

10/16/22 - Acts 10:36-48 - "Confirmation of Salvation"

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[0 : 00] Okay, so Acts 10, starting in verse 34, reads, So Peter opened his mouth and said, Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.

As for the word that was sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ, He is Lord of all, you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.

He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. And we are witnesses of all that He did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

They put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree, but God raised Him up the third day and made Him to appear, not to all people, but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.

And He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.

[1 : 35] To Him, all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name. While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.

And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.

For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. And then Peter declared, Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Him to remain for some days. This is God's word.

Praise God. My throat decided to get in a little tizzy through singing, so bear with me as I suffer from a dry throat.

[2 : 51] We're in the middle of the book of Acts. Like literally right towards the center of it.

And this is the 21st message. Yeah, I counted them all. 21st message in our Acts series. And Luke has taken us on quite a journey, hasn't he?

If you've been at a majority, if not all, those 21 messages, this has been a wild ride.

You've had semantic overlaps. You've had this happening over here while this is happening over here. And Luke is such a fantastic writer of being able to communicate what's going on and with the right details and having us investigate the meaning of all of it.

[4 : 24] I mean, all to prove. What's the point of all of it? All to prove something. To prove to Luke's intended audience, which he tells us he's writing to Theophilus, but also writing to us today as bound in an apostolic testimony that this is how God did it.

Through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In other words, this is the beginning of the church. You want to know how we got to here and this assembly?

These large swaths of this, we'll call it just a swath of just waves just rippling out from Jerusalem.

And when those sparks, it's like lighting a candle at the candlelight services. That spark spreads. The fire spreads. So we see that faith does come by hearing, after all.

To go a little bit further, cynicism, we'll talk more about it next week, is the antonym of faith. Skepticism says that, I can't believe it.

And, so Peter just entered Cornelius' house. This is a Roman official. This is, somebody who is the Gentile of Gentiles, essentially, as a representative.

[illegible]

He opened his mouth here. And the passage today brings the gospel to breach to the ends of the earth. This is a promise that was originating from Jesus Christ's word in Acts 1.8.

And here, it went from Jerusalem to Samaria, all Judea, and now it is breaching the ends of the earth with the Gentiles. It's truly something the skeptic can't believe.

[9 : 17] So, bound for us today includes every aspect of confirmation we should need to come to faith in Jesus Christ. Within the text today is everything that we need to come to faith.

It's the story of the gospel listed out for us in the passage as we read. So, if we can, for a moment, knowing that that is true, I want to make a moment of prayer before we dive into each and every verse of the passage and see something unfold that is just absolutely miraculous.

So, let's pray. God, help us today to be submitted to your word. Help us to come under your word, to come under your rule, to come under your reign.

Break down our man-made constructs and kingdoms. And Father, let us be building blocks of your temple. Let us see how to do that and how you started that in the text today.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. So, rather than, oh boy, I'm not even giving you slides.

[10 : 47] I'm all thrown off from the generosity. Let me give you a sermon title for note-takers here. And so, it's Confirmation of Salvation.

Confirmation. And so, how I'm going to do this in the text is there's three sections, essentially.

But what I see within each section are confirmations throughout. Confirmation of Salvation. And so, three confirmations.

The first confirmation is that the word was sent. The word wasn't maybe sent. The word wasn't, I hope, might be sent sometime.

But there's confirmation. The word was sent. And so, Peter opened his mouth and said, truly, I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.

[12 : 00] These verses that we covered last week, if we look at that isolated from the whole of Scripture, we might be duped for a works-based salvation.

Well, okay, if I want to be acceptable to God, I just have to fear Him. I'm pretty scared of Him. Right? So, okay, I'm in that way and I have to do what is right. So, help the old lady across the street a couple times.

Right? Do these good things. Hold the door for somebody. Isolated from the context, you might be duped into thinking that this is like a checkbox of things of how to be acceptable to Him.

But it's packed within meaning with the verses around. Did you know that there's verses around verse 34 and 35? It's very interesting how they inform what that means.

And we're going to see that today. And so, Peter has this revelation. All this confusion is brought to understanding. Understanding, I understand that God shows no partiality but in every nation, anyone who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him.

[13 : 07] As for the word that He sent to Israel, verse 36, preaching good news of peace. That was the word sent to Israel.

Preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ. Meaning, He is Lord over all. verse 37, you yourselves know that that happened throughout all, know what happened all throughout Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power.

He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with Him. Huh. Huh. Confirmation.

The word was sent. If you were ignorant of it walking in, might you know now that throughout these pages within Scripture is a river regarding the message of Jesus Christ.

A river. And from that living water you will not thirst. And we see that that word, that river as you're drawing from, is hope in the coming Messiah for Israel.

[14 : 46] In that, God's honor and display was all broadcasted in Israel, was it not? The essence of His being and the effect of His being that as Isaiah even prophesied in Isaiah 52, the proclamation of peace, this is actually found in the person of Jesus Christ where it says how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, your God reigns.

The one who's anointed Lord over all, 1 Chronicles 29-12, both riches and honor come from you and you rule over all, in your hand are power and might and in your hand is to make great and give strength to all.

Or as David says in Psalm 103, the Lord has established His throne in the heavens and His kingdom rules over all, doing good and healing the oppressed. All throughout Scripture is a Christocentric claim, a river that our forefathers have drawn from.

In other words, we receive a rich reference to the characteristic of God in Jesus Christ. That He is God's honor and glory made displayed.

And the word given to Israel proclaims God's lordship and salvation. Verse 37 says, you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaims.

[16 : 39] It's like while they might not understand the full way to being Gentiles and out of the worldview of the Jewish culture and the Jewish people, Gentiles might not know that.

But what they do know is that as Peter says, you know what happened throughout all Judea. Meaning that you've read the papers.

You've heard the rumors. The sick were being healed. The dead were being raised. Four days dead. Stinky dead. Being raised. You read about the coming of the Holy Spirit.

You've heard the rumors in Jerusalem and then Samaria. This is all pointing to God's glory and honor.

Remember, he says, remember John's baptism in the river where God anointed Jesus Christ. God appointed him, dedicated him, consecrated him, set him apart.

[17 : 44] And this was evident by the way of the testimony of his earthly ministry of being full of power in the Holy Spirit. God was with Jesus.

It was undeniable that God was with Jesus. Notice how Peter calls upon their memory because they know something.

But Peter wants them to understand something. In other words, God's initiative all along from Israel to now the Gentiles is that his initiative was to bring salvation and God's initiative of salvation was manifest, made manifest on grand display in the person of Jesus Christ.

In other words, church, Jesus Christ is the agent of God. I love Marvel movies. I love these undercover people sneaking in and everything. Literally, Jesus Christ is the agent of God.

He was sent for a specific assignment to live undercover in humanity, to enter into the darkness and to inaugurate the now here salvation.

[19 : 03] Isn't this remarkable? The word was sent.

This should be undeniable. God came to us. John 1.14 makes that clear, doesn't it?

And the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory. Glory as the only son from the father full of grace and truth.

And no one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the father's right side, but he has made him known. the most humbling reality as a Christian is knowing that God initiated a relationship with us.

Think about that. God initiated a relationship with us. It's evidence in the garden. It's evidence through the books of the law back here a little bit.

[20 : 23] It's evident in the gospels, but is it evident for you today? Did you know that God initiated, he went to great lengths to be in relationship with you today?

And in the most vibrant display of God's goodness, he sent Jesus Christ as his only begotten son to fulfill an operation that only God could fulfill.

To go undercover, under the cloak and cloth of humanity. To fulfill what humanity cannot do. To die a debt that he didn't need to pay, but he gave himself up to pay a debt that we can't owe.

And when we remember this, this first confirmation that the word was sent, we ought to be driven to worship in awe.

This ought to inform all that we do, especially corporate gatherings. We should be excited about this. where's the tambourines?

[21 : 42] Where's the liars? This draws us to worship in awe. Not just knowledge. Knowledge wasn't good enough for these Gentiles, but understanding.

Knowledge puffs up. But when you understand all that God is doing, and the reality of that, and the impact, and the, regardless of the skeptic, that it's undeniable.

It changes you. It changes you. Not just knowledge, but action. And so, he continues in this narrative.

He makes it clear that the word was sent, but look what he does as well. He says, the word was confirmed.

confirmed. He turns to his own testimony in verse 39. And we are witnesses of all that he did, both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

[22 : 54] They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. But God raised him on the third day and made him to appear. Not to all people, but to us, but to us, who have been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God as to be judge of the living and the dead.

To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receive forgiveness of sins through his name. Peter says, you've heard it, but we've seen it.

I love how 1 John starts out with all that he's seen, all that he's heard, all that he's looked upon, all that he's touched, right? And him saying that this is the testimony of the apostolic body.

They were there. In other words, don't just read the papers. Don't just hear the rumors. We saw Jesus' earthly ministry as you've heard about.

[24 : 14] We saw Jesus Christ's lifeless body on the cross. We saw humanity reject him and abandon him.

We saw Jesus Christ raised after three days being dead. Lifeless in a tomb. Like us today, not all are witnesses.

And just like these Gentiles in Cornelius' house, they weren't there. But they heard. Not all ate and drank with him. Imagine eating and drinking with Jesus after the resurrection.

I don't know what should make us and compel us to believe other than realizing that really happened. After he rose from the dead.

We were with him. You weren't, but we did. Listen to us. They became agents as well. Just as God sent Jesus Christ as his agent, Jesus Christ sent them, commissioned them, Matthew 28, 18-20, the Great Commission, or Acts 1-8 of this witness in all Jerusalem to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

[25 : 31] They were agents sent by God. What's the assignment of this apostolic body? Well, not to atone for sin, as some might pray to as the apostles being saints, but it's not to atone for sins or receive forgiveness, but to attest to where forgiveness can be found.

Because Jesus Christ, his task, his mission is still in order. He's going to return. And when he returns, he will judge the living and the dead.

In other words, the agent sent by God has one task to complete. And the agent sent by Jesus heralds a message, likened to those of the prophets in the Old Testament, warning those who are living in disobedience and rebellion, but giving a message of hope.

Everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins in Christ alone. This is good news.

This is the fulfillment of a promise from even long ago for Isaiah that's now being manifest to Jerusalem, the Gentiles of the future promise of forgiveness.

[26 : 56] Where Isaiah 33, 24 says, and no inhabitants will say, I am sick. The people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.

This is a promise long ago within the river of Scripture. But wait a minute. did you hear that?

Who can receive forgiveness of sins? Everyone. can be forgiven of their sins.

Not just Israel. Not just because you're from the tribe of Benjamin and all these nations and the patriarchs. But also these people who were actually declared unclean.

People who were declared common. And in Jewish law this is significant. And this is something unbelievable. Truly unbelievable. Everyone.

[28 : 04] The Lord over all offers salvation to all. Jews, Gentiles, or even Romans. God's salvation is not partial to man-made constructs and categories of people any longer.

Only that which is counter to His divine nature God is partial to. belief and unbelief. Right?

Light and darkness, truth and error, heaven or hell. How has God made this possible?

How has He done it? The divine agency of God sent the agency of Jesus Christ and the agency of Jesus Christ sent the apostles and the apostles sent the agency of a message of hope to the Gentiles in this living room and to us at 801 Wick Avenue on this day in history.

This is a message of hope. What's the message? Believe because judgment's coming. judgment is coming.

[29 : 18] This isn't to scare you, pull a fast one on you and manipulate you or anything like that. But judgment is coming. And if judgment is coming, the most loving thing that I can do for anyone who is not in Christ here today is to declare the same thing that was declared to the Gentile family.

judgment is coming. It will fall upon those who do not fear the Lord. It will fall upon those who do not live in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

John 3.19 talks about this judgment. He says this is the judgment. The light has come into the world and the people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

In other words, there's a consequence for unbelief. Those who fail to believe and heed the call of the gospel and faith in Jesus Christ are destined to eternal judgment.

Hell. It's an eternal separation from God. It is not going to be a party as your college buddies say that it's going to be. You're drinking here right now today and we'll just keep drinking in hell together.

[30 : 45] Huh. That's what the devil wants you to believe. Because that's how he can pull you away from the reality of forgiveness. The same is true for us today.

If there is hope in the message, the message is here. The message is now. And so is salvation. Through the agency of the apostolic message that I am heralding before you today of their witness, of what they attest to.

Who wants to be redeemed of sin? I'll fill the baptism up right now. It'll be done in a couple hours. But we'll heed the moment.

Who wants to be redeemed? Who desires more in this life than just vain pursuits of riches, of fame, of self-medicating with pornography, of self-medicating with drugs, or just buying things and having stuff to just distract us?

This is all vanity. Don't take my word for it. Take their word for it. The house of Cornelius, full of relatives and friends at this party, were an audience that the Holy Spirit had been priming them through the ministry of Jesus Christ, of what they heard and now are beginning to understand.

[32 : 21] And they were confirmed. That message was confirmed through the agency of the apostles. And so let's look at this last confirmation. Not only has the word been sent, the word has been confirmed, and we see also that the word was effectual to save.

There is power in the name of Jesus. And while Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.

And the believers from among the circumcision, the Jewish people, who had come with Peter, were amazed. Because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.

Peter didn't even get to the altar call yet. He's like, well, still, I got two other points to come after this. This is a three-point sermon.

I'm a good Baptist, right? Peter's like, no, you can't come yet. I got an altar call. We got order for this. Well, Peter was still saying these things.

[33 : 35] The Holy Spirit fell. At that, we see a separation between the will of man and the will of God, don't we? That we think that we have control of things.

It's actually God who has supreme control over all this. God initiates, doesn't he? Peter didn't get to the altar call. God's word was proven to be effectual to capture their hearts in forgiveness.

forgiveness. A hope once distant to the nation of Israel, now brought near to the outskirts of the end of the world among the Gentiles at the call of his message.

This is the final swath in the movement of God's word expanding the land that started as like an earthquake in Acts 1.8.

And within each of these swaths of movement from these people groups, God makes sure to have something tangible to show for their salvation.

[34 : 48] It happened in Samaria, a new breach and culture of people. The people were speaking in unlearned languages. Now, the word spread through there and then it breached the walls of the ends of the earth with the Gentiles.

And similarly, they spoke in unlearned languages. What were they saying? Well, Peter says they were extolling God in other languages.

They were singing along with David in Psalm 70. May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. May those who love your salvation say evermore, God is great.

He's saying with the Psalm of David in verse 34, Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together. He's singing along with David in Psalm 69.

I will praise the name of God with a song. I will magnify him with thanksgiving. There is no doubt. We are never given a reason to doubt or question if salvation is brought near to us today.

[36 : 11] We can't doubt their salvation, nor can the Jews who are sitting there amazed, can doubt their salvation. The effectual saving power of Jesus Christ was made manifest for all for the very first time.

This is monumental what's happening here. This is the Gentile Pentecost. And its fire still spreads today.

It's interesting between all these big swaths of movement, it's like these meteorites just like the Holy Spirit falls in Jerusalem, it's like boom, everybody's amazed.

The Holy Spirit then falls in Samaria, boom, everyone's amazed. And here, in the ends of the earth, the Holy Spirit falls, boom, everyone's amazed. But I don't think what's being said here does justice in our translation.

When you see amazed, this word means astounded to such a degree to lose mental composure.

[37 : 18] that's what was going on here with the Jews. They were losing their minds. This rocked the Jewish worldview, to say the absolute least.

And we'll witness more of that next week as well, but it's literally unbelievable to these skeptics. So Peter, after the Holy Spirit comes, they're praising, extolling God in many languages.

Peter, in the pattern of all these Pentecosts, the Jerusalem Pentecost, we'll call it the Samaria Pentecost, and now in the Gentile Pentecost, a command, be immersed in water on account of your belief.

And here we receive the conviction of baptism, believers' baptism here. They receive the Holy Spirit here. This is huge.

Not only just to the Jews, but they've received the Holy Spirit now. The Gentiles. They were once the people you don't eat with, you don't talk to, you don't touch.

[38 : 38] They were unclean. They have the Holy Spirit. This is huge, church. church. I highly doubt that it's talking about these assumptive things that we can often look into the text of, well, this would indicate that maybe there are babies in there that were immersed.

I highly doubt it because the text doesn't say it. But because there is something tangible to see, that baptism was an expression, it was a consequence of their faith.

They received the Holy Spirit. They believed and were commanded to be baptized. I would also not attribute tongues as a normative experience of a second baptism theology or doctrine because it's not consistent within Scripture, but it is consistent within these swaths of the Holy Spirit coming into fulfillment as God did, leaving all around amazed at what God is doing with tangible expression of that was real, something to show for it.

And I do not believe that that would be something that would be normative in our everyday lives as Christians. But why has Christianity withstood the test of time in trial throughout the centuries?

It is because the divine agency of God who is in charge of the operation, this whole thing is God's. God, that God, He is Lord over all and He offers salvation.

[40 : 14] He offers salvation to all. Some might ask why I'm a Christian today. Because I believe Peter. I believe just as the Gentiles in verse 36.

I believe in God's mighty acts in Jesus Christ's ministry on earth. I believe in Jesus' death and resurrection in verse 39. I believe in salvation through Jesus Christ who I am justified in His judgments.

I believe I am a living testimony of God's impartiality. I truly believe that. I believe that the power of God's grace that has produced my faith.

Jesus Christ was appointed for it. Peter proclaimed it and the Spirit confirmed it. That's why I believe. But do you believe?

Do you believe it? If you do, you have no reason to lose your mind over that reality.

[41 : 28] And every reason to praise, to worship, to consecrate your life to service and being an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

As we wrap things up, isn't this a story worth retelling? isn't this a testimony worth singing?

Isn't this a testimony worth giving our very lives for? How often the world looks upon the church, though, in amazement, losing their minds over the church?

Not because of them being filled with the Holy Spirit, but because the church looks nothing like their Christ. Not because of their great faith and trust in Jesus Christ, but because the church is divided.

The church is caving in upon each other. And the enemy has truly breached the walls within the church to stir up quarrels among one another.

[42 : 57] Boy. May our lives be carried out by the gentle guiding of the Holy Spirit to ensure that our lives confirm the grace and the love of God who saved us.

Steel Valley Church, I commend you to be the source of amazement of our faith, not our division.

The world's already lost. And I hate to say it, but sometimes between the world and the church, the church is supposed to be somewhere where they're supposed to have it together, have the answers.

others. And the world looks at the church and they're like, well, I guess I can sign up for more problems. But the reality is, the problem is here.

The problem is us. But God has given us a way of doing this well so that the world can be amazed at the power of God in the church.

[44 : 10] church. We may not speak in unlearned languages within an instant. We may not have miraculous testimony that captures the attention of the world.

But what we do have is the fruit in our lives. There's actually two types of fruits. Galatians 5.19 talks about some bad fruits.

Now, the works of the flesh are evidence. sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

I warn you, as I warned you before, Paul says to the Galatians, those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Those are the ones who do not fear the Lord.

Those are the ones that do not do righteousness. But, the other type of fruit is what the world is waiting for. Fruits of the Spirit, verse 22, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

[45 : 44] Against such things, there is no law. You're forgiven. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Church, I commend to you to be the source of amazement and faith in Jesus Christ. not of confusion of the enemy.

May our lives, may we live as testimonies of grace and be living confirmations to the watching world. Let's pray.