

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 3RD, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

GOD-FEARING (ACTS 10:1-8) ANOTHER GENTILE WORSHIPING GOD

One of the main themes of Acts is the "problem" of Gentile Christianity. For centuries, faith in God was largely ethnically and geographically focused.

- Now, in the New Covenant, **true religion is only limited by faith**, not ethnicity or location. It took a while to convince people of this.

FAITHFUL WITH WHAT HE HAD

The first thing Luke wants us to know about Cornelius is how devout a Gentile he was. In many ways, he displayed greater faith than the Jews, even before he knew about Jesus.

- This doesn't mean you can be saved apart from Jesus. **We are witnessing the transition between the Old and New Covenants.**

MESSENGER WITHOUT A MESSAGE

This vision seems a little odd. An angel shows up with a message, and the message is this: You'll receive another message later. Why not just have the angel deliver the message?

- The supernatural realm is real, and God often uses it to direct the natural realm. Our need to evangelize doesn't discount that God is the one acting.

A NEW LAW (ACTS 10:9-16)

MOSAIC LAW

When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, He made a covenant with them at Mt. Sinai. This covenant made them separate from the Gentile nations, and one of those separations was food laws.

- What God intended for good, man used for evil. **Some replaced zeal for God with zeal for the law.**

FUNCTION OF THE OLD LAW

The food laws weren't about allergies or promoting health. The old law wasn't given to define salvation by ethnicity or works.

- It was a physical representation of God's holiness. **Salvation has always been by grace through faith**, even as the expression of our faith changed from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.

THE OLD LAW HAS PASSED

Peter seems to consistently be **amazed by** and to **struggle with** the fact that the old law has been fulfilled and has passed. Mark, who records Peter's teaching, is the only one to record this in a Gospel (Mark 7).

- But Peter also falls back into old habits later in life when he disassociates from Gentiles (Galatians 2).

THE NEW LAW HAS COME

Now that Christ has fulfilled the old law, we live in the freedom of the new law. But this freedom isn't what we normally think of. It is **freedom to do as we ought**.

- The New Testament talks a lot about this freedom and how to live in it (Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 10; Galatians 5; James 1; 1 Peter 2).

THE MEETING (ACTS 10:17-33)

APPLICATION OF THE NEW LAW

Now, Peter lives out the law of freedom, not through dietary indulgence but evangelistic outreach. To paraphrase Paul, "Is God really concerned about food?" (1 Corinthians 9:9).

- **The ultimate purpose of everything is God.** Both the law and freedom from the law are about God.

FALSE WORSHIP, EVEN BY THE GODLY

Cornelius does an odd but biblically common thing by worshiping something he shouldn't. **The human heart is an idol-making factory**, whether of people or of laws.

- We should neither give nor accept false worship. Pastors are not God and neither are you.

REPETITIONS IN NARRATIVE

One of the odd features of the Bible is being retold what you've just been told. This can function as **bookends** (inclusio), **emphasis**, or **chiastic structure** (A, B, B', A').

- Whatever the function of this repetition is, Luke thinks it is **very important** and worthy of taking up precious (expensive) paper.

THE MESSAGE (ACTS 10:34-48)

THE MESSAGE DELIVERED

Earlier, the angels arranged for this meeting. Now, the meeting has taken place, and its purpose has been fulfilled: to share the gospel.

- Sharing the gospel requires presence and relationship. Saving comes through hearing, and hearing through sending. **Send and be sent!**

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

This short gospel presentation punches far above its weight. What must we believe to be saved? That God has spoken. That Jesus is Lord and judge of all. That He lived, died, and resurrected. That in Him is forgiveness of sin.

- If you want to be confident in the gospel to share it, **read and study this passage.** This message is sufficient.

THE HOLY SPIRIT Poured OUT

Several times in Acts we see people giving evidence of salvation through speaking in tongues. This is not normative. In Acts, tongues are extraordinary validations of salvation, not normative prescriptions.

- Luke's emphasis is not on tongues but on **who gets the Spirit**. Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles can all receive God.

THE BELIEVERS BAPTIZED

This passage echoes the eunuch's question earlier, in Acts 8: "What would keep me from being baptized?" **Nothing!**

- Water baptism always follows baptism of the Holy Spirit. We ought to be quickly obedient in this and every area. Place, person, and time are not important. **Obedience is critical.**

BE FAITHFUL WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

- We ought to pursue truth and a greater understanding of it. If we love God above everything else, **we should want to know Him above everything else.**
- But first, we must be obedient with what we know and have. God entrusts greater things to **those who steward what they have** (Matthew 25).

LIVE IN LIGHT OF THE NEW LAW

- In Christ, we have **perfect** freedom.
- This freedom is **to live as we ought**, not to indulge ourselves.
- Freedom and responsibility are two sides of the same coin.
- Sometimes, we're tempted to return to the law, but we must not reject what God has given us.

PREACH THE GOSPEL IN ACTION

- Faith is **more than** verbal affirmation.
- The news of our reconciliation to God should drive us to reconciliation with our neighbor.
- The love God has shown us should drive us to love of our neighbor.
- Love involves loving actions, usually outside of our comfort zones.

PREACH THE GOSPEL IN WORD

- Faith is **not less than** verbal affirmation.
- Sharing your faith begins with knowing your faith.
- Sharing your faith requires presence and relationship.
- Sharing your faith requires **actually sharing your actual faith**.