

Conversions In Acts

Cornelius & Household Conversion

(Ac 10:44-48)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons looking at the different “Conversions In Acts.”
 - a. Last week we looked at the conversion of “Saul Of Tarsus.”
 - i. **Ac 22:16** “And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.”¹
 - b. This week we are going to look at “Cornelius & Household Conversion.”
 - i. **Ac 10:44-48** “While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. 45 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. 46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, 47 “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.”
3. As we have in the past lessons so too will we look at this lesson using four questions for our main points.
 - a. What led to the conversions?
 - b. What was said to the non-Christians?
 - c. What was the mentality of the new converts?
 - d. How can knowing this help us help others?
4. With this in mind let us now begin to look at our lesson for today.

I. What Led To The Conversions?

- A. Cornelius hears from God
 1. Cornelius was a Roman centurion in Caesarea.
 - i. He was a centurion of the Italian Cohort.
 - a. He had 100 men under his command from Italy.
 - ii. Caesarea
 - a. This was the most prominent city in Palestine.
 - b. It was founded by Herod the Great as a sea port on the ruins of Samaria.
 2. Cornelius is a devout man who feared God.
 - i. He paid out of his own funds to help Jews out.
 - ii. He prayed continually to God.
 3. Cornelius is visited, in a vision, by an angel from God.
 - i. He told Cornelius that God had heard his prayers and that his alms had ascended to God as a memorial before God.
 - ii. He told Cornelius to send men to Joppa to get Peter and have Peter brought back to him.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

Conversions In Acts

B. Peter hears from God

1. Peter was the first one to have a sermon recorded after the church was established.
 - i. He went from a fisherman to a fisher of men.
2. Peter is visited a day after Cornelius was visited, in a trance, by God.
 - i. Peter had gone up on the roof to pray during the sixth hour.
 - a. This was noon time, the second of the Jewish times to pray.
 - ii. God shows Peter a sheet that has three types of animals on it.
 - a. There were the four-footed animals.
 - b. There were the creeping things.
 - c. There were the birds of heaven.
 - iii. God tells Peter to kill and eat of that which He has shown him.
 - a. What an amazing illustration for God to use to teach Peter with.
 - iv. Peter argues with God because of his “habitual behavior” under the Old Law.
 - a. The word “common” was used to describe food eaten by the Gentiles that the Jews would not partake of.
 - b. The word “unclean” was used to describe food considered such by God under the Old Law.
 - v. God responds to Peter, “What God has made clean, do not call common.”
 - a. It is interesting to note that God did not deal with the unclean aspect of Peter’s rebuttal.
 - b. Of course the reason being God didn’t have to by saying “what God has made clean.”
 - vi. Now this happened three times.
 - a. There are two possible meanings here.
 1. First that the whole scene from God played out three times, not that Peter argued three times.
 - i. This makes the most since.
 2. Second that the whole scene happened three times with Peter arguing three times.
 - i. Considering Peter’s earlier dispensation for arguing with Christ this seems possible but when one considers all the ways Peter has matured by now it is unlikely.

C. Peter goes to Cornelius’ house

1. Peter, after the trance, is told by the Holy Spirit that there are three men at the door and that he is to go with them without hesitation.
 - i. It is interesting that we discover here that it was the Holy Spirit that sent the angel to talk with Cornelius.
2. Peter and the men stay the night and leave the next day for Cornelius’ house.
 - i. We find here also that some of the Jewish brethren from Joppa were with Peter on the journey.

Conversions In Acts

3. Peter arrives at Cornelius' house.
 - i. Peter arrives and goes inside where he finds Cornelius bowing and worshipping him.
 - a. Peter tells him to get up because he is just a man.
 - ii. Peter discovers that Cornelius had brought together his relatives and close friends to hear what Peter had to say.
 - a. What an amazing thing to read!!!!
 4. Peter then begins to speak concerning why he was there.
 - i. It is during Peter's sermon that the household who heard Peter's preaching was baptized by the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Notice Peter said it was just like what happened to them when they received the Holy Spirit.
 1. **Ac 1:5; 2:1-5**
 - ii. After the household was baptized by the Holy Spirit they were baptized in water and became Christians.
- D. Thus...
1. What led to the conversions...was there anything that got the conversions going...yes it Peter's preaching of the gospel.

II. What Was Said To The Non-Christians?

- A. Peter preached first upon his lesson learned
 1. Peter explained that he now understood that God shows no partiality toward anyone becoming a child of God.
 - i. **Ga 3:28** "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
 2. Peter then reminded them of Jesus whom they had been aware of during his life on earth was "Lord of all."
 - i. Peter doesn't say they witnessed Jesus personally or that they were there when Jesus was crucified but that they had heard about Him and what happened to Him.
 - ii. Peter gives a brief reminder lesson on what Jesus did while on earth.
 - a. **II Pt 1:12-13** "Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. 13 I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder"
 3. Peter, after the reminder, preaches the gospel.
 - i. How Jesus had been put to death on a tree but raised by God on the third day and appeared to many.
 - ii. Peter makes it clear that he was a witness of this event and not someone that has secondhand knowledge here.
 4. Peter, after preaching the gospel, preaches that he, like the other apostles, was appointed by God to preach and testify.
 - i. He was to preach and testify that God appointed Jesus to be the judge of all the living and dead.
 - ii. He was to preach and testify that Jesus is the one that all the prophets bore witness that those that believe in Jesus will have their sins removed "through Jesus' name."

Conversions In Acts

4. Peter, after their baptism of the Holy Spirit, tells them what it means to obey the gospel i.e. how they have their sins removed through the name of Jesus.
 - i. Peter said to them...
 - a. **Ac 10:47-48** “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?”
48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ...”

B. Thus...

1. What was said to the non-Christians...was there any specific doctrine mentioned...yes they were reminded of who Jesus was, they were told what Jesus did (gospel), and they were told how they could have their sins removed and become Christians by obeying the gospel in the name of Jesus through baptism.

III. What Was The Mentality Of The New Converts?

A. Once again we do not have a lot of information

1. In fact we only have one verse that describes what happened after their conversion.
 - i. **Ac 10:48** “...Then they asked him to remain for some days.”

B. We do learn some things here though

1. We learn not that Cornelius and his household were hospitable.
 - i. We already see that in him inviting his family, friends, and strangers (Peter& other brethren) into his home.
2. We learn that Cornelius and his household were eager to learn more of God’s Word.
 - i. Remember they had the gifts of tongues not prophecy.
 - ii. They could simply speak other languages.

C. Thus...

1. What was the mentality of the new converts...was there anything surprising after their conversion in their attitude or actions...sure we see them eagerly want to learn more concerning God’s Word.

IV. How Can Knowing This Help Us Help Others?

A. Knowing this helps us help others by understanding there are people who want to know the truth and are simply waiting on someone to teach it to them

1. We don’t know who is actively seeking to know God and who isn’t.
 - i. Peter and the other Jewish Christians assumed that Gentiles were not interested in Christianity as a general rule which is what it had been like for centuries between the Jews & Gentiles.
2. We must make opportunities and step out of our comfort zone sometimes so that we can “find” those that are seeking truth.

Conversions In Acts

- B. Knowing this helps us help others by understanding what we need to preach/teach
1. Peter taught from the beginning.
 - i. Last week we noticed that you don't always have to start from the beginning. You can start where the person you are studying with begins to get the scriptures wrong concerning salvation.
 - ii. Here we see clearly though that Peter needed to start from the beginning.
 - a. We have to be able to read people to help them.
 2. Peter then, upon understanding they were ready, told them they must be baptized.
 - i. Sometimes after the Bible study we don't ask the most important question, "are you willing to be baptized for the remission of sins?"
 - a. We sometimes think, "well I just went over it with them they will let me know if they want to."
 - b. Example: There was a man I know that had attended, with his wife who was a Christian, the worship services without waiver for over 30 years but had never obeyed the gospel. One day he obeyed the gospel and everyone ask what finally led to him obeying. He responded, "The preacher asked me why I had not been baptized. I couldn't not answer the question so he said what are you waiting for. I couldn't answer that either so I was baptized."
 - ii. Every time we study we need to ask, "are you willing..."
- C. Knowing this helps us help others by understanding we need to spend a special amount of time teaching the babes in Christ
1. We cannot be the ones that just baptized and then forget.
 - i. This will 99% of the time lead to failure for the young Christian.
 2. We must make the extra time to sit down with them one-on-one and teach them more closely the Word of God.
 - i. It is through this we will see them grow into maturity out of infancy in Christ.
- Thus...
1. We find that there are many great lessons we can learn from this most exquisite biblical evangelical account.

Conversions In Acts

CONCLUSION

1. Criss Jami once stated, “Good works is giving to the poor and the helpless, but divine works is showing them their worth to the One who matters.” (<http://goo.gl/kYnqdv>)
 - a. So true a statement.
2. Question: Are you willing to be about the divine works for which you were created for?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**