

ACTS: ALIGNING WITH GOD'S SOVEREIGN WORK OF DISCIPLING

XXIV. God's Pattern For World Evangelism

(Acts 10:24-48)

I. Introduction

- A. The book of Acts explains "the orderly and sovereignly directed progress of the kingdom message from Jews to Gentiles, and from Jerusalem to Rome," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 351.
- B. Accordingly, we can learn much about aligning our ministry efforts with God's sovereign work from studying the Early Church era as it is presented in the book of Acts.
- C. Acts 10:24-48 provides God's pattern for world evangelism, providing insight into what the Lord wants to do and what He expects us to do in realizing this goal, so we view the passage for our insight and application:

II. God's Pattern For World Evangelism, Acts 10:24-48.

- A. In Matthew 16:19, Jesus had predicted that He would give the keys of the kingdom to Peter to open the door for people to enter it, what was partly fulfilled in Peter's evangelizing Jews on Pentecost in Acts 2:14-41 and Samaritans in Acts 8:14-25. However, Peter still needed to be used of God to open the door for the Gentiles.
- B. The way God worked to get the Hebrew Peter to evangelize Gentiles in Acts 10 provides us God's pattern for how He meant to evangelize the world in the era of the Church (as follows):
 1. First, God prepared the Gentiles to be receptive to Peter's ministry of the Gospel, Acts 10:24, 29b-33:
 - a. God gave the Gentile Cornelius a vision on contacting Peter to hear a message from him, Acts 10:29b-32.
 - b. Cornelius had responded to this vision by sending messengers to Joppa to get Peter (Acts 10:33) and filling his house with relatives and friends who waited to hear Peter's message when he came (Acts 10:24).
 2. Second, God prepared Peter to evangelize the Gentiles in Cornelius' home, Acts 10:9-23, 34-35:
 - a. The Lord had also begun to prepare Peter to evangelize the Gentile Cornelius by giving Peter a vision about eating animals that had formerly been banned for him under the Mosaic Law, Acts 10:9-16.
 - b. When Peter wondered about the application of this vision, the Holy Spirit directed him to meet the three Gentile men whom Cornelius had sent to find him at Simon the tanner's house, Acts 10:17-20.
 - c. Peter then learned from these messengers about Cornelius' vision directing him to hear God's message from Peter, so Peter knew God wanted him to evangelize Cornelius' Gentile people, Acts 10:21-23.
 - d. When Peter arrived at Cornelius' home and heard the report of Cornelius' vision, he realized that God had wanted him to go to them to evangelize them opposite his past reservations under the Law, Acts 10:34-35.
 3. Third, Peter presented the Gospel of Christ's salvation to the Gentiles, Acts 10:36-43: He simply rehearsed the history of Christ's life, death and resurrection and told of the remission of sins through faith in Him.
 4. Fourth, Peter's Gentile listeners were justified by God apart from any human manipulation, Acts 10:44:
 - a. The instant Peter told of the remission of sins through faith in Christ, the Gentiles who were listening to him believed in Christ, and the Holy Spirit consequently fell upon them, Acts 10:44.
 - b. Peter gave no "alter call" and no order to "pray to receive Christ," – the Gentiles simply trusted in Christ!
 5. Fifth, Hebrew believers recognized the spiritual fruit of the Gentile converts, Acts 10:45-46 with 2:1-11: The Hebrew believers present were stunned to witness these new Gentile believers supernaturally speak in other languages, magnifying the Lord just as the Hebrew believers had done on the Day of Pentecost!
 6. Sixth, seeing the evidence of salvation in the Gentiles, the Hebrew believers baptized them, v, 47-48a:
 - a. Peter asked if anyone could forbid believer's baptism to these Gentile converts who had receive the Holy Spirit like the Hebrew believers had done in Acts 2:1-11, and the answer of course was "No!"
 - b. Accordingly, Peter commanded that they be baptized in the name of the Lord as part of the Church, v. 48a.
 7. Seventh, the Hebrew believers fellowshiped with the new, baptized Gentile converts, Acts 10:48b: The Gentile converts asked that Peter stay with them for several days, and he evidently did so, what would have been impossible with the old restrictions of the Mosaic Law under which Peter had once lived!

Lesson: *God's initial pattern for evangelizing the world involved (1) His preparing the unreached to accept God's truth, (2) His preparing His messenger to evangelize the unreached, (3) His having His messenger give the Gospel (4) without human manipulation, (5) His having the messenger recognize the fruits of true conversion in the hearers (6) followed by having His messenger baptize the converts in Christ's name (7) and fellowship with them.*

Application: *Whether we evangelize our neighbors or send missionaries to the ends of the earth, may we follow the pattern God initially established in Acts 10 for evangelizing the world for Christ in the era of the Church.*