

Acts 10-11, The Conversion of Cornelius
10:24-48, The Meeting with Cornelius
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Overview

1. Overview of the entire story:
 - a) Two visionary commands:
 - 1) 10:1-8, Cornelius' Vision: God commands him to send for Peter, and he obeys.
 - 2) 9-24, Peter sent: God commands him to go to Cornelius, and he obeys.
 - b) 24b-48, Meeting with Cornelius: Salvation.
 - c) 11:1-18, Discussion in Jerusalem.
2. Today, focus on the meeting with Cornelius.

A. 24-33, Peter meets Cornelius

1. Cornelius' eagerness: he meets Peter when Peter "comes in" v.25, but it is later that Peter "comes in" to the house (v.27). Suggests the initial greeting is at the city gate, when Peter first "came in" to Caesarea, v.24a.
2. Misdirected worship.
 - a) Brings to mind other exx in which men or angels reject worship.
 - 1) Acts 14:11-15, Paul and Barnabas in Lystra: "We also are men."
 - 2) Rev. 19:10, John's angelic guide: "I am thy fellowservant."
 - 3) Rev. 22:28,29, same situation.
 - b) The repeated refusal of men and angels to receive worship makes all the more impressive our Lord's willingness to receive it. He never rejects it: as Son of God, he is worthy of our worship.
 - 1) Matt. 8:2, the leper
 - 2) Matt. 14:33, the disciples in the ship
3. Conversation in the house.
 - a) v.28 shows Peter's application of the vision. It is far broader than just to food, but applies to classes of people as well. Ought to do away with any notion of class or racial distinction on the part of believers. Cf. the Lord's dealings with the woman at the well: a samaritan, and a woman at that.
 - b) v.33, the circumstances of Gospel preaching. Not just a human preacher and a human hearer:
 - 1) The teacher is delivering what God has commanded him. *prostassw*, cf. *suntassw* and *tassw*, emphasizes God's direction and ordination, as opposed to *entellomai*, which

emphasizes the content of the command.

- 2) The hearers must answer for what they hear before God. cf. 2 Tim. 4:1; Matt. 11:21.

We are likely to make a big deal about the responsibility of a teacher before God; the hearers have no less a responsibility!

B. 34-43, Peter's Message

Basic movement: four statements about knowing or declaring something:

1. Peter perceives the eligibility of the Gentiles.
 2. They know the stories of Jesus' life.
 3. The apostles witness to the resurrection and its meaning.
 4. The prophets proclaim the need for faith.
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1. 34-35, "I Perceive..."--the eligibility of the Gentiles. Whether a person is acceptable with God does not depend on his nationality, but on his attitude and actions toward God.
 - a) The two conditions, "fear God" (attitude) and "work righteousness" (action), are already true of Cornelius before he believes on Christ (10:1,22), but this is not in general true of unbelievers. Cornelius has responded to God's OT revelation, and is thus in much the same state as an OT saint.
 - b) "Accepted" can also be rendered "acceptable," and that fits better here. Peter does NOT say, "Wow, you're wonderful. I guess I don't need to preach here." Rather, because he sees this receptiveness on Cornelius' part, he is bold to give him the news of the Messiah, so that he might believe and be forgiven.
 - c) *Application*: God does not force the gospel on unwilling people. Our positive response to what we have already heard is our ticket to learn more.

Obedience to the OT is not enough. Cornelius needs to learn of the coming of the Messiah.
 2. 36-38, "You know..."--the stories of the life of Jesus. The verb "you know" in 37 governs three objects. All three concern the life of Jesus Christ, but emphasize different aspects: its purpose (preaching peace), its setting (in space and time), and its mechanism (the HS in Christ's life).

Peter assumes that Cornelius, as an alert person, will have heard reports about the Teacher from Galilee.

 - a) 36, "You know the word." The Purpose of Christ's life: preach peace. Cf. Isa. 57:19 for the two dimensions of this peace, and Paul's exposition of it in Eph. 2:14-18:
 - 1) uniting Jew to Gentile (more broadly, doing away with schisms among people);

2) uniting both to God in one body.

Application: People are much exercised today over issues of peace among men. Just as we think the cold war is over, we are confronted anew with racial tension and strife in our own land. The problem is that we have sought the first kind of peace without the second. Only as we draw near to God can we hope to live in peace with one another.

b) 37, "You know the story" (*rhma*, in place of *logos*). The Setting of Christ's life:

- 1) In space: throughout all of Judaea, starting from Galilee.
- 2) In time: following John's baptizing activity.

Application: Some modern "scholars" question the historical details of Jesus' life, but feel that what really matters after all is just what the church "remembers" about him. We need to keep in mind that "we have not followed cunningly devised fables" (2 Pet. 1:16).

c) 38, "You know Jesus of Nazareth." The Mechanism of Christ's life.

"Anointed"--Cornelius understood something of his messianic claims.

It was because "God was with him" in the person of "the Holy Ghost" that he was able to go "about doing good, and healing."

Application: We need to rely on the same Spirit for power in our lives.

Peter not only recognizes Cornelius as a righteous, God-fearing man, but also as having considerable knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus, even extending to his Spiritual power. Yet Cornelius needs to learn more than this.

3. 39-42, "We are witnesses..."--life, death, resurrection, judgment.

Peter begins (39a) by confirming what Cornelius knows of the life of Jesus, then expands to his death, his resurrection, and his role as judge, details that Cornelius may not have known but needs to learn.

a) 39a, recap of what Cornelius already knows of what Jesus did.

b) 39b, what the people did. The two expressions emphasize the humiliation and rejection of the Lord.

- 1) "slew [him]," lit. "put [him] out of the way," "got rid of him." Emphasizes that he was "despised and rejected of men."

2) "hanged [him] on a tree," cf. Gal. 3:13, quoting from Deut. 21:22,23. Emphasizes that the curse of God was upon him, because of our sin which he bore. This insight goes beyond what Cornelius is likely to have concluded.

c) 40-42, what God did.

1) 40a, raised him from the dead. That God would do this for one whom he had cursed shows that the curse is now gone; our sin has been done away.

2) 40b-41, manifested him to previously chosen witnesses.
Notice:

a> the *nature* of the manifestation: eating and drinking together, proving that he rose with a physical body, not just as an apparition or ghost.

b> the *observers* of the manifestation: not everybody, but chosen witnesses.

1> This exclusion of unbelievers from seeing the risen Christ is anticipated in John 14:18-24. Example: when the Lord appears to Saul, the other travelers do not see Him.

2> Reason: Christ, now glorified, excludes from his royal presence all who do not please him. It is an unspeakable privilege to be admitted to his royal presence, and one that he does not grant promiscuously. Compare OT exx. where "seeing the face" of the monarch is conditioned on meeting his approval:

a: Joseph re. his brothers, Gen. 43:3,5;

b: Pharaoh to Moses, Exod. 10:28;

c: David re. Abner, 2 Sam. 3:13;

d: David re. Absalom, 2 Sam. 14:24.

NB: Christ is not sitting around pining for people to believe on him. He is now in glory, and admission to his presence is a privilege and a blessing to us.

3) 42, commissioned the apostles to preach and bear witness.
Notice:

a> The Author of the commissioning. The historical commands came from Jesus (1:8; Matt. 28:19-20; etc.), yet Peter is conscious of their authority as from God (cf. 4:19; 5:29).

b> The Content of the witness they are to bear: that Christ is God's appointed judge. Cf. Acts 17:31. The

resurrection shows

1> that Christ is the powerful Son of God, able to judge
(Rom. 1:4);

2> that resurrection is possible, thus people cannot
hope to escape judgment by annihilation in death.

Cornelius is not only a righteous, god-fearing person, but he knows the stories of the life of Jesus, and now Peter has brought him up to date on the resurrection of Jesus and his coming role as judge. Yet even this is not enough. Cornelius needs to know one thing more in order to be saved.

4. "The prophets bear witness..."--faith unto forgiveness. Knowledge of facts, even such facts as these, does not bring salvation. We need to place our trust in what God has done in Christ. For the prophetic testimony to this truth, cf. conveniently Isa. 50:10-51:6.

In sum: to be saved, one needs to be receptive, to know the history of Jesus' life, to recognize the implications of his death and resurrection, and to trust in him personally as our saviour.

C. 44-48, Coming of the Spirit

1. 44-46, the manifestation of the Spirit was in all respects like the day of Pentecost. This similarity was critical to avoid any suspicions that the gentiles might be second-class compared with Jewish believers, as we will see in Peter's argument in ch. 11.
2. 45, those who have accompanied Peter are described as "those of the circumcision." We will see next week that these are likely Gentiles who have converted to Judaism (cf. the seven in ch. 6). Having come through the arduous process of conversion, they in particular are amazed at Cornelius' short-cut.
3. 47, note the order of baptism, here as elsewhere in Acts: first faith, then baptism. Guards against two errors.
 - a) No basis for applying baptism to those who have not believed.
 - b) Those who believe are to bear witness to their faith in water baptism. No basis for avoiding baptism for those who have believed.

Hymn:

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 <last message>

C. 9-24, Peter sent: execution p <last message>

D. 24b-48, Meeting with Cornelius:

1. setting: o(de\ Kornh/lios h)^n prosdokw^ au)tou/s,
sugkalesa/menos tou\s suggenei^s au)tou^ kai\ tou\s a)nagkai/ous
fi/lous.
2. First interchange: misdirected worship
 - a) IU: (gesture)
25 w(s de\ e)ge/neto tou^ ei)selqei^n to\n Pe/tron,
sunanth/sas au)tw^| o(Kornh/lios pesw\n e)pi\ tou\s po/das
proseku/nhsen.
This must be Peter's entrance into Caesaria (v.24), not the
house, which happens in 27. Cornelius has been waiting for him
at the gate!
 - b) CU: 26 o(de\ Pe/tros h)/geiren au)to\n le/gwn,
1))Ana/sthqi:
2) kai\ e)gw\ au)to\s a)/nqrwpo/s ei)mi.
3. Second interchange
 - a) setting:
 - 1) 27 kai\ sunomilw^ au)tw^| ei)sh^lqen,
 - 2) kai\ eu(ri/skei sunelhluqo/tas pollou/s,
 - b) IU (Peter): quote p: 28 e)/fh te pro\s au)tou/s,
 - 1) (Umei^s e)pi/stasqe w(s a)qe/mito/n <see 1 Pet. 4:3,
"abominable"> e)stin a)ndri\)Ioudai/w| kolla^sqai h)\
prose/rxesqai a)llofu/lw|:
 - 2) ka)moi\ o(qeo\s e)/deicen mhde/na koino\n h)\ a)ka/qarton
le/gein a)/nqrwpon:
 - 3) 29 dio\ kai\ a)nantirrh/tws h)^lqon metapemfgei/s.
 - 4) punqa/nomai ou)^n ti/ni lo/gw| metepe/myasqe/ me;
 - c) CU (Cornelius) 30 kai\ o(Kornh/lios e)/fh,
 - 1))Apo\ teta/rths h(me/ras me/xri tau/th's th^s w(/ras h)/mhn
th\n e)na/thn proseuxo/menos e)n tw^| oi)/kw| mou,
 - 2) kai\ i)dou\ a)nh\r e)/sth e)nw/pio/n mou e)n e)sqh^ti
lampra^|
 - 3) quote p: 31 kai\ fhsi/n,
 - a> Kornh/lie,
 - b> ei)shkou/sqh sou h(proseuxh\
c> kai\ ai(e)lehmosu/nai sou e)mnh/sqhsan e)nw/pion tou^
qeou^.
 - d> 32 pe/myon ou)^n ei)s)Io/pphn
 - e> kai\ metaka/lesai Si/mwna o(\s e)pikalei^tai Pe/tros:
f> ou(^tos ceni/zetai e)n oi)ki/a| Si/mwnos burse/ws para\
qa/lassan.
 - 4) 33 e)cauth^s ou)^n e)/pemya pro\s se/,
5) su/ te kalw^s e)poi/hsas parageno/menos.
6) nu^ n ou)^n pa/ntes h(meis e)nw/pion tou^ qeou^ pa/resmen
a)kou^sai pa/nta ta\ prostetagme/na soi u(po\ tou^ kuri/ou.

- d) CU (Peter): 34)Anoi/cas de\ Pe/tros to\ sto/ma ei)^pen,
- 1) "I Perceive..."
 -)Ep' a)lhqei/as katalamba/nomai
 - a> o(/ti ou)k e)/stin proswpolh/mpths o(qeo/s,
 - b> 35 a)ll' e)n panti\ e)/qnei o(fobou/menos au)to\n kai\ e)rgazo/menos dikaios/nhn dekho\s au)tw^| e)stin.

 - 2) "You know..."--the stories of the life of Jesus
 - multiple object: 37 u(meis oi)/date,
 - a> 36 to\n lo/gon ...
 - 1> comment <logon>: comment p
 - a: text: [o(\n] a)pe/steilen tois ui(ois)Israh\l eu)aggelizo/menos ei)rh/nhn dia\)Ihsou^ Xristou^,
 - b: comment <IX>: ou(^to/s e)stin pa/ntwn ku/rios
 - b> to\ geno/menon r(h^ma kaq' o(/lhs th^s)Ioudai/as, a)rca/menos a)po\ th^s Galilai/as meta\ to\ ba/ptisma o(\ e)kh/rucen)Iwa/nnhs,
 - c> 38)Ihsou^n to\n a)po\ Nazare/q,
 - d> w(s e)/xrisen au)to\n o(qeo\s pneu/mati a(gi/w| kai\ duna/mei,
 - 1> <auton>: o(\s dih^lqen eu)ergetw^n kai\ i)w/menos pa/ntas tou\s katadunasteuome/nous u(po\ tou^ diabo/lou,
 - a: o(/ti o(qeo\s h)^n met' au)to^.

 - 3) "We are witnesses..."--life, death, resurrection, judgment
 - 39 kai\ h(meis ma/rtyres
 - a> of what Christ did:
 - pa/ntwn w(^n e)poi/hsen e)/n te th^| xw/ra| tw^n)Ioudai/wn kai\ [e)n])Ierousalh/m:
 - b> of what the people did:
 - o(\n kai\ a)nei^lan krema/santes e)pi\ cu/lou.
 - c> of what God did:
 - 1> 40 tou^ton o(qeo\s h)/geiren [e)n] th^| tri/th| h(me/ra|
 - 2> kai\ e)/dwken au)to\n e)mfanh^ gene/sqai, 41 ou) panti\ tw^| law^| a)lla\ ma/rtysin tois prokexeirotinhme/nois u(po\ tou^ qeou^, h(mi^n, oi(/tines sunefa/gomen kai\ sunepi/omen au)tw^| meta\ to\ a)nasth^nai au)to\n e)k nekrw^n:
 - 3> 42 kai\ parh/ggeilen h(mi^n
 - The historical commands came from Jesus (1:8; Matt. 28:19-20; etc.), yet Peter is conscious of their authority as from God (cf. 4:19; 5:29). Cf. also Ezek 3 (the responsibility of the watchman)
 - a: khru/cai tw^| law^|
 - b: kai\ diamartu/rasqai o(/ti ou(^to/s e)stin o(w(risme/nos u(po\ tou^ qeou^ krith\s zw/ntwn kai\ nekrw^n.
 - Cf. 2 Tim. 4:1, which shows that the sense of being "before God" includes the image of judgment.

Cornelius knows that he is "before God"; now Peter reminds him that the risen Christ will be the agent of that judgment to which he has submitted himself.

- 4) "The prophets bear witness..."--faith unto forgiveness.
43 tou/tw| pa/ntes oi(profh^tai marturou^sin, a)/fesin
a(martiw^n labeli^n dia\ tou^ o)no/matos au)tou^ pa/nta to\n
pisteu/onta ei)s au)to/n. e.g., Isa. 50:10-51:6.

4. Coming of the Spirit

- a) 44)/Eti lalou^ntos tou^ Pe/trou ta\ r(h/mata tau^ta
e)pe/pesen to\ pneu^ma to\ a(/gion e)pi\ pa/ntas tou\s
a)kou/ontas to\n lo/gon.
b) 45 kai\ e)ce/sthsan oi(e)k peritomh^s pistoi\ o(/soi
sunh^lqan tw^| Pe/trw|,
c) o(/ti kai\ e)pi\ ta\ e)/qnh h(dwrea\ tou^ a(gi/ou pneu/matos
e)kke/xutai:
d) 46 h)/kouon ga\r au)tw^n lalou/ntwn glw/ssais kai\
megaluno/ntwn to\n qeo/n.
e) quote p: to/te a)pekri/qh Pe/tros,
1) 47 Mh/ti to\ u(/dwr du/natai kwlu^sai/ tis tou^ mh\
baptisqh^nai tou/tous
2) oi(/tines to\ pneu^ma to\ a(/gion e)/labon w(s kai\
h(meis;
f) 48 prose/tacen de\ au)tou\s e)n tw^| o)no/mati)Ihsou^
Xristou^ baptisqh^nai.
g) to/te h)rw/thsan au)to\n e)pimei^nai h(me/ras tina/s.

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