

Acts Chapter 10

There is one easy way to divide the book of Acts. From chapters 1 to 12, we read of the ministry of Peter, and from chapter 13 onwards we read of the ministry of Paul. This is significant, of course, for the ministry of Peter was mainly directed towards the Jews, while that of Paul was mainly directed towards the Gentiles. That was God's order - to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, and as time progressed, the main thrust of gospel preaching moved towards the Gentiles.

But here in Acts chapter 10, we are still very much with Peter and his activities, even though here he is bringing the gospel to a Gentile, Cornelius. It is indeed not without significance that Peter is not only involved, but is brought to Caesarea by the will of God. To Peter were given the keys of the kingdom of God. Peter used these keys first of all in Acts chapter 2 on the day of Pentecost. Then the kingdom was opened to the Jews. In Acts chapter 8, the gospel is being preached in Samaria by Philip and others, and many were being saved. The apostles in Jerusalem sent to Samaria Peter and John, who laid their hands on the new converts and they received the Holy Spirit. It would seem that God sent the apostles to give this new work an "apostolic blessing". No-one could boast, "We received the Spirit as a result of Peter's preaching" whereas the Samaritans could say only, "We received the Spirit after hearing Philip the evangelist". In Acts chapter 10, we are moving on from the Samaritans to the Gentiles. Hence Peter is sent to preach the gospel and to give this new work the "apostolic blessing". The place is also significant. We are moving on from Jerusalem and Judaea, and moving beyond Samaria. Now we are going to Caesarea, to the Mediterranean coast - we are moving ever westward towards the Gentiles.

Acts chapter 10 is given over to the conversion of one man and his household - Cornelius, a Roman centurion. Bit by bit, the apostles are fulfilling the Lord's commission. In Mark chapter 16:15, the Lord tells the 12, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature". That was a mission field without limit - "into all the world". In Acts chapter 1:8, the commission is more specific. "And ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth". And that is how the gospel spread. From Acts chapter 2 to 7, the work is in Jerusalem. In chapter 8 it has moved to Samaria - there is even a convert who is moving back to Ethiopia. And now we are in Caesarea. But God moves in short steps, one at a time. In the best possible sense, it is evolution rather than revolution. Thus the eunuch is in fact a Jewish proselyte. He has been in Jerusalem, searching for the truth of God. When Philip meets him in the desert, he is reading the words of Isaiah the prophet and is seeking answers. "Of whom speaketh the prophet this - of himself or of some other man?" The eunuch therefore believes and is baptized. In Acts chapter 10, we meet another Gentile, Cornelius, who is described as "a devout man who feared God with all his house". He has abandoned the pagan idolatry of Rome and embraced the one true God, the God of Israel. Neither has he kept his faith to himself - he has led his household to the same God. He is described as a centurion of the Italian band. No mere mercenary this, nor his men - here were men of Rome. The gospel is reaching out to Romans.

In doctrinal terms, there is a progression in the way that God deals with men. While the gospel itself never changed, the emphasis of the church would change. God was going to reveal a truth which Paul called a great mystery. God would continue to save both Jew and Gentile but all the age-old distinctions, which God Himself had insisted upon, were to be removed. The Jew would no longer be superior nor the Gentile inferior. There would be "one body", one "new man". But this truth was not revealed

at Pentecost. Rather it took nearly thirty years for it to be taught by Paul when he wrote Ephesians. It is only when Paul reaches Rome that he says in Acts chapter 28, "Lo I turn to the Gentiles". God moves a step at a time in an ordered fashion.

Cornelius reminds us of the centurion in the gospel. The Jews come to the Lord Jesus to intercede on behalf of the centurion's servant who was sick. The fact that a centurion would have such regard for a servant is in itself remarkable. So what do the Jews have to say about this man. "He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue". If you love God, then you will also love the people of God. This was true of this centurion. The Jews therefore said, "He is worthy that this should be done unto him". Thus there were devout men amongst the Gentiles and God was moving out to them first.

Cornelius was a man whose faith also led him into action. He gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. "The people" here would be the Jews, whom he would love as the people of God. John tells us in his first epistle that a man who loves God must also show practical love towards His people. It would be impossible indeed to love the One and not to love the other. If it were not the case, "how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

I John 3:17-18

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth

It is also said of Cornelius that "he prayed to God always". He was a man of prayer, and God now was responding to his prayers. The angel's first word to the centurion was to call him by his name, "Cornelius". The God who heard his prayers knew him by name. The angel Gabriel likewise addressed Zacharias and Mary in Luke chapter 1, and the Lord called Zacchaeus by name when He called him to come down from the tree.

Here in Acts 10, the angel of God says to Cornelius in the vision, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God". God not only saw his alms and heard his prayers but they were being stored up in heaven. The word here, "memorial" or remembrance is the same word that the Lord used of Mary of Bethany and her act of worship. "Whosoever the gospel is preached, this that this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her". Her worship is remembered in heaven.

In Revelation 5:8, we read of the four beasts and the twenty four elders who fall down before the throne, having every one of them vials full of odours which are the prayers of saints. Not only are prayers stored in heaven, they are the sweet perfume of heaven that adds fragrance to the throne. See also the words of David in Psalm 141:2

Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

The angel of God continues in verse 5, "And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter". God is now working, not only in grace but in sovereign grace. He is preparing the heart and mind of Cornelius and as we shall see further down the chapter, he does likewise with Peter. God brings the man and the apostle together in the one place to fulfill His purpose. We see similar examples elsewhere. Humanly speaking, there was little chance of Elijah ever meeting the widow of Zarepath, yet the Lord says to the prophet, "Get thee to Zarepath, for I have commanded a widow woman to feed thee there". God sent the prophet but He also commanded the widow. How else can one explain the willingness with which the widow shared what she thought would be her last meal with a stranger from amongst the Jews. God did likewise with Ananias and Saul of Tarsus in Acts chapter 9. Saul was

a fear provoking, hateful man. Ananias had heard much about Saul's reputation. But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go thy way". Saul also has seen a vision, and in it a man called Ananias comes to him, "putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight". God also moved the hand of Caesar Augustus to sign the decree that would bring Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem. He works in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.

Notice the place that is mentioned – Joppa. It was from Joppa that Jonah set sail, in defiance of the command of God. Nineveh was the stronghold of the Assyrians, age-old enemies of Israel and an enemy that would eventually lead the 10 tribes into a captivity from which they would never return. Jonah could not accept the fact that God might grant repentance to Nineveh, hence he flees from the command of God by setting sail from Joppa. As we shall see soon, Peter also still has many of the prejudices of the Jew towards the Gentile, and he needed the thrice repeated vision of the great sheet to overcome those feelings.

The angel is quite detailed in his instructions. The servants of Cornelius did not have to knock on every door in Joppa. They were to go to the house of Simon the tanner, who dwelt by the seaside. There would be only one tanner in Joppa so the instructions were quite specific. Precise instruction were also given to Ananias in Acts chapter 9. He was to go to the street called "Straight", to the house of Judas, and there he would find Saul. No address was given to Peter and John as they set off to prepare the Passover for the Lord and His disciples. But when they entered the city, a man would meet them bearing a pitcher of water and all they had to do was to follow him into the house.

As soon then as the angel departed from Cornelius, he called for two of his household servants and a "devout soldier". Here was a man with whom Cornelius had shared his faith, and all three are sent to Joppa.

What follows from verse 9 to verse 16 is the thrice repeated vision that God gave Peter and the word of the Spirit spoken to Peter when the three men arrived at the door. So why did Peter receive this vision? We shall see later.

As Peter enters the house, Cornelius fell down at his feet to worship him. So far in the book of Acts, we have seen much evidence of the mighty works of Peter, beginning at Pentecost when three thousand souls are saved. The number soon grows to five thousand in Acts chapter 3. And it is not just his preaching that attracts our attention. Mighty deeds of healing were done by Peter and his fellow apostles. The Spirit of God is given by the laying on of his hands. It is hardly surprising that not just Cornelius but many people since have held Peter as an object of worship. But is it right to worship men, even great men like Peter?

We get the answer immediately from the lips of Peter. "Stand up: I myself also am a man". Worship is the prerogative of God alone. Others of God's creatures have sought it for themselves and have been or will be subjected to the eternal judgment of God.

In Acts chapter 12, we read of King Herod. He appeared before his subjects dressed in royal apparel. Sitting on his throne, he made a great oration to them. The people cried out in response, "It is the voice of a god and not a man". How did God respond to this? "God smote him with worms and he died".

In Revelation 13, we read of the two great Beasts. The second beast commands all men on the earth to worship the first beast on penalty of death. Both men, however, will come under the judgment of God and will be cast alive into the lake of fire.

It is not just men who must not be worshipped. In Revelation chapter 22, John is receiving from an angel great revelations regarding future events – the millennial kingdom and eternity. John fell at the angel's feet to worship him, but is immediately

forbidden. See thou do it not.....worship God". Lucifer was the highest of God's angels. He was also the first creature to seek glory for himself. In Isaiah chapter 14, we read of five "I will's" spoken not outwardly but within his heart. "I will exalt". "I will ascend". "I will be like the Most High". He was seeking the place that is reserved for God alone. In Ezekiel chapter 28, God responds with five "I will's" of His own. "I will cast thee out". "I will cast thee down". "I will destroy thee". God will brook no rival as far as worship is concerned. In Philippians chapter 2, we read of the seven steps in the self- humbling of the Lord Jesus. God responds with seven steps of exaltation. In Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel we have 5 steps of Lucifer's self exaltation, and five steps of God's humiliation.

Many since have worshipped "the saints" or the "Madonna and child". All such will come under the judgment of God. The fact that the Lord was given and received worship from men and women is another proof of His deity. A leper came and worshipped Him saying, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean". Jairus came worshipping Him and beseeching Him on behalf of his daughter. The woman of the city in Luke 7 came with her ointment to worship Him, likewise Mary of Bethany in John chapter 12. Likewise, we worship Him today as the Son of God, the One who is worthy of our praise.

In verse 28 of Acts chapter 10, Peter again re-iterates the age-old prejudice of the Jews towards the Gentiles. "Ye know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or to come into one of another nation". Despite the Lord's commission in Mark 16 and again in Acts chapter 1, Peter would have avoided such an encounter had it not been for the vision he had at Joppa. But now he says, "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean". Peter now sees the lesson of the great sheet.

Such distinctions between Jew and Gentile were done away with when the truth of the mystery was revealed, especially as unfolded by Paul in Ephesians 2 to 4. It is ironic that God uses the once bigoted Judaiser, Saul of Tarsus, to teach us that the special place of the Jew has been done away with and that both Jew and Gentile are on the same footing before God. This was spiritual dynamite to many and indeed many a believing Jew in the first century would die without accepting this principle.

From verse 30 to 34, Cornelius repeats his experience over the preceding four days, beginning with the appearance of the angel. We know about his alms and his prayers, but now we learn that he was fasting and praying. He had fully engaged with the customs and practices of the Jews, but here was no hypocritical Pharisee – here was a man who lived out his faith in a practical way. He was in earnest before God.

At the end of verse 33, there is a lovely expression used by Cornelius. "We are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God". How different would be our Christian experience if we had that attitude every time we came together, be it for worship, for ministry, or for preaching the gospel. Yet perhaps we do come to a ministry meeting and go away disappointed. Is it always our fault? We can always get something from a meeting but it underlines the great responsibility of the speaker as to what he brings to the meeting. Peter writes in his first epistle, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God". We should be able to speak with such authority. It should be as if God Himself was speaking to us. Too high a standard? – surely that is what we should be aiming for.

Verses 34 to 43 give us the words that Peter preached that day. Verses 34 to 37 give us a brief history of the Lord Jesus. Verse 38 speaks of His life and His death, verse 40 of His resurrection, and verses 41 to 43 the gospel that now was being preached.

Verse 34 illustrates Peter's lingering prejudice. He doesn't say, "God is no respecter of persons" but rather, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons". Peter had come

to this conclusion by observation and perception. He could not deny the things recently seen and heard. Verse 35 would cover the place of the proselyte – men like the Ethiopian eunuch and like Cornelius. They were accepted before God from every nation. The word which God sent was firstly to the children of Israel, and was published throughout all Judea, beginning with John's baptism. This was the history up till now and underlines the geographical bounds of the word of God in the past.

Verse 38 now brings us up to date. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him". Here was the Lord's daily occupation. From early in the morning till late in the evening, He was doing good – bringing healing and blessing to men. He did great things – for God was with Him.

Peter and the apostles kept company with Him all this time and were eyewitnesses of all these things. Here was a man doing good, and that publicly. Surely all would acknowledge Him? But verse 39 ends with, "Whom they slew and hanged on a tree". Here is the guilt of the nation, indeed the guilt of mankind exposed. The greatest sin ever committed by men was the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Peter therefore brings out first of all the sin of humanity. But the Rejected One is raised up by God on the third day. It is an interesting observation what the apostles preached about in the book of Acts. Eight times over, we read of what they preached and on every single occasion, they preached about the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. When Paul sums up the gospel which he received from the Lord Jesus, he said it had three elements:

Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures

And was buried

And rose again the third day according to the scriptures

No gospel message would be complete without reference to these facts.

The death of Christ was very public, but His resurrection appearances were to a restricted few.

40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

In John chapter 7, the Lord said to the unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem, "Ye shall seek Me and shall not find Me". To His own, however, in the upper room, He says, "Ye shall seek Me". There is no mention of, "And shall not find Me". They came seeking Him at the tomb, and He revealed Himself to them. He could have appeared to Caiaphas and Pilate and Herod and thus vindicated Himself but God has postponed the day of His vindication for two thousand years. Why? So that men might be saved – not by physical sight, but by faith. But was His appearance that of a spirit without substance? Peter adds, "Who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead". It was in a real body as Luke records in chapter 24 of his gospel, He ate with them the broiled fish and the honeycomb.

We often speak mistakenly about "coming into the presence of God". If we have to come into His presence, that means of course that there must be times when we are out of His presence. That surely could never be. David was conscious of this fact when he wrote Psalm 139: verses 7 to 10

"If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

9 If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;

10 Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about

me.

12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee"

He was conscious of the fact that there was nowhere he could go to escape the presence of God. God was always there.

This gospel message by Peter throws up some interesting facts, and it is important for us to see the order in which Peter presents these things. In verse 42 for example, the first thing that Peter speaks of is not the forgiveness of sins. That will come later in verse 43. But in verse 42 Peter begins with, God has "commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that is He which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead". Peter first establishes the reason why he was preaching. It was not a matter of choice for him - God had commanded him to preach. Paul felt the same burden, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel". He felt obliged to preach. Peter also was obliged to obey.

Secondly, Peter establishes the authority of the Lord Jesus who is at the centre of the gospel. All without exception will meet Him as judge. He will judge both the living and the dead. Just as there is no escaping His presence in verse 33, so there will be no escaping Him in a future day. Even the grave will be no hiding place. The One then who is at the centre of the gospel message is not someone who can be ignored. We must give heed to Him.

Peter has said likewise on previous occasions when he preached.

Acts 2:36

"God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ"

Having established who He is, Peter goes on to speak of the forgiveness of sins in verse 38.

Acts 3:13

"The God of our fathers hath glorified His Son Jesus"

Verse 14 "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just"

Verse 15 "And killed the Prince of life"

Acts 5:31

"Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins"

In all of the above verses, Peter presents the glory of the Person before he presents His work. Indeed the greatness of the Person adds weight to the importance of His work. He is holy; just; He is Lord; He is judge; He is Prince and Saviour. And here in Acts 10, He is Judge of living and dead.

In verse 43, Peter adds, "To Him give all the prophets witness that through His name, whosoever believeth in Him should receive forgiveness of sins". The leading phrase is an interesting one - "To Him give all the prophets witness". When declaring the facts of his gospel in I Cor 15, Paul says, "Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures". The latter phrase would tell us of a divine plan, written in eternity, and foretold through the ages as prophets wrote of Him and His forgiveness.

Isaiah 53:11 and 12

"By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for He shall bear their iniquities" He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors".

Jeremiah 31:34 (The New Covenant)

"For I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more".

Daniel 9:24

"To make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity"

Micah 7:18

"Who is a God like unto Thee, who pardoneth iniquity"

Zechariah 13:1

"A fountain opened...for sin and for uncleanness".

His death for sins was well documented in the OT prophets. Peter does not go into detail on this point. He has left it for us to do our homework. Cornelius being a Gentile would probably be unaware of the detail but remember that Peter was accompanied by a group of Jews from Joppa, who were there to witness what was being said and done.

As Peter continues in verse 43 of Acts 10; he is passing on a divine promise. God is promising the forgiveness of sins to all that believe on the Lord Jesus. I have often thought that God could have forgiven every man and woman based on the death of Christ. His death could have covered all, but God demands faith in His work. "Without faith, it is impossible to please Him". "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him".

Verses 33 to 46 tell us of the effect of Peter's preaching. The Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word. How did they know that the Holy Spirit had come? Verse 46 tells us – "They heard them speak with tongues and magnify God". We see now the importance of those who came with Peter from Joppa. They no doubt had witnessed the phenomena of tongues amongst the Jews when they believed, now the same thing was being seen amongst the Gentiles. It is the proof that God was working with the Gentiles also.

But should we expect this to happen today? Certain charismatic Christians would tell us "Yes"!! They would claim that receiving the gift of tongues was proof of having received the Spirit. If this were true then countless numbers of those who profess Christ are not saved for they have never had this experience and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" .

But can our Bible give us any guidance in this matter. I believe tongues were given for three specific reasons

1. As a means of divine revelation
2. As a sign to Israel
3. As divine sanction on special occasions

Let us turn first of all to I Corinthians 13. It is important for us to follow the logic of Paul's argument here. Paul begins by making a statement of fact in verse 8.

"Prophecies, they shall fail; tongues, they shall cease; knowledge, it shall vanish away."

We must ask the question first of all, "What are these various gifts spoken of in this verse? They are surely all means of divine revelation by which God made known His mind and His ways, especially we believe in the early days of the Church's history. But the verse is telling us that a time would come when these three gifts would cease. But why should this be the case? Verse 9 gives us the answer.

"For we know in part, and we prophesy in part". These gifts shall cease to exist because they are incomplete or imperfect.

We now know why they must cease. Do we know "when" they will cease? Verse 10 gives us the answer to this question.

"When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away".

This "perfect" thing stands in contrast to those things which are "in part". So what is this perfect thing, and when will it come? Is it heaven perhaps? If indeed it is heaven, then the logic of this chapter tells us that tongues, prophecies, and knowledge are still with us and will continue till the Rapture ie when we reach heaven. If this is true, then we owe a major apology to our charismatic friends for we have been telling them for years that they are misguided. But let us proceed with the assumption that the perfect thing is heaven. What else is true about the revelation of divine truth to us today? For example, how does verse 11 fit into our argument.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things".

Is Paul merely digressing here to tell us some glaringly obvious facts about his childhood days or is this part of the general argument of this section. It is surely the latter. So if we still have tongues, prophecies, and knowledge, we are engaging in things which are childish, and immature. And when will we reach the point of maturity? Only when we get to heaven?

The argument continues in verse 12.

"For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face".

If this "now" refers to the present, then our vision of spiritual things is vague and obscure - and this would be true however we interpreted the "perfect" thing. Many of our brethren would tell us that "face to face" must surely mean heaven, but I fear they haven't followed the logic of Paul's argument. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul tells us that we are "before Him". This has the idea of "before His face". We cannot get any nearer to God than we are now. We are nearer to God than the highest angel in heaven. But how do we get round the apparent difficulty of "Now we see through a glass darkly"? Our English word "now" also occurs in verse 13, but on further examination, we learn that two different words are used in the Greek of the original. The word "now" in verse 12 has the sense of "now up until this present moment" ie up to Paul's time of writing this epistle. The second "now" in verse 13 has the sense of "now at all times" ie without limit of time. That is why Paul says, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three". Here are three things that will never cease - they will always be with us. Tongues etc would not cease at the time Paul wrote but the apostle knew that the time would soon come when the need for them would pass.

So, is there an alternative interpretation of the "perfect" thing of this chapter? In Colossians chapter 2, Paul writes about that which was given unto him "to complete the word of God, even the mystery". When God's full revelation regarding His church had been made known, then anything else that went before which was imperfect would cease to be. So, to summarise, when Paul wrote I Cor 13, tongues and prophecies were still in use, but because they were imperfect, immature, and obscure means of revelation, they were to be replaced by something which was perfect and complete. That came when the word of God was complete, and perhaps more specifically when the mystery had been revealed.

Now this is just one reason why tongues etc have disappeared. A second reason is found in I Corinthians chapter 14. In verse 14, Paul quotes the words of Isaiah in chapter 28:11-12.

"With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people".

God was speaking to Israel and telling them that one day, He would speak through men of other tongues. This was fulfilled in Acts chapter 2 at Pentecost when the Jews heard men from various parts of the Mediterranean world declaring in their own language the wonderful works of God. That is why the phenomena is repeated in Acts chapter 10 - now it is Gentiles and not just Hellenist Jews who are speaking in

tongues - it is a sign to the Jews. God was putting His stamp of approval on what was taking place in the house of Cornelius, and this will be reported back to Jerusalem in Acts chapter 11.

All this took place in the early days of the church, but as the years went by, the Jews became ever more resistant to the gospel until Paul at last said in Rome, "Behold, I turn to the Gentiles". When Israel gave up God, God gave up Israel as a favoured nation. The need for tongues then as a sign to Israel had come to an end.

The last mention of the gift of tongues in the book of Acts is found in chapter 19:6. Again, we have a special case. At Ephesus, Paul meets some disciples of John the Baptist. Paul asks them if they had received the Holy Spirit since they believed. They had not so much as heard if the Spirit of God had come. They were the remnants of a past dispensation – a step removed from Judaism, but not far enough to embrace Christianity. Paul took them and baptized them in the name of the Lord and they received the Holy Spirit. The evidence of this was that they spoke with tongues. It is the divine seal of approval again – God has thus dealt with Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles, and now these followers of the Baptist. There are no more "special cases" left – God has covered them all.

Having received the Holy Spirit, Cornelius and the others were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Baptism followed on immediately from salvation. The same thing was true of the Ethiopian eunuch in chapter 8. On his confession of faith, Philip took him and baptized him. In our day, we have tended to link baptism with reception into the assembly, whereas in the earliest days of the church, baptism was clearly linked with salvation. The only condition for baptism is salvation. There are many conditions to be met before someone is fit for assembly fellowship.

Finally, in verse 48, there was fellowship with Peter and his companions. "Then prayed they him to tarry certain days". One can imagine that a man of Cornelius' stature would have many questions to put to Peter. He would be anxious to use the time to learn more about the Lord Jesus and His church. Is it possible for us that, as the years have gone by, we have lost the desire to extend our knowledge of divine truth.