

The Conversion of Cornelius

- Acts 10
- Background of Cornelius
 - 10:1 – Centurion/soldier in primarily heathen army
 - 10:2
 - Devout, like Saul (9:22), men who carried Stephen’s body (8:2), Ananias (22:12)
 - Feared God, with all his household (10:7 – devout soldier)
 - Gave alms generously to the people (Roman soldier giving to Jewish people in need...)
 - Prayed to God always
 - 10:22 – just man, fears God, has good reputation among Jews
- What conversion did this man need?
 - 10:3, 30 – Praying at dedicated time in middle of the day.
 - 10:4 – vision of angel
 - 10:6 – Send for Peter “will tell you what you must do”
 - 11:14 – Peter would tell them “words by which you and all your household will be saved”
 - Angel didn’t tell Cornelius what he needed; didn’t save him miraculously
 - As good as Cornelius was, he still lacked something...
 - Had Cornelius sinned? Had he been forgiven?
- Cornelius’ influence
 - While Peter receives vision and travels to Caesarea...
 - 10:24 – Invited relatives and friends to his house to hear Peter
 - 10:33 – “We are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.”
- Gospel for all
 - 10:34 – God shows no partiality
 - 10:35 – Whoever fears him and works righteousness is accepted by Him
 - Cornelius already did these things—what did he lack?
 - 10:36-42 – The Word, which Cornelius already knew
 - 10:43 – Through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins
 - 10:44-46 – Holy Spirit fell on them
 - Contrast with 2:38-39
 - 10:47-48 – Baptism still necessary and immediate priority
- Cornelius lacked conversion—he needed to believe in Jesus and be baptized.
 - Do we need to receive the Holy Spirit like Cornelius did? Or see an angel?
 - No, the purpose was for Peter and the Jewish Christians to realize that the Gospel was open to everyone
 - Many “good people” are on the right track—they just need to realize their privilege and obey the gospel
 - Cornelius was a moral man, but he hadn’t *earned* his salvation.
 - Sin separates man from God, and we must repent of sin to be saved. Cornelius apparently had not done that—he needed to believe in Jesus, repent, and be baptized.