

Program Transcripts

For April 2020



IN
SEARCH
OF THE LORD'S WAY[®]

SEARCH PROGRAMS

April 2020

Topics subject to change without notice

APRIL 5 – WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

In the beginning God created us male and female in His image and in His likeness. But does God give the same role to women that He gives to men? In this lesson we explore the role of women in the church.

APRIL 12 – A MAN ATTESTED

Have you ever wondered how the eyewitnesses of Jesus thought of His miracles? The fact Jesus worked wonders in public, and they were undeniable to His enemies, gives credibility to the New Testament record.

APRIL 19 – THE ETERNAL WORD

Although the apostles preached the gospel for the first time two thousand years ago, the gospel is still able to do what God intended. This gospel is eternal, true, and powerful! This faith was once for all delivered to the saints.

APRIL 26 – THE FIRST GENTILE CONVERT

The New Testament reveals the story of the conversion of Cornelius, his family, and his friends. The church from this point forward had both Jews and Gentiles. What saved Cornelius and how did he obey?

Women in the Church

In the beginning, God created us male and female in His image and in His likeness. But does God give the same role to women that He gives to men? Today, we're going to explore the role of women in the church. God said, "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' declares the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isaiah 55:8-9). God's ways are not always our ways; but God's ways are always right. We may not understand God's ways or agree with them, but God's wisdom far exceeds ours, and through time, God's wisdom proves right every time. So, we follow the One who is utterly trustworthy. Psalm 19:9 says, "The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether."

Where in the world would any of us be without the women in our lives? They are indeed precious in so many ways and a blessing to the church. I've been blessed with a godly mother, with a faithful and loving wife for over forty years, with four precious daughters who are all well-educated and very talented. I also have eleven delightful granddaughters. Do I care about all the females in my life? Of course I do! I want every good thing for them and want them to serve God. I want all my children to be saved and to remain in the truth.

The best thing you can do is to love and serve God faithfully and help others to love and serve God. Obeying God is an act of love. The Lord Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). If you want to bless your family, lead them in loving the Lord Jesus in every way. Don't pick which laws you like and ignore the others. We are to "observe all things" that Jesus commands us. This touches every aspect of our lives.

Our reading today is from 1 Corinthians 14:33-37.

for God is not *a God* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. Was it from you that the word of God *first* went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. When God created Adam and Eve, He created the male first and the female later. God created her to be a "helper fit for him" (Genesis 2:18). First Corinthians 11:9 says, "for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake."

The distinctive roles the Scriptures place on men and women are not cultural traditions of bygone eras but God's plan for humans made in His image.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, God said to the woman, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you" (Genesis 3:16). This declaration from the beginning applies to God's order in the home and in the church. This is God's declaration for all time.

God's Word, thousands of years later, says, "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3). Some have assumed that because man is the head of woman, this makes women inferior to men. The relationship, however, between Christ and the Father is like the relationship of woman to man; consequently, being in subjection does not mean being less than equal. Paul

said the Lord Jesus was equal with the Father but took the form of a servant in Philippians 2:5-8. Just because a woman is to be in subjection to a man does not make her less than him. Any man who treats women with disrespect is failing as a Christian.

When the Lord chose people to lead and teach the church, Christ chose men. The twelve apostles were all men, not six men and six women. The seven servants chosen to feed the Grecian widows in Acts 6 were all men. When the Scripture lays down the qualifications for elders and deacons in 1 Timothy 3:1-14, they are required to be husbands. The absence of females in this matter is no accident.

The Scripture gives women in the New Testament various, praiseworthy roles of teaching and service. Women may evangelize privately as Priscilla and Aquilla did with Apollos in Acts 18:26. Philippians 4:2-3 describes Euodia and Syntyche as fellow-laborers with Paul in the gospel. Paul instructed older women in Titus 2:3-4 to teach and train younger women to love their husbands and their children. Acts 9:36 describes Dorcas as a woman "full of good works and acts of charity." Some women had spiritual gifts; Acts 21:9 says Philip the evangelist had four daughters who prophesied. Women were the first at the tomb of Jesus, and the Lord sent them to tell the apostles of His resurrection. Women often traveled with Jesus and His disciples and supported His ministry.

Faithful Christian men should treat their wives with honor and respect. First Peter 3:7 says, "You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered." When men treat women with disrespect, it's clear this behavior hinders their prayers to God. Godly men honor women; ungodly men mistreat them.

The New Testament limits the roles women may play in the assembled church and in the leadership of the church. The Bible says, "as in all the churches of the saints. The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church. Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment" (1 Corinthians 14:33-37). It is clear women are not to speak to the whole church to impart teaching.

Paul gives four reasons for this restriction on women. First, the Law says this. It may refer to Genesis 3:16 and the female's subordination due to the sin in the garden. It possibly could come from man's priority in creation: "Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man" (Genesis 2:22). Numbers 30:3-12 also notes that a woman's vow must be approved either by her father or by her husband. If he opposes the vow, her pledge will not stand.

Second, "it is shameful for women (not just wives) to speak in church" (1 Corinthians 14:35). "Church" here refers to the assembled body as in 1 Corinthians 11:18. Paul calls the act of a woman speaking in church "shameful" or "disgraceful." While some hold culture as the source of the shame, it likely means this shame instead arises from God and His Law. In fact, the pagan cults of both Corinth and Ephesus had women as their high priestesses and teachers, according to Bruce Morton in his book, *Deceiving Winds*. The Lord's commandment was actually counter to the pagan culture of Corinth! God's teaching came to change the world; we

must not let the world change the church.

Third, "Let your women keep silent in the churches." This practice was not merely one to be kept in Corinth but in all the churches. "Keep silent" is from the Greek word *sigao* and means to hold one's peace and say nothing. The instruction to "keep silent" is given three times in this chapter. First, a tongue speaker (even if male) is to "keep silent" when no interpreter is present (verse 28). Second, if one prophet is speaking and another receives a revelation, "the first one must keep silent" (verses 29-30). Third, "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak" (verse 34). "Speaking" here is a general term which would apply to public talk: leading prayer, preaching, prophesying, tongue-speaking or interpreting.

Fourth, Paul says this is "the commandment of the Lord" (14:37). Some gifted Christians likely objected to Paul's instructions (14:36), so Paul boldly declares the source of this "commandment" is the Lord himself. There is nothing cultural or temporary about the Lord's command to the churches.

Some object, "What about the women who were praying and prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11:4-5?" The primary subject of chapter 11 has to do with wearing veils and not with speaking in church. The "custom" or practice of the day was for women to have long hair and wear a veil. Breaking from this custom was "disgraceful" and against nature. Some gifted women may have thought their spiritual gifts gave them the right to speak in the assembled church. If the women were speaking in the assembled church in chapter 11, Paul eventually tells them to stop it in chapter 14. Women likely spoke in other settings than the assembled church, such as gatherings of women or in private. Whatever the case, the command of the Lord was to end the practice of women speaking in the assembled churches.

We have this teaching confirmed in 1 Timothy 2. Paul said, "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling" (1 Timothy 2:8). Paul chose "men [adult males] in every place to pray." The phrase "in every place" is a specific term speaking of the place where congregations assembled to worship. First Corinthians 1:2 uses the term to describe the place where the church assembled. Clearly, God wanted males to take the lead in prayer and worship.

If women are not permitted to lead prayer, surely they are forbidden to preach. Women are to learn in quietness, not teach! First Timothy 2:11-12 says, "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." Asserting his apostolic authority, Paul did not permit women to be public teachers of men or to exercise authority over a man at church. She cannot rule or subjugate men to her will at church. Paul does not permit her to take these roles, even if elders, preachers, and other men allow it. No person has a right to ask or to permit any female to do what is contrary to God's instructions.

To be quiet or silent (*hesuchia*) here means to be at rest, a spirit and an attitude of tranquility arising from within and causing no disturbance. They were to focus on learning, not teaching and to remain quiet, to say nothing. This learning was to take place with "entire submissiveness." "Entire submissiveness," is a complete, voluntary surrender of one's rights or will. It is to give precedence to others; she is to "subordinate herself in every respect." This is not speaking merely of subjection to her husband; this is speaking broadly of women subjecting themselves to the leadership of men in the functions of the church. "Submission" does not mean one has inferior value or worth but rather that one recognizes one's role in a relationship. As we

noted, Jesus was not inferior to God according to Philippians 2:5-8, but He willfully subjected himself to his Father.

The theological basis for saying women cannot preach arises from the beginning with Adam and Eve, not a cultural bias from Paul himself. "For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." (I Timothy 2:13-14). This teaching reveals God's order of life, God's way. According to historian Everett Ferguson, the writers in early church history give evidence that "Women were not appointed as elders, nor did they take public speaking roles in the assembly as prophets, teachers, or leaders in the assembly. Where women did take these roles in heretical and schismatic groups, this practice was a basis for objection to these groups." While times change, God's Word does not change.

We should use our talents for the Lord, but we shouldn't assume talents permit us to engage in activities and roles God never meant for us. King Saul was not a priest and sinned by presumptuously making a burnt offering at Gilgal, rather than waiting for the high priest, Samuel (1 Samuel 13:8-14). Though he was king, Saul had no right to make this sacrifice. By presuming he could act without authority, Saul lost his place with God. King Uzziah also became proud and transgressed against the LORD by "entering the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense" (2 Chronicles 26:16). Uzziah was not a Levite, so Azariah, the priest, and eighty others rightly withstood him. God punished Uzziah for his sin. God will not let an unmarried or childless man be an elder, either.

Even Jesus, as the Son of God, could not serve as a Levitical priest in the temple because He was from the tribe of Judah (Hebrews 7:14). Jesus didn't feel cheated because he couldn't function as a Levitical priest in the temple. Giftedness does not grant the right to overrule God's laws. The Scriptures demand that anyone who leads must meet the qualifications. Rather than feeling cheated by God's limitations, we should focus on the things we can and should do to serve God. With joy and thanksgiving, let's follow His will and not our own.

Someone objects, "Isn't being limited unfair to women?" No. God has given women marvelous roles in virtually every other area than in the leadership of the church. God has given women some roles that men will never be able to fill. Should men object and feel cheated? No. Our task is to pursue the work God has given us to the best of our ability rather than envy what God has given to someone else. In God's eyes, every member of the body, the church, is valuable though they have different functions.

First Corinthians 12:14-19 says, "For the body [the church] is not one member, but many. If the foot says, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. And if the ear says, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,' it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. If they were all one member, where would the body be?" Yes, God has a place for everyone!

Please let Jesus be Lord of your life. Trust His ways; they are higher than our ways. Believe in the Lord Jesus; turn from sin and selfishness to serve Him; confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and be baptized. Baptism is an immersion in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. When you're baptized, God washes away your sins and makes you His child. Become a Christian today!

"A Man Attested"

Have you ever wondered how the eyewitnesses of Jesus thought of His miracles? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today we're going to explore whether the miracles of Jesus were real.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." Jesus trained and convinced twelve ordinary men that He was truly Lord and Christ by fulfilling the many prophecies in the Old Testament Scriptures and by His undeniable miracles. He also gave them miraculous powers by the Holy Spirit. Within a century, these twelve men committed to the truth led the church in a hostile environment to have more than a million members. They achieved this by persuading people of the truth, even in the midst of great persecution. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

The apostle John wrote in 1 John 1:1 to 4, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete."

The apostles preached the truth about Jesus passionately, persuasively, and joyfully, because they knew their message was the Word of Life that would bring eternal life. They wanted everyone to come into fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. They faced overwhelming opposition from a pagan society but gave their lives to preaching what they knew was the truth—what they saw and heard and even handled.

We offer this study free on Jesus attested by God by signs and miracles. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website, for anyone anywhere in the world, and it's www.searchtv.org. That's the website.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Acts 2:22 to 28, and we'll explore another reason to believe in Jesus Christ.

Today's reading comes from Acts chapter 2 verses 22 to 28. And we'll be reading a portion of Peter's message on the day of Pentecost.

"Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— this *Man*, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death. But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. For David says of Him,

'I SAW THE LORD ALWAYS IN MY PRESENCE;
FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, SO THAT I WILL NOT BE SHAKEN.
'THEREFORE MY HEART WAS GLAD AND MY TONGUE EXULTED;

MOREOVER MY FLESH ALSO WILL LIVE IN HOPE;
BECAUSE YOU WILL NOT ABANDON MY SOUL TO HADES,
NOR ALLOW YOUR HOLY ONE TO UNDERGO DECAY.
'YOU HAVE MADE KNOWN TO ME THE WAYS OF LIFE;
YOU WILL MAKE ME FULL OF GLADNESS WITH YOUR PRESENCE.'

That's a reading from God's Holy Word. Let's pray together. Oh, Father we are grateful that through Your son there were miracles, and wonders and signs preformed that many people saw. And that He was raised from the dead. Bless us now today as we study. In Jesus name, Amen.

Peter described Jesus as a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs. He wanted to the people at Pentecost to recall what they themselves knew about Jesus. Jesus had performed many miracles in the presence of multitudes of people. He showed what He was and proved himself by His works. Miracles are works of power that go beyond what is natural, they're supernatural works that only God could do. Wonders emphasize how people marvel at what they saw or experienced. It was a matter of wonder and awe that Jesus could walk on water, still a storm, or heal a man born blind. Signs are acts of God for a divine purpose. Jesus worked miracles to show the Jews that He was indeed the Son of God. Now, He wouldn't turn stones into bread for selfish reasons. He worked signs to point to God and His purposes.

Jesus remarked to the apostles in John 14 verse 11, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves." When Thomas doubted the resurrection of Jesus and wouldn't believe until he saw the imprint of the nails in His hands and the wound in His side, you remember, Jesus gave him proof. The Lord Jesus said to Thomas in John 20:27 to 29, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

Although the apostles and disciples were unbelieving and despondent after the crucifixion of Jesus, Acts 1 and verse 3 says, "To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God." Jesus gave them convincing proofs that God had raised Him from the dead. He appeared to those who knew Him best, people He could not fool. They saw Him, heard Him, spoke with Him, touched Him, and ate with Him. Because of this, they could stand together and proclaim, "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses" (Acts 2 and verse 32).

The New Testament lists fifteen appearances of Jesus after His resurrection. 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 6 says, "He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep." Now, if we were to ask any of these five hundred whether Jesus arose from the dead, they would surely tell us that they saw Him and they knew that He did. Paul didn't hesitate to acknowledge that they were eyewitnesses who could verify the resurrection.

We shouldn't imagine that the resurrection was the only miracle that people saw. The Lord Jesus performed many miracles in the presence of multitudes. Matthew 4 verses 23 to 25 says that, "Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with

various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.”

In Matthew 9, Jesus healed a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing the faith of those who carried him to the house, Jesus said to the paralytic, “Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven.” Well, this made the scribes and Pharisees to think evil of Jesus. But knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, “Which is easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Get up, pick up your bed and go home.” And he got up and he went home. Matthew 9 and verse 8 says, “But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.” I tell you, if you had seen this miracle, you too would be awestruck and would be glorifying God.

On another occasion Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee and went up into a mountain. Matthew 15 verses 30 to 31 says, “And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled (or maimed) restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.” The miracles of Jesus were undeniable. The word “crippled” here speaks of people who were maimed, missing some part of their bodies; and arm or a leg. They were visibly impaired. Matthew 18 and verse 8 speaks of the crippled as people missing a hand or a foot. Well, large crowds witnessed these healings.

Matthew 17:24 tells of “those who collected the two-drachma tax came to Peter and said, ‘Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?’” Peter, of course, said yes. In verse 27 Jesus said to Peter, “However, so that we do not offend them, (you)go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me.” Now, not many people find a coin in a fish’s mouth, but Peter did! Now, the coin was just enough to pay the tax for them both. Now, imagine: what would Peter think of Jesus if he pulled in his first fish and didn’t find a coin? Wouldn’t he consider Jesus a fraud? Finding that coin gave one more proof in Peter’s heart that Jesus really was God’s Son. Matthew was the one tells the story, not Peter. Clearly, the others knew about this wondrous miracle.

Jesus fed the 5,000 men besides the women and children from five loaves of barley bread and two fish (Matthew 14:17 to 21). The people watched Him bless the food and break the loaves to give to the crowds. They were outside of the villages with no source of food but the lad’s loaves and fishes were able to feed them; Jesus fed this multitude miraculously. The thousands of people ate as much as they wanted. And afterward they picked up the broken pieces, twelve full baskets. John 6 and verse 14 says, “Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, ‘This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.’” They were convinced of His power. They knew Jesus was fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah. Verse 15 reveals that they were intending to come by force and make Him king, but He withdrew into the mountain alone.

Matthew 15 verses 32 to 39 tells how Jesus, feeling compassion for the people, fed the four thousand men besides the women and children. The disciples wondered how they would get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a “large crowd.” They had only seven loaves and a few small fish, but the Lord Jesus fed them all until they were satisfied. And they took up the leftovers and filled seven large baskets. The people saw and knew His power and that it was from God.

Jesus later raised Lazarus from the dead. You know he had been in the tomb four days. John 11:45 to 46 says, “Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and saw what He had done, believed in Him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done.” Many

saw it (that is this resurrection) and believed! They began telling the story, and even the enemies of Jesus heard it! John 11:47 to 48 says, "Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, 'What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.'"

You see the enemies of Jesus knew and admitted His miracles and signs were real. They knew the evidence was so convincing that everyone would "believe in Him." They feared what the Romans would do if they let Jesus continue preaching and working miracles. The enemies of Jesus never denied His miracles; instead, they conspired to kill Him because His miracles were real. If Jesus were a fraud, he wouldn't have posed a threat to them.

After Lazarus' resurrection, six days before the Passover, you remember, Jesus came to Bethany. In John 12:9 to 11 the bible says, "The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He (Jesus) was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus." You see not only did the priests want to kill Jesus, they even wanted to kill Lazarus in order to stop people from believing in Jesus.

In Acts chapter 3 Peter and John healed the lame beggar. This fourth year old man. This man "had been lame from his mother's womb." He "was being carried along" and "set down every day at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful. Peter by the power of God healed the man. In Acts 3:8 to 10 says, "With a leap he stood upright and began to walk; and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God; and they were taking note of him as being the one who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple to beg alms, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him." You see they knew God, through Peter and John, healed this man. Well, after Peter preached to the people, the temple guards put them in jail.

And the next day the chief priest and the other temple officials wanted to know how this man was made well. Peter answered in Acts 4 and verse 10, "let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this name this man stands here before you in good health." The Council then convened in private saying, "What shall we do with these men? For the fact that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all who live in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it" (Acts 4 and verse 16).

When the Romans were trying Paul before Governor Festus and King Agrippa, he defended himself by speaking of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In Acts 26 verses 23 to 26, Paul argued "that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles." But, while Paul was saying this in his defense, Festus said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are out of your mind! Your great learning is driving you mad." But Paul said, "I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I utter words of sober truth. For the king knows about these matters, and I speak to him also with confidence, since I am persuaded that none of these things escape his notice; for this has not been done in a corner."

Well why does all this matter. Jesus was indeed a man attested to the people by God with many miracles and wonders and signs. They knew, in that age, what power He had shown for years. To preach God had raised Him from the dead then was not strange.

Let's pray together. Oh, Father we're thankful that You gave proof, many convincing proofs, to the people of that day about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Father help us, though we have not seen, to still believe. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

You might be saying, "well I know the Bible says Jesus worked miracles, but I've never seen anyone walk on water or raise the dead. I don't know anyone else who has seen miracles. How can you be so sure the miracles of Jesus happened?" Well, my faith rests in the testimony of the apostles, who could speak of His miracles and say, "just as you yourselves know." For years, Jesus Christ had been performing miracles before crowds. There was no doubt among the people that He could work these miracles. They were awestruck! If you could talk to them face to face, they would tell you what they saw and heard. If we had lived in those days and witnessed these things ourselves, we'd think it strange for anyone to deny His miracles.

Now, multitudes were witnesses of Jesus' miracles, and hundreds could verify His resurrection. The twelve apostles boldly risked their lives to testify that God had raised Him from the dead. They believed. And the writings found in the New Testament are the most studied, copied, and attested books of all time. If the resurrection of Jesus Christ were a fantasy, the first century church would never have existed. The fact that His disciples died proclaiming the Lord's miracles proves they were more than myths and legends.

Will you not also believe the evidence found in these 27 books of the New Testament, evidence prophesied in the Old Testament. When the Jews on Pentecost realized God raised up the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they crucified, they asked what they should do about their guilt. Peter answered, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Three thousand were baptized that day; they wanted forgiveness. The Lord forgave them, washed away their sins in baptism (Acts 22:16) and gave them newness of life in baptism (Romans 6 and verse 4). Won't you too believe, repent and be baptized?

We hope our study about the miracles of Jesus has deepened your faith. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now, you can download these lessons, no matter where you are in the world, or a newsletter online at: www.searchtv.org. There's a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area, also on line. We hope that you'll subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry," on YouTube. Where you can also see this program.

As always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.

"The Eternal Gospel"

Although the apostles preached the gospel for the first time two thousand years ago, it is still able to accomplish what God intended. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Today, we're exploring the eternal gospel.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Although the Bible is an ancient book, it's as relevant as today's news broadcast. Its themes and messages are truly imperishable and much needed by every person. We need God's promises, God's commandments, and God's truth. There are no substitutes for God's ways. You cannot find a replacement for the truth, and morality that God teaches in His word. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Sarah Sallon, an archaeologist at Hebrew University, sifted through some dusty old boxes from the archaeological sites of Masada and Qumran. She found 32 ancient seeds, which were in "beautiful condition" she planted six of them in Southern Israel. Well, scientists carbon dated these seeds and found the seeds were 2000 years old. Now, these plants took root and grew. Some of the plants are now old enough to pollinate and produce fruit on their own. The seed, although 2000 years old, can still do what God intended. It still produces after its own kind.

God said in Genesis 1:11 to 12, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them"; and it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good." Seeds can only bear fruit after their own kind. They will not bear anything else. Seeds from the date plants, even if they're 2000 years, that is a date palm, can only produce another date palm. The gospel is an imperishable seed like that and it can only produce what God intended; it too can only produce after its own kind. Only the imperishable truth can produce eternal life.

Now, we offer this study free on the eternal gospel. And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at searchtv.org. You can also download these materials online in printed, audio, or video formats.

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from 1 Peter 1:22 to 25, and see how God's word is truly eternal.

Our reading today comes from 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 22 to 25 and in this passage Peter talks about how that we are born again by our obedience to the truth.

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS,

AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS.

THE GRASS WITHERS,

AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF,

BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER."

And this is the word which was preached to you.

Aren't you thankful that we have God's word preached to us. Let's pray together. Father we're thankful that we have been able to purify our souls through our obedience to the truth. And that we're born again and that Your word has endured. Father bless us and help us to be obedient to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

In spite of his move from Jerusalem to Rome and from Jewish culture to Roman culture, Peter remained true to his message. He realized there was no new message for a new culture. He understood that what he preached to them was the word of the Lord that would remain forever. Others in later centuries might seek to change the message, but Peter realized that it was that same preached message he received from the Lord, which brought about the divine, new birth. What he preached would remain God's message until the end of time.

Jesus commissioned his apostles and disciples to preach the gospel, the one gospel, to every person in every culture, in every nation, and in every tongue. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 28:18 to 20 that, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." You see the gospel is ageless. What they were to teach in the first century was to last till the end of time.

The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 24:35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

Many years later, Jude was facing some who had strayed from the truth and were spreading false teachings. Well, Jude wrote in verse 3, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints." The faith which Jude spoke about was "once for all handed down to the saints."

Now we are born again through the living and abiding word of God. For, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the Word of the Lord endures forever." And this is the word which was preached to you (1 Peter 1:23 to 25). Psalm 119 and verse 89 says, "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven." Now, culture may change with the wind; but God's word is still true and still carries God's authority. The Lord Jesus said in John 12 and verse 48, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." The last day won't happen until the end of time. The words of Jesus will say the same thing on the last day as they did the day Jesus spoke them.

God's word is an imperishable seed that is alive today and will remain to the end of time. It will endure every cultural change through the ages; it cannot die or be destroyed. Men have always rejected it, but it endures. Persecutions did not stop God's imperishable Word from continuing to do its work.

People find their souls purified, when they obey the truth found in this imperishable seed. True obedience is not self-designed; it listens to what God says. And God causes us to be born again by His word, not by some other way. If the seed is planted in order to reproduce, it must come from God. Men can't alter or redesign the seed and then expect to get the same result. Seeds only produce after their own kind. And if you change the seed, you get what the changed seed produces. Not what God intended. You see a changed seed is different. Do you think changing the seed or message honors God? Do think He's pleased when men reinvent the gospel message?

Many current preachers believe obedience to the heart, to be heartfelt but not necessarily tied to obeying what God actually says. They think if the heart is right, it matters little whether the person obeying conforms to God's teaching. Well, this is popular within our culture, since it allows people to do whatever they wish to become a Christian. And some say well, "one doesn't have to be immersed to be baptized; one may substitute sprinkling or pouring and come out with the same result." But the Scriptures speak of baptism as a burial, (Romans 6) and the word baptism refers to an immersion in water.

And so, one must wonder, however, what Peter meant by obedience to the truth. Did he mean that we obey the truth that we agree with? Did he mean that we obey the truth that we understand, even if our knowledge of it is imperfect? Did he mean that we're obeying the truth, even if we obey a man-made tradition that rebels against the truth? Did he mean that we obey some of the truth but may ignore the rest? Did he mean that one is obeying the truth to the purifying of one's soul, even if one is substituting a manmade tradition for the gospel truth?

You see, some want the Man but they don't want the plan. They want the love and grace but not the authority and the teaching. Obedience, however, demands some instruction to be obeyed. When you obey the instruction, you obey the Person who gave it. That's how anyone obeys anything; he obeys the person and the authority behind the instruction. One does what one is told to do. The whole idea of obeying someone but dismissing or contradicting his teaching is doublethink.

The gospel is an imperishable seed that was preached in the first century and will last till the end of time.

The Scriptures teach that God saves through the blood of Christ when one is baptized into Christ. And, when the Jews on the day of Pentecost asked for the very first time what to do to be forgiven, Peter responded, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." God forgives our sins when we repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Ananias, you'll recall, told Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name."

The apostle Paul explains how baptism unites us with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. Rom. 6:3 to 7 says, "Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin."

Unfortunately, some have become convinced that they're saved before and without baptism. They believe God has freed them from sin before that they're united with Christ in baptism. They believe that they're blessed before they obey the command of God. One must wonder how a person can say they are obedient to the Lord and yet ignore what the Scriptures teach about the necessity of baptism to salvation. Can you obey the Lord while denying what He teaches? When one gets away from obedience to the Lord in small measures, it's not long before one takes much larger steps. A small twisting of the truth today can lead to a large twisting tomorrow. Once people forsake obedience to the truth, there's little to stop falling away altogether.

Only the Lord has a right to determine who is and who is not a Christian. Popular culture can believe whatever it wishes, but they cannot overrule or edit the Lord's will. And it's arrogant and presumptuous to think that Jesus is subject to the whims of a new generation, that he must change his mind should he want to attract it. Jesus made it clear in John 3 and verse 5 to Nicodemus that unless a person is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Now, we're hearing from some, "A new culture should require a new brand of Christianity adapted to the culture, Amen?" So says the "emerging church." The church must change or die, we hear, so says all the experts! We have to be postmodern; we have to be pluralistic; we have to stop being judgmental about anything; and we have to stop using the Bible. We need a new church for a new age! This is not the wisdom that is from above, but the wisdom of the world speaking, in all of those things.

The word of God is not only eternal; it is wisdom from above. James 3:17 to 18 says, "But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." God is calling us to follow Him and His teaching rather than compromise His morals with worldly sins and teach truth rather than compromise, the truth and lead people into error. God's word brings peace to the individual, to the home, to the church, and to the community. False doctrines are built on misunderstanding, selfish ambition, and even jealousy. James 3 and verse 16 says, "For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing."

Now no generation can thumb its nose at the Lord Jesus and escape accountability. No generation can tell God to hush and replace Him with its own laws for long. Now past generations have abandoned God's way to pursue their own desires, but that course leads only to destruction. When Israel embraced idolatry, they suffered for their sins. Now, you can decide that some sinful behavior is okay; you can even convince the majority to agree with you. But, popular opinions cannot turn sin into righteousness. God is still in charge. And when Israel despised God's statutes, and embraced idolatry to be like nations around them, and abandoned the commandments of God, they found out that they could not dismiss God so easily. God punished them. And reading through the Old Testament and especially the book of Jeremiah will open our eyes: God will punish those who refuse to repent. And He means what He says.

Now, Jesus is Lord of all. And God gave all authority to him over culture in every age. The Father has given all things into His hands (John 3 and verse 35). We can believe all kinds of things, but what we think or imagine doesn't change the gospel. We can propose our ways to be saved like the sinner's prayer, but the Lord Jesus makes the rules. Some imagine they can rewrite morality, but God's word has the last word. A new interpretation that denies the plain message will not stand with God. New interpretations that say things that God never said won't change God true standards. Time cannot and will not change God's word. Scripture will say on judgment day exactly what it said when Jesus and the apostles first taught it. And what God says and calls sinful is still sinful today. We can find ways of worship that please and entertain us, but the worship that pleases the Lord looks to Scripture and obeys Him. We can say all religions are alike and can save us, but Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me" (John 14 and verse 6).

Let's pray together. Oh, heavenly Father we're thankful that the Lord Jesus came in to this world and left us the words that You wanted us to hear. Father help us to be diligent, to study Your word and to be obedient to it, so that we too might have newness of life. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, Amen.

Sadly, some think the Bible is an ancient book filled with myths and legends. They don't realize the Scriptures, inspired of God, are alive with meaning and power. Hebrews 4:12 to 13 says, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." God knows our hearts. Some think they should stand in judgment of the Bible and they don't realize the Bible will judge them.

The Lord Jesus said to the devil in Matthew 4 and verse 4, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" The phrase, "It is written" should be understood to mean "It stands written." What God said, or what God had Moses to write in Deuteronomy over a thousand years was still binding in the eyes of the Lord Jesus. The things that Jesus said 2,000 years ago, are still binding on us today. His words will judge us on the last day (John 12 and verse 48).

And for this reason we must take our faith in the Lord seriously. We must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God and be willing to confess our faith. We must repent by turning from sin and worldly ways so that we live for Him; and we must be baptized into Christ in order to be forgiven and to have newness of life. Baptism into Christ means being unified, or united with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:3 to 7). And this takes place when we're immersed or buried in water. And that's when God washes away our sin (Acts 22:16). My friend won't you be baptized into Christ?

We hope that today's study about the eternal gospel has deepened your faith in God's word. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now, you can download these lessons in audio or video formats. You can find a newsletter online at our website: searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now, don't worry, if you get a hold of us, we're not here asking for money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

Get your heart focused on God today by worshiping at church. There is probably a church of Christ in your area. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well, we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So, keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. And as always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.

"The First Gentile Convert"

The New Testament reveals the story of the conversion of Cornelius, his family, and his friends. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." What saved Cornelius, and how did he obey?

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. Man has no greater need than a relationship with Jesus Christ and God our Father. To live with Him eternally we must have faith, must know His will, and we must give ourselves to Him in obedience. If you don't know the will of God, you won't be able to take up your cross and follow Him. Look closely at yourself and ask, "Am I following the Lord? Am I doing what He teaches?" Cornelius listened and obeyed. Will you? Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

Acts 10 verses 1 and 2 says, "Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually." When you think of someone like Cornelius, who has such a fine character and fears God, you wonder why he should need to be converted. But, Cornelius, even though he was an honorable and devout man, who trained his household to believe and to pray to God as well. He, even though he was a generous man and a man of prayer. In spite of all this, he still needed to hear words by which he and his household might be saved (Acts 11 and verse 14).

Some today live like Cornelius; they're devout, prayerful, and generous. Yet if they don't know the Lord Jesus and have not heard the words that can save, they need to hear them just as badly as Cornelius did. Since we can't earn our salvation, we must hear the gospel truth and respond with obedient faith. God saves all men the same way, through the blood of Jesus Christ and in obedience to His will.

Now, we offer this study free on the first Gentile convert. If you'd like a printed copy of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org. The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Acts 10:23 to 28, and we'll explore the salvation of the first Gentile convert.

Our reading today comes from Acts chapter 10 verses 23 to 28. And here Peter and those six who were with him are entering into the house of Cornelius. Verse 23.

So he invited them in and gave them lodging. And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped *him*. But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am *just* a man." As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled. And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and *yet* God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

Oh, how thankful I am that we can be able to enter into the kingdom of God and be able to be a member of the body of Christ. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that Your love and Your grace has opened up a door so that all people by faith and by obedience can come to be a part of Your family. Bless us now and help us to be good servants. In Jesus name, Amen.

Cornelius was a devout and prayerful man, but he was not yet a Christian; he was not yet cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ. Acts 10:3 to 6 says, "About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, "Cornelius!" And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God. "Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea."

Well, why did the angel tell Cornelius to send for Peter in Joppa? Well we find Peter's answer to this question in Acts 11 verses 13 and 14, "And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, 'Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here; and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'" Peter was going to teach Cornelius and his household words that would save them. Although Cornelius was a praying man, he still needed to hear words to be saved. Although Cornelius had spoken to an angel, he still needed words to save him.

Although this angel had spoken to him, the angel didn't tell him what to do to have his sins forgiven. Although the angel assured Cornelius that God had heard his prayers, he doesn't leave him rejoicing that he was already saved. No, the angel told him to send for a man who will tell him what he must do to be saved. Now, some who pray today need to know God would answer the same way He did with Cornelius. The answer to a prayer to be right with God comes in the form of hearing a message from God. Faith and obedience to the message preached will bring salvation.

God uses words to bring people to Christ and salvation. The apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 1:22 to 23, "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." Now, we're born again when we obey the truth found in the imperishable seed, which is the living and enduring word of God. Salvation doesn't come from some "better felt than told experience" or from some miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit; it comes through obedience to the truth of the gospel.

Now, for this reason, the apostle Paul could say in Romans 1 and verse 16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." Again, he said in 1 Corinthians 1:21, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." Friends, God doesn't miraculously operate on our hearts to give us faith. Romans 10 and verse 17 says that, "faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.(or the word of God)" Peter didn't come to Cornelius to give him a miraculous gift but came to give him words that would save him.

Peter had to be convinced about approaching the Gentiles with the gospel. You see up to this point, only Jews had become Christians. Before Cornelius' servants arrived, God used a trance at lunchtime on a rooftop to convince a hungry Peter to think differently. Acts 10 verses 11 to 16 says, "and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!" But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean." Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy." This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky." Peter was perplexed by the trance, and the men sent from Cornelius

arrived at the gate. The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter and told him to accompany these men without any misgivings. The men explained that Cornelius desired for Peter “to come to his house and hear a message from you.”

Well, two days later Peter along with six others entered Cornelius’ house, where many family and friends were gathered to hear his message. Now, by this time Peter recognized that “God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.” Peter said to those assembled, “I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him (Acts 10 verses 34 to 35).

Peter then preached Jesus to Cornelius, his family, and his friends. Apparently, Cornelius knew some things about Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all and went about doing good and healing people miraculously, “for God was with Him.” He spoke of how the Jews “put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. God raised Him up on the third day” and made Him visible to the witnesses who were chosen. Peter revealed how the apostles were ordered to preach to the people about Jesus who was appointed by God as the Judge of the living and the dead. He noted in verse 43, “Of Him (that is of Jesus) all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

While Peter was speaking, the “Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message” (verse 44). All the circumcised Jewish believers were amazed that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles. Well, they heard the Gentiles speaking with tongues and exalting God. When Peter saw this, he said in verses 47 to 48, “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?” And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Now, this is not the first time Peter had spoken about being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. You’ll remember what he said on the day of Pentecost to those who were pierced to their hearts over the crucifixion of Jesus. Peter said in Acts 2:38 to 39, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. “For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.” Cornelius would not receive the forgiveness of sins until he had obeyed the gospel message.

Now some say, “Phil, they received the Holy Spirit’s gift of tongues before they were baptized.” That’s true, but we must ask the question why and review the question when. In Acts chapter 11 Peter and the other six had to defend themselves before the apostles and the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem for going to the Gentiles with the gospel. And verse 4 says that Peter proceeded to “explain to them in orderly sequence” what happened. Now, “orderly sequence” means he told them what happened point by point. He spoke of his vision on the rooftop, learning that, “What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy” (Acts 11 verse 9). Verse 12 says that, “The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man’s house.” Peter then revealed that Cornelius’ vision of the angel telling him to send for Peter; “and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household” (verse 14).

Well, in Acts 11:15 to 17 Peter reported, “And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as He did upon us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as He gave to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God’s way?” Verse 18 says, “When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life.”

You see, the miraculous speaking in tongues given by the Holy Spirit was not to save Cornelius and those with him but to convince the Jews that Gentiles were no longer to be considered unclean and unholy. From this time forward, they began preaching the gospel to Gentiles just as they did to their fellow Jews. Now, this unique reception of the gift of tongues did not mean the household of Cornelius was exempt from repentance or baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for them to receive the forgiveness of sins.

The purpose of miracles was not to save people but to confirm the words spoken by the apostles and evangelists of the time. Hebrews 2 verses 3 to 4 explains how the gospel matters and how miracles were used to confirm the word. It says, "How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will." You see, miracles confirm the word, but God uses the gospel message to save those who are lost.

When Philip the evangelist preached in Samaria, the crowds gave attention to what was said by Philip, "as they heard and saw the signs (miracles) which he was performing" (Acts 8 and verse 6). He cast out unclean spirits and healed the lame and paralyzed. There was much rejoicing. And verse 12 says, "But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike." The Spirit didn't save the people through a direct operation. They believed the word, they were baptized, and then God saved them.

When an angel of the Lord and the Holy Spirit directed Philip to join the chariot of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8, the Spirit spoke to Philip; but Philip preached from the Scriptures to the Eunuch. There was no sinner's prayer, and there was no direct operation of the Spirit on the Eunuch. He heard Philip's preaching about Jesus and he wanted to be baptized in water (Acts 8 verses 35 to 39). The Eunuch realizing that he was saved when he was baptized went on his way rejoicing.

Although the apostle Paul, when he was known as Saul of Tarsus, heard the voice of Jesus in Acts chapter 9, the Lord Jesus only told him to "get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do." Well, it's clear in the book of Acts that hearing the words of the gospel always preceded salvation. The speaker tells the sinner what he must do in order to be saved. And in Saul's case, you remember that Ananias told him in Acts 22 and verse 16, "Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name." Baptism is clearly the time when God washes away sins. It wasn't a prayer, it wasn't a vision on the road, it was baptism and he was saved.

Let's pray together. Father we're thankful for Your love and we're thankful for the day. We're thankful Father that Your word clearly explains us what we need to do in order to be right with You. Help us to be good listeners and to be obedient to Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

When Cornelius heard what he needed to do, he didn't argue about it. He faithfully listened to Peter's message and obeyed. Acts 10:48 says, "And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." Some will tell you well, "Just say this sinner's prayer, and you will be saved"; but Peter, Philip, and Paul didn't propose that for salvation. Some think the Holy Spirit miraculously and irresistibly saves them by a direct operation; but it's clear from the book of Acts that people were saved by hearing the gospel and obeying it.

Hebrews 5:8 to 9 says, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation," Salvation is a gift from God to those who believe in Him and obey His teaching. We can't earn our salvation, but we can't receive it apart from obeying the Lord. Rather than depend on a short

sinner's prayer, like some suggest, why not follow Peter, Philip, and Paul, who were sent by God to teach people the true gospel and what to do to be saved. My friend, be like the noble Bereans and search the Scriptures. Find out how people were saved in the book of Acts. Don't be deceived.

When we hear and believe the gospel, repent of our sins, confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God and are baptized, then God saves us. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 3 and verse 21, "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." If you want to be saved and if you want to have a good conscience, then follow this teaching. And you'll never regret doing the right thing.

We hope that today's study about the first Gentile convert has stirred you to draw close to the Lord Jesus. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. You can download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: www.searchtv.org. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Why not subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry," on YouTube. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. And of course as we say, don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you get to heaven.

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