

## The Conversion of Cornelius

### Acts 10

Church was Jewish in nature. They gathered in the temple Peter still followed the Jewish times of prayer - even in Joppa. 6th hour of the day. See also Acts 3. Samaria's acceptance was remarkable, Acts 8. Ethiopian Eunuch. Paul, the future apostle to the Gentiles had been saved, gone to Arabia, Jerusalem and was presently in Tarsus in Cilicia. The conversion of Cornelius rocked the believers and was the beginning of the whole controversy which could have split the church.

#### **1) CORNELIUS AND JUDAISM 10v1-6**

**A Roman Officer.** A common name which 1000's had who had freedom granted them by P. Cornelius Sulla in 82BC. He was over a body of troops all from Rome stationed in Judaea. More important than his military status was his character and reputation.

**A God Fearer.** Not a full proselyte but a "proselyte of the gate". On the verge of Judaism but had not submitted himself to its full rites and ordinances. Attracted by the monotheism of the Jews and their ethical standards. He believed in God.

**A Generous Giver.** Many acts of charity were performed by this man showing his devotion.

**A Regular Intercessor.** Observing the Jewish times of prayer- here 3pm in the afternoon. This was a regular thing for him.

**A Respected and Good Neighbour.** v22 Well known for his kindness and his righteousness and well thought of among all the Jews.

How do we compare? It had not brought him peace, assurance or acceptance. See Acts 10v3-6; 11v11-14, "words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved".

v22 He was warned by God = he was in danger!

#### **2) CORNELIUS AND JOPPA 10v5-23**

Peter staying in Joppa. He needed to be prepared as Cornelius was being prepared.. Note in the house of Simon the tanner. Jew would not have stayed there. Simon accepted as a believer.

Peter on the rooftop for prayer. He had a vision of the great sheet with three kinds of unclean animals according to the Jewish law of Lev. 11. God's command was "Kill and eat". Peter protested, but a voice said, "What God has cleansed you must not continue to call common or unclean". Peter needed to realize that what was true about food was also true about people - Gentile people. Both can be cleansed and become part of the people of God.

#### **3) CORNELIUS AND JESUS. v23-48.**

Peter sets out for Caesarea with 6 others, 11v12.

Cornelius worshipped him. They are still worshipping those who are not to be worshipped! Statues, saints etc. .

God has no favourites. Everyone who fears him and works righteousness is accepted with him. Peter's theme is Jesus -he is the answer.

Jesus was chosen peace bringer; the anointed servant; the mighty healer(v38); the crucified victim; the exalted Lord; the ordained judge; and blessed saviour.

The SCOPE "whosoever". The STEP "believeth" Christ has done the work.

The SAVIOUR "in him" The SURETY "shall" The SWEETNESS "forgiveness of sins" God moved and they received the Holy Spirit.

Do you know him? Have you trusted him? Will you be saved or judged by him?

## **God Wants Cornelius and You**

### **Acts 10**

Church was Jewish in nature. They gathered in the temple Peter still followed the Jewish times of prayer - even in Joppa. 6th hour of the day. See also Acts 3. Samaria's acceptance was remarkable, Acts 8. Ethiopian Eunuch. In Acts 9 Paul, the future apostle to the Gentiles had been saved, gone to Arabia, Jerusalem and was presently in Tarsus in Cilicia. The story of the conversion of Cornelius in Acts was very important because it recorded the acceptance of Gentiles into the church. (Still long way to go until they recognized the implications of this). Peter, under God opened the door.

#### **THE MAN. 1-6.**

**A Roman Officer.** A common name which 1000's had who had freedom granted them be P. Cornelius Sulla in 82BC. He was over a body of troops all from Rome stationed in Judaea. More important than his military status was his character and reputation.

**A God Fearer.** Not a full proselyte but a "proselyte of the gate". On the verge of Judaism but had not submitted himself to its full rites and ordinances. Attracted by the monotheism of the Jews and their ethical standards. He believed in God.

So he believed in God, evidenced by his regular prayers and his giving.

**A Respected and Good Neighbour.** v22 Well known for his kindness/generosity and his righteousness and well thought of among all the Jews.

Saved or not? Remember 11v14. The point is the acceptance of Gentiles and the responsibility to preach to them the way of salvation. Better not to try and compare him with people today.

#### **THE MANIFESTATION. 7-17.**

Peter had to be prepared for the coming of the two messengers from Cornelius. Even a moderately orthodox Jew would not willingly enter the dwelling of a Gentile.

Peter went up to pray, v9. Jews took seriously Ps55v17, Dan6v10.

Note in the house of Simon the tanner. Jew would not have stayed there. Simon accepted as a believer.

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Remember Mark7v18-20 Peter was behind that record.

#### **THE MISSION v17-33.**

When messengers arrived "Holy Spirit said..." In the whole matter of guidance there will be an inner conviction, circumstances and a word from the Lord.

v24-25 Peter refuses to be worshipped. They were equals.

v28 Cornelius explains why he had sent for Peter.

#### **THE MESSAGE v34-48.**

v34 Peter acknowledges that God will accept anyone who fears him and lives in a righteous way - as evidence of faith. He preaches to him about Jesus.

Jesus was chosen peace bringer; the exalted Lord; the anointed servant; the mighty healer(v38); the crucified victim; the ordained judge; and blessed saviour.

God the Holy Spirit falls on all who hear the word and the Gentile Pentecost occurs.

Note. People receive the baptism of the Spirit here at conversion. Baptism was commanded by Peter. Had not Jesus ordained it?

## **Cleansing and Acceptance for All who Believe Acts 10v1f**

### **CORNELIUS AND THE ANGEL 10v1-6**

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v22 He was warned by God = he was in danger!

In v33 we see that he 'immediately' did something about it. You need to do something about it tonight.

### **PETER AND THE VISION v9-21.**

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God can turn things around for you. He can deliver you. He can change your life.

Peter comes to Cornelius' house. He refuses to be worshipped, v25.

v34 Peter acknowledges that God will accept anyone who fears him and lives in a righteous way - as evidence of faith. He preaches to him about Jesus.

Jesus was chosen peace bringer; the exalted Lord; the anointed servant; the mighty healer(v38); the crucified victim; the ordained judge; and blessed saviour, see v36-43, especially v43.

The SCOPE "whosoever". The STEP "believeth" Christ has done the work.

The SAVIOUR "in him" The SURITY "shall" The SWEETNESS "forgiveness of sins"

### **THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CONGREGATION v44-48**

The Holy Spirit moved in the peoples' hearts. God may be speaking to you tonight. They believed and they received the Holy Spirit.

Peter commanded them to be baptized. They were not baptized to receive the Holy Spirit – they already had the Holy Spirit. Not sacramental.

Baptism was commanded by Peter. Had not Jesus ordained it? As a witness.