

Book of Acts

Chapter 10

Theme: Conversion of Cornelius

Introduction

✦ Acts 1-8:

- ✦ The gospel from Jerusalem, through Judea into Samaria.

✦ Acts 9:

- ✦ The “linchpin” in God’s plan is converted by His grace.
- ✦ This conversion is told 3x (Acts 9,22 and 26)

✦ Acts 10:

- ✦ The first world convert! A Gentile!
- ✦ This conversion is also told 3x.
 - Acts 10 – the narrative is given
 - Acts 11 – to ‘those of the circumcision’.
 - Acts 15 – at the ‘Council of Jerusalem’.

Peace Arrives

- ✦ The great persecution that Christians had endured by the ending of Acts Chapter 9 had ceased.
 - ✦ “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up.”
Acts 9:31
- ✦ This peace had come for many reasons, likely chiefest of these was that the Jews had now persecution of their own.
 - ✦ The mad-emperor, Caligula, had placed a statue of himself in the Holy of Holies. Among many other atrocities.

Result of Peace

- ✦ Up to the ending of Acts 9, the apostles, due to persecution, were persuaded to remain at Jerusalem.
- ✦ But now Peter feels the need to travel around the western seacoast, to strengthen the believers who had earlier fled there from Jerusalem.
 - ✦ The Lord's words are remembered - "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. *When you are restored, strengthen your brethren*". Luke 22:32
- ✦ So we read of the first 2 stops on his trip in Acts 9, Lydda and Joppa.



Acts 10:1-2

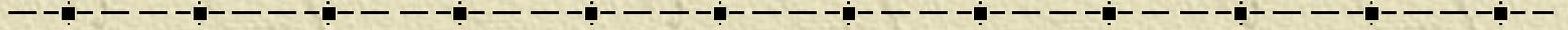
✦ Cornelius was a moral man – lost in sin.

- ✦ Devout (pious)
- ✦ Feared God (reverential in conduct)
- ✦ Generous (charitable)
- ✦ Prayerful (depended on God)
- ✦ Just (fair, honest)
- ✦ Good reputation (integrity)
- ✦ Lost in sin - Acts 11:14 – “(Peter)... will declare to you a message *by which you will be saved,*”

Acts 10:4

-
- ✦ In all three accounts of the conversion of Cornelius, we find that, this devout, God-fearing, upright and generous man:
 - Lived according to the light he had. (Acts 10:2)
 - Sill needed to repent. (Acts 11:18)
 - Needed to believe in the Lord Jesus. (Acts 15:7-9)
 - If he was, by the Lord's grace. (Acts 15:11)
 - To be saved and receive forgiveness of sins. (Acts 10:43)
 - The cleansing of his heart. (Acts 15:9)
 - The gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 10:45)
 - And eternal life. (Acts 11:18)

Acts 10:8



Why all the way to Joppa, 36 miles away?



Acts 10:8

Why all the way to Joppa?

- ✦ Paul ,the '*apostle of the Gentiles*' had earlier passed through Caesarea. (Acts 9:30)
- ✦ '*Philip the evangelist*' had earlier settled in Caesarea. (Acts 8)
- ✦ Neither declared the gospel to Cornelius and his household.
- ✦ Peters words, spoken at the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 ...
'Men and brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, *that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe*'.
- ✦ Convenience is then not a word used in the language of the Gospel.

Acts 10:9

-
- ✦ The practice of Godly saints of old to pray at noon:
- ✦ David (Ps. 55:17)
 - ✦ Daniel (Dan 6:10)
 - ✦ Peter (Acts 10:9)

Acts 10:14

- ✦ This is the last of three occasions on which Peter uses the word “*Never*” when addressing the Lord.

The Upper Room, ‘You shall *never* wash my feet’.

On the way to Gethsemane, ‘I will *never* fall away’.

The house of Simon the tanner, ‘I have *never* eaten anything that is common or unclean’.

- ✦ On each occasion Peter received a correction from our Lord.
- ✦ From this point on, it is interesting that, Peter ‘*never says never*’ to the Lord.

Acts 10:16

✦ On 3 occasions, Peter was challenged with the same point, 3 times:

Alongside a fire of coals at the court of the high priest.
(John 18:18)

Along side another fire of coals at the sea side. (John 21:9)

The sheet from heaven - “This happened three times”
(Acts 10:16)

✦ On each occasion his resistance decreases.

✦ From this point he resists the Lord no more and goes to the home of a Gentile.

Acts 10:17

Why did Peter respond as he did?

✦ Genesis in the Garden:

- ◆ Man was given permission by the Lord God to eat only herbs and fruit with one notable exception, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

✦ After the Great Flood:

- ◆ God told Noah “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything”. Gen. 9:3
- ◆ A distinction already existed between animals which were ‘clean’ and animals which were ‘unclean’. Gen. 7:2. But this had not yet been applied to food.

Acts 10:18

Why did Peter respond as he did?

✦ At Mount Sinai:

- ✦ The Lord forbade His people to eat many of the creatures which mankind had eaten freely up until that time.
- ✦ These dietary laws did 2 things:
 - Prevent any intermingling with the surrounding Gentiles.
 - Served as a reminder that they were to be separated to the Lord to avoid the moral and spiritual uncleanness of the Gentiles.
- ✦ “Consecrate yourselves, therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.” Lev. 20:7

Acts 10:17

Why did God respond as He did?

✦ Had God ‘made clean’ that which He had once declared to be unclean?

✦ “And He (Lord Jesus) said to them, *“Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?”* (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ESV - Mark 7:18-19

Acts 10:17

Had Peter heard the Lord say this?

- ✦ Peter was the one who asked for this explanation
 - ◆ “Peter said to Him, “Explain the parable to us.” Matt. 15:15
- ✦ Note the annotation by Mark (*Thus he declared all foods clean.*) Mark 7:19.
- ✦ Peter, likely, strongly influenced Mark’s gospel:
 - ◆ 1 Peter 5:13 “Mark, my son”.
 - ◆ Acts 12 – Peter, after his miraculously released from prison, goes to Mary’s house, the mother of Mark.
 - ◆ Many early Christian writings attest to Peter’s influence on Mark.

Acts 10:20

- ✦ As Peter wrestled with the implication of our Lord's admonition in the vision and possibly His words in Mark 7, he was perplexed.
- ✦ But clear instruction comes in verse 20 "Arise and go down".
- ✦ The response is swift "And Peter went down."
- ✦ The complexities (behind the scenes) are left for God.
 - ✦ Peter's vision came 21 hours after that of Cornelius'.
 - ✦ 21 hours to prepare and walk the 36 mile journey and arrive **just** on time!

Acts 10:24

- ✦ Many centuries before another preacher to the Gentiles left Joppa.
- ✦ Jonah, the unwilling preacher.
- ✦ But God either through the willingness of Peter or the unwillingness of Jonah will have His message go to the Gentiles.
- ✦ One plants, another waters but the Lord adds the increase!

Acts 10:34

- ✦ Evidence that Peter knew “The middle wall of partition” has just come down! Eph. 2:13-18
- ✦ “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” Gal 3:8

Acts 10:41-42

✦ No unbelieving eye saw the Lord after he was raised.

✦ The circumstances of His appearing included:

- 1) Individuals & Groups of 2- 500.
- 2) Indoors & Outdoors.
- 3) Judea & Galilee.
- 4) Countryside & City.
- 5) Close-up & Far away.
- 6) Morning & Evening.
- 7) With appt. & without appt.
- 8) On a hill, by a lake, on a road.
- 9) Sitting, standing, walking.
- 10) Always talked to whom he appeared to.
- 11) Often ate with them.
- 12) Always to adults, **never** to children.

Acts 10:43

-
- ✦ This is the last of 5 sermons Peter preached in Acts:
- ✦ Just after Pentecost (Acts 2:14-39)
 - ✦ Temple Beggar (Acts 3:11-4:4)
 - ✦ After his first Arrest (Acts 4:8-12)
 - ✦ After his second Arrest (Acts 5:29-32)
 - ✦ At the home of Cornelius (Acts 10:34-43)

Acts 10:43

✦ 5 common elements in every message:

- ✦ An introduction to his audience.
- ✦ A statement that the Lord Jesus was put to death: the fault of the people.
- ✦ A statement that God has the last word by “raising him from the dead”.
- ✦ A statement that the Lord Jesus has been exalted and is the coming Judge.
- ✦ A statement that now is the time to repent and put their full trust in the Lord Jesus in order that they might have forgiveness of sins, be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:43

-
- ✦ A comprehensive message indeed!
 - ✦ Note how Mark's gospel, and Peter's last recorded sermon follows exactly the same structure.
 - ✦ Beginning with Lord's baptism by John and continuing through to His resurrection.

Acts 10:43

-
- ✦ They were baptized in the Spirit first, and then baptized in water.
 - ✦ The same as it was at Pentecost, as evidenced by 6 believing Jews.