

Acts 10-11, The Conversion of Cornelius
10:1-24, Two Commands
May 16, 1992
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Overview

1. Last section established Peter's authority as representative of the Lord, through miraculous healings like those of Christ.
2. Overview of the entire story:
 - a) 10:1-8, Cornelius' Vision: God commands him to send for Peter, and he obeys.
 - b) 9-24, Peter sent: God commands him to go to Cornelius, and he obeys. Note the point of the vision: any food is OK now.
 - c) 24b-48, Meeting with Cornelius: Salvation.
 - d) 11:1-18, Discussion in Jerusalem. "You went in ... and did eat with them." The very issue the vision addressed.Each of these, and the story as a whole, holds particular lessons for us.

A. 9:43-10:2, Background of the Players

1. Peter's willingness to live with a tanner (continually unclean through contact with dead animals) shows that his Jewish prejudices were already beginning to weaken.
2. 10:2,22, the centurion's qualifications
 - a) Itemize:
 - 1) "devout," *eusebhs*, like Ananias who led Saul to the Lord (22:12) or the "godly" whom the Lord delivers out of temptations (2 Pet. 2:9). Emphasis on worshipful attitude toward God; "operative cultivate piety" (Alford)
 - 2) "feared God," thus recognized his authority.
 - 3) "gave alms," practical expression of his piety. Backed it up with action.
 - 4) "prayed always." Personal devotion. The particular devotion reported here, the 9th hour, was a Jewish custom, cf. 3:1.
 - 5) cf. v.22, "righteous, fears God, of good report among the Jews." Like the centurion on Luke 7, "3 he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: 5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue."
 - b) not enough to save him!
 - c) Most important: evidence of his DESIRE to be saved. Thus 10:4. God does not save those who do not want it. Cornelius' righteousness cannot save him, but because of the desire it demonstrates, God will show him how to be born again.

B. 10:9-16, Peter's Vision

1. 9, Engaged in prayer at the sixth hour (noon). Jewish custom was to pray three times a day (Psa. 55:17). We've seen Peter at noon and Cornelius in the afternoon.
2. 14a, "Not so, Lord." How typical of Peter, who presumed to rebuke the Lord at the time of his great confession (Matt. 16:22) and again at the foot-washing (John 13:8). When will we learn not to argue with the Lord--particularly when he is trying to bless us? Here, he is removing some of the constraints under which Peter lived.
3. 14b. The sheet contained every kind of animal; the "unclean" ones (e.g., pigs) could never be eaten, and even the clean ones could not be eaten without being killed in the prescribed manner, so were "common."
4. 15, cf. Mark 7:19, where "purging all meats" is not in the mouth of the Lord, but a comment by the evangelist on the implication of the Lord's words. The parallel in Matt. 15 lacks these words. Recall that Mark is usually thought to record Peter's experiences with the Lord; the experience in Acts 10 likely opened to his understanding the true implications of the Lord's earlier teaching.
 - a) God created all things "good."
 - b) Because of sin, the law designated some animals unclean.
 - c) Now Christ lifts the curse; God cleanses what was unclean, and it is now permitted.

This vision is only the first of three messages that God sends Peter.

C. 10:9-24, 3-fold leadership of Peter

Cf. Philip in ch. 8. *Application:* We need to be alert to these same three modes of instruction from the Lord.

1. 9-16, Peter's Vision: Tangible divine message (cf. Philip's angel). Involves a command not to reject what God has cleansed, thus stimulating the "fear of the Lord" (9:31).
 2. 17-18, 21-22 (separated), Messengers' request: circumstances.
 3. 19-20, The Spirit speaks: "encouragement of the HS" (9:31).
- D. Role of works in the passage: both Cornelius and Peter must obey the Lord's command in order for salvation to come. Yet when it comes, it is indisputably the work of the Spirit, and neither of them can claim credit for it.

Summary

Bring together several aspects of obedience seen in this passage.

1. Necessary for salvation, but not sufficient. Shows Cornelius' openness. But not meritorious. Salvation does not follow as the reward for his good deeds, or as a debt owed because of them.
2. "Not so, Lord." The danger of bucking the Lord's leading.
3. The vision of the sheet reminds us that the Lord's expectations do change from one age to another. We no longer live under the ceremonial law, and are not bound by its provisions.
4. Once more, the three modes of divine instruction.

Psalm: 15, "Who, O Lord, with Thee abiding..."

Analysis

- A. 9:43)Ege/neto de\ h(me/ras i(kana\s mei^nai e)n)Io/pph| para/
tini Si/mwni bursei^.
- B. 10:1-8, Cornelius' Vision: Execution p
1. Command: interchange p
 - a) IU: 10:1)Anh\r de/ tis e)n Kaisarei/a| o)no/mati Kornh/lios,
e(katonta/rxhs e)k spei/rhs th^s kaloume/nhs)Italikh^s,
2 eu)sebh\s kai\ fobou/menos to\n geo\n su\n panti\ tw^|
oi)/kw| au)tou^, poiw^n e)lehmosu/nas polla\s tw^| law^| kai\
deo/menos tou^ qeou^ dia\ panto/s,
3 ei)^den e)n o(ra/mati fanerw^s w(sei\ peri\ w(/ran e)na/thn
th^s h(me/ras a)/ggelon tou^ qeou^ ei)selqo/nta pro\s au)to\n
kai\ ei)po/nta au)tw^|, Kornh/lie.
 - b) CU: 4 o(de\ a)teni/sas au)tw^| kai\ e)/mfobos geno/menos
ei)^pen, Ti/ e)stin, ku/rie;
 - c) RU: ei)^pen de\ au)tw^|,
 - 1) Ai(proseuxai/ sou kai\ ai(e)lehmosu/nai sou a)ne/bhsan
ei)s mnhmo/sunon e)/mprosqen tou^ qeou^.
 - 2) 5 kai\ nu^n pe/myon a)/ndras ei)s)Io/pphn
 - 3) kai\ meta/pemyai Si/mwna/ tina o(\s e)pikalei^tai Pe/tros:
 - 4) 6 ou(^tos ceni/zetai para/ tini Si/mwni bursei^,
 - 5) w(^| e)stin oi)ki/a para\ qa/lassan.
 2. Execution: temporal p
 - a) time: 7 w(s de\ a)ph^lqen o(a)/ggelos o(lalw^n au)tw^|,
 - b) text: fwnh/sas du/o tw^n oi)ketw^n kai\ stratiw/thn eu)sebh^
tw^n proskarterou/ntwn au)tw^|, 8 kai\ e)chghsa/menos
a(/panta au)toi^s a)pe/steilen au)tou\s ei)s th\n)Io/pphn.
- C. 9-24, Peter sent: execution p
1. Command: note the three-fold leadership, as in the case of Philip.
 - a) 9-16, Peter's Vision: Tangible divine message (cf. Philip's

a> a)/ndres trei^s zhtou^nte/s se:
b> 20 a)lla\ a)nasta\s kata/bhqi
c> kai\ poreu/ou su\n au)toi^s mhde\n diakrino/menos,
d> o(/ti e)gw\ a)pe/stalka au)tou/s.

2. Execution: The Journey

- a) 23 ei)skalesa/menos ou)^n au)tou\s e)ce/nisen.
- b) Th^| de\ e)pau/rion a)nasta\s e)ch^lqen su\n au)toi^s,
- c) kai/ tines tw^n a)delfw^n tw^n a)po\)Io/pphs sunh^lqon au)tw^|.
- d) 24 th^| de\ e)pau/rion ei)sh^lqen ei)s th\n Kaisa/reian:

D. 24b-48, Meeting with Cornelius: <next message>

E. 11:1-18, Discussion in Jerusalem <coming>