesarea; Peter is still in Joppa—that the age of the Law is over. "We are now in the Church Age, and you are to cooperate with this delegation that Cornelius is going to send to fetch you from Joppa and bring you back to Caesarea."

Part three is the visions' application, where Cornelius dispatches three Gentiles to travel from Caesarea to Joppa to fetch Peter. Peter goes—he leaves Joppa, he goes to Caesarea, and he steps foot into the house of a Gentile as a Jew, which Jewish tradition forbade. He is able to do that because he had the vision of the sheep and the animals in the sheet, that the age of the Law has been set aside.

There is Cornelius and his closest companions, his friends and his family, because he knows that whatever Peter is going to say, it is going to be very important. God, on the front end, told him this in Acts 10:33. It concludes with Cornelius in his house with his closest friends and family. He basically says to Peter, "The floor is yours. God told us you were coming. I am sitting on the edge of my seat. I cannot wait to hear what you have to say."

I wish all churches were that way. The pastor walks in, and everybody is just sitting on the edge of their seat and cannot wait for what the pastor has to say. That is what is going on here with this man, Cornelius, who does not know the name Jesus Christ yet, but he is an honest God seeker.

We are going to look at tonight in Acts 10:34-43, where Peter is going to speak and give a message. You get the idea that he cannot even get the message out before Cornelius and his group believes. Peter had more to say, but what he said was enough, and they believed. They have what we would call a Gentile Pentecost, which we will look at next time in Acts 10:44-48.

Tonight we are looking at what Peter said. What a great study for us, because we are going to be put in positions constantly where we have the opportunity to share the faith with unsaved people that may not even know the name of Jesus. What do we say? What do we talk about? What do we emphasize? What do we highlight?

My primary spiritual gift is not evangelism, but I had a great opportunity to share my faith this week. I have been praying to the Lord for opportunities. You should pray that as well, because you would not believe the situations that God will put you in through appointment cancellations or something, where you will be next to someone and you will have an opportunity, not so much in a coerced way, but in a natural way to talk about spiritual things.

This particular individual wanted to know what I did for a living. I am like, "Are you sure you want to know?" I said, "I am a pastor." He goes, "Really? What do you do as a pastor?" He wanted to know if it was a high stress job. I said, "Not really. There are a lot of good things about it." I tried to explain what I did, that I teach and I write books, and he wanted to know what books I had written. I told him I had written a book called "The Middle East Meltdown" where I was talking about the different players in the last days that will surround Israel. He said, "Really?" He was from Haiti, and he asked, "Is Haiti mentioned in the Bible's prophecies?" I said, "Not that I can see."

You can see from just that little conversation that I had an opportunity to springboard into the gospel. Asking him the question that got me saved, I asked him, "If you were to die and stand before the Lord and He would ask you, 'Why should I let you into heaven?' What would you say?" He gave the same answer I gave when I was 16. A lot of I's. "I did this. I did that."

From there I had the chance to show him that it is not about us—it is about what He did. That is how you can know with 100% certainty, that you can go to heaven. He was talking about how he quit drinking and he quit carousing and he quit hanging around with the wrong crowd. I said, "That stuff is admirable, but it really does not get you into heaven."

It was a wonderful opportunity that the Lord stuck right in front of me. It was not one of those things where he immediately trusted Christ, I could tell, but a seed was planted. I just pray that the Lord will water it and bring it to fruition later. When you study these things that the Apostle Peter is talking about to Cornelius, you know how to guide the conversation when the Lord puts you in those situations.

That is why this paragraph is important to us. What Peter is going to do is turn the keys, because you will recall in Matthew 16:19, Jesus told Peter,

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." (Matt 16:19)

That is why it is always Peter that has the first bite of the apple to lead different people groups to Christ. He leads the first Jews to Christ (Acts 2). He leads the first half-breed group, the Samaritans, to Christ—he lays hands as the Holy Spirit is given (Acts 8). Now he is given this golden opportunity as he walks into the house of this unsaved Gentile, a God seeker who does not know the name of Jesus. He is going to be given the opportunity to lead the first Gentiles to Christ.

What will follow is a Gentile Pentecost. Once Cornelius and his entourage believe, Peter will say, "That is exactly what happened to us Jews at the beginning when we got saved, when I taught on the day of Pentecost and about 3,000 Jews came to Christ." Here come the things that Peter is talking about as he is now turning the keys that Jesus gave him for a third time.

- I. Peter and the Keys of the Kingdom (Acts 10:34-43)
 - A. Introduction (34-35)
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First, we have an introduction (Acts 10:34-35). What is the first thing that Peter focuses on? He focuses on the fact that God is not a respecter of persons. It says, "*Opening his mouth...*" (Acts 10:34)

At some point you have to open your mouth. I know a guy that calls evangelism going and mowing his neighbor's lawn, which is a very nice thing to do, but nobody got saved that way. If you are using it as a bridge builder or something, I get it, but at some point you have to get away from mowing the lawn and you have to say something.

Peter opened his mouth, and you remember Philip also had to open his mouth when he led the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ in Acts 8.

Romans 10:17 says,

*"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
(Romans 10:17)*

You cannot have a word without speech. Peter opens his mouth.

"Opening his mouth, Peter said: 'I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality.'" (Acts 10:34)

Why does he understand that now? Because God gave him a vision of animals in the sheet saying, arise and eat. Meaning the age of the Law is over and you can go into a Gentile's home because God loves the Gentiles.

Deuteronomy 10:17 says of God that He is awesome and *"does not show partiality nor take a bribe"* (Deuteronomy 10:17).

Second Chronicles 19:7 says,

"...be very careful what you do, for the Lord our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe" (2 Chronicles 19:7).

When God blessed Abraham, going back to the beginning, and created the Nation of Israel, it was very clear that the reason He blessed Israel was that he wanted to bless the world through Israel. Israel's blessings were not just for Israel. There is a missional purpose right at the beginning of Scripture in Genesis 12:3, where God said to Abraham, *"...And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."*

"[Israel is] a light to the nations" (Isaiah 42:6).

*"I will also make you a light to the nations,
So that My salvation may reach the end of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6)*

Even in the prophecies related to the coming kingdom, we know that the Gentiles are going to be there.

*"That they may possess the remnant of Edom
And all the nations who are called by My name,'
Declares the Lord who does this." (Amos 9:12)*

The "nations", in Hebrew the "goyim." God blessed Israel not to just bless Israel, but He blessed Israel so that Israel would be a blessing to the world.

Earlier Jonathan was praising the Lord for God's blessings on Sugar Land Bible Church. That is a wonderful thing to think about, but we have to understand that God does not bless us just to bless us. He wants to use us to reach other people. We are blessed to be a blessing. If you are blessed in any way in your life, that blessing is not just for you; God wants you to use that blessing to reach a lost and dying world. Why? Because God is not an American. He is not a Canadian. He is not an Israeli, although He is the God of Israel. He wants to bless the whole world.

This is what Peter means when he says, "I see now that God does not show partiality." He got a little bit stuck in his Judaism, and that was easy for the Jews to forget that they were there to bless the Gentiles. Not to look down on them, but after 1,500 years of the law, they got a little bit inbred. That is why he saw the vision of the sheep and the animals in the sheet saying, "Arise and eat" (Acts 10:11-13). He is saying, "Now I realize that God does not show partiality. That is why, as a devout Jew, I have stepped into the home of Cornelius, a Gentile."

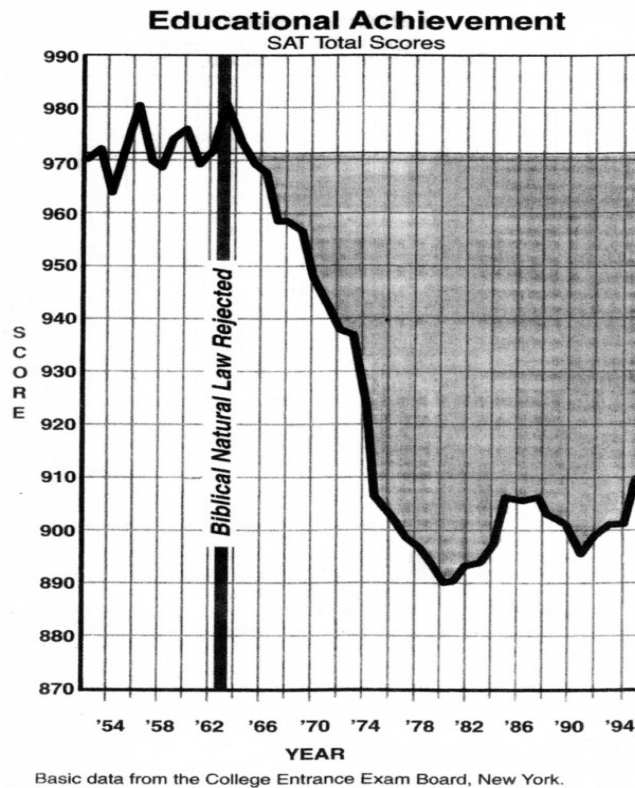
Then you go down to Acts 10:35, and it talks here about how righteousness is available in any nation. It says,

*"but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is
welcome to Him." (Acts 10:35)*

God wants people to fear Him. Fearing God, meaning respecting God, is a good thing because the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7).

I have used this frequently. These are our SAT scores in America, taking a precipitous decline in 1962, which was the year the Supreme Court pushed Bible reading and prayer out of schools. That is when America really got stupid, to be honest with you, because the fear of the Lord is the beginning not just of wisdom (which is knowledge applied), but it is knowledge itself. The brain cannot work the way it is supposed to when it is not submitted to God.

I was very heartened to see that the state of Oklahoma wants to bring back the Ten Commandments in the school—Bible and prayer in school. I was heartened to see a little two-minute video by president-elect Trump saying that we need the Bible and what he called "religion" back in the United States. That is all very encouraging—a little bit late to the party, but encouraging nonetheless. That is when people start to get really smart again, when they have a fear and respect for God. God is looking for people in every nation that will fear or respect Him.



Arnold Fruchtenbaum says,

"In verse 35, Peter recognized the fact of Gentile acceptance: 'but in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness is acceptable to him.' The one who fears God obviously has faith. The one who has faith will work righteousness as the evidence of that faith. Such a person is acceptable to God."¹

God is looking for people anywhere, everywhere, all over the world, regardless of where they live, or their ethnicity that will trust in Him and then seek to live a godly life through progressive sanctification. Anywhere, everywhere people want to do that God says, "The welcome is out to do that, including you, Cornelius."

Then Peter here highlights Yeshua's work—that is the Hebrew name for Jesus. Here are some things that you can focus on when the Lord gives you the privilege of sharing your faith with a lost person. He talks first of all about Yeshua's preparation (Acts 10:36).

"The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)—" (Acts 10:36)

¹ Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Book of Acts*, 241.

First and foremost, it came to Israel. *"The word which He sent to the sons of Israel."* They were given the first opportunity to receive the kingdom and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

"These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: 'Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Matthew 10:5-7)

They were given a golden opportunity to receive the King and the Kingdom, which they naturally turned down. But God took lemons and turned them into lemonade. He used that horrible miscarriage of justice, where they violated all their legal rules to run Him through the legal system and get Him turned over to Rome quickly, to get Him killed as quickly as they could. It was a horrible miscarriage of justice. He used that to pay the sin debt of the whole world. God took a tragedy and turned it into a triumph.

This is the preaching of peace through Jesus. Here is what is often on Christmas cards—Isaiah 9:6-7:

*"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal
Father, Prince of Peace.
There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,
On the throne of David and over his kingdom,
To establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness
From then on and forevermore."* (Isaiah 9:6-7)

The Lord of hosts will accomplish this so that Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He is going to bring political peace to this world. Do you believe that? Before He brings political peace to the world, He must deal with something else: the state of warfare between sinful man and a holy God. He brings peace to that situation first; that is what happens when you trust Christ. You are no longer God's enemy, but you are reconciled to God.

This is what Peter focuses on as he is talking to Cornelius. Jesus is entitled to do this because *"He is Lord of all"* (Acts 10:36). When you are put in a situation to share your faith, you could talk about peace with God, what that means. The world will want you to start talking about political things. You could say, "There is actually a form of peace that precedes the political—it is spiritual peace. God wants to declare a truce with you, because right now you are God's enemy." Romans 5:10 says that when a person trusts Christ, they are *"reconciled to God."* The state of warfare is over.

Then as you drop down to Acts 10:37, you see a reference there to Christ's First Coming. What did He do? Cornelius could have known about this, because he lived in Caesarea, in the land of Israel, where these things transpired.

"You yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed" (Acts 10:37)

John the Baptist got the ball rolling when he saw Jesus in John 1:29 and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Then, of course, John the Baptist baptized Jesus.

You will see a reference to that in Matthew 3:16-17 which says,

"After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'" (Matthew 3:16-17)

All of these people were coming to John to be baptized with his message, and he was offering the Kingdom (Matthew 3:2). But then Jesus shows up and John says, "This is the one that all of those Old Testament prophecies point towards."

Here, Peter points out to Cornelius that this whole thing started with John's baptism, and from there the ministry of Jesus, which began in Galilee, spread throughout the land of Israel, down into Judea as well. This is a summation that Peter is giving of the first advent of Jesus, concerning basically His First Coming.

Then you go down to Acts 10:38 and it talks about Christ's life and work. What did He do exactly?

"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38)

It is convicting that if Jesus Himself had to be anointed with the Holy Spirit to do God's work, empowered by the Holy Spirit to do God's work, and He was the Son of God, then how in the world would I ever think that I can get by on my own natural abilities as a pastor? If Jesus needed the anointing of God, I certainly need it, and you certainly need it for what God has called you to do.

We need to, as the Book of Galatians tells us, "walk according to the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16). You look at someone on a walker, for example, and see how dependent they are on that walker. That is what our lives are to be like, as Christians. We are to be depending on the power and the resources of the Holy Spirit, because the Christian life is not difficult, it is impossible if you try to live it on your own power. But when you draw upon the resources of the Holy Spirit, which God makes available to us moment by moment, by faith. It is amazing the things that Jesus is able to reproduce in and through us.

I am reminded of when Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 in the synagogue in Nazareth. (I have been to Nazareth and seen a reconstruction of what the synagogue probably looked like.) It was predicted of Him 700 years in advance that He would say this:

*"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
Because the Lord has anointed me
To bring good news to the afflicted;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to captives
And freedom to the prisoners;
To the favorable year of the Lord
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn." (Isaiah 61:1-2)*

In fulfillment of that prophecy, given 700 years in advance, here comes Jesus into that Nazarene synagogue.

"And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read." (Luke 4:16)

Jesus was what we call a churchgoer. He did not boycott regular fellowship with God's people. He attended synagogue regularly, which is what the Book of Hebrews says we should do. Hebrews 10:25 says, "not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some."

This is a unique situation here. Luke 4:17 goes on to say,

"And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written" (Luke 4:17).

Keep in mind that they had no chapter and verse divisions that we know of in the time of Christ. It was not like, "I am going to preach out of Isaiah 61:1-2." The Book of Isaiah was not organized that way in His time. He just knew the Isaiah scroll so well that He could go to the exact place with no chapter and verse divisions, and begin preaching on the part of it that pointed to Him.

Then he starts quoting:

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.
He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set free those who are oppressed,
To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord.'*

And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him." (Luke 4:18-20)

I bet they were, because what He is doing is claiming to be the fulfillment of that Isaiah prophecy.

"And He began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" (Luke 4:21)

Did you notice that He left out the second part of Isaiah 61:2, which says "*the day of vengeance of our God*"? Why did He leave that out? Because that is the part of it that pertains to the Second Coming. This is very common in the Old Testament prophets. They give you a glimpse of the First Coming, a glimpse of the Second coming, but they do not tell you about the valley between the mountains. You have to consult the New Testament to get that information.

He reads the part of it that relates to His First Coming, and He leaves out the part of it that relates to His Second Coming. He says, "I am here to preach liberty and freedom to the captives. The reason I am doing this is because God has anointed Me to do it."

That becomes a wonderful summation of what Peter is saying here to Cornelius in Acts 10:38:

"You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38)

What did Jesus do with that power? Did He lord it over people? No, Acts 10:38 says,

"...and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." (Acts 10:38)

"He went about doing good." A lot of Christians say, "What should I do with my life?" Here is something you could do: go around, do good, and be a blessing to people. As He went around doing good, Acts 10:38 tells us that "*God was with Him*," meaning that God was pleased with Him.

Is this not what God's voice said at His baptism? He said,

"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." (Matthew 3:17)

God the Father was pleased with God the Son. Now do you know who else God is pleased with? He is pleased with you because you are connected to Jesus. He does not see us as we are; He sees us through the shed blood of His Son. You may have had a lousy day today or a lousy week, and said some things and done some things that you wished you had not done. Welcome to the club.

The truth of the matter is, at the end of the day, God is pleased with you. Maybe some behavior needs to change, but I am talking about your position. God is pleased with you because He does not see us as we are—He sees us through the transferred righteousness of Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:9).

"...[Jesus] went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil," (Acts 10:38)

God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life, but there is an opposite side of that: Satan hates you and has a terrible plan for your life. John 10:10 tells us:

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)

You have to understand that as a Christian you have God the Father who is insanely in love with you. That is why we are the bride. You have a devil who is insanely in great hatred of you. As God is out trying to bless your life and make it count for eternity, Satan's whole agenda is to derail your Christian life. He cannot undo your salvation, but He can cause an awful lot of trouble.

This is why we are told to put on the full armor of God. Hebrews 2:14, speaking of the ministry of Jesus says,

"Therefore, since the children share in the flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil," (Hebrews 2:14)

Satan has a lot of power, and Christ came into your life to render him powerless. Satan can cause a lot of trouble in a person's life, but he cannot take you to hell. He cannot take away your salvation. He cannot take away God's love for you. These are things that are important to remember in the midst of spiritual warfare. This is why Jesus came into the world.

Then Peter, in Acts 10:39-41, talks about how we apostles are witnesses to this whole thing. You see a declaration there:.

"We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem." (Acts 10:39)

What was nice about being an apostle is they were appointed unto God to be witnesses to Jesus, of Jesus. That is what Peter is doing in the house of this Gentile, Cornelius—he is witnessing. Have you ever asked yourself, why does God not just take us to heaven when we get saved? That would be a lot easier. The answer is that He wants to do something through your life.

There are certain things you cannot do in heaven. Did you know that? One of them is to share your faith with lost people, because there are no lost people in heaven. You get that unique privilege right now. God has blessed you to be a blessing to other people, and that is why He leaves us on the earth. That is what He was doing with the apostles.

It calls the Land of Israel the "land of the Jews" and not Palestine. Have you noticed that the word "Palestine" is not in the Bible? Palestine comes from Hadrian during the second century. After the Jews were kicked out of the land by Rome, he tried to pretend like the Jews were never there, which is tough to do with modern archeology.

A lot of us have seen the movie called "Patterns of Evidence," which shows all the archeological evidence for the Old Testament in the Land of Israel, Babylon, and other places. Hadrian thought he could just wipe out the Jewish presence. It is like what the Muslims do. The Muslims are always building structures on top of Jewish holy sites. Do you notice that? Why do they keep building on top? Because they are trying to pretend like the Jews were never there; they are trying to rewrite history.

So Hadrian came up with this name, Palestine. It came from the ancient Jewish enemies called the Philistines that David and others fought. He was trying to make an anti-semitic slur. "Palestine" is derived from "Philistine." It was not just an anti-semitic slur, but made it sound like the Land of Israel was never Israel's.

When Christians use this expression, "Palestine," it is like using the expression "West Bank" instead of Judea and Samaria. The West Bank is not west of Israel; it is east of Israel. The West Bank is west of Jordan, Israel's neighbor. When we use the expression "West Bank" we are using a politically-loaded Jordanian term. When we use the word "Palestine" without really understanding it we are actually using an anti-semitic term going back to Emperor Hadrian.

The Bible will never use the word "Palestine" unless it is talking about the Philistines in Old Testament times. It just calls the land of the Jews the Land of Israel. You can jot down Matthew 2:20-21. You will see the same thing there: "the land of Israel."

"We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem." (Acts 10:39)

He highlights not only the declaration of the apostles, but Jesus' death. Jesus came into the world to die on a cross for the sins of the world.

"...They also put him to death by hanging Him on a cross." (Acts 10:39)

Who are "they"? "They" are the Jews.

"This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you [first-century Israel] nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death" (Acts 2:23).

You will notice that the Bible never tries to exonerate first-century Israel for what they did to Jesus. That is a hot potato that you have to handle very carefully, because what Christian antisemites have done is call the Jews the "Christ killers." The last time I checked, Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. Who killed Christ?

Did first-century Israel kill Christ? Yes, they did, but there is enough blame to go around for everybody. The Romans participated; the Gentiles participated. Jesus said that He would be turned over to the Gentiles (Luke 18:32). He participated because in John 10:18 He says,

"No one has taken [My life] away from Me, but I lay it on My own initiative" (John 10:18).

At the end of the day, we all participated because He died for us. We are all Christ killers when you think about it. You have to handle these texts carefully. A lot of people try to exonerate first-century Israel, but the Bible never does that. Neither does it place the blame completely and totally on first-century Israel. Jesus died according to the predetermined plan of God, but *"you nailed [Him] to a cross"* (Acts 2:23).

Was it their free will that killed Jesus, or was it according to a predetermined plan of God? Both are mentioned there. Are you in favor of free will or divine sovereignty? Because I see both. People always want to push you on that—one end or the other of the spectrum or the other. Be careful of the extremes. Denying free will and focusing on sovereignty, focusing on free will and denying sovereignty is the opposite. Both free will and sovereignty have a role in God's place.

I do not want to get so focused on sovereignty that I give up on free will, or so much on free will, that I give up on divine sovereignty, because the Bible teaches both. Both are right there in that passage. "Pastor, what do you believe in? Do you believe in divine will or divine free will or divine sovereignty?" My answer is "Yes." It is both, because I see both right there in that passage:

Jesus died according to the predetermined plan of God, yet as that plan of God was being executed, God was using the free will rebellion of His creatures to accomplish the task. Only God can pull something like that off, right?

Peter moves away from the death of Christ, and he focuses on the resurrection of Christ. We do not just serve a dead Savior. He is a risen Savior and a living Savior.

"God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,"
(Acts 10:40)

Later on, Paul would write:

"If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, your faith also is in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:14)

Jesus came out of that tomb, but if He had not, then we might as well pack it up and go home. Then we would be serving a Savior that was killed 2,000 years ago and is not alive right now. But we serve a crucified Christ and a resurrected Christ.

As Peter is talking about the resurrected Christ, he talks about the post-resurrection ministry of Jesus.

"Not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead." (Acts 10:41)

In the Book of Acts, as we have studied, in Acts 1 there is a 40-day period in between the resurrection of Jesus and His ascension, where they are eating together. Thomas, you remember, is touching His hands and side, which Jesus acquiesces to.

They are eating breakfast; they are going fishing; He is telling them to throw their net on the other side of the boat. "Maybe you will catch more fish if you throw your net on the other side of the boat." You can imagine the blow to their pride that was. "We are the professional fishermen, Lord." "Just throw your net on the other side of the boat and you will have so many fish, you will not be able to pull it in." They finally obeyed and did it.

All of that was during the post-resurrection ministry of Jesus. How could Jesus pull off a miracle like that? Because Jesus knows where the fish are. They do not tell you that in Bible college. Jesus knows where the fish are. "Throw your net on the other side of the boat and you will have so many fish, you will not know what to do with them all."

They are asking Him theological questions, post-resurrection pre-ascension, about the Kingdom. Then finally He is taken up from them in the Ascension. So that there is a reference to the post-resurrection ministry of Jesus.

Paul in the resurrection chapter (1 Corinthians 15) say,

"And that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain alive until now, but some have fallen asleep." (1 Corinthians 15:4-6).

"He appeared to Peter—"Cephas" is his Aramaic name—and to the twelve, and to 500 people. Do not take my word for it," Paul says. "Go, go talk to them yourselves. Most of them are still alive, though some have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:6).

"Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles;" (1 Corinthians 15:7)

Who is James? That is the Lord's half-brother.

"And last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also." (1 Corinthians 15:8)

There he is speaking of the Damascus Road vision that he saw. He is dealing here with the post-resurrection and also, to some extent, the post-ascension ministry of Jesus.

Peter makes a statement here about how he and the other apostles have been chosen to communicate these truths.

"Not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead." (Acts 10:41)

What were they chosen to do? To be apostles. They were chosen to serve. In our study on Calvinism on Sunday mornings, I will show you that a lot of the passages that people use to show that one person is chosen unto salvation and another person is not are taken out of context. The choosing has to do with a choice unto service. In John 15, Jesus will say,

"You did not choose Me but I chose you," (John 15:16)

People will grab that part of it and say, "Look, God chooses certain people unto salvation." You just have to keep reading the rest of the verse. In John 15:16, He says this to the disciples in the Upper Room:

"You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you." (John 15:16)

The choice there is of the apostles to bear fruit. That is what the whole context is.

Does God choose certain people unto salvation? Probably. But do human beings have a choice as to whether they are going to receive Christ or not? Absolutely. Do you believe in election or do you believe in free will? My answer is "Yes, I happen to believe in both." "How do you figure that out?" I do not try to figure it out; I quit trying to figure that one out a long time ago. That is way above my pay grade. I just know that God works in His way.

I have responsibilities here on the earth. I am not to get so hung up on divine sovereignty that I never share my faith with everyone, because certain people might be

non-elect. The Bible says "*preach the gospel to all creation*" (Mark 16:15). It does not say to figure out if they are the elect first so you can preach the gospel to them.

Jay Adams, the great counselor, has a lot of influence in the counseling world. In his famous book "Competent to Counsel," he says to his counselors they should never tell a counselee that Christ died for him, because they do not know if the counselee is one of the elect. That is so sad. Every person I meet and have an opportunity to share my faith with, I say, "Jesus died for you," because I do not follow the Calvinistic doctrine of limited atonement. I believe in unlimited atonement—the world is savable, but not saved until people trust in the provision. The provision is there for anyone who will trust in it. Whether people trust in it or not is their call.

How does that work with God choosing certain people? I have no idea. Ask God. Do not ask me; I cannot figure it out. I just know what God does is His business, and what I am supposed to do is under a divine command. Every human being is savable.

"Not to all people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead."
(Acts 10:41)

"We apostles were chosen to be apostles." You have to look at "chosen" very carefully here. This is not a text about how some are chosen to heaven, some are chosen to hell. What you will notice is the passages that Calvin has used typically do not put the passage back in its context.

Then he goes on and he talks about the apostolic commission (Acts 10:42-43). He talks about the apostles' testimony.

"And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead." (Acts 10:42)

The apostolic testimony is: Get right with Jesus now, because He is the "*Judge of the living and the dead*." There is coming a time in history when He will render judgment on every single human being, those alive and those dead. Paul, on Mars Hill, is going to climax his sermon that way. In Acts 17:31 it says,

"Because He has fixed a day in which He [Jesus] will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31)

Jesus is coming back to judge everyone, and I am thankful that when I stand before the Lord in judgment as a believer, He is not going to hold my sins against me. He is going to give rewards or not give rewards based on how I invested my life as a Christian, but the issue of heaven and hell is not an issue for me. Neither is it an issue for you if you

are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The only judgment you will face is the judgment of rewards.

Woe to the person to whom the transferred righteousness of Jesus has never been applied. They have to stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne Judgment. It is described in the Revelation 20:11-15. I do not know if we are going to be present when that judgment is rendered. I sure hope not, because I do not want to be there. It looks horrific to me. As their names are not found written in the Book of Life, the resurrected of all ages are transferred from Hades into the Lake of Fire, and their torment in the Lake of Fire is determined by what is in the books.

If your name is not in the book, if you have never trusted Christ as your Savior, then you are judged by the books. What are the books? I would guess it is a record. People receive differing degrees of torment forever based on the sins recorded in the books. I do not want anything to do with that judgment. I want to be in the Book of Life.

The disciples came back after offering the kingdom to Israel and they were all rejoicing, "Even the demons submit to us" (Luke 10:17). Jesus says,

"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." (Luke 10:20)

"There is a judgment coming, and we apostles are out to preach this. That is what I am doing in your house right now, Cornelius."

We will conclude here with Acts 10:43, where Peter makes a quick reference to the prophets of the Old Testament, who all pointed to this Man, Jesus. That is the Emmaus Road, post-resurrection.

"Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He [Jesus] explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." (Luke 24:27)

"Now He said to them, 'These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.'" (Luke 24:44)

This refers to Tanakh, the three major divisions of Hebrew Bible. "The whole Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, points towards Me."

Jesus speaking to the Pharisees in John 5:39 says,

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;" (John 5:39)

"For if you believe Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me." (John 5:46)

Moses, by the way, lived 1,500 years before Jesus said this.

What does Paul do in Thessalonica? Acts 17 two and three.

"And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, 'This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ,'" (Acts 17:1-3)

What Scriptures? What scriptures are they referring to? Not the New Testament; it has not even been written yet. It is Hebrew Bible pointing to Jesus. What a great way to evangelize somebody.

Did you know that Jesus Christ is the only Man that has ever walked the face of the earth where there is history written about Him hundreds and thousands of years before He lived? That is, to my understanding, totally unique to Christianity. No other alleged holy book can do such a thing.

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Do you see how it keeps saying over and over again, "according to the Scriptures, according to the Scriptures, according to the Scriptures"? What Scriptures are we dealing with here? We are dealing with Tanakh: Torah, Nevi'im Ketuvim—Law, Prophets, Writings. They organized the books differently than we do, but they are the same books pointing to Jesus Christ.

After all of this, he gives the gospel.

That through His name everyone who would repent of all their sins. Oh, it does not say that. Everyone who admits they are a sinner, believes on Jesus and confesses Him as Lord. Oh, it does not say that either. That is the ABC method of salvation.

Do you follow how complicated we have made the gospel into three steps, four steps, five steps, or the Texas Two-Step, which I am going to demonstrate for you up here on this stage. The gospel is one step. You hear the truth of the gospel and there is a single step. There is no ABC, there is no crying. If you want to cry, you can, but you do not have to cry a river if you do not want to. God says you do not have to. There is nothing about confessing, calling, or any of these things that people throw into a very simple message. The message is one verb, which is "to believe."

"Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes receives forgiveness of sins." (Acts 10:43)

It is not to clean yourself up and come to Jesus; it is not walking the aisle. There is no altar call here; nothing like that. It is simply, "Believe, Cornelius, then you will receive the blessing that God promises to the believer, which is your sin debt—past, present, and future—will be wiped out. God is not at war with you anymore." That is why there is an emphasis on peace in Acts 10:36.

All of these verses clearly indicate that there is one condition to salvation: faith alone. Some of the classics are Genesis 15:6, John 3:16, and Acts 16:30-31.

Lewis Sperry Chafer says:

"...upwards of 150 passages of Scripture condition salvation upon believing only."²

It is just mystifying to me how people want to run the Romans 10: to develop confession as a condition for salvation. They want to go to that obscure passage that really concerns the Nation of Israel in the future, which is what Romans 9-11 is about. But people want to build their evangelistic message there. That is where they get the C in ABC from. Instead of the 150 crystal clear passages that condition salvation upon believing only.

In Acts 11:15-16, Peter is going to say,

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. 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.'" (Acts 11:15-16)

The simplicity that is here Peter is going to say, "That is what happened to us on the day of Pentecost." Whatever you are doing with Acts 2:38—"repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ"—we have worked through when we are in Acts 2. If you are going to use Acts 2:38 to build a complicated salvation, which many people do, Peter is saying that you cannot do that. In Acts 11:15, he says that what happened in Acts 10:44, which is pure simplicity, is the same thing that happened to "us at the beginning."

Do not come up with an interpretation of Acts 2 of multiple conditions for salvation. The biblical text will not allow you to do that. There is a way to handle Acts 2:38. We do not get baptized to get saved; we get baptized because we are saved. If you are going to take Acts 2:38 and turn it into baptism plus faith equals justification, then you are going against what Peter said in Acts 11:15.

² Lewis Sperry Chafer, vol. 7, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1993), 265-66.

Pay attention to that, because people like to grab these passages like Acts 2:38 and Romans 10:9-10 and build a complicated methodology of salvation. I am trying to explain why Acts 11:15 will not allow you to do that. That is the end of Peter's message. In fact, it really is not the end. You get the feeling that he wants to keep going.

"But we believe that we are saved through the grace of our Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are." (Acts 15:11)

In other words, if there is simplicity in Acts 15:11, there has to be simplicity in Acts 2:38. If there is simplicity in Acts 10:44, there has to be simplicity in Acts 2:38. I will say more about this as we get into Acts 11 and Acts 15, but I am just trying to whet the whistle a little bit.

Peter finishes his sermon, but I do not think he is really finished. I think he wanted to keep going. However, here is Cornelius and his household, and they have heard enough. "We do not need to hear anymore. We have heard enough." They are going to believe. What is going to happen when they believe is the Gentile Pentecost (Acts 10:44-48) is going to manifest itself (Acts 10:44-48). It is exactly what happened in Acts 2 with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the speaking of tongues,

Peter, through God's grace, won a bunch of people to Christ with this simple message because God set the whole thing up. The hearts were prepared. Then we will move into Acts 11:1-18, where Peter is going to have to go back to the ranch, Jerusalem, because the leadership is still in Jerusalem. He is going to have to explain to all these Jewish Christians that a Gentile got saved. It really happened. In other words, "What happened to Cornelius happened to us."

The leadership is doubtful about it. "Can a Gentile really get saved?" At the beginning of the Church Age, this is what the Jewish leadership was wondering. We have been at this for 2,000 years, where Gentiles have been saved all over. What is the church debating today? Can a Jew get saved? But at the beginning of the Church Age it was, can a Gentile get saved? God says, just watch Me.

Here at the end of the Church Age, can a Jew get saved? Can God really restore Israel to her rightful place? We doubt it. That is why we have Replacement Theology. We doubt that could happen. As God said, "Just watch Me," at the beginning of the Church Age, He is going to say, "Just watch Me," at the end of the Church Age. There is going to be a Rapture, and boy, you are going to see a Jewish salvation. You will have the best seat in the house, by the way, like you have never seen before. That is where we are going.