

THE CONVERSION OF A GENTILE SOLDIER

Acts 10:1-11:18

Introduction:

- 1. Jesus told His apostles they were to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8).**
- 2. The Gospel has been preached in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria.**
 - a. A Jewish proselyte from Ethiopia has received the Gospel.**
 - b. Saul, the chief persecutor, has been converted, and will soon become Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.**
 - c. The Gospel has not yet been taken to the Gentiles.**
 - d. Ten years have passed since Pentecost.**
- 3. The Great Commission included “all the nations,” “all the world,” and “every creature” (Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15, 16).**
 - a. Peter had preached on Pentecost that the Gospel was to “all who are afar off,” the Gentiles (Acts 2:39).**
 - b. We will now see the door of the kingdom opened by Peter to the Gentiles (Matt. 16:16-19).**

Discussion:

- I. CORNELIUS WAS A CENTURION OF GOOD CHARACTER (1-8).**
 - A. Centurions were the backbone of the Roman army.**
 - 1. Their rank was comparable to that of a captain.**
 - 2. A regiment contained 600 men with centurions over 100 soldiers.**
 - 3. Caesarea was the Roman capital of Palestine.**
 - B. Centurions in the New Testament were honorable men.**
 - 1. Jesus commended a centurion for his great faith (Matt. 8:5-13).**
 - 2. The centurion at the crucifixion confessed, “Truly, this was the Son of God” (Matt. 27:54).**
 - 3. The centurion entrusted with conducting Paul to Rome treated him fairly (Acts 27:3, 42, 43).**
 - C. Cornelius was a man of outstanding moral character.**
 - 1. Few good moral people could measure up to him today.**
 - 2. He was religious - “a devout man.”**
 - 3. He taught his family- “ He feared God with all his house.”**
 - 4. He was charitable- “He gave generously to the people.”**
 - 5. He was a man of prayer - “He prayed to God always.”**
 - D. Cornelius saw a vision of an angel while praying.**

1. The angel told him his prayers had gone up “for a memorial before God.”
2. The angel did not tell him what to do to be saved (2 Cor. 4:7).
3. He told Cornelius to send for Peter who “will tell you what you must do.”
4. Cornelius immediately sent three servants to Joppa.

II. PETER FELL INTO A TRANCE WHILE PRAYING (9-23).

- A. As Cornelius’ messengers drew near Joppa, Peter went up on the housetop to pray.**
1. He was hungry and food was being prepared.
 2. He saw heaven opened and a great sheet let down containing all manner of clean and unclean animals.
 3. A voice said: “Rise Peter, kill and eat.”
 4. Peter replied, “I have never eaten anything common or unclean” (Lev. 11).
 5. The voice said, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.”
 6. The vision was repeated two times.
- B. The Spirit told Peter three men were seeking him.**
1. God had carefully timed the events.
 2. The messengers from Cornelius related his vision.
 3. Peter lodged them for the night - an unusual act for a Jew.

III. PETER WENT TO CORNELIUS’ HOME IN CAESAREA (24-33).

- A. He found Cornelius assembled with his family and friends.**
1. Cornelius fell down to worship Peter but was forbidden.
 2. Such acts of homage to men are condemned (Rev. 22:8,9).
- B. Peter related his vision to Cornelius.**
1. It was unlawful for a Jew to associate with a Gentile.
 2. He had learned not to call any man common or unclean.
- C. Cornelius then related his vision to Peter.**

IV. PETER PREACHED THE GOSPEL TO THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS (34-43).

- A. He had learned that “God is no respecter of persons.”**
- B. Peter preached the same Gospel he had preached on earlier occasions.**
1. Jesus was anointed by God with the Holy Spirit.
 2. He went about doing good and healing the sick.
 3. The Jews crucified Him, but God raised Him up.

4. The apostles were all witnesses of these things.
5. Jesus had been appointed to be judge of living and dead.
6. Whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins.

V. THE HOLY SPIRIT FELL ON THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS (44-48).

- A. Before Peter finished speaking, the Holy Spirit was poured out on Cornelius and his household.
 1. They spoke with tongues and praised God.
 2. The brethren who came with Peter were astonished.
- B. This was an extra-ordinary occurrence.
 1. Cornelius and his household were Gentiles.
 2. They had not yet obeyed the Gospel.
 3. They were baptized in the Holy Spirit as the apostles were on Pentecost (11:15-17).
- C. Why were Cornelius and his house baptized in the Holy Spirit?
 1. It was not to give them the same powers as the apostles.
 2. It was to convince the Jews that the Gentiles were also to be recipients of the Gospel!
- D. Peter asked, "Can anyone forbid water that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"
 1. They had heard and believed the Gospel.
 2. They had to be baptized in water to be saved just like all others (Mark 16:15, 16).

Conclusion:

1. How was Cornelius saved?
 - a. Not by an angel for the angel told him to send for Peter.
 - b. Not by a vision or trance for its purpose was to convince Peter to go to Cornelius.
 - c. Not by the baptism of the Spirit for it was to convince the Jews that the Gentiles were also to receive the Gospel.
 - d. Cornelius and his household were saved when they heard and believed the Gospel and were baptized in water (11:14; 10:47,48).
2. There is but one baptism today - the baptism of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19,20; Eph. 4:5).
3. Have you believed the Gospel and been baptized in water in order to be saved?
4. If not, why not do so today?