

# CORNELIUS' HOUSEHOLD RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST

**BIBLE TEXT** : Acts 10:24-48.

LESSON 303 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Acts 10:24-48**

<sup>24</sup> And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

<sup>25</sup> And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.

<sup>26</sup> But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

<sup>27</sup> And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

<sup>28</sup> And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

<sup>29</sup> Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

<sup>30</sup> And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

<sup>31</sup> And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

<sup>32</sup> Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

<sup>33</sup> Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **I Peter In Caesarea**

1. Peter found Cornelius waiting for him, Acts 10:24.
2. Cornelius would have worshiped Peter, but Peter forbade it, Acts 10:25, 26;

#### **Acts 14:11-18**

<sup>11</sup> And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

<sup>12</sup> And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

<sup>13</sup> Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

<sup>14</sup> Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

<sup>15</sup> And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

<sup>16</sup> Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

<sup>18</sup> And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

#### **Revelation 19:10**

<sup>10</sup> And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it not*: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

3. A large company of kinsmen and friends had gathered in Cornelius' house to hear Peter's words, Acts 10:27.
4. Peter asked the reason and received the answer as to why Cornelius had sent for him, Acts 10:28-33.

### **II Peter's Sermon**

The truth in all its brilliance revealed that God is no respecter of persons, Acts 10:34, 35;

#### **Matthew 5:45**

<sup>45</sup> That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

#### **Romans 10:12**

<sup>12</sup> For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

A partial revelation of Jesus had already been given to these people, Acts 10:36-38

Peter's sermon expounded the verity and fullness of the Gospel, Acts 10:39-43;

#### **1 Timothy 3:16**

thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

<sup>34</sup> Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

<sup>35</sup> But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

<sup>36</sup> The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

<sup>37</sup> That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

<sup>38</sup> How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

<sup>39</sup> And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

<sup>40</sup> Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

<sup>41</sup> 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.

<sup>42</sup> And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead.

<sup>43</sup> To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

<sup>44</sup> While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

<sup>16</sup> And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

### III The Promised Holy Ghost

1. The Holy Ghost fell upon the whole company, Acts 10:44; Acts 2:1-4

<sup>1</sup> And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

<sup>2</sup> And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

<sup>3</sup> And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

<sup>4</sup> And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

#### Acts 19:1-7

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

<sup>2</sup> He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

<sup>3</sup> And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

<sup>4</sup> Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>6</sup> And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

<sup>7</sup> And all the men were about twelve.

2. Peter and his companions were astonished, Acts 10:45, 46.
3. Peter counselled and commanded that these new disciples should observe the ordinance of water baptism, Acts 10:47, 48;

#### Matthew 28:19

<sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

### NOTES:

"Go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." The messengers from Cornelius had arrived at the gate of Simon, the tanner; and God was preparing the heart of Peter to receive these Gentiles and return with them to their city of Cæsarea. Peter called the men into the home, and on the morrow he started with them on the journey back to the Roman centurion. The great Apostle had learned the lesson well: that the quicker God's bidding is acted upon, the easier it is to do. While the vision was still fresh in his heart and mind, Peter went forth boldly; but had he tarried and pondered, the task at hand would have become harder and harder to him.

Peter and the brethren that were with him in Joppa knew the attitude of the Jews at Jerusalem regarding Israelites and Gentiles having communion. It was considered an unlawful procedure for a Jew to eat with a Gentile — not because God had at any time set up such a law, but because such a tradition had been handed

<sup>45</sup> And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>46</sup> For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

<sup>47</sup> Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

<sup>48</sup> And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

down from generation to generation. God helped Peter overcome this lifelong influence in a few moments, but Peter used wise judgment when he did God's bidding promptly. The Christian who desires triumphant victory should follow a similar pattern.

### Equality

When Peter and his company came to the house, Cornelius met them with such joy that he fell at Peter's feet to worship him. The people of the East often prostrate themselves before their superiors; or Cornelius may have felt that Peter was a special emissary from God, having been sent by the angel. At any rate, Peter soon clarified the matter, for he lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." God's vision to Peter had taught another valuable lesson. The Jews were willing to speak of the Gentiles as dogs, but seldom were they willing to yield equality to their foreign neighbours; yet Peter spoke to Cornelius as a man — one equal to himself.

The recognition of equality among men is one of the foremost attributes of Christianity. Nations have tried to legislate this quality into their citizens; councils and conventions have spent numberless hours trying to find a solution to the problem of the unequal rank and status of men; but the problem finds its only answer in Christianity. Being born into the family of God produces a natural brotherhood among its members, regardless of rank, colour, or former creed. Many organizations make great boasts of their theoretical brotherhoods, but in application their high-sounding theories fall completely short of their goal. Real Christianity will never fall short of this goal.

As Peter entered Cornelius' house, he found many people there waiting for him. He asked the people why they had sent for him, at the same time relating to them the fact that a Jew made himself the object of scorn, criticism, and persecution, by coming to a man of another nation. Cornelius had an answer ready. He had sent for Peter because an angel from God had directed him to do so, and Cornelius said, "Thou hast well done that thou art come." As spokesman for the group of people waiting to hear Peter, Cornelius further said, "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." These were hungry hearts indeed! "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

### Revival

"He shall tell **thee** what thou oughtest to do," were the words of the angel that caused Cornelius to send for Peter, but Cornelius was of no mind to hear alone the wonderful words of life. There were many people in Caesarea of Cornelius' acquaintance, kinsmen and friends, who were as equally interested in true godliness as was Cornelius. No doubt Cornelius had discussed matters of religion with these people on many occasions, individually and perhaps collectively as well. One thing was certain: Cornelius wanted Peter's mission to Caesarea to be a very fruitful journey. The man of God was coming! A revival was in store if every man did his part. In this particular case the responsibility was singularly upon Cornelius, because he was the only person who knew Peter was coming. Cornelius performed his task wonderfully well, for a great crowd gathered to hear Peter, and God did not withhold His choicest blessing.

Here is a successful formula for a revival in any church: prayer and supplication until God assures the people that He will send help; also wide publication that a man of God is coming to proclaim the Good News of salvation. The whole group of people who enter the doors of the church do so with a single heart, "to hear all things that are commanded . . . of God."

Could such a movement fail? It could not! Can such a movement be realized in this day of sin, wickedness, and love for pleasure rather than godliness? It can be realized if the saints of God are earnest enough in prevailing prayer for such an event, and honest in their endeavours to bring their kinsmen and friends to the house of God.

### **Saved and Sanctified**

The strongly-emphasized truth in the first part of the Acts of the Apostles is the wonderful baptism of the Holy Ghost, yet those who received this gift must have first received what was also enjoyed in former dispensations — regeneration (justification) and entire sanctification — in order to be prepared for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. God never cancels former truth and light or in any way opposes it; but each succeeding revelation only causes the former to shine with greater light. This is the law of the revelation of God. While God is now pouring out the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh, He does not annul justification as revealed to faithful Abram, but enables us to see it more clearly. Neither does He abolish the experience of entire sanctification, but reveals it in greater light and importance in this New Dispensation.

The household of Cornelius were justified and sanctified before the baptism of the Holy Ghost fell upon them. Cornelius was a devout man and one that "feared God with all his house" (Acts 10:2). People to be **devout** must be walking in all the light they have. They had heard "the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ." Peter said, "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa" (Acts 10:36, 37). Also, God said to Peter in the vision, "What God hath **cleansed**, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15). Paul, through the inspiration of the Spirit, said, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might **sanctify** and **cleanse** it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Peter tells us, "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying (or cleansing) their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8, 9). In the original Greek, this means a definite act completed in past time. It is very clear that these people were justified and sanctified before being baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Some teach that these people were unsaved because the angel said to Cornelius, "Peter . . . shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house **shall be saved**" (Acts 11:13, 14). This does not mean that they were unsaved any more than it does that the Apostles were unsaved when they said: "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved,

### QUESTIONS

1. Why did Peter and his friends make the trip to Cæsarea?
2. Who was in Cæsarea to meet Peter?
3. To whom did Peter preach?
4. Name at least three important truths that Peter brought out in his sermon.
5. What important event took place at the end of Peter's sermon?
6. Why were the disciples and Peter astonished?
7. What was Peter's counsel when he saw that the Gentiles had received the Holy Ghost?

even as they" (Acts 15:11). These Scripture passages have the same meaning as the words of Jesus: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same **shall be saved**" (Mark 13:13).

No one has ever received all God's graces and gifts at the same time. Scripture never even hints at the thought that the Apostles, the Ephesians, the Samaritans, the house of Cornelius, or anyone else, ever were regenerated and sanctified wholly at one and the same time. We may not know when the Apostles and the Pentecostal saints each received the second work of grace or the first work of grace, but that they had received both before Pentecost is clear.

We do not read of any prophet, Apostle, martyr, or reformer, in or out of the Word of God, being converted and at the same instant cleansed from all inbred sin; but the testimonies of thousands and tens of thousands of the people of God declare they received a distinct, second work of grace. Among them are the most intellectual, the most spiritual, and the most God-honoured saints since the time of the Apostles.

### The Baptism of the Holy Ghost

As Peter was preaching to the group of Gentiles in Cornelius' house, the Holy Ghost fell on all those who listened. Peter and the brethren from Joppa were astonished when they realized that God had given the Gentiles the like gift that He had given to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost. Here again, the Jews thought that the Holy Spirit of God — the Shekinah of the Tabernacle and Temple — was restricted to the confines of the land of Israel and to the descendants of Abraham; but these disciples found that God is not restricted to places nor people. When Peter saw that God had received these people in full measure, he commanded that they should be baptized in water and received into the Church, thus showing to all concerned that God's decrees in Heaven were instantly obeyed by His representatives on earth.

This glorious gift of the Holy Ghost to Cornelius and his friends had far-reaching effects. It showed to the Gentiles the truth of Peter's words -- the message of the Gospel regarding Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. It opened the door of grace and faith directly to the Gentiles and gave them equal standing with the Jews in the Apostles' eyes. It enlarged the vineyard of the Lord from the vicinity of Palestine to the regions of the whole world. Many years have come and gone since that time, but the work seems just as great as ever. The Lord's vineyard is still in desperate need of workers. There is much work left to be done; but lo! What will the Lord of Harvest say to us when we stand before Him? Will He be compelled to say, "Why stood ye all the day idle?" Or will He be able to say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

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