SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES

†
10:34

DEEP DIVE

Acts

Chapter Ten, Verses 1–48

What God Has Cleansed — a Roman centurion at prayer, a hungry apostle on a rooftop, a sheet from heaven, and the Spirit poured out on the Gentiles

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

At three in the afternoon an angel tells a God-fearing Roman officer to send for Peter; at noon the next day God shows Peter a sheet full of unclean animals and says, “What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.” Four days later, while Peter is still preaching Christ, the Holy Spirit falls on a houseful of Gentiles. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke’s key words.

THE PASSAGE

Acts 10:1–48

Cornelius · the sheet · the house · the sermon · the Spirit

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Five movements from Caesarea to Joppa and back

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

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

Acts 10:1–48

What God Has Cleansed — God prepares two men in two cities, brings them under one roof, and opens the door of faith to the nations

† How to Read This Study

This study walks Acts 10 in 5 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · ACTS 10:34–35

"Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that △ God is not one to show partiality, but ☆ in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him."

† Before the Passage

Jesus told the apostles they would be His witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" (1:8). By chapter 9 the first two rings were filling in: the church "throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace" (9:31), and Saul had been named the Lord's "chosen instrument … to bear My name before the Gentiles" (9:15). But no apostle had yet preached to a Gentile in his own house. Chapter 10 is the hinge of Acts. Luke tells it in full, Peter retells it in Jerusalem (11:4–17), and Peter cites it again at the Jerusalem council: "God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe" (15:7).

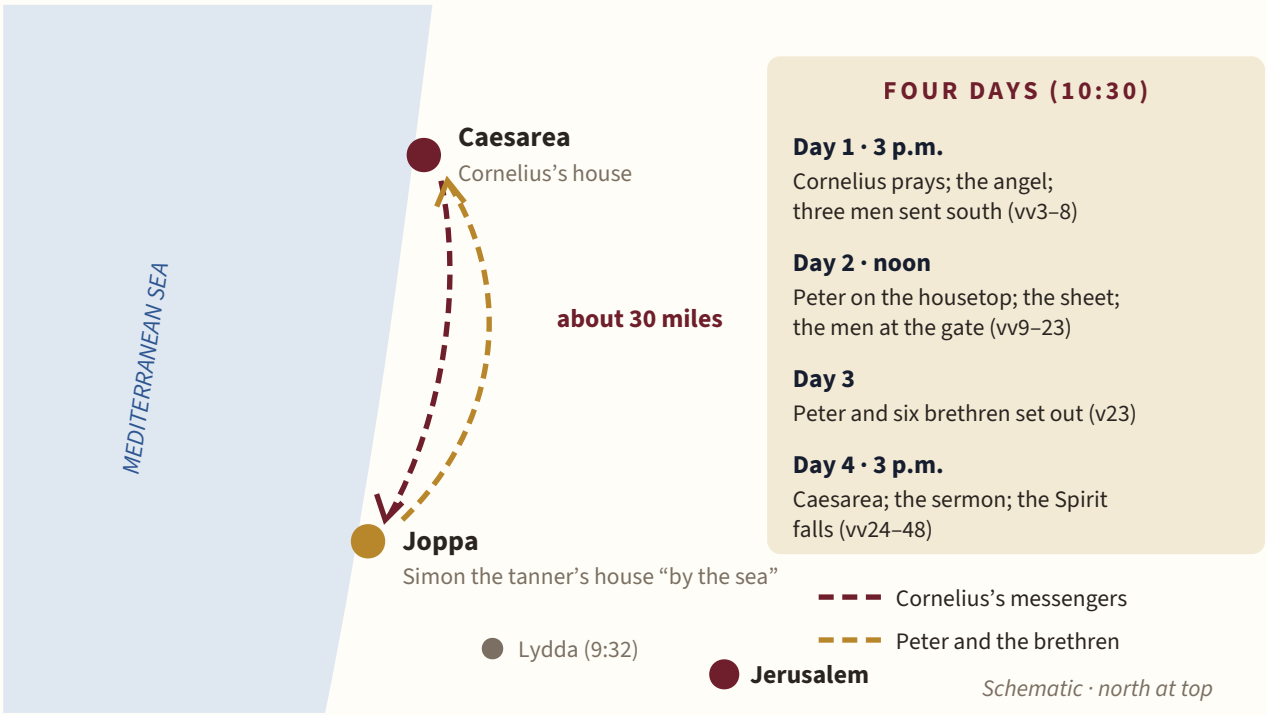
Caesarea was Herod the Great's showpiece port on the Mediterranean and the Roman capital of Judea, where the governor lived and soldiers were stationed. Cornelius was a centurion — an officer over about a hundred men — of "the Italian cohort." Joppa, about thirty miles down the coast, was an old Jewish port; Peter had

stayed on there “many days … with a tanner named Simon” (9:43). Joppa is also where the prophet Jonah once went down to the sea to run from God’s call to the Gentiles of Nineveh. Now an apostle is called from Joppa to the Gentiles, and this time he goes.

The Law of Moses had set Israel apart, and the food laws were part of that wall: “I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples” (Leviticus 20:24). By Peter’s day the scribes had built further fences, and a Jew would not enter a Gentile’s house or eat at his table. Peter himself says it: “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him” (v. 28). That custom is why the vision is about food and the lesson is about people.

Gentiles like Cornelius were called God-fearers: they worshiped the God of Israel, prayed at the Jewish hours, gave alms, and kept much of the Law without being circumcised. Our teachers debate how to describe such a man before he heard the gospel. The angel’s own words, as Peter later reports them, settle what he still lacked: Peter “will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household” (11:14).

FIGURE · CAESAREA AND JOPPA



Trace the two dashed routes along the coast and read the four days at right: Cornelius’s men go south to Joppa, and Peter comes north with them to Caesarea.

I
MOVEMENT

ACTS 10:1–8

Your Prayers Have Ascended

A Roman centurion who feared God, an angel at the ninth hour, and an order to send for Peter

> [1] *Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort,* [2] *a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.* [3] *About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just*

> *come in and said to him, "Cornelius!"* [4] *And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.* [5] *"Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter;* [6] *he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea."* [7] *When the angel who was speaking to him had left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants,* [8] *and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.*
>
> ACTS 10:1–8

δίκαιος

DIKAIOS · "RIGHTEOUS" · G1342

Cornelius's messengers call him "a righteous and God-fearing man" (v. 22). *Dikaios* — 80 New Testament uses — is the word for one whose life is upright and just. Verse 2 adds *eusebēs*, "devout," and *phoboumenos ton theon*, "one who feared God," the phrase for Gentile God-fearers. The same word *dikaios* was used of Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:6) and of Simeon (Luke 2:25). Luke wants us to see a Gentile whose life already looked like Israel's best — and who still needed to hear the name of Jesus (11:14).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik places Cornelius among the God-fearers: "Cornelius was in the category of what the Jews called God-fearers (one who feared God)." He did not just hold opinions about God — "we see a man who obviously had a real relationship with God." Guzik is struck by how personal the angel's visit was: "It is significant that God spoke to Cornelius directly, even calling him by name." And the message was that heaven had noticed: "God heard his prayers and remembered his generosity to others." Yet the angel does not preach the gospel; he sends for a man who will.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "Peter's Vision" (11 July 2004) starts with the map: "Caesarea is a bit north on the Mediterranean coast, just above Joppa." Cornelius was no ordinary soldier, for "he was of the elite guard of the emperor, the Italian Regiment." Sproul explains the God-fearers: "they believed in the Most High God and were faithful followers of Yahweh, the God of Israel." The angel's word to him is the word every hidden pray-er needs: "God recognizes you. God notices you." Sproul does not say outright whether Cornelius was already saved.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry admires the whole household: "He was a very charitable man," and "He was much in prayer." He draws a rule for heads of homes from "with all his household": "Every good man will do what he can that those about him may be good too." He reads the angel's word in the old wording — "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God" — and the answer to those prayers is not a reward but an errand: send to Joppa for Peter.

II
MOVEMENT

ACTS 10:9–23

What God Has Cleansed

Noon on a housetop, a sheet let down from the sky, and three men at the gate

9 *On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city,*
Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. 10 *But he became hungry and was desiring to eat;*
but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; 11 *and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like*
a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, 12 *and there were in it all kinds of four-footed*
animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. 13 *A voice came to him,*
"Get up, Peter, kill and eat!" 14 *But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything*
unholy and unclean." 15 *Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer*
consider unholy." 16 *This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.* 17 *Now*
while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who
had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate; 18 *and calling out,*
they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there. 19 *While Peter was reflecting on*
the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. 20 *"But get up, go downstairs and*
accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself." 21 *Peter went down to the men and said,*
"Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?" 22 *They said, "Cornelius,*
a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely
directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you." 23 *So he invited them*
in and gave them lodging. And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren
from Joppa accompanied him.

ACTS 10:9–23

"You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean."

LEVITICUS 20:25

FIGURE · TWO VISIONS, ONE PLAN

TWO VISIONS, ONE PLAN · GOD WORKS BOTH ENDS

CORNELIUS · CAESAREA	PETER · JOPPA
praying at the ninth hour (v3, 30)	praying at the sixth hour (v9)
an angel: “Cornelius!” (v3)	a trance: the sky opened (vv10–11)
“send for a man named Simon” (v5)	“kill and eat!” — “By no means, Lord” (vv13–14)
he obeys at once (vv7–8)	the Spirit: “I have sent them” (v20)
“we are all here present before God” (v33)	“God has shown me … any man” (v28)

The men knock at the gate “while Peter was greatly perplexed” (v17) — God’s timing on both sides.

Read across each row: God prepared the Gentile and the apostle at the same time, so that each man’s vision explained the other’s.

κοινός

KOINOS · “COMMON, UNHOLY” · G2839

Koinos means “common, shared” — the root of *koinōnia*, fellowship — and in Jewish usage “ceremonially profane,” not set apart to God. Fourteen New Testament uses. The NASB renders it “unholy” in 10:14, 15 and 28 (KJV “common”), next to *akathartos*, “unclean.” It is the same word as the “impure hands” of Mark 7:2. Peter refuses what is *koinos*; God answers, “What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.” By verse 28 Peter has drawn the conclusion: “I should not call any man unholy or unclean.” The animals were never the point; the people were.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sets the scene: “In that culture, the housetop was normally used as a sort of patio.” Peter’s hunger is a familiar story — “This often happens during prayer; distractions in our body come as we try to direct ourselves to God.” The command to kill and eat “obviously went against Peter’s commitment as a Jew, which was to never eat anything except kosher foods,” and yet “God responded clearly to Peter.” When the men arrive, the Spirit speaks — “This was God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, speaking to Peter” — and “All Peter needed to know was that the Spirit said, “I have sent them.”” Guzik imagines the surprise: Peter opened the door to “two servants and a soldier.”

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew’s

Sproul thinks Peter’s host was himself an outsider: “In all probability, the Simon with whom Peter stayed in Joppa was a gentile, who was considered unclean.” On the rooftop “about the sixth hour. This was about noon,” and the “great sheet” is a word “that can be used for a huge sail on a sailing ship.” Peter’s reply is a flat refusal: “No, not me, I’m not going to do it.” Sproul admits the shock — “God changed the rules in the middle of the game, so to speak” — and then gives the key: “But you see this was not about food or animals. It was about people.” “Other people may call you unclean,” but God declares clean.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry, a Puritan, approves Peter's first instinct as a general rule: "Temptations to eat forbidden fruit must not be parleyed with, but peremptorily rejected." But this was no temptation; it was a revelation, and God would not let it pass: "This was done thrice." Henry notes God's exact timing: Peter "is told, before any of the servants could come up to tell him, that three men below want to speak with him." The vision and the knock at the gate interpret each other.

III
MOVEMENT

ACTS 10:24–33

I Too Am Just a Man

A crowded house, a centurion at Peter's feet, and a door no Jew would walk through

24 *On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his*
relatives and close friends. 25 *When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and* ⚠ *fell at his feet and worshiped him*.
26 *But Peter raised him up, saying, "* ▤ *Stand up; I too am just a man*." 27 *As he talked with him, he entered and*
found many people assembled. 28 *And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is*
a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet △ *God has shown me that I should not call any man*
unholy or unclean. 29 *"That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for*
what reason you have sent for me." 30 *Cornelius said, "Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house*
during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, 31 *and he said, 'Cornelius, your*
prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. 32 *'Therefore send to* ⟲ *Joppa and invite*
Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.' 33 *"So I*
sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then,
☆ *we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."*

ACTS 10:24–33

προσκυνέω
PROSKYNEŌ · "WORSHIP" · G4352

To bow down, to do homage — sixty New Testament uses, most of them of worship given to God or to Jesus. Cornelius "fell at his feet and worshiped him" (v. 25). Whatever he meant by it, Peter will not take it: "Stand up; I too am just a man." Paul and Barnabas tear their robes at Lystra for the same reason (14:14–15), and an angel twice tells John, "Do not do that" (Revelation 19:10; 22:9). Worship belongs to God alone — and Jesus never refused it (Matthew 14:33; John 9:38).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes how much Cornelius expected — "Cornelius had a lot of faith in God" — gathering relatives and friends before Peter even arrived. His bowing was wrong, and Guzik draws the line both ways: "If Cornelius should not give such reverence to Peter, neither should Peter receive it." Then Peter crossed a real barrier: "Peter actually entered the house of a Gentile, something that Jewish customs and traditions strictly prohibited." The vision was already bearing fruit.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "Cornelius' Household" (18 July 2004) Sproul stresses that God arranged the meeting from both sides: "God directed Cornelius to send some of his cohort to request a visit from Peter," and "God prepared this meeting by sending a vision to Peter of the sheet filled with all the animals, both clean and unclean." When Cornelius bows, Peter refuses the honor, and Sproul places it in a pattern: "Paul had to do the same thing." "Angels had to do the same thing."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry describes the scene at the door — "he fell down at his feet, and worshipped him" — and Peter's refusal: "I myself also am a man." Henry explains the barrier Peter names in verse 28: the Jews "knew it had never been allowed by the Jews, but always looked upon as an unlawful thing." Now God had shown Peter otherwise, and he came without objection.

IV
MOVEMENT

ACTS 10:34–43

God Is Not One to Show Partiality

Peace through Jesus Christ, Lord of all — anointed, crucified, raised, and appointed Judge

34 *Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that △ God is not one to show partiality,*
35 *but ☆ in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.* 36 *"The word which*
He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (△ He is Lord of all)— 37 *you yourselves know*
the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.
38 *"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. 39 *"We are*
witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. ⚠ They also put Him to death by
hanging Him on a cross. 40 *"△ God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,* 41 *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. 42 *"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. 43 *"Of Him all the prophets bear*
witness that through His name ☆ everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

ACTS 10:34–43

προσωπολήμπτης

PROSŌPOLĒMPTĒS · "ONE WHO SHOWS PARTIALITY" · G4381

Literally a "face-receiver," from *prosōpon*, face (G4383), and *lambanō*, to receive — one who judges by appearance or rank. It occurs only here in the New Testament. The idea goes back to the Law: God does not lift up faces. Paul uses the related noun "partiality" (*prosōpolēmpsia*) in Romans 2:11 and James warns the church against it (2:1). Guzik: "We often think God sees color; He only sees the heart."

κύριος πάντων

KYRIOS PANTŌN · "LORD OF ALL" · G2962

Peter's aside in verse 36 — "(He is Lord of all)" — is the theology of the whole chapter in three words. If Jesus is *Kyrios* of all, He is not a Jewish possession. Paul says the same: "the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him" (Romans 10:12). Henry widens it further: "He is Lord of angels; they are all his humble servants."

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik calls verses 34–35 "the foundation for Peter's understanding that the gospel should now go forth to Gentiles." He puts it plainly: "We often think God sees color; He only sees the heart." The sermon itself is the story of Jesus — anointed, doing good, crucified, raised — and the warning that "Jesus is ordained by God to be Judge of the entire world." Then the door swings wide in verse 43: "Note it carefully: Whoever believes!"

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul calls verses 37–41 "the life and ministry of Jesus in a nutshell," and he will not let anyone drop the center: "It may be good news, but if it does not include the cross, it is not evangelism, it is not the gospel." "The cross of Christ and the resurrection are essential elements of the gospel." He presses verse 42: "Christianity is about Jesus as your Judge not just after you die but right now." And the Judge is the one who pardons: "Then the Judge gives remission of sin and removes from the record all charges against you."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In "The Mediator—Judge and Savior" on verses 42–43, Spurgeon finds two offices in one Person: "The first is that of Judge and the second is that of Savior." You cannot have one without the other: "Dear Hearer, if you do not believe in Christ as your Judge, you will never accept Him as your Savior!" Pardon is by faith — "the text says, "He that believes on Him"" — and it is wide open: "I am one of the "whoevers," for I believe in Jesus with all my heart!" His appeal is simple: "Oh, trust Him! Trust Him and you shall have pardon!"

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads verse 35 carefully: God "does not, as a judge, so give sentence" by a man's nation, and "He never did, nor ever will, reject or refuse an honest Gentile." But Henry does not stop at verse 35; on verse 43 he writes that "the remission of sins lays a foundation for all other favours and blessings." And the Lord of all is Lord of more than men: "He is Lord of angels; they are all his humble servants."

V
MOVEMENT

ACTS 10:44–48

On the Gentiles Also

The Spirit falls mid-sermon, the circumcised are amazed, and water follows

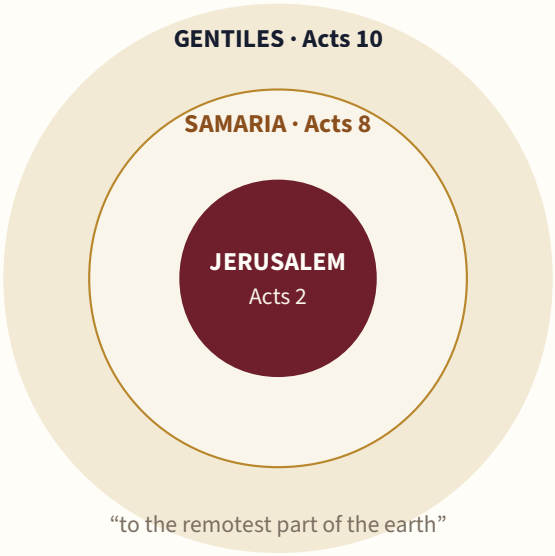
44 *While Peter was still speaking these words, ✩ the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.* 45 *All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because ✩ the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.* 46 *For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting*

> *God. Then Peter answered,* 47 *"Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?"* 48 *And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.*
>
> ACTS 10:44–48

> *"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

FIGURE · THE SPIRIT, RING BY RING

THE SPIRIT POURED OUT, RING BY RING · ACTS 1:8



Acts 2:4 · Jews in Jerusalem
"filled with the Holy Spirit … other tongues"

Acts 8:17 · Samaritans
apostles lay on hands; they receive the Spirit

Acts 10:44–46 · Gentiles at Caesarea
Spirit falls during the sermon; tongues

Acts 19:6 · John's disciples, Ephesus
hands laid on; tongues and prophesying

Peter: "just as we did" (10:47) — the same gift, one body.

The rings follow Acts 1:8; the panels list each time Acts describes the Spirit coming on a new group, with Caesarea as the first Gentile household.

πνεῦμα ἅγιον

PNEUMA HAGION · "HOLY SPIRIT" · G4151

Pneuma — breath, wind, spirit; 383 New Testament uses — is the word for the Spirit who "fell upon" the listeners (v. 44), was "poured out" as a "gift" (v. 45), and was "received … just as we did" (v. 47). Luke uses Pentecost language on purpose: Joel's "I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind" (Joel 2:28) is now true of Gentiles. Peter later says, "the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning" (11:15). The Spirit Himself settled the question the church was not yet ready to ask.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik enjoys the interruption: "Peter allowed the Holy Spirit to interrupt his sermon." He calls it "a filling with the Holy Spirit in two senses," and says the outward sign was "good and even necessary on this occasion," so that the Jewish believers could see these Gentiles had received what they had. Then baptism followed, and it "showed their full acceptance into the community of those who followed Jesus."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "The Holy Spirit to the Gentiles" (25 July 2004) Sproul says "while Peter was still preaching, suddenly the Spirit of God was poured out on the gentiles," and "Those who were Jews recognized the Spirit's outpouring." He calls it "the gentile Pentecost," one of a series with Samaria and Ephesus. He rejects the view that "the indispensable sign for having received the baptism of the Spirit is speaking in tongues"; the point is unity: "we are all brought into the body of Christ." "If you have Jesus, you have the Holy Ghost." And on water: "How can water baptism be withheld when that which water baptism signifies, in part, is the baptism of the Spirit?"

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit" (No. 201, 20 June 1858) takes verse 44 as the pattern for every preacher: "the Holy Ghost fell on Peter first, or else it would not have fallen on his hearers." Preaching is an instrument, and only an instrument: "Instrumentality is to be used, but the Spirit is to have the honor of it." So he calls his church to pray — "the Holy Spirit will not come to us as a church, unless we seek him" — and he is sure of the answer: "Let us meet and pray, and if God doth not hear us, it will be the first time he has broken his promise."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry notes the Spirit came "on all those who heard the word" — the sermon was not finished, but God was. "Those of the circumcision who believed were astonished," because they had not thought it possible. Peter's question is unanswerable: "can we deny the sign to those who have received the thing signified?" And Henry observes the order of ministry: "Peter did not baptize them himself, but commanded them to be baptized."

VI
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From a separated people to one new man in Christ

> *"Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine."*
>
> LEVITICUS 20:26

> *"Even those I will bring to My holy mountain And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be acceptable on My altar; For My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples."*
>
> ISAIAH 56:7

> *"It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions."*
>
> JOEL 2:28

> *"For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."*
>
> ACTS 2:39

> *"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.""*
>
> ACTS 11:18

> *"And God, who knows the heart, testified to them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith."*
>
> ACTS 15:8–9

> *"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;"*
>
> ROMANS 10:12

> *"But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,"*
>
> EPHESIANS 2:13–14

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul ties the Caesarea outpouring to the others in Acts: "The same thing happened among the Samaritans and the Ephesians in the book of Acts (Acts 8:14–17; 19:1–7)." Each new group is brought into the one body.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one turning point. Guzik walks the text and notes the culture; Sproul preached it in three sermons and keeps the gospel's center — the cross and the Judge — in view; Spurgeon preaches the Judge who is Savior and the Spirit who must fall on preachers first; Henry draws a rule from nearly every verse. They differ on how to describe Cornelius before Peter came, and they agree that the vision was about people.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · Cornelius	A God-fearer with a real relationship with God; called by name.	Elite guard; "God recognizes you. God notices you."	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Charitable, much in prayer; a good man makes his house good.
II · The sheet	Distraction in prayer; the Spirit said, "I have sent them."	God changed the rules — not about food but about people.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	Temptations are not parleyed with; but this was done thrice.
III · The house	Cornelius had faith; Peter entered a Gentile house.	God arranged both ends; Paul and angels refused worship too.	— (no Spurgeon sermon on these verses sourced here)	"I myself also am a man"; the old custom was unlawful.
IV · The sermon	God sees the heart; whoever believes!	No cross, no gospel; Jesus your Judge right now.	Judge and Savior in one; one of the "whoevers."	Never refuses an honest Gentile; remission is the foundation.
V · The Spirit falls	The Spirit interrupted the sermon; baptism showed acceptance.	The gentile Pentecost; if you have Jesus, you have the Spirit.	The Spirit falls on the preacher first; pray for Him.	Can we deny the sign to those who have the thing signified?

ACTS 10:1–48 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **God notices the seeker.** Sproul: "God recognizes you. God notices you." Cornelius's prayers and alms "ascended as a memorial" (v4) — and the answer was a preacher. SPROUL
- **A good man still needs the gospel.** Devout, generous, praying — and the angel sends for Peter, who "will speak words to you by which you will be saved" (11:14). THE TEXT
- **Hunger on the housetop.** Guzik: distractions come "as we try to direct ourselves to God." God used Peter's empty stomach to teach him. GUZIK
- **"By no means, Lord" is a contradiction.** Sproul hears a flat no: "No, not me, I'm not going to do it." You cannot say "Lord" and "no" in the same breath for long. SPROUL
- **Not about food — about people.** *Koinos* moves from animals (v14) to "any man" (v28). Sproul: "It was about people." THE GREEK
- **God works both ends.** Two visions, one plan: the men arrive "while Peter was greatly perplexed" (v17). The Spirit: "I have sent them Myself" (v20). THE TEXT
- **"I too am just a man."** Peter refused worship (v26). Guzik: "If Cornelius should not give such reverence to Peter, neither should Peter receive it." GUZIK

- **God is no face-receiver.** *Prosōpolēmptēs* appears only in 10:34. Guzik: "We often think God sees color; He only sees the heart." THE GREEK
- **No cross, no gospel.** Sproul: "if it does not include the cross, it is not evangelism, it is not the gospel." Spurgeon: the Judge is the Savior. SPROUL
- **The Spirit falls on the preacher first.** Spurgeon: "the Holy Ghost fell on Peter first, or else it would not have fallen on his hearers." SPURGEON

† Questions for the Table

1 **Cornelius was devout, generous and prayerful — and still needed to hear about Jesus. Who do I know who is "a good person" but has never heard the gospel clearly from me?**

He will speak words to you by which you will be saved (11:14).

10:1–6; 11:14

2 **Peter said, "By no means, Lord." Where am I telling God "no" while still calling Him Lord?**

No, not me, I'm not going to do it (Sproul).

10:13–16; Luke 6:46

3 **God told Peter not to call any man unholy or unclean. What kind of person do I secretly write off — and what would change if I believed God could cleanse him?**

It was about people (Sproul).

10:15, 28

4 **Cornelius said, "we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." How do I come to church or to our table — ready to hear, or ready to judge?**

A whole household waiting for the word.

10:24, 33

5 **Peter preached Jesus as both Judge and Savior. Which one do I tend to leave out — and why do I need both?**

If you do not believe in Christ as your Judge, you will never accept Him as your Savior (Spurgeon).

10:42–43

6 **The Holy Spirit interrupted Peter's sermon. Where do I need to stop talking and let God do what only He can do?**

Peter allowed the Holy Spirit to interrupt his sermon (Guzik).

10:44–48; 11:15–17

Acts 10 begins with a Roman praying in Caesarea and a Jew praying in Joppa, and ends with them under one roof, eating together and baptized in one name. God did not lower His holiness; He cleansed hearts by faith. Whatever wall you have put up, the Lord of all has already sent someone to knock on your gate.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.

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