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Peter—Acts 10

Salvation to the Gentiles—Conversion of Cornelius

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

- 01. Chapter 10...** “This chapter is concerned exclusively with the conversion of Cornelius, the same event also being under consideration in Acts 11. Luke's devoting so much space to the narrative of a single conversion indicates the importance of it. It was in the conversion of this Roman centurion that the issue of receiving Gentiles into Christ was finally decided. Yes, other Gentiles had been saved prior to this; but it was upon the basis of their having first been proselytes to Judaism. Many of the earliest Christians (most of whom were Jewish) were willing to welcome Gentiles into the faith AS PROSELYTES first and Christians later. Cornelius' baptism was the end of that, despite the fact of 'Judaizers' continuing to advocate the old view for a considerable time afterward, as seen in the Pauline epistles” [Coffman].
- 02. 10:10-12...** “Peter was prepared in a natural way to receive the vision and the truths it contained. He was at that time staying in the home of a tanner, who by his constant contact with dead animals would have been regarded by devout Jews as ceremonially unclean. Some kind of recognition and acceptance of this situation would have been necessary for Peter to have escaped ceremonial uncleanness. Secondly, he was hungry, it being the noon hour, and while food was being prepared, the vision was presented to him. That which served to keep separate the class of people known in Jesus' days as Jews was the law and its ceremonial obligations. Much that was observable to the public were those dietary regulations set forth by Moses in Leviticus 11, which no doubt had some distinction in earlier days, as may be seen in the clean/unclean classifications in the days of Noah (Gen 7:2; 8:20). Jesus in his teaching, which did not become binding until his death on the cross, set forth principles to some of his audiences which when recognized and enacted would do away with the dietary and ceremonial uncleanness (Mt 15:11, 17-18; Mark 7:19)” [Gospel Advocate Annual Lesson Commentary, pp. 280-81].
- 03. 10:17... Now while Peter doubted in himself—**“Peter was much perplexed as to the meaning of the vision. The word 'perplexed' denotes a consternation to the point of despair (Vine, 234), and the imperfect tense shows a sustained agitation. It is difficult to shed quickly the convictions of a lifetime. As the apostle was mulling this over, trying to plumb the meaning, behold, the messengers from Cornelius arrived at the gate down below, inquiring... The 'timings' in the book of Acts are incredible (see chapter 8). There are *too many* 'coincidences' for these matters to be coincidental! ” [Wayne Jackson, *The Acts of the Apostles: from Jerusalem to Rome*, p. 125].
- 04. 10:44... While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word—**The question often discussed is: DID CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT? I say NO!, but this view is not widely held among our brethren. Brother Graham Cain wrote a fine article about this matter in *The Defender*, April 1995. Here is a lengthy quote from that discussion: “In listing what actually happened as recorded in Acts chapters ten and eleven, please note the following facts: 1. Peter spoke to them (10:34-43). 2. While he was yet speaking, 'the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word,' (vs. 44). 3. Astonishment resulted, “because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the

Holy Ghost" (vs. 45). 4. The Jews knew that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles because, "they heard them speak with tongues" (vs. 46). 5. Peter stated that this amazing development caused him to remember 'the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost' (11:16). 6. Peter went on to explain and defend his actions in this matter by saying, 'Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us' (11:17). We are usually advised at this point that the expression 'like gift' means 'exactly the same gift in extent and fullness.' Question: What exactly was the gift? It was, of course the ability to speak in tongues. What else? Nothing! Then to what did verse 16 refer? Evidently it reminded Peter of Pentecost when this same, exact gift of tongues was that which was poured out upon the apostles, causing great excitement and attention among the people who witnessed that great demonstration. These, then, received exactly the same gift (speaking with tongues) that the apostles received in Acts 2:4. Further Questions: Was there anything, other than tongues in the case of Cornelius and his friends that was like the events of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter two? a. Was there 'a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind' (vs. 2)? b. Did 'cloven tongues like as of fire' appear and set 'upon each of them' (vs. 3)? c. Were those of the household of Cornelius from henceforth guided 'into all truth' (John 16:13)? d. Did the Comforter 'teach [them] all things' (John 14:26)? e. Did all of them (or any part of them) have the power to perform miracles? To impart the Holy Spirit to others in any way by the laying on of hands? In both cases the Spirit was 'poured out' directly from God but that, apparently, was what it took to convince the Jewish mind that Gentiles were included in the gospel of God's grace. This was the way that God 'bare them witness' as Peter explained in Acts 15:8 at the council in Jerusalem. Look at the Duck We have long known that when we see a feathered creature which looks, walks and quacks like a duck we have just about a 100% chance of being correct when we conclude that it, in fact, is a duck. Using this nomenclature, coupled with common sense, let's examine the things that transpired on the two occasions. We see clearly that they did not: 1. Look the same; 2. Sound the same; 3. Produce the same. How then—can we insist that they were the same? Speaking in tongues is not Holy Spirit baptism just as a quack is not a duck. Each is an element, or a constituent part of the whole. In Conclusion: Note further that the Bible does not say they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The evidence does not show that they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Their subsequent actions do not (by silence of the Bible) indicate that they were, and it is not necessary to assume that they needed to be, in order to fulfill Joel 2:28. These are not things that have to do with our salvation. They are questions of interest, however, and might possibly assist us in stimulating and sharpening our skills in interpretation of the text. Anything that will prompt us to a deeper study of the Holy Scriptures is always beneficial."

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **The Period of the Church.**

III. Summary.

This chapter tells about the visions of two men. It was God's plan that the saving message would be delivered FROM man TO man. Cornelius received a vision from the Lord toward the end of getting him to send after God's messenger; Peter received a vision from the Lord toward the end of being helpful when he was sent for by a Gentile. Peter dutifully and beautifully responded to his call. The beautiful attitude of Cornelius is seen in that he immediately did what he was told to do and he waited for the coming of Peter with his kinsmen and near friends. He told Peter (v. 33) for what reason they were waiting: **to hear all things that are**

commanded thee of God. Peter's great statement of verses 34-35 should cause all of our hearts to rejoice! Peter preaches Jesus to the assembled ones at Cornelius' household and a very special sign is presented to sanction and express the approval of the Lord over the happenings—the Holy Spirit fell on them and they spake in tongues and magnified God (v. 46). Then it was obvious that salvation could not be withheld from these Gentiles and they were baptized in the name of the Lord.

IV. Outline.

01. Devout Cornelius has a vision (Acts 10:1-6).
02. Cornelius sends for Peter (7-8).
03. Peter's vision (9-16).
04. Peter travels with the messengers from Cornelius to Caesarea (17-23).
05. Cornelius has assembled his kinsmen and friends to hear the gospel (24).
06. Peter asks why they sent for him (25-29).
07. Cornelius relates his vision to Paul (30-33).
08. Peter realizes God is NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS (34-35).
09. Peter's sermon (36-43).
10. The Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius' household as seen by their speaking in tongues (44-46).
11. Cornelius and others of his household are baptized (47-48).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ There were some astonished Jews at Cornelius' home as Peter finished preaching.
02. _____ Cornelius sent two people to Joppa after Peter.
03. _____ Cornelius told Peter that he had done well in coming to him.
04. _____ Peter was confused about the meaning of the vision he had.
05. _____ There were no Jewish Christians who traveled with Peter from Joppa to Caesarea.

Multiple Choice (Select the BEST Answer)

06. _____ After the Gentiles at Cornelius' house spake with tongues and magnified God, Peter asked—CAN ANY MAN FORBID: (a) forgiveness; (b) fellowship; (c) water.
07. _____ According to his message to Cornelius, Peter was told by Jesus to preach Jesus as: (a) Messiah; (b) Judge; (c) Creator; (d) Master.
08. _____ Before Peter had his vision on the rooftop in Joppa, he became very: (a) reflective; (b) ill; (c) hungry.
09. _____ If Peter came to Cornelius without GAINSA YING, he came without: (a) hoping to make any profit; (b) opposing or objecting to it; (c) delay.
10. _____ When Peter said NOT SO in this context, to WHOM did he say it: (a) messengers from Cornelius; (b) Cornelius; (c) the Lord.

Fill in the Blanks

11. _____ claimed to be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus.
12. Cornelius had a vision about the _____ hour as he was _____; Peter fell into a _____ about the _____ hour on the next day.
13. Peter was told to go with the _____ men who sought him by the Spirit because _____.
14. _____ said—OF A _____ I _____ THAT GOD IS _____ OF PERSONS.

15. “... And _____ waited for them, and had _____
_____ his kinsmen and _____.”

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week’s handout

ANSWERS to Questions on Acts 9:32ff... [(1) False, Acts 9:38; (2) False, Acts 9:33; (3) False, Acts 10:6, 32; (4) False, Acts 9:32; (5) True, Acts 9:39; (6) a, Acts 9:42; (7) c, Acts 9:39; (8) c, Acts 9:39; (9) c, Acts 9:40; (10) b, Acts 9:35; (11) whole, arise, immediately, Acts 9:34; (12) Tabitha, Acts 9:36; (13) delay, Acts 9:38; (14) many, Acts 9:43; (15) Peter, Acts 9:40.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS.** [by Frank L. Cox, *The Minister’s Monthly*, 1/1966, p. 235].
 - I. The Special Features: The three miracles...
 1. The first miracle was performed before Cornelius to have him send for the preacher (verses 1-8).
 2. The second, before Peter, to convince him that God is no respecter of person (verses 9-43).
 3. The third was before the six Jewish brethren to convince them that the gospel was for all nations (verses 44-47).
 - II. The General Features:
 1. Cornelius believed, having heard the word (Rom 10:17).
 2. He repented. The apostle was working under a commission which required repentance of all men (Lk 24:47).
 3. He was baptized (v. 48).

Take from the conversion of Cornelius the special features and we find that it is just like any other conversion, in apostolic times or in our times.
2. **HE SHALL TELL THEE WHAT THOU OUGHTEST TO DO** (Acts 10:6). This is the noblest thing that any person can tell another person. That is, what he ought to do in the sense it is here used. What all men ought to do, as Peter would tell Cornelius and the assembled ones, was to obey the gospel—otherwise they will be lost eternally (2 Th 1:6-9). The very idea of having opportunity to relay to others the very same message that Peter was here FOR THE FIRST TIME preaching to a Gentile audience, ought to be most a most exciting and thrilling prospect for every Christian.
3. **BUT PETER SAID, NOT SO, LORD; FOR I HAVE NEVER EATEN ANY THING THAT IS COMMON OR UNCLEAN** (Acts 10:14). Peter was quite well aware to Whom he was speaking, and yet when the Lord told him to “kill and eat,” Peter said NOT SO. If we step out of the particular setting here for just a moment to notice the words Peter spoke, and think about it, we can see how incongruous those words are! The word LORD means master, someone you obey and to whom you yield. Peter was using the term LORD and at the same time saying NO! As Christians, we all need to understand that we cannot do that with our Lord. We cannot call Him Lord and then say NO to Him about anything. We must, rather, be yielding to His will!
4. **...AND CERTAIN BRETHREN FROM JOPPA ACCOMPANIED HIM** (Acts 10:23). When we check to see if there is another place in Scripture to learn more of this incident, we discover the actual number of Jewish brethren who went with Peter was six (11:12). We should search to find what else the Bible may have to say about the

passage we are studying at any given time. Sometimes this helps to clear up questions we may have.

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

I M N B K V C X Z L H K J H G F D S A I
 P N O U I I Y T R E U W Q A X Z G C F V
 B G T H N M L J L D N K S T A N D U P J
 N H G H B V F L R D G C X S I A Z Q A H
 F S W D E E D O A F R G T Y Y H J U C I
 K E L O P N L M N N Y H A G B V F A M D
 C D A S X O A N Z A D S Q A S W E E E D
 A F R R S T O M G H N E J U I R K L H P
 T N C T E I V B E I N M A L P D K J T H
 E G O F S D D S A O A Q W T E E R T L Y
 E N U I J M G G N H F Y T G B D V F L R
 H E V D N C X O S W Q T A Z X N C D A E
 S R F V B T P N D H Y U H T I A K M N J
 T V F R T G E B G T Y H U E Q M A Z O X
 A S W E D E A D C V F O R T L M G B L N
 E C D E R V C F R T V B G T H O Z A L Q
 R X S T C R E S P E C T E R C C R V E C
 G C A V F R T G D B G T Y H N N H D F Y
 N N B V C O R N E L I U S C X S W Q A Z
 O P I O U Y T R E D C E W X A Q Z D R L

[The words (or word locaters) listed below are to be found in the text of our lesson. They also are found in the puzzle above. This is just one more way to reinforce what you have studied from the text. Why not read the whole verse where the word is found one more time as you do the puzzle? Thank you for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. Let's desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow (1 Pet 2:2). DRL]

Acts 10

Cornelius, 1	commanded, 33
devout, 2	no respecter, 34
feared God, 2	peace, 36
vision, 3	anointed, 38
hungry, 10	on a tree, 39
great sheet, 11	preach, 42
kill, and eat, 13	fell on all them, 44
Not so, Lord, 14	in the name of the lord, 48
Stand up, 26	
gainsaying, 29	

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