

Peter's Home Bible Study

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Introduction:

A. Acts 10:24-48

1. Up to this point, the gospel had been limited in its outreach
 - a. It had spread throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria - Acts 9:31
 - b. Other than Samaritans (half Jewish), it had gone only to Jews
2. With the conversion of Cornelius and his household, the first Gentiles are saved.
 - a. A conversion noted not only because they were the first Gentiles, but also because of the miraculous events that precipitated it
 - 1) An angel appearing to Cornelius
 - 2) Peter's vision, followed by the Spirit's instruction
 - 3) The Spirit falling upon Cornelius, his family, and friends
 - 4) Cornelius and his household speaking in tongues
3. As in the case of Saul of Tarsus, we have more than just one account
 - a. Luke's description - Acts 10:1-48
 - b. Peter's description when he was called to defend his actions - Acts 11:1-18
4. Important questions to consider:
 - a. Exactly when did the Spirit fall upon Cornelius and his company?
 - b. What was the purpose of the Spirit falling upon them?
 - c. Were they saved when the Spirit came upon them, or when they were baptized?

I. HARMONY OF THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS

A. The angel appears to Cornelius

1. Cornelius, a centurion, is a very religious man - Acts 10:1-2
2. The angel appears to him - Acts 10:3-6
3. As Peter recounts it, "...who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved" - Acts 11:14
4. Cornelius sends 2 servants and a devout soldier to Peter - Acts 10:7-8

B. Peter has a vision

1. While the three men are traveling toward Peter, he has a vision
 - a. Acts 10:9-16, 11:4-10
 - b. It involves a sheet descending from heaven, containing all sorts of creatures; a voice tells Peter to kill and eat; Peter objects, for he has never eaten anything common or unclean; the voice tells him, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." Three times the vision is repeated

C. The Spirit tells Peter to go with the messengers

1. The men from Cornelius arrive as Peter contemplates the vision
 - a. Acts 10:17-18, 11:11
2. The Spirit tells Peter to go, "doubting nothing, for I have sent them"
 - a. Acts 10:19-20; 11:12
3. Peter receives the men and takes six with him as they go to Cornelius

- a. Acts 10:21-23, 11:12
- D. Peter arrives at Cornelius' house
 - 1. Cornelius has gathered his family and close friends - Acts 10:24
 - 2. Peter deflects an attempt by Cornelius to worship him - Acts 10:25-26
 - 3. Peter explains his presence a violation of Jewish custom, but now understands "I should not call any man common or unclean"
 - a. Acts 10:27-28
 - 4. Asked by Peter to explain why he was called, Cornelius recounts the appearance and instructions of the angel - Acts 10:29-32; 11:13-14
 - 5. Cornelius and his household were ready "to hear all things commanded you by God" - Acts 10:33
- E. As Peter begins to speak, the Spirit falls upon the listeners
 - 1. Carefully note the actual sequence of events:
 - 2. Peter explained it "in order from the beginning" - Acts 11:4
 - a. He says "as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them" - Acts 11:15
 - b. The Spirit actually came upon the Gentiles at the beginning of the sermon
 - 3. With the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles, they began speaking with tongues, which amazed Peter and his Jewish companions
 - a. Acts 10:45-46, Acts 2:4, 6, 8, 11
- F. Peter's sermon to the household of Cornelius
 - 1. He begins with a full perception that God shows no partiality
 - a. Acts 10:34-35
 - b. Started with the vision of the sheet and unclean beasts
 - c. Continued with the Spirit's instruction to go with the messengers
 - d. Made clearer with the Spirit falling on Gentiles - Acts 11:15-17
 - e. A message he did not fully grasp and apply - Gal. 2:11-14
 - f. A message he finally got when he wrote in 2Peter 3:15-16
 - 2. Peter then proceeds to proclaim Jesus Christ - Acts 10:36-43
 - a. As Lord who was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power
 - 1) Acts 10:36-38
 - b. Who was killed, but then raised from the dead and seen by eyewitnesses who knew Him well - Acts 10:39-41
 - c. Who has commanded the apostles to proclaim Him as ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and dead - Acts 10:42
 - d. Through Whom remission of sins is offered to those who believe
 - 1) Acts 10:43
 - 3. The same message in every sermon!
 - a. Jesus Christ, Son of God
 - b. His death, burial, and resurrection
 - c. Ordained of God as Lawgiver and Judge
 - d. Through whom we obtain forgiveness of sin
- G. Peter commands them to be baptized
 - 1. How could anyone forbid water to those who had received the Spirit just as the apostles did? - Acts 10:47, 11:17-18

2. So Cornelius and his household were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord - Acts 10:48

II. OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS CONVERSION

- A. Religious people need to be saved
 1. Many people believe that if you are religious, you will be saved, if you go to church, do good, etc., you have earned the right to enter heaven
 2. Yet, though Cornelius was a man who was a devout man, feared God with his whole family, gave alms generously, prayed to God always
 3. But he still needed to be told words by which he would be saved
 4. Clearly, being religious isn't what saves
- B. The gospel is for all
 1. Peter perceived that God is no respecter of persons - Acts 10:34-35
 2. God desires all men saved - John 3:16; 1Tim. 2:3-6; 2Peter 3:9
- C. The purpose of the Spirit falling on them
 1. Some presume that the purpose was to save Cornelius and his family
 - a. That they were saved before obeying command to be baptized
 - b. But the Spirit came upon them as Peter began to speak, before they heard words by which they could be saved - Acts 11:14-15
 2. The purpose of the Spirit can be gleaned from the following:
 - a. The effect it had on the Jewish brethren who were present, and Peter's response - Acts 10:45-47
 - b. The reaction of the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem when Peter told them what happened - Acts 11:17-18
 - c. Peter's explanation at council later in Jerusalem - Acts 15:7-11
 3. The purpose of the Spirit falling on them was to show Jewish brethren
 - a. That God was no respecter of persons - Acts 10:34-35
 - b. That God was willing to grant them opportunity to repent and have life - Acts 11:18
 - c. That Gentiles could be saved in the same way as Jews, by faith, repentance, and baptism - Acts 15:9, 11, 2:38, 10:48
 - d. That faith comes through hearing the word of God - Rom. 10:17
- D. The point at which Cornelius was saved
 1. From what we have already seen in other conversions
 - a. Cornelius was not saved until he heard the words
 - b. Cornelius was not saved until he obeyed what he was told to do
 2. Cornelius and his household were not saved until they believed and were baptized - Mark 16:16

Conclusion:

- A. While miraculous events surrounded the conversion of Cornelius and his household, their salvation was no different from any other
 1. They heard the gospel of Jesus Christ and they were taught to believe and be baptized
- B. As Peter said at the council, it is "through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" that both Gentiles and Jews are saved - Acts 15:11, 11:18