

The Salvation of the Gentiles, Part 4

Scripture: Acts 10:36–43

Code: 1737

Introduction

The book of Acts is the only historical book in the New Testament, in the purest sense of the word. It records the growth of the church from its birth through its early years. Following the chronology of the New Testament through Acts 1, Jesus Christ has already died, been buried, risen, and ascended to heaven. Then He sent His Spirit to indwell His church. In Acts 2 the Spirit of God came and the church was born. From Acts 2:10 the church grew as more people came to Christ. It happened first in Jerusalem. The Spirit of God was moving tremendously among the people, and they were being saved as they acknowledged Christ. Then the gospel reached outside of Jerusalem. The Jews who were living in Greek speaking countries had come to Jerusalem for the feasts and festivals (Ac. 2:5, 8:11). Many entered into the church through faith in Christ. Then the church reached out to halfbreed Samaritans (who were half Jew and half Gentile). They heard the gospel, believed, and were placed by the Spirit of God into the church (Ac. 8:12). As we come to Acts 10, the last great expansion of the church takes place. It had reached Jerusalem Jews, the Hellenist Jews, and the Samaritans. The last step was "the uttermost part of the earth" (Ac. 1:8). The church now reached out to the Gentiles. In Acts 10 we find the salvation of the first group of Gentiles. The church that was founded by our Lord when He sent His Spirit exploded in a few years into Gentile territory. The design of our Lord was that we would be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then the rest of the world is coming to pass (Ac. 1:8).

In Acts 10 Peter is about to preach a sermon to a group of Gentiles that will result in their salvation and their inclusion in the church. The message to the Jews was that Christ was crucified, has risen, and is coming again. An act of faith receives the gospel message. The message to the Samaritans and the Gentiles was exactly the same. The message to you is no different.

Review

We are studying the sermon of Peter, which began in Acts 10:34. Let's look briefly at what has happened in Acts 10. God knows that the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles is a monumental event, so He has made some preparations.

Cornelius was a pagan by all definitions: He had been raised apart from the written law of God apart from Judaism. He did not know the law contained in the commandments that God granted to men and placed in the care of Israel. But he did live up to the light that he had in his conscience and that he had experienced in the world around him. Romans 1:18 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Paul goes on to say, "That which may be known of God is manifest in and around every human being. If they can't see God through their conscience and the world about them, then they are without excuse" (vv. 19-20). God gives the knowledge that He exists to every man throughout the earth. If a man will apprehend that knowledge and live up to it, then God will move in

with more light. People say, "What about people in pagan countries who don't have the Bible and who don't hear the gospel?" God is a just and loving God who never makes mistakes. If a man in any situation lives up to the light that he has, then God will grant him more light. Cornelius was such a man. He had attached himself to Judaism because he perceived that the true God was the God of Israel. So God began to work on him.

I. SOVEREIGN CALL (vv. 120; see pp. xxxx, xxxx)

II. SUBMISSIVE WILL (vv. 2133; see pp. xxxx, xxxx)

III. SIMPLE PRESENTATION (vv. 3443)

Cornelius needed only an explanation of the gospel. His heart was ready because God had sovereignly done His work. Peter was God's chosen vessel to dispense the facts of the gospel to Cornelius so that he might be saved and added to the church. In Acts 10:33 Peter was in Cornelius's home, and Cornelius said, "... Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Cornelius wanted salvation. In fact, before Peter's sermon was completed, Cornelius had believed and received Christ (v. 44).

This sermon of Peter like all good sermons has three parts: an introduction, a main theme, and an invitation. Let's begin by looking at ...

A. The Introduction (vv. 3435; see pp. xxxx)

1. THE FAIRNESS OF GOD (v. 34; see pp. xxxx)

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons"

As a Jew, Peter had been reared to understand that God had a special love for Israel. But to realize that God could love Gentiles was hard for the Jews to understand. So it was extremely difficult for Peter to extend himself to Gentiles. But God had prepared him with a vision (Ac. 10:9-16). In that vision, God began to break down his prejudices, so Peter was able to say, "I'm beginning to understand that God is not partial to people." God doesn't play favorites culturally, religiously, or racially. Paul uses the same phrase as Peter in Romans 2:11: "For there is no respect of persons with God." That is not a new thought; it is found throughout the Old Testament. Isaiah 33:8 says that God "regardeth no man." God doesn't make concessions to smart men as opposed to simple men, rich men as opposed to poor men, or one race over another race. God is impartial. Peter is saying, "Cornelius, I know you are a Gentile, but salvation is available to all."

Salvation Is Available

I don't care who you are, or what your culture, background, or race is, salvation is available to you. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). The gospel is for all men. In 2 Peter 3:9 Peter said, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come

to repentance." Scoffers say, "Where's the coming of the Lord? The world's a mess; why doesn't He get here? He must be impotent" (vv. 34). But Peter says, "He hasn't come yet because He's merciful. He's waiting to give men an opportunity to respond." God is merciful, not impotent; He wants men to come to salvation. When Peter says that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," he means that salvation crosses all barriers. Salvation is not just for superreligious people or for strange fanatics, but for all who respond.

2. THE FAVOR OF GOD (v. 35; see pp. xxxx)

"But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."

That does not mean that you're saved by doing good works. When Peter says "is accepted with Him," he means that God looks favorably on the man who fears Him and practices righteousness. For example, when God sees a pagan in some corner of the world where there is no information about the Scriptures, He might find that he is living up to the information that is in his conscience. Romans 2:15 says that every man is born with enough conscience about God to know Him. In other words, you can know God from what He's written in your heart. Romans 1:20 says that you can know God from what He's done in the world. Anyone who can't see God from what he sees in the world isn't looking very hard. Scripture testifies that men have the knowledge of God built into them. If a man fears God and does his best to do what is right from what he understands about Him, then God will look favorably on him. Now that doesn't mean he is saved; it just means that God looks favorably on him. It is then that God will give him the information he needs to be saved.

Cornelius was a good man: He feared God and was as righteous as he could be, but he was not saved. The principle of salvation is simple: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Ac. 4:12). Of course that refers to the name of Jesus Christ (v. 10). Any man can live up to the light that God has given him, but he wouldn't be saved until he received Christ. Salvation comes in no other way. You say, "What about the man who does the best he can? Will God teach him about Christ?" Absolutely. In John 7:17 Jesus said, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." In other words, "God will give the man who does His will more light. He will reveal the truth." That was true of Cornelius. He had lived up to the light he had been given, and Peter came with the rest of the light. God is impartial. Cornelius was a Gentile, but God doesn't withdraw Himself from any seeking heart. Jesus said, "... him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (Jn. 6:37).

The Bridge Across the Hellish Gulf

When man sinned, he fell away from God. When he fell, a gulf intervened that is as bottomless as hell and as black as a moonless midnight. That gulf is populated by demons that howl against man. The genius, goodness, and various contrivances of man could not span that gulf, so he remained cut off from God. But in the midst of hell's high carnival over man's lost condition, Jesus Christ left His home in glory, came into this world, and at the cost of His own life, hung a bridge across the gulf. The name of that bridge is salvation. For centuries, sinwrecked humanity has been stumbling across that bridge into the arms of a loving God. At no time has God ever distinguished between race, culture, mentality, or anything else. Jesus Christ is the only way to God. I don't care how good you are; you're still on the other side of the gulf unless you cross the bridge of Jesus Christ.

Cornelius was ready, so Peter says, "Salvation is available to you, Cornelius. You lived up to all the information you had, and I'm here to give you the rest." That's the way God works.

Breaking Barriers in the World

I'll never forget my experience in a town in the Andes Mountains in South America. The streets were mud, and the sewers ran out of houses and into little gullies in the dirt street. People and animals lived in the same mud hut. As I walked along a road with a missionary and saw little children in the mud and filth, I realized how foreign that environment was to my own understanding. We eventually stumbled on a clearing, and I heard many people singing a song. I thought to myself, "That sounds like, 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus.'" I didn't understand the words, but the tune was familiar. I wandered over to the back of the church and stuck my head in the door. There was no room for me to step in! The place was packed from front to back and side to side. The people were singing, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Those people were far removed from anything we could ever understand, and they had been cut off from the testimony of Scripture. But, somehow in His own timing, God had sent the gospel to prepared hearts. In recent years, a revival had broken out to the extent that they were going to have to build more churches in the next few years than they had ever built in that area of the world.

God will always meet the seeking heart. I will never forget running into a little Arab boy in the streets of Jerusalem. He spoke enough English to tell me that he knew Jesus Christ. All around the world on a university campus or in a prison, with the brilliant or the uneducated, or with the rich or the poor the barriers have been crossed. Jesus Christ is real. I don't care who you are or what your background is; salvation is available to you.

B. The Theme (vv. 3642)

Peter's introduction is that salvation is available; his theme is that salvation is in Christ. It's great to know that it's available, but the next thing you want to know is what it is. How do you get it? Where is it? Peter says that salvation is in Christ. The only one who can provide you with resurrection life is Jesus Christ. Why? Because He's the only one who ever rose from the dead. G. B. Hardy, a Canadian scientist, said, "I only want to know two things: Has anyone ever cheated death, and did he make a way for me to do it? If so, I want to find that man." He looked in Buddha's tomb, but it is occupied. He looked in Mohammed's tomb, but it is occupied. When he looked in Jesus' tomb, he found it empty. He concluded, "Someone cheated death." Then he asked, "Did He make a way for me to do it?" Then he read this in the Bible: "... Because I live, ye shall live also" (Jn. 14:19). Hardy said, "That's what I wanted to know." There is salvation in no other than Jesus Christ.

1. THE SAVING MESSAGE (vv. 3637a)

"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), that word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee ..."

He is saying, "I am here to announce that salvation is available through Jesus Christ. There is no other way."

a. The Word of Salvation (v. 36a)

"The word which God sent ..."

God has been giving messages for a long time; unfortunately, people aren't always listening. You can't crawl out of your little box and discover God, and you can't reach Him by your own design. You are natural and He's supernatural. The natural cannot ascend to the supernatural, so the supernatural descended to the natural. God speaks in our world. What did He say? "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets [in the Old Testament], hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son ..." (Heb. 1:12). God said something in Scripture and He said something in the person of Christ. What did He say?

b. The Channel of Salvation (v. 36 b)

"... unto the children of Israel ..."

God used Israel as a vehicle, not as an end. God didn't unload all His grace on Israel; He simply used them as a channel for His grace. But they were ineffective, so God cut a new channel His church. But what did God want to say through them?

c. The Peace of Salvation (v. 36c)

"... preaching peace by Jesus Christ ..."

Man is at war with God. You're born into this world in conflict with God. But it is God's will that men know peace with Him.

1) The Rebellion of Man

One day we read in the papers about peace, and the next thing we know we're fighting a war somewhere else. We say to ourselves, "Where does it all end?" The Bible says that it ends in the coming of Christ and not before. The Bible says, "There is no peace, saith the +LORD, unto the wicked" (Isa. 48:22). There will never be peace between nations because nations are only groups of people, and there's no peace between people.

There is no peace within the individual heart because men don't have peace with God. They are in a world that is going against the grain. No wonder they can't be comfortable and be at peace. From the time a man is born into this world, he is in sin. He is in rebellion to the moral law of God. Consequently, he is not at peace with God, and that is reflected in his own life he's not at peace with himself. That means he's not going to be at peace with his family, and that nations aren't going to be at peace with other nations. All that is in the macrocosm is an extension of what is in the microcosm: The lack of peace in the world is a reflection of the lack of peace in the lives of individuals. Men are trapped and they can't bridge the chasm between them and God. They don't have any peace in their hearts. They're living against the grain of the standards that God has built the universe upon. Consequently, men know no rest.

2) The Reconciliation of God

However, God has come into the world and said, "I have a message of peace." Would you like to be at peace with God and with men? You can; that's His message. Resurrection life is a life of peace. When you come to Christ, your old, rebellious nature dies and you have a new life at peace with God. To be living the life of God according to God's standards is absolutely revolutionary. Total change is possible. That's God's message to the world. Why does man want to live in rebellion against God when he can have peace with Him? Why does he want to live in rebellion with himself when he can have peace with himself? Why does he want to live in rebellion with his family and his friends when he can have peace? He doesn't have to because peace is available.

Second Corinthians 5:18 says, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ" Christ has made peace with us. We were cut off, but Jesus built the bridge across the gulf and we are now able to make peace with God. Then Paul says, "... God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ..." (v. 19). God took care of our sins in Christ; therefore, we can have peace with Him. Sin creates friction with God's holiness. Consequently, there's no peace; there's only turbulence. As we come to Christ, His holiness becomes ours. There's no more turbulence; we're at peace with God. Even though we still sin, our sins are covered by the blood of Christ. They are forgiven and cleansed instantly. The Lord says, "I will remember them no more" (Isa. 43:25).

In Acts 10:36 Peter says, "... preaching peace by Jesus Christ" There's no other way. I would love to say, "Believe anything you want as long as you're sincere," but that would be a lie. There is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ. But don't worry, if any man in a pagan country is living up to the knowledge within him of the true God, then God will give him the light he needs to come to a full knowledge of Christ. There is no other way. God is the real preacher and witness. Peter says, "I'm just repeating what He said."

d. The Lord of Salvation (v.36d)

"... He is Lord of all"

What does that mean? Peter is saying to the Gentiles, "He's my Lord, He's your Lord, we're all one." Peter is also saying that Jesus is God in a human body. He is not just a man; He's Lord over all. That means there is no other Lord. God said, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Ex. 20:3). Jesus Christ is Lord. Anyone is a child of God because he knows Christ. There's no way a man can enter into peace with God other than through Christ.

e. The Availability of Salvation (v. 37a)

"That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee ..."

Peter is saying, "This isn't anything new to you, Cornelius. You've heard about Christ." Cornelius lived in Caesarea, a small town by the coast of the Mediterranean where the Roman government had its headquarters in Palestine. It was only forty to fifty miles from Jerusalem. Cornelius had heard about Jesus. Word had been scattered throughout all Judea and Galilee. Information about Him was

available.

I say the same thing to you. You've heard of Christ. Perhaps you spent some years of your life in a Sunday School class and have gone to church from time to time. At least the western world and all its crass commercialism propagates some truth about Christ every Christmas and Easter. You may even think about Jesus Christ.

2. THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION (vv. 37b42)

a. The Announcement by John (v. 37b)

"... after the baptism which John preached"

John the Baptist was the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets. He announced the coming of Christ. He called out people from Israel to purify themselves in preparation for the Messiah. Their baptism was a symbol of that purification. One day, as John was preparing people for the coming of the Messiah, He came. Jesus wandered down to the Jordan river and John said, "... Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). John later said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn. 3:30). John faded away and Jesus came to the forefront. The spotlight of the world was turned on Him. His ministry began when He was baptized by John in the Jordan River.

b. The Anointing by the Spirit (v. 38a)

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power ..."

The Holy Spirit and power always go together. God anointed Christ immediately after He was baptized. The Spirit of God descended upon Him. God was saying, "This is My Messiah." God set Him apart as the Redeemer, the King, and the Anointed One. He said, "... Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Mk. 1:11). God anointed His Son with power as the Spirit of God came upon Him. Jesus was then ready for the work that He had been called to do.

Christ's work is described in Luke 4. Nazareth was a despised town in Galilee. That Christ came from there was part of His humiliation. In Luke 4:24 Jesus said this to the people of Nazareth after teaching them: "... No prophet is accepted in his own country." They never thought anything good could ever come out of their town. But that same day, He stood up in the synagogue and read this Messianic prophecy from Isaiah 61:12a: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Lk. 4:18-22). Jesus was saying, "I am the Messiah!" He was anointed by the Spirit of God as the Messiah. He began His ministry in the power of the Spirit.

c. The Activity of Christ (v. 38bd)

1) The Particulars (v. 38bc)

a) Doing Good (v. 38b)

"... who went about doing good ..."

Could Jesus ever do anything else? That's unlike most wouldbe Messiahs, who spend their time in philosophical speculation. He spent His time in doing good.

b) Healing the Oppressed (v. 38c)

"... and healing all that were oppressed of the devil ..."

There's a conflict in the universe between God and Satan. Jesus came into the world to enter that conflict and resolve it. After Jesus was anointed at His baptism, He was immediately led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by Satan (Mt. 4:11). The conflict began. For the three years of His ministry, Christ was in constant conflict with Satan. It continued as He sweat great drops of blood in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk. 22:44). When He was put on the cross, Satan threw all hell against Him. He was in conflict with Satan to the very end. Jesus came into this world to destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn. 3:8). He went about doing good, as Satan went about the world doing evil.

Is all disease related to the devil?

Everyone who is sick isn't demon possessed. And every time you get sick doesn't mean that a demon is oppressing you. But all illness is related to the devil. You say, "Why?" Because all illness is a result of sin in this world. For example, if you have no Satan, you have no sin; if you have no sin, you have no death; if you have no death, you have no decay; and if you have no decay, you have no disease. So if you have no Satan, you have no disease. Sometimes sickness is caused by demon possession, but it is ultimately a result of Satan's curse on the earth. For example, God wanted to test Job, but who actually made Job sick? Satan did (Job. 2:7). You say, "What about Paul?" Paul had an infirmity of the flesh that had been given to him, yet Paul called it "the messenger of Satan to buffet me" (2 Cor. 12:7). All illness is related to Satan and the principle of sin in the world. When Jesus came into the world, He immediately started fighting against Satan's system. One great way He fought it was by destroying his power over disease and death. While Jesus was on the earth, He actually called some people back from the dead (e.g. Jn. 11:32-44).

2) The Power (v. 38d)

"... for God was with Him."

It was obvious that God was active in Christ. Nicodemus the Pharisee came to Him by night and said, "... we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with Him" (Jn. 3:2). It was obvious that God was in the body of a man doing miracles. He was powerfully resisting Satan's rebellion. The battleground for God and Satan is the universe, but the conflict was resolved on the earth. Jesus Christ fought against Satan and won.

But at first it didn't look like He did (Lk. 24:411).

d. The Affirmation of the Apostles (v. 39a)

"And we are witnesses of all things which He did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem ..."

Peter says, "This is not hearsay; we all saw it." The Apostles were witnesses of the things He did, such as doing good and healing those oppressed of the devil. The Greek word for "oppressed" (v. 38) is used in only one other place: In James 2:6 it means, "tyrannized, totally dominated." The Apostles saw Jesus Christ heal people and crush Satan's only power. Satan's has two effective weapons: disease and death. But Jesus, throughout His ministry, smashed Satan's power over disease. Satan tried to use his great power of death on Jesus, but failed.

e. The Attack of Satan (v. 39b)

"... whom they slew and hanged on a tree."

Can you imagine that a civilization would crucify a man who went about doing good?

1) Initial Acceptance

For a little while they acknowledged the good that He did. In John 12:12-17 Jesus rode into Jerusalem at Passover time. Everyone was thinking about a deliverer because Passover commemorates Israel's deliverance from Egypt. They had just heard that Jesus, who had always claimed to be the Messiah, had raised Lazarus from the dead after he had been in the grave four days (v. 17). They thought, "He may be our deliverer." As Jesus rode into Jerusalem, they cried "Hosanna," which means, "save now." They were crying for political deliverance from Rome. They were too blind to know that their souls needed deliverance from Satan. But Jesus said, "... Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24). He told the people that He came to die, and they turned away from Him.

2) Ultimate Rejection

The next time the crowd came together, they screamed for His blood: "If you're not going to be our political Messiah, then we're not interested in You. You're a blasphemer!" So they killed Him by nailing Him to a cross. The Roman soldiers performed the actual crucifixion. The Jewish religious leaders put Him through a false trial to bring it to pass. Both groups were instrumental in His death.

The devil tried to stop Christ by killing Him. Death was the last power He had. Jesus had shown that the devil's power over disease wasn't strong enough because He shattered it again and again. So the devil tried to use his power over death on Jesus.

f. The Approval of God (v. 40)

"Him God raised up the third day, and showed Him openly"

The devil got men to kill Christ, but God raised Him up. Man's verdict was "Blasphemer"; however, God reversed the decision, raised Him from the grave, and said, "Redeemer!" Man and God are at opposite extremes. God said, "My ways are not your ways" (Isa. 55:8). Men judged the Redeemer and Messiah as a blasphemer, and then executed Him. But God raised Christ from the grave.

Peter said that God "showed Him openly" (Ac. 10:40). The Apostle Paul said, "... if Christ be not raised, your faith is [in] vain ..." (1 Cor. 15:17). If Christ isn't risen, then those who have died hoping in Him and His resurrection are lost forever.

g. The Assurance of Eternal Life (v. 41)

"Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before by God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead."

Jesus came out of the grave alive in a physical body. You say, "Is that important?" Yes! Because He lives, you can live also. Christ died to pay the penalty for your sin, and He rose to give you life. It's one thing to pay the penalty for sin, but it's something else to come out on the other side of the grave and offer eternal life. Both aspects of Christ's work are necessary. I'm looking forward to death (although I'm not excited about the pain of it) because I know that when I die, my soul will be with God. I don't fear death. Paul says, "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:20).

Christ came out of the grave. Satan tried to keep Him in it, but failed. Pilate tried to keep His grave sealed shut, but that didn't do any good (Mt. 27:62-66). Satan is still trying to cloud the facts of the resurrection. Easter is filled with Satan's lies. He has confused God's customs and symbols throughout history to confuse the meaning of Easter, just like he has for Christmas. For example, Easter is a form of the name of the ancient Chaldean goddess Astarte. Another name for Astarte is Ashtoreth, who was associated with Baal worship. Easter eggs are the result of a myth that a great egg fell from heaven into the Euphrates River. Out of that egg came Ashtoreth. Satan has been attempting to cloud the facts of the resurrection of Christ for a long time.

Satan would like to keep Christ in the grave, but he can't. Christ is alive. Because He lives, I live. The day I put my faith in Jesus Christ I came alive, and I'll never die. My body will die, but my soul will live eternally with God. What a promise! I have peace and joy in Christ.

h. The Authority of the Judge (v. 42)

"And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be the Judge of [the] living and [the] dead."

Peter is saying, "If Christ is not your Deliverer, He'll be your Judge. Take your choice." With that Peter concludes the main body of His sermon.

C. The Invitation (v. 43)

"To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall

receive remission of sins."

Remission is forgiveness. The only thing that allows God to receive us is His forgiveness. It comes when you believe in Christ. I read a story about a father who took his wife and three children on his yacht. They were far out in the harbor when a storm came, and the boat capsized. His wife and three children were in the water. He knew he could save one, but the others would need to drown. What a horrifying decision to make! He chose to save his wife. He put his arm around her and swam to shore while the three children drowned. That's not like God. He has no problem collecting all the drowning people who want to be saved. God is not limited. Peter said, "... whosoever believeth shall receive [forgiveness]." Salvation is only a question of faith. It is available in Christ to everyone who comes in faith. Paul said, "... if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. 10:9). Do you believe that Jesus died on a cross for you, bore your sin, and rose from the dead to give you life? If you believe that, personalize it by saying, "Christ, come into my life. Give me resurrection life." And He will.

+focus

1. Describe the growth of the church as detailed in Acts 2:10. (see p. 1)
2. To whom is salvation available? (see p. 3)
3. What must a man do to be saved, even though he has lived up to the knowledge that God put within him? (see p. 3)
4. What is the theme of Peter's sermon? (see p. 5)
5. What were the two means by which God spoke to man? (Heb. 1:12; see p. 5)
6. What was God's purpose for Israel in the spreading of the gospel? (see p. 6)
7. Why don't men have peace in their hearts or with their fellow man? (see p. 6)
8. What is God's message to the world regarding peace? (see p. 6)
9. How did God reconcile us to Himself? (2 Cor. 5:18-19; see p. 7)
10. Describe the ministry of John the Baptist. What did he announce? (Jn. 1:29; see p. 8)
11. What did God anoint Jesus with? (Ac. 10:38; see p. 8)
12. What was the work that God had called Jesus to? (Lk. 4:18-22; see pp. 89)
13. How is all illness related to the devil? (see pp. 910)
14. What are Satan's two weapons? What did Jesus do to them? (see pp. 10-11)

15. What was the initial response of the people to Jesus? What was their ultimate response? (see pp. 1011)

16. What two aspects of Christ's work are necessary for our salvation? (see pp. 1112)

+ponder

1. Colossians 1:12 says that we should give "thanks unto the Father, who hath made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." You should be thankful for the salvation that God has given to you. Take this time to thank God for your salvation. Remember your condition before you were saved. Thank Christ for becoming your bridge to God. Be sure to continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to Him (Heb. 13:15).

2. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. Why should we persuade men to be reconciled to God? Give several reasons. Whom are we responsible to for our lives? Why? What ministry has Jesus Christ given to us? How should that ministry manifest itself? What is your responsibility as an ambassador of Jesus Christ?

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