

# How To Get New Testament Results In Your Church

Acts 10: 1-48

Acts 10 is packet full of detail, of movement and of spiritual lessons. So much so that I would highly recommend that you read the chapter several times to gain the full significance of its teachings.

It records the conversion of a devout but unsaved soldier; the ‘conversion’ of Peter from inborn religious prejudice to an understanding of the fact that in God’s sight all men are equal; the chapter concludes with the account of the salvation of Cornelius and his household.

It has been suggested that in order to produce the amazing results recorded at the end of Acts 10, God had a problem thirty miles long: that is, if you can measure a problem geographically. You see, Cornelius was in Caesarea and Peter was in Joppa, thirty miles away – not only thirty miles’ walking distance but a distance of deep-down prejudices which had to be broken and dealt with.

However, God can overcome problems, since we find that the chapter works up to a grand climax. Let’s see what led to so many being so suddenly and gloriously saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. What should we do to secure such results for God in our works, in our church, and in our preaching and teaching. Let’s read the scriptures.

## ***Cornelius Calls for Peter***

**10** *At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. <sup>2</sup> He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. <sup>3</sup> 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!”*

<sup>4</sup> *Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.*

*The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. <sup>5</sup> Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man*

*named Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup> He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."*

*<sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.*

### ***Peter's Vision***

*<sup>9</sup> About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. <sup>10</sup> He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. <sup>11</sup> He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. <sup>12</sup> It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. <sup>13</sup> Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."*

*<sup>14</sup> "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."*

*<sup>15</sup> The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."*

*<sup>16</sup> This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.*

*<sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.*

*<sup>19</sup> While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three<sup>[a]</sup> men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup> So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."*

*<sup>21</sup> Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"*

*<sup>22</sup> 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 ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” <sup>23</sup> Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

### **Peter at Cornelius's House**

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. <sup>24</sup> The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. <sup>25</sup> As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. <sup>26</sup> But Peter made him get up. “Stand up,” he said, “I am only a man myself.”

<sup>27</sup> While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. <sup>28</sup> He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. <sup>29</sup> So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?”

<sup>30</sup> Cornelius answered: “Three 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 <sup>31</sup> and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. <sup>32</sup> 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.’ <sup>33</sup> 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.”

<sup>34</sup> Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism <sup>35</sup> but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. <sup>36</sup> You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. <sup>37</sup> You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— <sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup> “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, <sup>40</sup> but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. <sup>41</sup> 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. <sup>42</sup> 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. <sup>43</sup> All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”*

*<sup>44</sup> While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. <sup>45</sup> The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. <sup>46</sup> For they heard them speaking in tongues<sup>[b]</sup> and praising God.*

*Then Peter said, <sup>47</sup> “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” <sup>48</sup> So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.*

So how do we get New Testament results in our church?

### **1. The Audience must be gathered**

In verses 24 and 27 we are told that in obedience to the Lord’s direction, Cornelius and his family and friends met together to await the arrival of Peter.

So as soon as Peter arrived he had a ready-made congregation, and all Peter had to do was to preach the gospel. If we want to see New Testament results we must go to where the people are and proclaim the word of God.

We can certainly witness to them individually, but we must also gather them together so that they may “listen to everything the Lord has commanded” them of God. Just look at verse 33 again.

*<sup>33</sup> 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.”*

So if we were not going out and speaking to people about God and trying to get them into a church we are violating God’s commandment. If we are violating His commandment then how do we ever expect to grow or see New Testament results.

## **2. The Gospel must be preached and taught**

When Cornelius told Peter that all the people had met together and were waiting to hear what God had to say to them, he at once began to preach the gospel, and the outline of his sermon is in verses 34-43.

Notice that in verse 44 it was while Peter spoke “these words” that God poured out His blessing on all who listened. What were “these words”? – what is the gospel that we must proclaim? It is clearly stated in verses 34-43 which I am going to re-read and break down for you a little bit.

*<sup>34</sup> Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism <sup>35</sup> but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. <sup>36</sup> You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. <sup>37</sup> You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— <sup>38</sup> 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.*

*<sup>39</sup> “We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, <sup>40</sup> but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. <sup>41</sup> 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. <sup>42</sup> 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. <sup>43</sup> All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”*

Well it all starts here.....

1. God loves everybody, verse 34, He does not show favoritism;
2. He is the only means of salvation;  
Isaiah 45:22; <sup>22</sup> “Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.

3. *God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be our Saviour (verse 38); John 3:16; <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

You can also look up Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10; John 10:9; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 John 4:8-10.

4. *The Lord Jesus died on the cross to atone for our sins (verse 39); Isaiah 53:5-6; <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

You can also look up John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.

5. *He rose again (verse 40); Luke 24:1-6; 1 Corinthians 15:1-20.*
6. *Salvation does not come by faith or works; it is by 'believing' (verse 43); Acts 16:30-31; <sup>30</sup> He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup> They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."*

You can also look up Romans 1:16; Romans 3:26; Romans 4:5; 2 Timothy 1:12.

This is the gospel, the good news, and if men and women are to be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, this is the message they must hear.

Are we doing this? If not then we are violating His commandment and so how do we ever expect to grow or see New Testament results.

### 3. The Holy Spirit must be honored

Look at verse 44! While Peter (on earth) was preaching the gospel, the Lord (in heaven) was doing His work through Peter. Look up Mark 16:19-20; <sup>19</sup> *After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.* <sup>20</sup> *Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.*

There are no true conversions unless the Holy Spirit produces them, and He only does this when we preach “these words”, the gospel.

If we are to see results, we must secure the co-operation of the Holy Spirit, and this can only be done as we honor God.

Notice the following fundamental requirements for this to happen:-

1. *There must be a clean channel.* The Church must be separated, We cannot be like the world;

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 says, <sup>14</sup> *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?* <sup>15</sup> *What harmony is there between Christ and Belial<sup>[a]</sup>? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?* <sup>16</sup> *What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.”* <sup>17</sup> *Therefore, “Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”* <sup>18</sup> *And, “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*

2. We must be dedicated.

Romans 12:1-2 says, **12** *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.* <sup>2</sup> *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

3. *There must be an emphasis on prayer.* This is the divinely-ordained method for securing blessing;  
**private prayer** (Matthew 6:6); <sup>6</sup> *But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*  
**united prayer** (Matthew 18:19); <sup>19</sup> *“Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.*  
**and the prayer of the church** (Acts 4:23-24); <sup>23</sup> *On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. <sup>24</sup> When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them*  
  
4. *There must be a proclamation of the whole counsel of God.* We must believe the Bible and preach it, thus honoring the Holy Spirit who inspires the Word. Acts 20:26-27; <sup>26</sup> *Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. <sup>27</sup> For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.*

Only as the church is clean, as we look to God alone to work through us, and as we proclaim the whole message of our Lord and Savior, will our dependence really be upon the Holy Spirit. With such complete dependence upon Him He will do

**His work of reproof** (John 16:7-11); <sup>7</sup> *But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. <sup>8</sup> When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: <sup>9</sup> about sin, because people do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup> about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; <sup>11</sup> and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.*

**His work of warning** (Hebrews 12:25); <sup>25</sup> *See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?*



**and His work of conversion** (Acts 2:37-41); <sup>37</sup> *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”* <sup>38</sup> *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”* <sup>40</sup> *With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”* <sup>41</sup> *Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

#### **4. The Word must be received**

Peter preached the gospel: “they heard the Word” (10:44), “received the Word” (11:1), and “received the Holy Spirit” (10:47), so a man is converted by hearing and receiving the Word, believing it, and by receiving the Lord Jesus as your Savior.

Verse 43 from today states that we are saved by believing, and to believe is to receive.

John 1:12 puts it this way, <sup>12</sup> *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—*

Lastly ...

#### **5. The Converts must be established**

The gospel is preached and taught, the Holy Spirit does His work, the listeners are receptive and trust Christ, are

**born of the Spirit** (John 3:3); <sup>3</sup> *Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again*

**baptized into the body by the Holy Spirit** (1 Corinthians 12:13); <sup>13</sup> *For we were all baptized by<sup>[a]</sup> one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

**filled with the Spirit** (Ephesians 5:18); <sup>18</sup> *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,*

Wow that's a lot! Could there be anything more? – yes, verses 47-48 from today include two important things, which assure us that the converts were immediately instructed in the faith:

1. *Their conversion was accepted.* Cornelius and his friends had lost their prejudice, and so had Peter, and they all rejoiced in what God had done.
2. *Their confession was witnessed.* The new believers were baptized. This was not optional, but a question of obedience. Why? Because of Matthew 28:18-20.

<sup>18</sup> *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

So if we ever want to see the New Testament come to life in this church and in our lives then we have some work to do.