

Acts 10 - John Karmelich

1. If Hollywood were to make a movie based on Chapter 10, the title would probably be:
 - a) Pentecost II - "This time it could be *you!*"
 - i) Chapter 2 is about the 1st time the Gospel is preached to a Gentile (non-Jew).
 - ii) The chapter is often nicknamed "The Gentile Pentecost"
 - a) Like the "Great Pentecost" in Chapter 2, the converted are speaking in tongues by the end of the chapter.
 - iii) The big theme is about breaking down the barriers of prejudice, with the Jews and Gentiles being used as an example.
 - b) Chapter 10 is about Peter's sermon to a Roman soldier and his family.
 - i) To summarize, Peter sees a vision of a large sheet filled with animals, which he figures out that God wants him to witness to Gentiles (non-Jews). Meanwhile, a Roman centurion (a guy in charge of 100 soldiers) gets a vision from an angel telling him to send guys to get Peter. The Roman centurion has a Bible Study in his house, Peter gives the sermon, and the next thing you know everybody's speaking in tongues.
 - a) There. You're all done. The rest is just more details! ☺
 - b) Obviously, there is a lot more to this chapter.
2. The one thing that hits you after reading the chapter a few times is that the focus is not just on this Roman Centurion, but the *real* lesson is about the maturity of Peter.
 - a) Peter, like most 1st Century Jews had a lot of built in prejudices about Gentiles.
 - i) Jews looked at Gentiles as being "beyond help".
 - a) There is a verse from the Midrash (the official Jewish commentary on the Law) that says, "God created the Gentiles to fuel the fires of hell."
 - b) When Jesus told the Apostles to take the Gospel "To Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth", I'm sure most of them thought it only applied to *Jews* living all around the world.
 - c) Reading all of Acts, you also get the impression that Jews would have been a lot more tolerant of Christians had they only focused on Jews. Part of their hatred stemmed from the teaching that non-Jews could be saved outside of Judaism.
 - d) God choose the Israelites to be his chosen people. Not because they were better, but he needed *a* group to be examples to others. The mistake the Jews made was "it went to their head", and they thought they were more pious than others were. (Sounds familiar? ☺)
 - (1) "Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people." (Deuteronomy 9:6 NIV)
 - ii) As you study Chapter 10, you see clues of Peter's change in attitude.
 - a) From the first to the last verse of this chapter, you can see Peter change.

- b) Why was Peter given the honor of opening the ministry to the Gentiles?
 - i) Didn't we read in the last chapter that Saul/Paul was to be God's spokesman to the Gentiles? Doesn't it also say in the Bible that Peter's primary mission is to the Jews? (Galatians 2:8) What Gives?
 - a) Part of the reason is to change Peter's attitude. Peter, at this time, was the church leader, and God used Peter as an example to others.
 - (1) One must remember that becoming a Christian is *only the beginning*. The rest of one's life God works on maturing you into a more faithful Christian.
- 3. The lesson to learn, for all of us, is about breaking down barriers and prejudices.
 - a) The first assumption one needs to make about Christianity is we don't know who is saved and who isn't. Period. This is why God wants us to witness to all people. It doesn't mean passing out literature to everyone on the street, but our attitude and behavior as Christians should be consistent in front of all people!
 - b) Anyone of else could cross out "Jews & Gentiles" and fill in the blank with our own experience. It could be a race, another denomination, an individual, a group, etc.
 - i) "For whoever is not against us is for us." (Mark 9:40 NIV)
 - ii) This is a whole sermon unto itself, so I'll let it go, and start the chapter.
- 4. Chapter 10, Verse 1: At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ² He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.
 - a) Some background notes.
 - i) Caesarea is a coastline city in ancient Israel. It was a Roman-based city for soldiers and officers.
 - ii) A "centurion" is in charge of 100 soldiers. He would be the equivalent of a "captain" or a "sergeant" in a modern regiment.
 - iii) "Italian Regiment" simply means soldiers from all over Italy.
 - a) Remember that in this time of history, government was more "city-states" than national-counties. (It's the *Roman Empire*, not the *Italian...*)
 - b) For a Roman soldier to be respected by the Jews was a big deal. Historically, most were hated as Roman conquered and controlled the Jews.
 - i) Most commentators did not see this guy as a convert to Judaism, but one who simply was kind, generous and respected the Jewish faith.
 - ii) The #1 job of a Roman soldier and leader is "keep the peace". As long as there were not any rebellious out breaks, people who lived within the Roman Empire (for the most part) were granted all sorts of religious freedom.
 - c) Cornelius is the kind of guy who would be respected in most communities today.
 - i) For those who believe in the false principal "All it takes to get into heaven is to be a good person", well, Cornelius is your man!
 - a) He would probably be accepted in most liberal & middle ground churches!
 - ii) Only one problem: Not saved! Here was a "good person" who is not saved!
 - a) Why is that? Why can't you be saved by being "a good person"?
 - (1) First, we don't know how "good" is "good" in God's eye. There would be no way to have *assurance* that you are good enough.
 - (2) Second, God is perfect, therefore for us to live with him for eternity *we* have to be perfect. Since we're not, a *perfect sacrifice* is necessary.

- (3) Finally, God will not allow anyone to brag in his presence (e.g. "I'm here for all the good deeds I've done"). That is not coming to God in faith. (See Ephesians 2:8-9 on this.)
- iii) One of the classic questions people ask is "What about the people deep in the jungles of Africa who have never heard the Gospel. What about them?"
- a) Romans Chapter 1 makes it clear that God does judge people based on what knowledge they *do have*.
 - b) I bring this up because Cornelius is one of those guys.
 - c) Yet God has greater plans for Cornelius.
 - d) I take the view, as do many Christians, that those who are actively seeking the true and living God, God-himself leads them into more revelation about Himself.
 - (1) "I love those who love me, and those who seek me find me." (Proverbs 8:17 NIV)
- d) Cornelius has a Roman background, which is a belief in many Gods. He is obviously dissatisfied with that, and is influenced enough by Judaism to believe in one true God. Verse 2 says, "he prayed to God" readily.
- i) If you see someone "getting more religious" or simply seeking the truth, pray for that person. God is leading them to himself. It has happened millions of times in history, as we'll see in Verse 3.
5. Verse 3: One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"
- a) Why "3 in the afternoon?" I suspect that Cornelius was interviewed by Luke years later to write Acts. There are moments in our lives we remember so well, we even remember the time of day. I don't see any special spiritual significance here.
6. Verse 4: Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.
- a) Like the last chapter, "Lord" can also mean sir, a title of respect.
 - b) A Roman centurion like Cornelius probably does not have any type of Bible background. He would have no concept of what an angel is and isn't.
7. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God." ⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." ⁷ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸ He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.
- a) Some Christians will argue that God does not hear the prayers of non-believers.
 - i) Nonsense. First of all, how can anybody get saved if God doesn't hear the prayers of nonbelievers?
 - ii) There is a verse in Proverbs that goes as follows:
 - a) "One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Proverbs 28:9 NKJV)
 - iii) I take the view that those who are actively seeking God, even though their knowledge of truth is limited, that God will hear their prayers.
 - b) Why did God tell Cornelius to send men to Joppa to find Peter? Why didn't the angel just say "Jesus is God, and give 'em the Gospel?"
 - i) It would save a whole lot of reading of the rest of the chapter, wouldn't it? ☺
 - ii) I find that God works *through people* to spread the Gospel message. He does this for *our sake!* It is not only great joy to *receive* the Gospel message, but also to *share it with others*. God does not do it himself as to give us the privilege!

- a) Even with Saul (Paul) in the last chapter, God did not lay out the Gospel message to Saul. He simply stated, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting". Saul himself figured out the rest.
 - b) The main purpose of Angels is to deliver messages from God. The word "angel" means, "messenger".
 - iii) Back to the question, why send men to Peter?
 - a) Part of it is for Peter's sake. God wanted to open the Gospel to gentiles.
 - (1) Having Peter travel to Cornelius would give Peter time to think about God's redemptive plan to include other non-Jews.
 - iv) God's plan is also for Peter to deliver the message to Cornelius household and friends (later in the chapter). By doing it this way, Cornelius had time to organize everybody together to hear Peter's message.
 - c) Last thing. How would these men find Peter in another city?
 - i) The answer is that Peter was staying with "Simon the Tanner". Ever been to a place that tan's leather hides? It smells awful. All these guys had to do was go to the seashore and "follow their nose".
8. Meanwhile, the story moves 30 miles away to Peter, at Simon the Tanner's house. Verse 9: About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.
- a) In Jewish houses, roofs were flat. It is more like a rooftop patio.
 - b) Orthodox Jews pray 3 times every day, one of them is at noon.
9. The story continues with Peter in a "trance"; Verse 11: He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."
- a) One of the interesting things to note is that Peter was hungry, and God uses that fact to show Peter this vision of a large sheet filled with animals and God says "Kill & Eat".
 - i) That means God is aware of when we are hungry!
10. Verse 14: "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." ¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." ¹⁶ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.
- a) Notice Peter's ego coming out in verse 14: "I have never eaten anything impure".
 - i) Peter disobeyed God (Not so, Lord) by trying to justify himself!
 - ii) You can say 'Lord' and you can say 'Not so', but you *can't* say "Not So Lord". (W. Graham Scroggie) from Warren Wiersbe "Chapter by Chapter Bible Commentary"
 - b) To a Jew, there is a whole list of foods that they cannot eat. Leviticus Chapter 11 is the focus of that list. (The application of this list to a Christian is really interesting, but I'll save that for another day. For those who were in my Exodus Study, they are "word-pictures like the parts of the Tabernacle.) In Leviticus, God only permitted Jews to eat certain foods. Certain types of birds *were* acceptable, others were not. The same for types of animals, fish and insects.
 - i) Technically, this is different from the Jewish "kosher" laws we think of today. The Kosher rules are interpretations of the laws. For example, there is a verse that says you should not "boil a goat in its mother's milk." To avoid that possibility, Jews today never eat meat and dairy in the same meal.
 - a) Kosher also includes how certain foods are prepared.

- ii) One thing to notice about this list is that there were both *acceptable and unacceptable* animals on this vision.
 - iii) The vision, as we'll see later, has *nothing to do with eating clean animals!*
 - a) Whether or not a Christian-Jew should eat "kosher" is a whole another debate unto itself. I don't believe you'll find the answer in this verse.
 - c) The vision is about associating with Gentiles.
 - i) We know that because the vision was repeated 3 times!
 - a) 3 men come to visit Peter right after the vision.
 - ii) To a Jew, all Gentiles are "unclean". A Jew must wash in a ceremonial way after coming in physical contact with a Gentile.
 - iii) When God says in Verse 15 "don't call anything impure that God has made clean", he was referring to people!
 - iv) Reading ahead to Verse 34, Peter says, "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism". Peter figured out the vision was about bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles.
 - d) One thing to notice before we move on:
 - i) Peter got a "vision" and Cornelius got an "angel".
 - a) Why not an "angel for both" or a "vision" for both?
 - b) It's the same reason that when Jesus performed a miracle, he never did it the same way twice. Some people he touched. Other miracles were from a distance. Others he prayed over. Others he called demons out of them. To a blind man, he put mud in his eye and told him to wash.
 - c) The point is God wants us to focus on the person and not the method!
 - (1) If God uses the same method consistently, we would look *to the method* for miraculous powers and not the source, God himself!
 - ii) I think the same thing could be said about Cornelius angel at 3pm and Peter's vision at 12:00pm. I guarantee if both incidents were say, at 3pm, there would be groups claiming, "special blessings always occur at 3pm! ☺"
 - a) The point again, focus on the messenger, not the specificity of the event.
11. Back to Peter. At this point, the vision, which he saw three times, was now over. Verse 17: While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.
- a) God's timing is always perfect! Right as Peter was finishing, the men showed up!
12. Verse 19: While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."
- a) God is working on Peter's prejudice. If the Holy Spirit had not urged him to greet these men, he would still be sitting there contemplating the vision.
 - i) Also remember, men being sent by Roman centurion was a scary thing. The threat of being arrested for being a Christian was still real!
13. Verse 21: Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" ²² The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.
- a) I don't know if any of these men were Gentiles, but it was a big first step for Peter just to invite them into the house.

- b) Hearing a story about "an angel told a Roman soldier to send men down to find me" sounds preposterous to a non-religious person. (If it weren't for Peter's vision, I would have made sure they were sober if they walked in my house with that remark! ☺
 - i) I'm convinced the *only* reason Peter took them seriously was his own vision.
 - a) What's the point I'm trying to make?
 - b) Answer, "God hasn't lost your telephone number!" Let me explain.
 - c) When somebody comes knocking on your door, saying "they have a "message from God for you", inquire *yourself* of God whether or not this is true! God hasn't lost your phone number!"
 - d) Another point is that when God is working on an arranged meeting, he is working *on both ends* to make it happen.
 - e) "but test the spirits, whether they are of God;" (1 John 4:1)
14. Verse 23b: The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. ²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.
- a) Cornelius knew that an angel was arranging this meeting, so he calls his friends & extended family over to hear the message. I like this! A pre-arranged home Bible study!
15. Verse 25: As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."
- a) There is a church in Rome with a giant statue of Peter. For centuries, people have come and kissed the toe of that statue.
 - i) In the Bible, when somebody tried to worship Peter, Peter put the focus off of himself and onto God!
16. Verse 27, Peter starts talking to the group: ²⁷ Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"
- a) When Peter says "it is against our law to associate with a Gentile" is *not* in the Bible.
 - i) That was a Jewish tradition based on their (wrongful) interpretation!
 - ii) God wanted the Jews to be a *witness* to the world by their lifestyle
 - b) It's a little funny to think about, but Peter is actually opening with an insult.
 - i) To paraphrase: "You know it's not customary for us Jews to even *associate* with you lower-than-bugs Gentiles, but here I am anyway! ☺
 - ii) Peter then apologizes in Verse 28 by saying "God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.
 - a) Peter was saying his built-in prejudice against Gentiles was wrong.
 - b) That "wall" between Jews & Gentiles was well known on both sides of the fence. Peter "knocked down that wall" right away, so as to get people's mind off *that* issue, so he could *then* focus on the message.
 - c) That's a good lesson to us in persuasive communication. Sometimes we need to get an over-riding issue out of the way so people *can* hear the message you would like to say.

- c) There's a curious sentence in Verse 29: "May I ask why you sent for me?"
 - i) Peter didn't just start into his gospel message. He *asked* why did you call me?
 - ii) There's a lot of speculation on this sentence.
 - a) Did the Holy Spirit "urge" Peter to stop and ask that question?
 - b) Peter just traveled 30 miles (1-2 day journey) with 3 messengers. They *must* have told Peter *something*. Maybe Peter wanted to hear it directly from Cornelius that God called him. Maybe he wanted to hear from Cornelius to verify the story the 3 messengers sent.
 - c) The 3rd possibility is that "preaching to the Gentiles" was still something Peter wasn't ready to do. It takes awhile to overcome a lifetime of (wrongful) teaching. Maybe Peter just wasn't ready just yet and needed to hear more from Cornelius.
17. Verse 30, Cornelius tells the story again. ³⁰ Cornelius answered, "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."
- a) These verses pretty much repeat what has already been told in the story.
 - b) The best line of this whole paragraph is the last one. To paraphrase "We are all here "in the presence of God" to listen to whatever you have to tell us!"
 - i) Now if *that* isn't an invitation to preach the Gospel, I don't know what is!
 - c) That's a mistake we often make as Christians. We try to work *ahead of God* preaching the Gospel before people are ready. God works on *His* timing, not ours!
 - d) Charles Spurgeon was once asked, "What does it take to be a great preacher? His answer: "A great audience!" He meant one that is receptive to God's message.
18. Here comes Peter's sermon, Verse 34: ³⁴ Then Peter began to speak "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached-- ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.
- a) The first thing to notice about this paragraph is a lack of Old Testament references.
 - i) Read this paragraph again, and notice how it is *geared* toward non-Jews.
 - a) (All done? very good! ☺)
 - ii) Peter focuses on the historical events of the past few years as background to giving the Gospel message. These people have been living in this area for the past few years, and they are probably very acquainted with these stories.
 - iii) Peter focuses on the miracles of Jesus, which were performed for the *validation* of who he was. Peter also mentions John the Baptist, who was very renown and respected in the region.
 - b) Notice in Verse 36 Peter states that Jesus is "Lord of all". No mention of "Savior".
 - i) The first thing to consider, from a non-Jewish perspective, is that Jesus is not just "King of the Jews" but *also* "King of all". He is the only God. There is no other way to heaven. It is only *after* you realize Jesus is "King of all", and *then* He becomes your savior! The order is important.

19. Peter continues, Verse 39: "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree,
- a) Why say "hanging him on a tree?" Most likely it was out of respect for Roman culture. To a Roman, crucifixion was so cruel, it was not considered polite to speak of it in mixed company.
 - b) There is a "Jewishness" to that verse, where a man is cursed if hung on a tree (Deuteronomy 21:23). Since this is a Gentile-audience, I don't believe that is Peter's point here.
20. Verse 40: but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.
- a) The emphasis of the Gospel is not Jesus dying, but Jesus *rising again*.
 - i) This is why Protestant churches are so big on having "empty" crosses in their sanctuary. The *emphasis* is on the *risen* Lord, not the Lord suffering for our sins!
 - ii) The reason for the emphasis is because it validates Jesus as God.
 - a) No other religion ever claimed that their main "person" ever rose from the dead.
 - b) Many people and religions (including Islam) don't have a problem with baby-Jesus in the manger, or Jesus the miracle worker, or Jesus the great teacher, but Jesus *risen from the dead* is another story!
 - (1) They *can't* accept that, because to accept the risen Jesus, seated at the right hand of God is to accept Christianity, & Jesus *as* God!
 - c) That's why Peter mentions in Verse 41 that we "ate and drank" with Jesus. Jesus was not a ghost. Ghosts don't eat and drink.
 - b) Peter also emphasizes in Verse 41 that not *everybody* saw Jesus, just those God had "pre-destined" to be his witnesses.
 - i) The Bible has verses that teach *both* pre-destiny and "free-will". This is one of those "pre-destiny" verses. 'Nuff said. ☺
 - ii) Some people use this verse to argue for "limited atonement". That is the belief that Jesus *only* died for those are pre-destined.
 - a) I simply disagree. Christ died for *all*. Some simply *choose* not to accept that free gift God gives. Here is a supporting Bible Verse:
 - (1) "And he (Jesus) died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. " (2 Corinthians 5:15 NIV)
21. Peter continues, Verse 42: He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."
- a) The only "Jewish" type reference in the whole sermon is to the "Prophets". Peter must have figured those who lived around Jews must be familiar with the term "prophets" in Old Testament context.
 - b) Peter gives the Gospel in the last part of Verse 48: "that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name".
 - i) That's it in a nutshell. Not being a good person, not going to church every Sunday, but receiving in forgiveness by *believing* that Jesus died for your sins.
 - ii) The "other side of the coin", of course, is that, *if* you believe that, you will put that belief into motion by your actions. "Works" *is* a part of Christianity, but it is only *through* the faith that one "acts" like a Christian.

22. Verse 44: While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.
- a) Verse 44 says that while Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit "took over" and people received the message and believed it. The Holy Spirit came upon them the *moment* they believed the Gospel!
 - a) Some "Pentecostal" churches argue that "salvation" and the "coming of the Holy Spirit" are two separate distinguished events. They appear to be happening both at once here!
 - ii) Peter was interrupted. He didn't even make it to the altar call! ☺
 - a) Why do you think God worked that way?
 - b) I suspect so that the credit goes to God, and not Peter!
 - b) Back on page 1 of this lesson, I said if Hollywood made a move of this chapter, it would be called "Pentecost II - "This time it could be *you!*"
 - i) Chapter 10 is nicknamed by some commentators the "Pentecost of the Gentiles". That is because the "speaking of tongues" came on the room the same way it did to the first Jewish believers on *the* day of Pentecost, back in Acts Chapter 2.
 - ii) "Tongues" is the supernatural gift to praise God in another language, usually one in which you can't speak. For more on "tongues", see my notes on Chpt. 2.
 - iii) Some Pentecostal churches believe that one does not have "the Holy Spirit" unless or until they have the gifts of tongues. They use this verse & Chapter 2 as proof.
 - a) I disagree. The purpose of *this* group receiving the gifts of "tongues" is to show the Jewish group traveling with Peter that the Gospel is for the gentiles too. Re-read these verses and it should validate that argument.
 - b) The purpose of this "tongue" demonstration was to show that Gentiles are on an equal-basis with Jews in God's eyes.
 - (1) "For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. (Deuteronomy 10:17 NIV)
23. Peter continues, last part of Verse 46: Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
- a) We have now seen Peter take a major step in Christian maturity.
 - b) From a man who *only* believed that salvation is *through* Judaism *through* Jesus,
 - i) Peter now understands that it is *only* through Jesus.
 - ii) For Peter showing this family what baptism is, is a major step for him.
 - c) Notice that baptism here is a separate event from the coming of the Holy Spirit.
 - i) These believers were "filled with the Spirit" back in Verse 44?
 - ii) So what's the purpose of being baptized here?
 - a) It is for *identification* with Christ. It is a public *declaration* of their new life with Christ.
 - b) I suspect, but can't prove Peter believed in "full emergence" baptism. The reason being is that it is a wonderful "word-picture" of the old life dying in the water, and coming up again in the new life.
 - c) Besides baptism being a public declaration of new life, it shows you, the "baptizee" a symbol of being "cleansed" in your new life as you come up out of the water.

24. Last Verse: Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.
- a) Christianity doesn't *end* at baptism, it is just the beginning. Growth and maturity as a Christian is a life-long process. Asking Peter to stay is saying "Hey, Peter, there is still a lot of stuff about Christianity we don't know. Stay a few days and teach us more about Jesus! Hang around here Peter, we want to learn more!"
 - i) That's a great attitude for us as we go to Sunday worship or a mid-week Bible Study. We are there to learn *more* about Jesus, and *more* about what God expects for our lives.
 - b) Wow, I'm ending a half page early. I must be slipping! ☺
25. Let's Pray: Father, we thank you for the walls you have knocked down in bringing the Gospel to all people. Like Peter, help us to clean out our own bigotry. Help us to remember that Jesus dies for *all* people, and *all* people need to turn to him. We may have a burden in our heart for someone special. We are not able to "talk" them into the kingdom of heaven", but with your help, we may be able to "pray them in". Like Peter, help us to be guided by the Holy Spirit, and help us not to jump ahead of your redemptive plan. For we ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen.