

Back to the Father

Your Journey

Beginning Our Relationship

The Gift of the Holy Spirit – Part 5

The Promise Poured Out on the Gentiles

The Gentiles who were formerly separated from the promises of God have been brought near by the work of Jesus Christ. (*Eph 2:11-22; 3:1-19*)

- The term Gentiles was used by Jewish people to refer to foreigners, or any other people who were not a part of the Jewish race. The Jews were the Chosen People of God who had entered a covenant with God. God initiated the covenant with Abraham (*Gen 12:1-7*) and affirmed it repeatedly through Israel's leaders and prophets. Because of this covenant relationship, a feeling of exclusivism gradually developed among the Jews over a period of several centuries. In early Hebrew history, Gentiles or non-Jews were treated cordially by the Israelites (*Deut 10:19; Num 35:15; Ezek 47:2*). Men of Israel often married Gentile women, including Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. However, after the Hebrews returned from their period of captivity in Babylon, the practice of intermarriage was discouraged (*Ezra 9:12; 10:2-44; Neh 10:30*). Separation between Jews and Gentiles became increasingly strict; by the New Testament period the hostility was complete. The persecution of the Jews by the Greeks and Romans from about 400 B.C. to the New Testament era caused the Jews to retaliate with hatred for all Gentiles and to avoid all contact with foreigners. Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary

In Acts 10:1-33 God reveals to Peter that the Gentiles were now candidates to hear the word of God and in verses 34-48 we read the results of what took place when Peter responded to that revelation.

34 Peter opened his mouth and said, "Truly I perceive that God doesn't show favoritism; **35** but in every nation he who fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him. **36** The word which he sent to the children of Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all— **37** that spoken word you

yourselves know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; **38** even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. **39** We are witnesses of everything he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they also killed, hanging him on a tree. **40** God raised him up the third day, and gave him to be revealed, **41** not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen before by God, to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** He charged us to preach to the people and to testify that this is he who is appointed by God as the Judge of the living and the dead. **43** All the prophets testify about him, that through his name everyone who believes in him will receive remission of sins."

- Peter preaching to the Gentiles was the beginning of the fulfillment of the last part of Acts chapter 1 verse 8.

Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. You will be witnesses to me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth." WEB

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the **Holy Spirit** fell on all those who heard the word.

- The Holy Spirit falling on the Gentiles was proof to Peter that they had received his message.

45 They of the circumcision who believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the nations.

- The people at Pentecost were all amazed, Simon at Samaria was amazed and now the circumcision that came with Peter to Caesarea were also amazed when they saw the Holy Spirit poured out and the signs that accompanied this event.
- When God pours out his Holy Spirit on believers it does not take place without being noticed.

46 For they heard them speaking in other languages and magnifying God.

- The purpose of the gift of tongues was to impress the Jews with the fact that a miracle was taking place. In (10:46), the Gentiles spoke with tongues as

proof to the apostles that they had received the Spirit; and in (19:6) the Ephesian followers of John the Baptist spoke in tongues for the same reason. Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament.

Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ "Can any man forbid the water, that these who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we should not be baptized?"

- The Gentiles were moving into the same relationship with God as the believing Jews. That which comes through repentance, through being baptized into Jesus Christ and into the spirit of God.

⁴⁸ He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay some days.

- The Gentiles were not only willing to enter into a deeper relationship with God by responding to what was asked of them by being baptized but they were also seeking to learn more from Peter of the ways of God.

Acts 11:1-18

The apostles contend with Peter about the word of God going out to the Gentiles.

¹ Now the apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. ² When Peter had come up to Jerusalem, those who were of the circumcision contended with him, ³ saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men, and ate with them!"

Peter answers the apostles by explaining to them how God convinced him that he had opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles.

⁴ But Peter began, and explained to them in order, saying, ⁵ "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision: a certain container descending, like it was a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners. It came as far as me. ⁶ When I had looked intently at it, I considered, and saw the four-footed animals of the earth, wild animals, creeping things, and birds of the sky. ⁷ I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter, kill and eat!' ⁸ But I said, 'Not so, Lord, for nothing unholy

or unclean has ever entered into my mouth.' ⁹ But a voice answered me the second time out of heaven, 'What God has cleansed, don't you call unclean.' ¹⁰ This was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. ¹¹ Behold, immediately three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent from Caesarea to me. ¹² The **Spirit** told me to go with them, without discriminating. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying to him, 'Send to Joppa, and get Simon, whose surname is Peter, ¹⁴ who will speak to you words by which you will be saved, you and all your house.'

- The angel made it clear that the words that Peter would speak to the Gentiles were the words that would lead to their salvation.

¹⁵ As I began to speak, the **Holy Spirit** fell on them, even as on us at the beginning.

¹⁶ I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John indeed baptized in water, but you will be baptized in the **Holy Spirit**.' ¹⁷ If then God gave to them the same gift as us, when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God?"

- The events that took place at Pentecost may have not been exactly the same but the gift that was given was.
- The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the gift that God gives to those that are willing to believe in the message of salvation and seek after him.

¹⁸ When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life!" WEB

When we are faced with things that we are not accustomed to or familiar with it is important that we weigh all the facts and respond to them and not to our own biases, opinions and fears that could sway us from that which is true and the blessings that accompany believing that which is true. The apostles after hearing all that Peter had to say received his words and glorified God for the great and wonderful new thing that he had brought about.