

Acts 061
Gentile Salvation
Part 6
Acts 10:44-48
December 4, 2024
Dr. Andy Woods

This evening we will be taking a look at Acts 10:44-48. Peter is moving from Joppa down south up to Caesarea, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, where something massive is going to happen. We are going to see it tonight, the conversion of the first full fledged Gentile in the Church Age.

The converts in the church that we have had thus far are Jews. In Acts 2, there were 3,000 of them, followed by the Samaritans, a half-breed race, in Acts 8. Then a proselyte who is coming from Ethiopia—the Ethiopian eunuch. Gradually, what is happening is the church is starting off as a uniquely Hebrew institution and is becoming progressively Gentile.

What we are going to see is the very first full-fledged, uncircumcised Gentile come to Christ—a man named Cornelius and those with him. By the time the apostle Paul leaves the borders of Israel on his first missionary journey in Acts 13 and 14, what you will start seeing is the Gentiles start getting saved in droves. This is how the church is going to become a predominantly Gentile institution.

God has set this whole thing up, this conversion. Cornelius, the man that is going to be converted, has had a vision up north in Caesarea. Peter has had a vision (both of these from God, ultimately) that he is to go to where Cornelius is and lead him to Christ. Then you have the visions' application, where Cornelius sends an entourage to Joppa to fetch Peter. Peter comes and then you see Peter's Caesarean ministry, where for the very first time in a long time, a Jew enters the home of a Gentile, this man named Cornelius.

In Acts 10:34-43, Peter, who has the keys to the kingdom, which Jesus gave him in Matthew 16:19, turns the keys one more time, and preaches the clear gospel to Cornelius. Now what you see happening in Acts 10:44-48 is Cornelius and his household believes, and they are filled by the Holy Spirit.

We pick it up here in Acts 10:44-48. Here is our outline that we are going to follow this evening.

- VII. Gentiles' Salvation (Acts 10:44-48)
 - A. Pentecost of the Gentiles (44)
 - B. Jewish believers' reaction (45-46a)
 - 1. Amazement (45)

- 2. Evidence of tongues (46a)
- C. Peters' question: water baptism (46b-47)
- D. Water baptism (48a)
- E. Peter's discipleship (48b)

What happens is Cornelius believes, along with those with him. The very same phenomenon that happened with the Jews on the day of Pentecost, when Peter preached that opening sermon where roughly 3,000 Jews believed and were filled with the Holy Spirit and they began speaking in languages that they had never learned, exactly what happened to them now happens to the Gentiles with Cornelius. I call Acts 10:44 the Gentiles' Pentecost.

We pick it up there in Acts 10:44. Notice what it says:

"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon those who were listening to the message." (Acts 10:44)

You notice this expression, "While Peter was still speaking these words." Go back to Acts 10:43, where he told them to believe, and you will see the word "believes"—"everyone who believes." That is the single condition that is necessary for a lost soul to be won to Christ. They have to fulfill a single condition, which is to believe.

That is a principle that is very old in the Bible. It goes all the way back at least to Genesis 15:6, after God made Abraham promises, it says,

"Then [Abraham] believed God, and He reckoned to him as righteousness." (Genesis 15:6)

This is how salvation always occurs. "Believe" is another way of saying trust. So Peter has gotten to that point in his message, and you get the idea that Peter was not even finished with his message yet.

He probably had a conclusion ready to go, a few illustrations, and they interrupt him while he is preaching. They are basically saying, "We have heard enough. We do not need to hear any more. We are convicted and we are ready to be saved right now." It is like fruit that is ripe, and it is falling off the branch. All you have to do is touch it, and it is going to fall off.

Some people are that way because the Lord has just done a work in their hearts. They are ripe fruit and they are ready to be saved right now. With other people, it is more of a planting process. I have seen people, when given an opportunity, get saved immediately. It really has a lot to do with how God prepares the heart in advance, which is clearly what has happened to this man, Cornelius, as we have studied. Peter cannot even get to his conclusion and these folks are ready to believe.

You look at Acts 10:43 and you see the simple gospel. Something very important is going to happen in Acts 11:15-16, where Peter has to go back to Jerusalem to explain to the leadership of the church that was still predominantly Jewish, that, yes, a Gentile can get saved. I call it the Ricky Ricardo chapter where Ricky would say to Lucy, "Lucy, you have got some 'splaining to do."

That is what is going to happen in Acts 11. It is the Ricky Ricardo chapter where the Jewish leadership of the church at this time does not think a Gentile can get saved. Peter has to stand before them and explain to them that, yes, a Gentile got saved, just like we got saved at the beginning. It is going to be an interesting chapter, because the Jewish-dominated leadership of the church at first is going to be hostile to Peter, but by the time he finishes narrating what happened to Cornelius in Acts 10, they are just absolutely thrilled. They have seen evidence that, yes, a Gentile could truly be saved.

It says in Acts 11:15,

"And as I [Peter] began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them [Cornelius and his household] just as He did upon us at the beginning." (Acts 11:15)

"At the beginning" is a reference to Acts 2.

In Acts 10, the message is pure grace. What was the message in Acts 2? A lot of people go to Acts 2 and they want to throw in baptism and some kind of human work, but Peter says Cornelius was saved by pure grace (Acts 10:43), one condition—believe. "Cornelius was saved just like we Jews were at the beginning." If Acts 10 is pure grace, and Peter in Acts 11 says he was saved just like we were from the beginning, then you have to handle Acts 2 with pure grace.

You cannot come into it and play games like a lot of people do and say, "You have to be baptized first," and all of that, or Peter's statement in Acts 11:15 would not make any sense. The same thing is going to be said in Acts 15:11, which is down the road at the Jerusalem Council. It is going to say this,

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

How are these Gentiles being saved? By pure grace. How were we Jews saved at the beginning? By pure grace, by fulfilling a single condition. All the way through the Bible—you can trace it all the way back to Abraham—God always justifies people by pure grace. He never does it by works. They have to fulfill a single condition of believing what God said. In this case, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, where Peter has had an opportunity to explain that even though he has been cut short and probably had more things that he wanted to say.

Go down to Acts 10:45-46, after the Holy Spirit comes upon these Gentiles, and there is a Jewish reaction to this whole thing. If you go back to Acts 10:23 for just a minute, this is when Peter was making the trip from Joppa up to Caesarea. It says,

"And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him." (Acts 10:23)

Now, these are Jewish brethren that traveled with Peter from Joppa, down south, up to Caesarea, up north. These brethren that came with him are a real big deal, because they are going to be witnesses to this conversion. When Peter gives his testimony to the Jewish leadership in Acts 11, they do not have to rely upon his testimony alone as to what happened to Cornelius; there are other witnesses there that traveled with Peter from Joppa to Caesarea to see these things. When God asks the Jewish leadership to believe that Cornelius is saved, He is not asking that leadership to believe it based on Peter's testimony alone, but based on those that accompanied Peter.

What you have in Acts 10:45-46 is the Jewish reaction to this Gentile conversion. Let us go back to Acts 10:44, which says,

"While Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message." (Acts 10:44)

Cornelius and his entourage believed, and immediately the Holy Spirit came upon them through a miracle called regeneration—the impartation of divine life. Their bodies at that point became the perpetual and permanent temple, if you will, of the Holy Spirit. That is what happened to the Jews at the beginning in Acts 2. That is now what has happened to Cornelius and his household.

What is the reaction of those Jews that accompanied Peter to witness these things? The first reaction they have in Acts 10:45 is that they are amazed at what they see. It says,

"All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also." (Acts 10:45)

When the Jews saw this conversion, they were in a state of amazement. In fact, that word for amazement in Greek is "*existēmi*," (ἐξίστημι) where we get the word ecstatic, ecstasy. These Jewish believers were pleasantly surprised that these Gentiles were being saved just as they were saved. This now becomes the first time an uncircumcised Gentile or Gentiles have been baptized in the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to be baptized in the Holy Spirit? We have to get teaching from Paul later to fully develop it. Paul, of course, had not written 1 Corinthians yet, but eventually he would. When he writes 1 Corinthians, he explains the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul will say,

"For by one spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

When a lost soul hears the gospel and puts their personal trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ for their salvation, immediately, what happens is the Holy Spirit takes that person and baptizes them. "Baptizo" in Greek, basically means "oneness, unity, connection, identification." Do not confuse it with water, because when we think of baptism, we think of water. This is not dealing with water. The water baptism that we submit ourselves to as Christians is just an outward symbol of what the Holy Spirit already did.

Water symbolizes a reality, but what is the reality? The reality is the moment a person trusts Christ, the Holy Spirit takes them at the point of faith and connects them to Christ's metaphorical body called the church. A body, as Paul will explain in 1 Corinthians 12, consists of many parts; there are eyes, there are ears, there are mouths, there are knees, there are elbows.

All of us make up some part of Christ's body, called the church, and are called to play different roles. We may not know exactly where we fit. We might not know exactly what our spiritual gifts are to contribute to the body of Christ, but we do not need to know. God knows. We will figure all that out on the post-salvation end of things.

The Lord does a miracle where He takes a person that is completely isolated from God and connects them at the point of faith to Christ's metaphorical body. That is something that has already happened to you when you trusted Christ. Water just symbolizes that reality. Water cannot give this to you. The only one that can give this to you is God. That is a miracle He has been doing in the age of the church for the last 2,000 years.

You get saved, and you probably do not even know where you are going to go to church yet. Should you be a Methodist? Should you be a Baptist? Should you be a Presbyterian? I call myself a Bapticostalfundamatic. Sometimes I call myself a Methacathobapterian, because the denominational label is less important. What is really important is the fact that in all of these different places all over the world is Christ's body, and He has different places for us to serve. You cannot do that until the Holy Spirit takes you and connects you to His body and you are identified with the body of Christ.

Thus far in the Church Age, this has not happened to Gentiles. Now, for the very first time, it has happened to a Gentile or Gentiles. These folks have been identified at that point with the body of Christ, and this is the first time this has happened to a Gentile. The Holy Spirit started this baptizing work in Acts 2. Peter and everybody else knew about it. Now, for the first time, it has actually happened to a non-Jew, a non-Hebrew.

The witnesses that are with Peter cannot even contain themselves; they are ecstatic about this. Then you find evidence of this through the speaking of tongues. When you go to Acts 10:46, it says,

"For they were hearing them speak with tongues and exalting God." (Acts 10:46)

We went into a lot of detail about tongues when we were in Acts 2. "Tongues" is a lousy translation. That translation has confused more people than anything, because when the King James uses the translation tongues, it is referring to a known language. In Revelation 9 it refers to Hebrew as "in their own tongue."

What is a tongue according to the King James translation of the Bible? It is a known language; it is a language that a person suddenly knows and can communicate clearly without ever having studied it. The Greek does not say tongues, the Greek says "glossa," where we get the word glossary—a known language. Sometimes the Greek will use the word "dialectos," where we get the word dialect—a known language.

What they broke out in is not some kind of mystical gibberish. It was a brand new language that they had never studied before, but it was something that was understandable by people that spoke that language. For example, if the only thing you speak is Spanish, and the only thing I speak is English—you know that I do not know Spanish and I only know English, but suddenly I walk into the pulpit and I start speaking in Spanish in a way that you can understand me, what would you say? You would say, "That is an absolute miracle. Have you ever studied Spanish?" "No." "How is it that we can understand you when you have never studied Spanish?" The answer is that it is a miracle of God.

This is how God corroborated this new movement of the Holy Spirit in the Church Age. He corroborated it through confirmatory signs and wonders. One of the confirmatory signs and wonders is the speaking in what is mistranslated, I believe, as tongues. The same thing happened in Acts 2. All of a sudden the apostles could be understood in a language that the people from the known parts of the world understood. Suddenly, the apostles were understandable in that language, even though the apostles had never studied that language.

Remember, we are at the foundation stage of the church. The church's foundation is the apostles and the prophets. This is how God confirmed that this baptism in the Holy Spirit, which Paul is going to explain in 1 Corinthians 12:13, is a real thing because nothing like this in terms of a change has happened for 1,500 years.

The longest age or dispensation in the Bible is the dispensation or age of law, which goes all the way back to Mount Sinai. For 1,500 years, there was no change in God's program, but now there is a change. The Nation of Israel has rejected their king. God used that transaction to pay the sin debt of the world through the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now a brand new body has

begun, consisting of those who are trusting in the Messiah for personal salvation, the very Messiah that Israel rejected. They are being baptized or identified into this new man called the Body of Christ.

For 1,500 years, such a thing has never happened, but now it is happening. How do you know it is happening? You know it is happening because there are confirmatory miracles that are taking place. One of those confirmatory miracles is the speaking in other languages, something mistranslated as tongues.

First Corinthians 14:22 says this:

"So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but unbelievers; but prophecy is a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe." (1 Cor 14:22)

Within the church, the focus is on prophecy, preaching it edifies the believer. But here, with a dispensational change that they had not seen for 1,500 years, which is a very long time when you think about it. America has only been around for 250 years. Think about 1,500 years where nothing new is happening as far as the outworking of God's purposes. Now there is a change. These Jewish believers need to understand that this is really of God, so tongues accompany the conversions in Acts 2. Tongues accompany the conversions in Acts 10.

What you will discover as you go through the Bible is that miracles have a tendency to cluster around time periods where something brand new is happening. You will see a ton of miracles in the Book of Exodus, because that is a change of dispensation where there is a transition from Israel under promise to Israel under the Law.

You will see a ton of miracles clustering around Elijah, because their God is raising up a new office called the prophet, who is going to hold the kings accountable. Then you see a ton of miracles around the offer of the kingdom to the Nation of Israel through the person of Jesus Christ.

You are seeing a ton of miracles here at the beginning of the Church Age, because God is doing something completely unique and totally new. There are future movements of signs and wonders, which will be counterfeit signs and wonders done by the Antichrist for the world. Those will be satanically powered, but whenever there is a major change to confirm what is actually happening, God gives these confirmatory, signs and wonders.

What you will notice in periods of time like we are in is that miracles have a tendency to be less common because we are not in a new dispensation. We have been in the same dispensation for the last 2,000 years. When I say that people get mad at me and they say, "Are you saying God does not do miracles today?" Well, of course God does miracles today. If God did not do miracles today, it would not do me any good to pray for

people. But the type of miracle that is happening here, coming through apostles, a direct miracle, is something that was more unique to the beginning of the Church Age.

That is where I am putting this whole issue of tongues. That is what is happening to Cornelius and his entourage. How do we know the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit is real? We have not seen anything like that for 1,500 years. How do we know these Gentiles are authentically saved? There are confirmatory signs and wonders.

One of the things that is mentioned here is tongues, which, as I said before, is the ability to speak in a known language that that one has never studied, which is recognizable to the listener. That is what is happening. Peter's group that he is with is amazed this is happening; they are ecstatic. They see evidence of it through tongues or languages, so they can tell here that this is an authentic conversion, which leads Peter to ask a question. Acts 10:46 says,

"For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God."
(Acts 10:46)

Whenever the Holy Spirit is at work, He will exalt the Son; He will not exalt Himself. Jesus said this in the Upper Room in John 16:13-14:

"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, For He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you."

That is how you recognize the work of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit will always put the spotlight on the Son, Jesus Christ. That is His function. You walk into a group of people, or you walk into a church and you want to know if the Holy Spirit is at work here. You can tell because, who is getting the credit? Who is getting the glory? Where is the attention drawn? Is it drawn to a human being? Is it being drawn to a talent? Is it being drawn to a budget? That is not the work of the Holy Spirit. Is it being drawn to a building? A program? That is not the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit always seeks to glorify the Son.

You have many, many groups within Christendom, Christianity, that get so wrapped up in the Holy Spirit that it is almost like that is all they talk about is the Holy Spirit. I am thinking to myself, "The Holy Spirit, as wonderful of a ministry as He has, is not interested in directing attention to Himself. He always directs attention to Jesus Christ.

This book, the Bible, was breathed into existence in the original manuscripts through inspiration by the Holy Spirit. Now, you read through this book, the Bible, and what is it about? It is about Jesus. The whole Bible revolves around Jesus. The Old Testament is the preparation for Jesus; the Gospels are the manifestation of Jesus; the Book of Acts is the propagation of Jesus; the epistles are the explanation of Jesus; and the Book of Revelation is the consummation of Jesus.

Every major section of this book points to Jesus Christ, and that would make sense if the Holy Spirit indeed in the original manuscripts through inspiration, used human instruments, and carried them along to pen God's message. If someone is really writing a message under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they are going to want to talk about Jesus, because Jesus Himself said, "The Holy Spirit will come into the world, and He will glorify Me" (John 16:13-14).

That is why, when this conversion happens, you do not see these people glorifying tongues. You do not see these people glorifying the Holy Spirit. What you see them doing is exalting God. Which I would understand as Jesus Christ, because that is what Peter's sermon was about earlier—Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

That is how you recognize the work of the Holy Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, always wants to direct attention to the second member of the Trinity, God the Son. Not to trivialize it too much, but I look at the Holy Spirit as Ed McMahon with Johnny Carson. "Here's Johnny!" Ed is not saying, "Here I am."

Ed McMahon is always directing attention to Johnny, and that is what the Holy Spirit logically or naturally does.

When people come into your life and they see Jesus Christ in your life through character—because you might be the only Bible someone reads—and they see Jesus, then you just say, "Praise the Lord. That means the Holy Spirit is using me because that is His job; that is His function."

They are exalting God after Peter's sermon just finished talking about God the Son. Then Peter asks a question in the second part Acts 10:46-47:

"Then Peter answered, 'Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?'" (Acts 10:46-47)

Here Peter asks the question that in Greek requires a negative answer. The way this is set up the proper answer is, "No, we cannot refuse these people to be baptized, can we? No." Now he is dealing with water baptism. Water baptism does not save anybody. Spirit baptism saves; water baptism is just the outward symbol of an inward reality. If someone has never been water baptized, they can still go to heaven.

The ultimate example is the thief on the cross. The thief is penitent; the thief is dying. "Jesus, remember me when You enter Your kingdom." Jesus did not say, "Quick! Throw water on him before he dies. We got to get this guy into heaven." Water baptism does not save anybody, but water baptism is actually very important. It is not salvific, because it is an outward symbol of what has happened.

Peter now asks this question: These people have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, can we refuse water baptism to them? The answer, of course, is no. When water baptism is mentioned in Acts 2:38, it says,

"Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins;'" (Acts 2:38)

People take that to mean that you have got to be water baptized to get your sins forgiven, but that is not how to handle the word "for," which is a translation of the Greek word "eis." When that word is used, it typically means because "of," as in Matthew 12:41:

"The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at [because of] the preaching of Jonah." (Matthew 12:41)

"They repented because ["eis"] Jonah preached.

So in Acts 2:38, when Peter says "repent"—which means "change your mind"—and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ," he is not saying "for the forgiveness of your sins;" he is saying "because of the forgiveness of your sins." Do you see the difference? In other words, you get baptized because your sins have been forgiven.

How did you get your sins forgiven? Water did not do that; God did that through the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit. Because that has happened to us—and baptism is a church ordinance, it is an outward symbol of an inward reality—water baptism, we think, is very important, but it does not save anybody. There are people that want to get baptized over and over again because they think they are saved through baptism. The only thing that does is send someone to hell water-logged, as Dennis Rokser likes to say.

Peter asked this question: "These folks have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, what is to stop us from being water baptized?" You will notice that in Acts 10:43 they believed, and they received the Holy Spirit in Acts 10:44. Notice that they did not receive the Holy Spirit before they believed. You see the order of salvation here. In our Calvinism series on Sunday morning, I am going to show you how Calvinism distorts that and puts the coming of the Holy Spirit before a person believes, but that is not what the Bible says. The Bible says they believe.

No doubt they are convicted by the Holy Spirit when the gospel is preached, but when they believe or trust in Christ, then the Holy Spirit enters them. Jesus called that regeneration, being born again, the impartation of divine life. The Greek for "regeneration" is "palingenesia (παλιγγενεσία)." It is a compound word: "palin," again and "genesia," as in Genesis, begin. "Palingenesia" means "beginning again."

You are a new creature in Christ Jesus because your sins are gone, in terms of their debt. Now something is inside of you that was not there before. How do you describe such a person? They are a new creature in Christ Jesus. The old is gone; the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We can even add something else to it—the Word of God—because "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17). The word of God has been proclaimed by Peter in the sermon; the gospel has been proclaimed. The people that hear the word of God believe it (Acts 10:43); the Holy Spirit comes into them (Acts 10:44); and then they get baptized (Acts 10:47).

After the gospel is preached, the word of God, number one, believe the gospel, and number two, at that point the Holy Spirit regenerates the lost soul. Then, number three, water baptism, because water baptism is an outward symbol of an inner reality. Word. Believe. Regeneration. Baptism. Can I say it again? The word is proclaimed, believe the word, regeneration (or baptism in the Spirit), then water baptism.

Keep it straight, because everybody mixes it up. The reason they mix it up is they want to do something to curry God's favor. Yet God has set up salvation in such a way that no man can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9). No one is going to get into heaven proud as a peacock, "Look at what I did for the Lord." That is not how it works. You are saved by grace, and because we are saved by grace, God has an "ordo salutis." It is a Latin word, and it just means "order of salvation." God has an order of salvation so that a human being cannot take credit.

What I have just given you—proclamation of the word, believe the word, regeneration, then baptism—is an "ordo salutis." Even if a person does not get baptized, they are still saved. They are probably not going to grow the way they should because they are disobeying the first command God ever gave to the saved sinner, but they are still going to heaven when they die. The thief on the cross is an example.

If water baptism gets you saved, why would Paul say in 1 Corinthians 1:14-17, "I baptized this guy over here. I baptized that guy over there. I baptized this family over here. I baptized that family over there." Then Paul has a senior moment, and he says, "You know what? I cannot even remember who else I baptized." You appreciate that as you get older, because we have our senior moments. Paul had a senior moment: "I cannot even remember who I baptized."

That is a very strange statement. If baptism gets you to heaven, Paul would not say, "I cannot even remember who you all are or who I baptized." He would probably have a pretty good mental record of it. Water baptism is a big deal; water baptism is important; water baptism is a step of obedience; water baptism is a step of growth; but nobody got into heaven through water baptism, or else you are preaching a gospel of works.

Peter asked this question: "Can we deny these people water baptism?" The answer is, "No, they need to get water baptized." This is always the order in the Book of Acts. First,

salvation, then water baptism. Remember the Ethiopian eunuch who was saved? Remember what the Ethiopian eunuch said?

"As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?'" (Acts 8:36).

Remember what Jesus said in the Great Commission?

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

In other words, make them disciples first, then baptize them.

In Acts 8:12, Philip is preaching to the Samaritans:

"But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike." (Acts 8:12)

No infants here are baptized, by the way.

If we go back to the Ethiopian eunuch, "I believer" (Acts 8:37); then it says,

"and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38).

The same thing is happening here in Acts 10. We are going to see a convert in Thyatira named Lydia. God is going to open her heart to spiritual things; she believes, and then she is baptized (Acts 16:14-15). There is also the Philippian jailer, who is going to get saved later in Acts 16. He says, *"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"* They said, *'Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved...'* (Acts 16:30-31). Then it says in Acts 16:33: *"...and immediately he was baptized" "having believed,"* (Acts 16:34).

There is going to be a guy named Crispus that is going to get saved in Acts 18:8: *"Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized."* In every text I am reading here, faith alone in Christ alone precedes water baptism.

Now what happens is they are actually baptized in water. You see that in the first part of Acts 10:48, which says,

"And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 10:48)

Notice that Peter ordered them to be baptized—baptism is very important. I am not trying to marginalize it at all. It is a significant step in the life of the new child of God, but

people should not place such a premium on it where they start to argue that you cannot get into heaven unless you are water baptized. That violates the very definition of what water baptism is—an outward symbol of an inward reality. Water baptism cannot give you that inward reality; only spirit baptism can give you that.

Then why be baptized? Because God told us to get baptized in water to symbolize to the world that Christianity is true for you. When you get water baptized, it is typically done in a public place. It is going to have an effect on the people around you because you invite them to your baptism, and you know what? They start treating you a little differently. You will notice unsaved family and friends saying, "Oh, so-and-so is taking this Christianity thing pretty seriously. I better watch my language around them." Or they will use a bunch of profanity and then figure out you are standing in the group, and will remember that you have been water baptized. They will say something like, "Excuse my French," or something like that.

It has this effect on the unsaved world watching you because they are watching. People at your job are watching; people in your family that might be unsaved are watching, and when they get into trouble with something and they need some advice you are the person that gets the phone call. They recognize something is a little different or unique about you, because they have seen how serious you are taking this because of your water baptism. Water baptism, if it contributes anything, it contributes to your ministry; it contributes to your growth in Christ. This is why Peter is ordering a baptism here, but as I have tried to explain, that is not to be confused with being salvific.

You will notice in Acts 10:48 that they are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Why does a person have to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ? Because it is the name of Jesus Christ that saves. Peter, speaking these words back in Acts 4:12, said,

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name ["onoma" (ὄνομα)] under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

A person has to be saved with the right Savior. Faith is only as good as the object it is placed in. They have to place their faith for their eternity into Jesus Christ, who has a name. His name is Jesus, which means "salvation." Christ is not his last name. We do not refer to him as Mr. Christ. He is the "Christos," meaning He is the "Maschiach"—He is the long awaited Messiah.

The name Jesus goes back to Joshua in Hebrew. Joshua, of course, saved the Nation of Israel, in a sense, by bringing them into the land and eradicating the Canaanites. When you trust in Jesus for salvation, He saves you, but to a much larger extent. He brings you into your land of salvation and eradicates the spiritual Canaanites or anything that would have claim over your soul. A person must believe in Jesus using the correct name, *"for there is no other name under heaven...by which we must be saved,"* (Acts 4:12).

If all of that is true, it would make sense that a person is baptized into the name Jesus Christ. If Jesus is the one that saves and He has a name, then our baptism has to be a baptism into Christ Jesus, into His name. That is why in the Book of Acts they baptize in the name of Jesus. What we say here at Sugar Land Bible Church, following Matthew 28:19, is: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." We make sure that we put the Son in there to properly identify who Jesus is.

If you jot down Acts 19:5, you will see the same thing happening:

*"When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."
(Acts 19:5)*

The baptism that they had before was not good enough, because that was a baptism into John's name (Acts 19:3-5). It says,

"And he said, 'Into who then were you baptized?' They said, 'Into John's baptism.' Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus.' When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

You are saved by the name of the Lord Jesus; you are baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is what Peter is saying here when he asks this hypothetical rhetorical question, "Should we refuse water baptism to these people?" No way. He ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Then you get to the very end of Acts 10:48 and it says,

"Then they asked him [Peter] to stay on for a few days." (Acts 10:48)

By the way, in Acts 2:38, you will remember the baptism that happened there. They were *"baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for [because of, "eis" in the Greek] the forgiveness of your sins."* Because your sins were forgiven at the point of faith alone, in Christ alone, you need to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism is an outward symbol of an inward reality, and it must be in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Put the second member of the Godhead in there somewhere in your baptism presentation, because there is *"no other name under heaven...by which we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

Then you get to Acts 10:48, which says,

"Then asked him to stay on for a few days." (Acts 10:48)

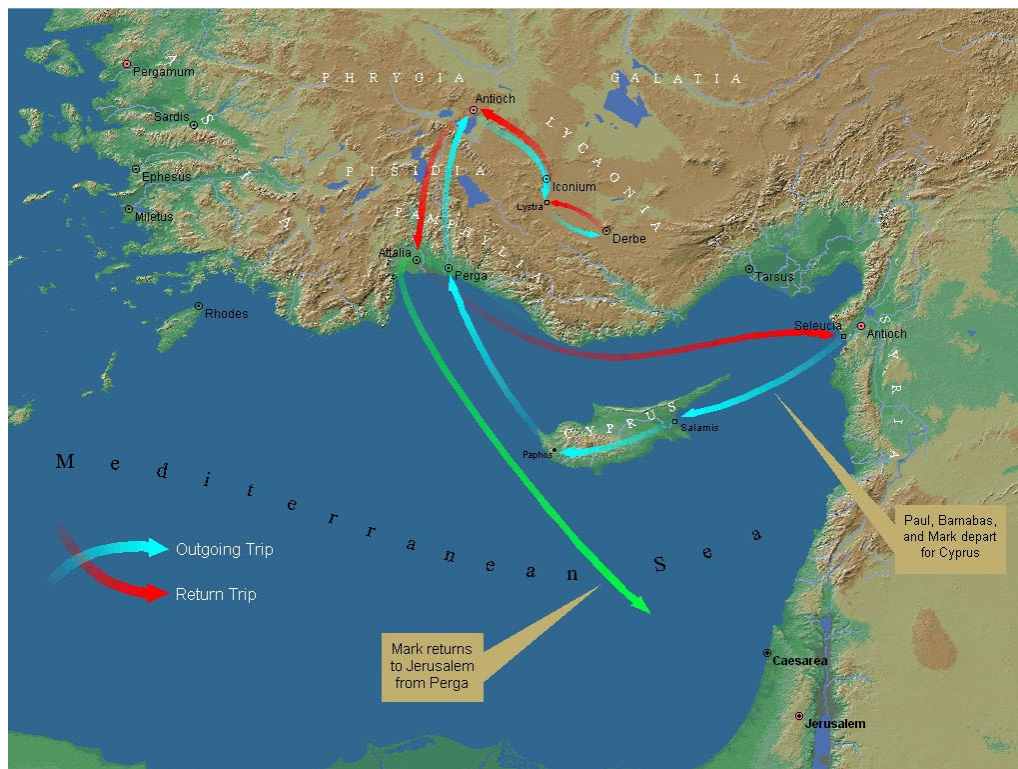
Peter had led these people to Christ. Why does he not take off? "I am out of here." That would be like taking a newborn home from the hospital and setting them in the middle of the kitchen floor and saying, "Help yourself to a ham sandwich when you get hungry." We are not called to make converts; we are called to make disciples. The Great

Commission is to make disciples. Catching the fish is one thing; cleaning the fish is totally different.

There are a lot of people that are really good at catching fish, but the fish need to be cleaned. My primary gifting is not in catching fish; my primary gifting is in cleaning the fish, because I am really not an evangelist. I always wanted to be an evangelist, but God really never gave me that spiritual gift. Even if we do not have it, we are still all called to evangelize. Paul writes to Timothy, who is a pastor, and he says, "*...do the work of an evangelist*" (2 Timothy 4:5).

There are people in this world that are a lot better at evangelism than I am, that is because God gave me a different gift mix. My gift mix is to take those that are saved and to bring them to maturity through relevant, accurate, understandable biblical teaching. That is what I do; that is what Sugar Land Bible Church largely is all about, in addition to other ministries. There is a difference between catching a fish and cleaning a fish.

Peter caught a fish. He caught a big one—several of them, actually—but they do not know anything. They do not know anything about the things of God. They need a pastor-teacher. In the interim, Peter sticks around, at least for a few days. What are they doing? He is discipling these new converts, no doubt. Paul the apostle was not just a fish catcher, but he was a fish cleaner. You know that by how he structures his journeys when he leaves the borders of Israel.



In this map, Paul is leaving Antioch, where all the missionary journeys start, and he goes to Cyprus, and then he travels up to another Antioch called Pisidian Antioch. Then

he makes his way all the way to Derby, and that is where he stops going into new territory. You will notice what Paul did not do when he hit Derby: he did not go back to Syrian Antioch to start his second journey, which probably would have been a shorter route. He could have hit Derby, headed up a little bit and then down into Syrian Antioch, and everything would have been finished with missionary journey number one.

He does not do that. He retraces his steps; he goes back to the same places that he went before. Why would he do that? Because Paul was not interested in catching fish alone—he was interested in cleaning fish. He was not interested in only evangelizing—he was interested in discipling. He was not interested in only bringing a newborn home from the hospital and saying, "Help yourself to a ham sandwich when you get hungry." He was into nurturing those that the Lord allowed him to win to Christ on missionary journey number one.

If you do not understand that, his route here does not make any sense. The closest distance between two points is a straight line. He does not do convenient travel; he does not do what Google Maps told him to do. Have you ever gotten so lost that you confused Google Maps; it just keeps saying "Recalibrating." If Paul had Google Maps, it would have been saying, "Recalibrating," because it does not make any sense what he is doing, unless you understand that he is not about just catching fish, he is about cleaning fish.

A lot of churches, all they do is catch fish—which is a great thing—but you can sit in a church like that and hear the gospel message every single Sunday, and that is the whole message. Every single message is telling people how to be saved. What do you do with people that have been saved for 15 years and do not know how to live the Christian life? What about a ministry to them?

Don't get me wrong about preaching the gospel. We try to give the gospel every single week here in our sermons, but our sermons are not all about catching fish, catching fish, catching fish. They are about cleaning fish. That is why Peter sticks around like he does for at least a few days. He wants to make sure that this precious new convert, this man Cornelius that came to Christ—the first full fledged Gentile that has now experienced the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit in the Church Age—is developing correctly as a Christian.

In the field of medicine, there are obstetricians and then there are pediatricians. When you are around doctors, I have never seen one that is both. Maybe they are out there, but I have never seen one. You either specialize in one or the other because they are two totally different fields. One is assisting in the birth process, the other one is helping the newborn grow. Paul does what he does because he is not just an obstetrician, but he is a pediatrician.

You need to understand that when you come to Sugar Land Bible Church, although we seek to evangelize, our primary ministry is helping the saints mature correctly. That is what is happening here with Peter.

Then we are going to get to Acts 11. I would encourage you to read it over Acts 11:1-18. You will see Peter leaving Caesarea, going back to the leadership in Jerusalem, and having to explain to a hostile audience that, "Yes, a Gentile could get saved. It Can really happen. I saw it happen, and here are my witnesses that I brought with me from Joppa that saw it happen, too."

This is a real move of God in the Church Age, where Gentiles are being saved and the church leadership is going to give him the "What you talkin' 'bout, Willis?" look.

Now he has to explain himself. By the time he gets finished explaining himself, they are just as ecstatic as everyone else that saw this conversion happen. This is an exciting part of the Bible that we are in.