

# Bible Study: Acts

## (Part 5-Chapter 10)

by Gary T. Panell

### **Chapter 10**

(1-23) "Luke now records a very important final step in the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles. Its importance is indicated by Luke's twice recording Peter's visit to Cornelius. This step raised some difficult problems as to the terms of social intercourse between the Jewish and the Gentile Christians and the terms of the admission of the Gentiles into the Church. This question became the theme of the conference in Jerusalem in Acts 15.

"A **centurion** was an officer in the Roman army who commanded a hundred men and was similar in rank and function to our noncommissioned officers. **Cornelius** commanded the **Italian cohort**. A Latin inscription has been preserved which indicates the presence in Syria of the 'second Italian cohort of Roman citizens' in A.D. 69." (*Wycliffe*)

"Caesarea was rebuilt by Herod and with an excellent harbor, it served as the headquarters of the Roman procurators, located 30 miles north of Joppa and named in honor of Augustus Caesar, it was the headquarters for the Roman forces of occupation. A Latin name made popular when Cornelius Sulla liberated some 10,000 slaves over 100 years earlier. These had all taken his family name, Cornelius. Cornelius commanded a military unit that normally numbered at least 100 men.

"The Roman legion (about 6,000 men) was divided into ten regiments, each of which had a designation. This was the "Italian" (another was the "Imperial," or "Augustan," 27:1). A centurion commanded about a sixth of a regiment. Centurions were carefully selected; all of them mentioned in the NT appear to have had noble qualities (e.g., Luke 7:5). The Roman centurions provided necessary stability to the entire Roman system." (*The NIV Study Bible*)

Here are the Caesars of the Roman Empire (leaders) that were in power before and after this time:

Julius Caesar, 49-44 B.C.

Gaius Julius Caesar Octavius & Antony 44-31 B.C.

Augustus Caesar, 31 B. C. -14 A.D.

Tiberius Caesar, 14 A. D. -37 A. D.

Gaius Caesar (Caligula), 37 A. D. -41 A. D.

Claudius Caesar, 41 A. D. -54 A. D.

Nero, 54 A. D. -68 A. D." (*A Handbook of Ancient History in Bible Light* by Miller)

"Cornelius was a Roman by nationality, but had become a believer in the true God of creation, as revealed in nature and in the Scriptures. It is very doubtful, however, that he was a full proselyte to the

Jews' religion. Peter's call to witness to Cornelius may be regarded as the official divine extension of the blessings of Israel to the Gentiles." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

2. "A few Gentiles became converts to Judaism and accepted all Jewish practices, including circumcision. A larger number stopped short of circumcision but accepted the Jewish belief in God, synagogue worship, the ethical teachings of the **OT**, and some of the Jewish religious practices. These people, who were called **God-fearers**, were familiar with the OT in the Greek version as it was read in the synagogues.

"Devout God-fearers provided the most fertile soil in which the Gospel took root. Cornelius was such a 'semi-proselyte.' **His devout** character was manifested by his liberal **alms** to the people and his regular **prayers** to God." (*Wycliffe*)

These three things are said about Cornelius' character: 1) He was a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, 2) who gave alms [charitable gifts] generously to the people, 3) and prayed to God always.

Jesus had ministered to a centurion in Capernaum who had much faith. Jesus healed the man's son and said this about Gentiles: "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 8:11-12) Isn't it interesting that, there are some Jews being saved in the Church Age, but there are many more Gentiles being saved than Jews?

Jesus' prophecy is coming true just as He said it would happen.

Even though Cornelius was a believer in the Old Testament sense, he was not a Christian in the Church yet. "...who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved." (Acts 11:14) There was a transition taking place at this time between the O.T. economy and what was happening in the Church Age. Even though this transition was starting, I do not believe it was completely finalized until the temple of the Jews was destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D.

In other words, the thief on the cross went to paradise. Even though he was saved, he was not in the Church. Before Pentecost there were many believers around the world, but they were not Christians like we are today. It was not until they had received the message of Christ as Lord and as risen Savior did they [become Christians](#), having the Spirit of God living in them.

(3-4) The ninth hour would be at 3 P.M. in the afternoon when Cornelius had been pouring his heart out to God. He was, no doubt, praying along the lines that God would give him more knowledge of what He wanted. ".and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard.'" (Acts 10:31) The angel Cornelius saw was in a vision. Sometimes angels come in person, as they did to Abraham and others, but here the angel is seen in a vision.

There is a lot in Scripture about how angels operate, and this would make a great study.

"Even though Cornelius had not known about Christ, nor was he a practitioner of the Jewish system of sacrifice and worship, he nevertheless was a 'devout man, and one that feared God, which gave much

alms to the people, and prayed to God always' (Acts 10:2), and God was pleased with this. While these actions were not capable of earning salvation, his sincere acceptance and practice of the limited spiritual light that he had received resulted in God sending more light to him. It may be that this is a model of how God may deal with those men and women of any time and nation who do accept and follow such light as they have." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

"Compassion for the Poor, SERVING HUMAN NEED. Cornelius earnestly desired to know God. Not only did he pray, but also he put his faith into action through giving alms (gifts) to the poor. Cornelius was similar to other godly men and women throughout history who have been 'full of good works and charitable deeds' (9:36). When we have a right relationship with God, we have compassion for the poor that motivates us to give them practical help. Cornelius's actions drew God's favorable attention, and they serve as an example for us." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

(5-6) The angel was not there to give the message of salvation, [that is our job as Christians](#). The angel's ministry was to bring Peter and the message of salvation in the Church to Cornelius, a man who was searching for answers. We are commanded by Christ to "go" with the gospel to the lost!

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

"And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.'" (Mark 16:15).  
"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

The angels have their role to play in God's Kingdom, and we have our role to play. The only times in Scripture you really see angels giving the message of salvation, was at the birth and resurrection of Christ, and then again in the Tribulation. The reason they preach the message of salvation during the Tribulation is probably because the believers are being killed almost as fast as they are being saved.

"Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.'" (Revelation 14:6-7)

(7-9) "Cornelius chose two trusted servants and a soldier who was a God-fearer like himself to go to Joppa to bring Peter. Joppa is some thirty miles from Caesarea. The three messengers left Caesarea early in the morning and arrived in Joppa about noon.

"Meanwhile, God was preparing Peter to receive them. About twelve o'clock Peter went up to the flat housetop to seek a quiet place to pray.

(10) "Since it was mealtime, he desired to eat and probably called downstairs to the house below to have food prepared. As he continued to pray, he fell into a state of ecstasy and saw a vision.

(11) "In the vision he saw some kind of object, like a great sheet, lowered by the four corners from the opened heavens to the earth. Vessel. A Greek word that can designate almost any kind of useful material object.

(12) "In the sheet he beheld [saw] the three kinds of creatures described in Genesis 6:20-four-footed animals, reptiles, and birds.

(13-14) "When commanded to kill some of these animals and eat, Peter replied that to do so would mean violating the Jewish ritual law against eating food. Leviticus 11 contains these laws. Animals that did not chew the cud and did not have cloven hooves were designated as unclean and were not to be used for food. Furthermore, clean animals had to be prepared in such a way that the blood did not remain within the carcass. Although Peter was a Christian, he was also a good Jew, who did not violate Jewish dietary rules.

(15) "The voice from heaven told him that God had now abolished these regulations about clean and unclean foods. Jesus had in effect taught the same thing (Mark 7:14-23) by teaching that foods which enter a man's body from without cannot defile his heart. The expression in Mark 7:19b, 'This he said, making all meats clean,' is probably a word that Mark received from Peter. The apostle was learning for himself the true meaning of Jesus' teachings." (*Wycliffe*)

"*God has made clean.* Jesus had already laid the groundwork for setting aside the laws of clean and unclean food. 'Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what come out of the mouth, this defiles a man.' (Matthew 15:11) 'forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God *is good*, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.'" (1Timothy 4:3-5) (*The NIV Study Bible*)

"Notice the meaning of Peter's vision. He was told by a voice from heaven to do something that was contrary to the Mosaic Law (vv. 12-14). This was symbolical that the dispensation of law was to pass away. The fact that the command was repeated signifies that God's purpose was established. (Compare Genesis 41:32.) The fact that the sheet was taken up into heaven signifies that the purpose symbolized by the sheet and animals was divine." (*Through the Bible book by Book* by Myer Pearlman)

"Three times Peter saw a vision of ritually unclean animals, and each time a heavenly voice insisted that he eat them in violation of his Jewish convictions. This triple vision was intended to show Peter that God is not a respecter of persons (v. 34) and that he should readily accompany the strangers downstairs to the residence of their Gentile master. Peter probably would not have visited Cornelius's home if God had not spoken to him so directly (see v.28; 11:2, 3; Galatians 2:11, 12)." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"The cleansing work of Christ on the cross applied not only to the forgiveness of sins, but even to the distinction between clean and unclean animals (compare Leviticus 11, 1Timothy 4:4,5) Most especially it removed the barrier between Jew and Gentile, as was made plain to Peter by this vision (Ephesians 4:11-22)." (*The Defender's Study Bible*)

Peter probably did not understand the meaning of the vision at first. He did understand when the 'Gentiles' came to his home asking for him to accompany them to their home. Before this, it would be unheard of for Jews to eat in the home of a Gentile. There has to be some applications here to us in our

time as well. There was a time, I can remember, when there were Christians in the South who would not associate with those of a different color of skin than their own.

Today, I am sure; there are places in the world where Christians have trouble fellowshiping with those who are different in some way from themselves. God is telling us here not to be like this. We are to love and reach out to others, no matter what skin color they have, or whatever other differences we perceive them to have. The Gospel is for everyone!

(16-23) '*invited the men into the house.*' "By providing lodging for them, Peter was already taking the first step toward accepting Gentiles. Such intimate relationship with Gentiles was contrary to prescribed Jewish practice. '*The next day.*' It was too late in the day to start out on the long journey to Caesarea. '*some of the brothers.*' Six in number (11:12), they were Jewish in background (10:45). [...went with them as witnesses]

(24-33)"'*I am only a man.*' "Possibly Cornelius was only intending to honor Peter as one having a rank superior to his own, since he was God's messenger. But Peter allowed no chance for misunderstanding- he was not to be worshiped as more than a created being." (*The NIV Study Bible*)

This should also make it clear to us that saints are not to be worshipped. Even though Saint Peter was mightily used of the Lord, he is no different than you and I. In heaven one of the messengers, which is what the word angel means, told Saint John not to worship him. "And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'" Jesus does receive worship, because He is God, but no one else should be given worship or receive worship. We know that Satan wants worship, and that is why he in his pride is doomed! (See the discussion response [Is it wrong to say the Rosary?](#))

"Peter explained to Cornelius and his company that Jewish law made it 'taboo' for a Jew to associate with or visit people of another nation. However, God had now so lifted Peter out of his Jewish scruples that he could no longer look upon any man as ceremonially common or unclean and therefore unfit for social fellowship. God had made his will so clear to Peter that he had accompanied the servants of Cornelius without any objection, a thing he would not have done as a Jew." (*Wycliffe*)

The Old Testament did have prophesies about the future salvation of the Gentiles which was coming: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You." (Psalm 22:27) "Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'" (speaking of Christ) (Isaiah 49:6)

Jesus prophesied the Gentiles salvation: "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd." (John 10:16)

Ephesians makes it clear that there is one body now in the Church Age, made up of both Jews and Gentiles: Paul's statement, "how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit

to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel." (Ephesians 3:3-6)

(34) "The fact that God shows no partiality means that He wants everyone, regardless of their nationality or ethnic orientation to hear the gospel and believe. In Christ there are no barriers. 'For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek [Gentile], there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'" (Galatians 3:26-28) (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

"*no respecter of persons*. This principle is frequently stressed in Scripture (2 Chronicles 19:7; Romans 2:11; Colossians 3:25). Sometimes the reference is to personal wealth or position; here it refers to the relation between Jews and Gentiles. Before our Creator, 'there is neither Greek [Gentile] nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free' (Colossians 3:11).

(35) "*accepted with Him*. This is an extremely significant revelation. Before Christ, the Gentile nations were 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world' (Ephesians 2:12). It was possible for a Gentile to become a proselyte to Judaism, but most Gentiles never had any knowledge of this possibility. With the substitutionary death of Christ for the sins of all men, however, both Jews and Gentiles can be saved simply by grace through faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"However, multitudes of people through the centuries since have lived and died without ever hearing the gospel, and the same is true today. A perennial question has to do with the possibility of salvation for such people, and Peter's testimony to Cornelius seems to suggest a possible answer. Almost three thousand years ago, the prophet Hanani said 'the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him' (2 Chronicles 16:9).

"No one can ever be [saved simply by working righteousness](#), for, as Solomon said: 'There is no man that sinneth not' (1 Kings 8:46). Nevertheless, God so loved the world that He sent His Son! He would 'have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth' (1 Timothy 2:4). Consequently, God honors those who come to fear the true God of creation and sincerely try to 'work righteousness' in accord with the witness of God's law in their own conscience and any other true light they may have received (John 1:9; Romans 2:15).

"Although this in itself was not sufficient to attain salvation, in either the case of Cornelius or that of others in similar situations, nevertheless God in grace sent Peter to Cornelius to give him full understanding of the saving work of Christ, and Cornelius responded with true faith.

"Although it is not possible to be dogmatic, it may be that God will respond in similar fashion to others who respond to the light that God has provided for all men in nature, as well as conscience (John 1:9; Romans 1:20)." (*The Defender's Study Bible*) There is evidence of this in history as missionaries have gone out to unreached areas of the world, and also recently in Muslim countries where Christ is speaking to individuals who sincerely want the truth, but have no way of hearing it.

(36-38) "Peter preached the Gospel to Cornelius, pointing out that although God sent his Word first to Israel, Jesus is indeed Lord of all men. 37, 38. Peter's proclamation of the Gospel included a brief

summary of Jesus' ministry in Judea and Galilee, his anointing as Messiah at the time of his baptism, his good works, healings, and exorcism of demons.

(39-41) "It is notable that Peter says little about the meaning of Christ's death, and that he proclaims no doctrine of the atonement. The Gospel consists of the facts of Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus' resurrection was not a publicly attested fact but was witnessed by chosen men and is confirmed particularly by the fact that these witnesses ate and drank with Jesus after his resurrection from the dead.

(42-43) "The Gospel includes an announcement of the coming judgment of both the living and the dead by the resurrected Jesus, and the offer of the forgiveness of sins to all who will believe in Him. Peter's sermon is our first example of preaching to the Gentiles." (*Wycliffe*)

Jesus began His ministry in Galilee after He was [anointed by the Holy Spirit](#) at His water baptism. "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:16-17)

Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." (Luke 4:18-19) If Jesus needed this anointing, how much more do we need it?!

(44-48) As Peter was speaking the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. The six Jewish witnesses were astonished. This proved to these prejudiced Jews that Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit. The Gentiles were saved by faith alone! ([Look at our Romans Study](#))

Speaking of this time later, when Peter was before other Jewish brethren, he explained what happened: "And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up *and* said to them: 'Men *and* brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.'" (Acts 15:7-9)

"Just as the Jewish believers received the Spirit and praised God in tongues at Pentecost, these Gentile believers now received the identical gift (v. 45; 11:15). The Jewish Christians who were present knew that the Gentiles had received the gift of the Holy Spirit (v. 45), for they heard them speak with tongues (v. 46). That tongues are at least one means of giving evidence to the initial baptism in the Holy Spirit is unmistakably clear here." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*)

The following statements are those of John Wesley from the book, *The Holy Spirit And Power* as paraphrased by Clare Weakley. "The nature of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit is taught both by Scripture and the writings of the early Church fathers. These fathers wrote after the apostolic age. [Some people claim that after the Twelve Apostles passed away or when the last book of the Bible was

written, the gifts of the Holy Spirit were no longer manifest in the Church, this is just not the case as shown here by that noted evangelist and teacher John Wesley.] \*Comment here by G. T. Panell

"The original promise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit was from Jesus. St. Mark records His word, 'These signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.'" (Mark 16:17-18 KJV)

"A further account was given by St. Peter on the very day that promise was fulfilled. The account of Peter is: 'This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel;

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.'" (Acts 2:16-17 KJV)

"A more complete list of the gifts of the Holy Spirit was given by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. He wrote: 'There are diversities of gifts [charismata, the unusual scriptural term for the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit], but the same Spirit. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of [other] miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another diverse kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.'" (1 Corinthians 12:4-11 KJV) [[Corinthians Study](#)]

"Thus, we may observe that the chief charismata, or spiritual gifts, conferred on the apostolic church were: (1) casting out devils; (2) speaking with new tongues; (3) escaping dangers, in which otherwise they might have perished; (4) healing the sick; (5) prophecy, foretelling the things to come; (6) visions; (7) divine dreams; and, (8) discerning of spirits.

"Some of them, particularly the gifts of casting out devils and speaking with new tongues, appear to have been designed chiefly to convince Jews and heathens of the power and validity of the gospel. Some were chiefly for the benefit of their fellow Christians, as healing the sick, foretelling of things to come, and the discernment of spirits. All were given to enable Christians who experienced or witnessed them to run with patience the race set before them, through all the storms of persecution, which the most continual prejudice, rage, and malice could raise.

"Since that time, some have attempted to prove: (1) no miracles occurred in the early church after the apostolic age; (2) all the early church leaders who claimed that these gifts were still at work were fools or scoundrels, and most of them were both one and the other;

(3) no miracles were wrought [done] by Christ or the apostles; and, (4) that they, too, were fools or scoundrels, or both.

"I do not agree with them on any of these points. My reasons are set forth in as free a manner as I can express. To agree with these objections would be to ignore both Scripture and history. The testimony of the Church fathers of the first 200 years of the Church will be used to prove that the gifts of the Spirit existed after the apostolic age.



"You may naturally ask, 'Why do you stop there? What reason can you give for this? If you cite miracles before the Roman Empire became Christian, why not afterward?' "I answer that after the empire became Christian, a general corruption of faith and morals infected the Christian Church. By the revolution, as St. Jerome says, 'The Church lost as much of her virtue as it had gained of wealth and power.'

(Jerome, ca. 340-420, was an historian and the translator of the Vulgate Bible. He finally headquartered in Palestine from 386 until his death. As an historian, he continued work on Eusebius's Chronicle, the first post-apostolic Church history.)

"And this very same reason was given by St. Chrysostom in the words, 'There are some who ask, "Why are not miracles performed still? Why are there no persons who raise the dead and cure diseases?" To which he replies that it was due to the lack of faith, virtue, and piety in those times. (Chrysostom, John, ca. 345-407, became Bishop of Constantinople, ca. 398. He was famous for great preaching while at Antioch, ca. 386-398.)

([St.]Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, ca. 392, wrote contrary to Chrysostom. In his famous City of God, [ca. 412], Section XXII:8 was on miracles. That title was, "Of miracles which were wrought that the world might believe in Christ, and which have not ceased since the world believed." In that essay, Augustine listed a variety of miracles, including healings and six raisings from the dead as having occurred in his diocese at Hippo.)

"It does not appear that those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were common in the Church for more than two or three centuries. We seldom hear of them after that fatal period when the Emperor Constantine called himself a Christian. Then he, from a vain imagination of promoting the Christian cause, heaped riches, power, and honor upon Christians in general, but in particular upon the Christian clergy. From that time, the gifts of the Holy Spirit almost totally ceased. Very few instances of this kind were to be found after that. [John Wesley did not state that miracles completely ceased. He had seen too many in his own ministry to ever affirm such. His statement is that, "very few instances were to be found after then."]

"The cause of this was not (as has been vulgarly [carelessly] supposed) that there was no more need or occasion for them, because all the world had become Christian. This is a miserable mistake. Not a twentieth part of the world was then nominally Christian. The real cause of the loss was that the love of many, almost all the so-called Christians has grown cold.

"The Christians had no more of the Spirit of Christ than the other heathens. The Son of Man, when He came to examine His Church, could hardly find faith on earth. This was the real cause why the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit were no longer to be found in the Christian Church after that time. It was because the Christians had turned heathen again, and had only a dead form left. [John Wesley, "The More Excellent Way," Thomas Jackson, ed., The Works of John Wesley, (London: Wesleyan Conference, 1872), vol. 7, Sermon LXXXIX, pp. 26-27.]

"So, when this faith and holiness were nearly lost, dry, formal, orthodox men began even then to ridicule whatever gifts they did not have themselves. They belittled and discredited all the gifts of the Spirit as either madness or fraud. As a result, the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were soon withdrawn from the early Church. [*The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley*, August 15, 1750.]

"Therefore, to say the miracles never occurred is to say that all who participated in them were either fools or scoundrels. They would be fools for believing miracles occurred if they had not. Claims that the miraculous powers and gifts of the Holy Spirit ended with apostles is canceled by the testimonies of the early Church fathers. Where is the proof they were wrong? Who is to say they were either fools or scoundrels? Without proof, no one can.

"Proceed to the testimony of Justin Martyr who wrote about fifty years after the apostles. [Justin Martyr was born in Samaria and died a martyr's death in Rome, ca. 165. He wrote two defenses of Christianity, "Apology," ca. 153, and "Dialogue with Trypho," a little later.] He wrote, 'There are prophetic gifts among us even until now. You may see with us both women and men having gifts from the Spirit of God.' He particularly insisted upon casting out devils as the gift that everyone might see with his own eyes.

"Irenaeus, [Irenaeus, ca. 115-200, became Bishop of Lyons, ca. 175. He wrote "Against Heresies," ca. 185. He was raised in Smyrna and there was exposed to Polycarp, whose ministry began before 110.] who wrote somewhat later, affirms 'that all who were truly disciples of Jesus wrought miracles in His name: Some cast out devils; others had visions, or the knowledge of future events; others healed the sick.' And as to raising the dead, he declares it to have been frequently performed on necessary occasions by great fasting and the joint supplication of the Church. 'We hear many,' says he, 'speaking with all kinds of tongues, and expounding the mysteries of God.'

"Theophilus, [Bishop of Antioch, a contemporary with Irenaeus and a successor to Ignatius.] who lived in the same age, speaks of casting out devils as being common in the Church at that time.

"Tertullian, [ca. 150-225, became a follower of Montanism. Known as the father of Latin theology, he ably defended Christianity in several writings.] who flourished toward the end of the second century, challenges the heathen magistrates to 'call before their tribunals any person possessed with a devil. If the evil spirit, when commanded by any Christian, did not confess himself to be a devil, who elsewhere called himself a god, they should take the life of that Christian.'

"Minutius Felix, [Marcus, ca. 200, was the first Latin apologist. He wrote dialogue to "Octavius." ] supposed to have written in the beginning of the third century, addressing himself to a heathen friend, says, 'The greatest part of you know what confessions the demons make concerning themselves, when we expel them out of the bodies of men.'

Origen, [ca. 182-251, a pupil of Clement and ordained presbyter in Caesarea. Origen completed several writings including, "Hexapla," "De Principiis," and "Against Celsus."] somewhat younger than Minutius, declares that there remained still the manifest indications of the Holy Spirit. 'For the Christians,' says he, 'cast out devils, perform many cures, foretell things to come. And many have been converted to Christianity by visions. I have seen many examples of this sort.'

"In another place, he says: 'Signs of the Holy Spirit were shown at the beginning of the teaching of Jesus, more were shown after His ascension, but afterwards fewer. However, even now there are still some remains of them with a few, whose souls are cleansed by the Word and [who have] a life conformable to it.' Again: 'Some,' says he, 'heal the sick. I myself have seen many so healed of loss of senses, madness, and innumerable other evils which neither men nor devils can cure. And this is done, not by magical

arts, but by prayer and certain plain adjurations such as any common Christian may use, for generally common men do things of this kind.'

"Cyprian, [ca. 200-258, became Bishop of Carthage, ca. 250. Influenced by Tertullian, he left several writings.] who wrote about the middle of third century, says, 'Beside the visions of the night, even in the daytime innocent children among us are filled with the Holy Spirit, and in ecstasies see and hear and speak those things by which God is pleased to admonish and instruct us.' Elsewhere he particularly mentions the casting out of devils, which, says he, 'either depart immediately or by degrees, according to the faith of the patient or the grace of him that works the cure.'

"Arnobius, [ob. Ca. 330, was a Christian apologist in the time of Diocletian (284-305). He had Lactantius as a pupil.] who is supposed to have written in the year of A.D. 303, tells us, 'Christ appears even now to men unpolled and eminently holy who love Him; whose very name puts evil spirits to flight, strikes their prophets dumb, deprives the soothsayers of the power of answering, and frustrates the acts of arrogant magicians.'

"Lactantius, [ob. Ca. 330, was converted ca. 301. He became an advisor of Constantine and tutor of his son, Crispus. His "Institutione Divinae," was an exposition and defense of the Christian faith.] who wrote about the same time, speaking of evil spirits, says, 'Being adjured by Christians, they retire out of the bodies of men, confess themselves to be demons, and tell their names, even the same which are adored in the temples.'" (*The Holy Spirit And Power* by John Wesley)

I have listed these statements of John Wesley and the others he has quoted to show that this is not some myth that we are speaking of, but truly the work of the Holy Spirit. These things have not ceased in the Church but have always been present in the Church. These same miracles of the Holy Spirit are taking place in our time as well, which we shall cover shortly. Now with that we should return to the text of Scripture at hand.

"10:44-48 A Miracle with the Gentiles, HOLY SPIRIT FULLNESS. The fact that the Gentile household of Cornelius was included in the outpouring of the Spirit is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28 ("I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh"). The presence of the sign of tongues was particularly significant to the Jews who were accompanying Peter in that they received the Holy Spirit 'just as we have' (Acts 10:47).

"This was later related to the leadership in Jerusalem as evidence that the Gentiles had truly been accepted by God in the plan of salvation (11:16, 17). The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for all believers (2:38, 39). That these began speaking in tongues as Peter was preaching reveals that the pattern of receiving Holy Spirit baptism is not dependent upon first being baptized in water; however, it does not make water baptism optional for a believer." (*New Spirit Filled Life Bible*) It does show that a person is saved even before baptism, and that the filling can come immediately after salvation.

As John Wesley so aptly put it: "Being filled with faith and the Holy Spirit, Christians possess in their hearts and show forth in their lives the genuine fruits of the Spirit of God. In their words and actions, they express love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and temperance. They reflect whatever is lovely and praiseworthy. They adorn in all things the gospel of God, our Savior. They give full proof to all mankind that they are indeed moved by the same Holy Spirit which raised Jesus from the dead." (*The Holy Spirit And Power*, Chapter on First Fruit of the Holy Spirit by John Wesley)

"Another important principle may also have been illustrated here. Because of the faith and concern of one man who responded to the limited light he had, God sent a messenger not only to lead him to full saving knowledge of Christ, but also to lead many of his friends and relatives to the Lord as well." (*The Defender's Study Bible*) Also we see that Peter did not leave Cornelius and the new converts right away, but he stayed awhile and taught them the basics of the Word of God, so that they could get off to a good start. This is also an important principle; we need to teach new converts not just leave them. Evangelism is not enough. Teaching also needs to take place in a new convert's life!

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