

**THE CONVERSION OF A MORALLY GOOD DEVOUTLY RELIGIOUS
MAN
Ac.10,11,15
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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The study of this conversion is interesting because:
 - a. Of what the Bible says about it.
 - b. Of what men say about it, especially what they say about it is so often contrary to what the Bible says about it.
 - c. Of what men often say about morality and salvation.
2. The universality of the gospel of Christ is clearly stated in the Great Commission which reveals the simple rules in God's plan or scheme of human redemption through Jesus Christ, Mt.28:18-20; Mk.16:15,16; Lk.24:44-49; Jno.20:19-23.
3. The universal application of the gospel of Christ is clearly evident in the N.T. book of conversions, the book of the Acts of the Apostles, in the examples or cases of conversion recorded there, Ac.2; 8; 9; 10; 11; 13; 16; 18; 19.
 - a. These cases or examples of conversion clearly demonstrate for us
 - (1) The way and furnish us the pattern to follow in preaching salvation in the name of Christ and in believing to the salvation of our souls.
 - (2) The power of the gospel to save sinners.
 - (3) The simplicity of the gospel.
 - (4) The universality of the gospel.
4. The conversion of Cornelius, the morally good, devoutly religion man, and his household in Ac.10; 11; 15, emphasizes the universality of the gospel in two ways:
 - a. This case shows the gospel is for all races: Gentiles and Jews.
 - b. This case shows the gospel is for all classes of people.
5. Cornelius' case is unusually interesting because:
 - a. He, as far as the divine record shows, was the first Gentile, as such, converted to Christ by the gospel.
 - (1) There were Gentile proselytes to the Jewish religion present on Pentecost (Ac.2:10).
 - (2) These, of course, were "converts to Judaism, or foreign converts to the Jewish religion" of the O.T. under the law of Moses. See also Mt.23:15; Ac.6:5; 13:43.

- (3) This case marks the beginning of the beginning of the gospel among the Gentiles, as gentiles, as Ac.2 and Pentecost marked the beginning of the gospel among the Jews. Cf. Ac.11:15.
 - b. The devout religious convictions and the good, the excellent, moral character of Cornelius, who was a God-fearing worshipper of God causes many to be surprised:
 - (1) That such a devoutly religious man was lost and needed conversion.
 - (2) That such a good moral man was lost and needed to be saved.
 - c. Of the miracles (in fact, 4 in number) involved in this case and of their significance.
 - d. It is the proof and fulfillment of God's eternal purpose in Christ to unite both Jews and Gentiles, i.e., all nations, in one body by the cross, Isa.2:2-4; Jno.3:14-17; Eph.2:11-22; 3:1-11.
6. Our lesson plan in this stud is to consider:
 - a. The subject of this conversion, the man himself, before his conversion and his need to be saved.
 - b. What was done for him, or the means by which his conversion was brought about.
 - c. What the man himself had to do to be saved.
 - d. In conclusion to offer a summary of what we learn from this case of conversion.
7. Though we shall refer to other passages, our basic, primary text is Ac.10:1-48..

II. DISCUSSION

A. **FIRST, WE TAKE NOTICE OF THE SUBJECT OF THIS CONVERSION, THE MAN HIMSELF BEFORE HIS CONVERSION AND HIS NEED TO BE SAVED, Ac.10:1,2.**

1. As to his person and position, according to V.1:
 - a. He was a Roman by race, an Italian, a Gentile. (At least, he had a Latin name.)
 - b. He was a soldier by profession, with no indication that he had to resign his profession after becoming a Christian.
 - c. He was a centurion by rank, a captain: "denotes a military officer commanding from 50 to 100 men, according to the size of the

legion (or division) of which it was a part (from ‘hekatón,’ a hundred, ‘archo,’ to rule), e.g., Mt.8:5-10.” – Vine, I, 178.

2. According to Vv.2,22, as to his character:
 - a. He was devout toward God; a God-fearing man; a pious man.
 - b. He was benevolent toward man.
3. Considering this, some are startled to learn, or even find it difficult to admit, that a man of his character needed to be converted and saved.
 - a. For to them such a person is not lost and doesn’t need to be saved.
 - b. But probing deeper into the six expressions used to describe his character (such as: “a devout man;” “one that feared God;” “gave much alms to the people;” “a just man;” “of good report among all the nation of the Jews;” “prayed to God always”), it may be even more startling to some that such a man was lost!
4. This deeper probe into these six expressions describing this good man’s character reveals that his piety exhibited itself in at least six different ways, and shows us just how good, moral, devoutly religious and God-fearing he was – yet still lost – still needed to be saved!
 - a. His piety exhibited itself in his being “a devout man.”
 - (1) “Devout,” as used in Ac.10:2,7, and sometimes translated “pious,” means: “...to reverence...signifying sacred awe; it describes reverence exhibited especially in actions; reverence or awe well directed...”
 - (2) “...In the N.T. it is used of a pious attitude towards God, ...directs us...to the energy which, directed by holy awe of God, finds expression in devoted activity.” – Vine, I, 308.
 - (3) Hence, Cornelius’ devotion was “reverence manifested in actions” toward God.
 - b. His piety exhibited itself in cherishing the fear of God in his own soul, Vv.2,22.
 - (1) This means “to show reverential fear of God,” -Vine, II,85.
 - (2) It is a “reverential fear” consisting of:
 - (a) Reverence. Cf. Psa.111:9; Mt.6:9.
 - (b) Submission. Psa.128:1; Cf. Psa.1.
 - (c) Dread. Isa.8:13; Dan.9:4.
 - (3) The absence of such reverential fear is characteristic of the wicked and foolish, Psa.36:1-4; Rom.3:9-18; 1:18-32.
 - (4) The presence of such reverential fear marks the wise, the sincere, and the prudent man, Psa.111:10; Prov.1:7.

- (5) Cornelius' sincerity and reverential fear of God is attested by his own servants, 10:21,22.
- c. His piety exhibited itself in his concern for and in his seeking the spiritual welfare of his household, his kinsmen, and his friends, Ac.10:2,24,33.
- (1) He was concerned about the religious training of all who were committed to his care, as well as his kinsman and his friends.
 - (a) He didn't wait until it was too late to show such care as did the rich man of Lk.16.
 - (2) In this he reminds us of and may be compared:
 - (a) To Abraham, Gen.18:16-19.
 - (b) To Job, 1:5.
 - (3) In this respect, he is a good and proper example for all husbands, fathers, masters, and all other superiors, Eph.6:4-9.
 - (4) In this respect, Cornelius perhaps puts many professed Christians to shame.
 - (5) Think what it would mean to families, to communities, and to local churches of Christ if all professed Christians were like Cornelius in this respect!
- d. Cornelius' piety exhibited itself in his practicing benevolence toward the poor, the needy, 10:2.
- (1) Note the adjective "much." He gave "much alms" – not a little or a very little now and then.
 - (2) The context indicates his practice of alms giving:
 - (a) Was done sincerely and without prejudice or hypocrisy.
 - (b) Was done habitually, regularly, and generously.
 - (c) Was not simply "the service of works" to gain favor, or a favor-gaining maneuver.
 - (d) Was done with no expectation of something in return from the ones supplied with alms.
 - (e) Was no done to keep from losing the favor of individuals or institutions who were perspective customers; such as, some business places today (some of which are even forced to do so!).
 - (f) Was not done to please his boss or his company (which is the case sometimes with the United Fund,

etc., with a company wanting 100% participation of its employees).

- e. Cornelius' piety exhibited itself in his habitually maintaining the exercise of praying to God – “praying to God always”, 10:2.
 - (1) In this he no doubt puts many professed Christians to shame.
 - (2) A faith that doesn't prompt men to pray regularly, or “pray without ceasing”, is a weak, feigned, dead faith. Cf. Rom. 12:12; Eph.6:18; Phil.4:6; Col.4:2; 1Th.5:17; Jas.5:16; 1Pet.3:12.
 - (a) But even those who pray may be lost and in need of the gospel, Mt.7:21-23; Lk.6:46; Cf. Ps.66:18; Prov.28:9.
 - (3) Cornelius prayed, was heard in his prayers, and received an answer to his prayers, Ac.10:4,31.
 - (a) What he prayed for is not specifically stated.
 - (b) But the answer he received and what he was told to do, which he readily did, necessarily implies his prayers had something to do with the welfare of his soul, 10:4-8,24,33.
 - (c) We know he did not seek to set aside God's law of pardon in prayer; for he did not ignore but gladly accepted God's instructions as to what to do to be saved. Cf. Prov.28:9
- f. Cornelius' piety exhibited itself in the reputation he enjoyed among his own servants as well as among all the nation of the Jews, 10:22.
 - (1) Those who worked for and served him no doubt knew him well and yet respected him highly.
 - (a) It's often said, “You do not really know a man until you work for him!”
 - (b) Well, these servants worked for him, yet still respected him!
 - (c) That speaks volumes for this man.
 - (2) He even enjoyed a “good report among all the nation of the Jews,” which was not normally the case with a gentile. Cf. Ac.22:21-23.
 - (3) Such commendation from such sources is a powerful testimony to his excellent character!

5. Yet, the Bible pictures Cornelius, as well as his household, as lost, Ac.10:3-6; 11:13,14.
 - a. This is not only a great surprise to some, but some refuse to believe he was really lost – even some brethren have denied it!
 - b. In fact, many religious bodies, churches, would have no qualms about receiving him into full fellowship as a Christian—especially after his having had an angel appear to him.
 - (1) You talk about one who had what they would call “a religious experience” as proof of his pardon; he had it!
 - (2) Yet, he was still lost!
 - c. His case agrees with apostolic affirmation in the N.T. under the Great Commission, Rom.3:9,19-23; Gal.3:22.

B. WHAT WAS TO BE DONE FOR THIS MORALLY GOOD, DEVOUTLY RELIGIOUS, GOD-FEARING MEN, AND HIS HOUSEHOLD, ALL OF WHOM WERE LOST? OR, WHAT WERE THE MEANS BY WHICH THEIR CONVERSION WAS BROUGHT ABOUT?

1. Only God can save one. But we must not forget or fail to consider the necessity of the gospel of Christ as God’s means of saving sinners, Mk.16:15,16; Rom.1:16,17; 1Cor1:21; 4:15; 15:1,2; 2Th.1:6-10; 1Pet.1:22-25. Cf. Jno.8:31,32.
2. In discussing the means of their conversion we must not overlook the fact that the sinner and the gospel preacher had to be brought together ***in that day*** (that is, in the day before revelation was completed and written down for them to read, Eph.3:1-5), thus Ac.10:3-33. Cf. Ac.8:26-35. In fact there were three miracles used to accomplish this.
 - a. This was necessary because as yet God’s will was not completed in written form. Cornelius and his household did not have access to a N.T. as we do. Cf. Rom.10:11-17; Jno.16:1,8,12,13; 2Cor.4:7.
 - b. This was accomplished by means of three miracles involving two visions performed for this very purpose.
 - (1) First, there is Cornelius’ vision of an angel instructing him to send for Peter, which is **MIRACLE #1**, Vv.3-6.
 - (a) But why send for Peter?
 - (1) Some would argue that since Cornelius’ prayer was “heard” and “answered,” he was therefore already “saved,” Vv.4,31.

- (a) Many would want no better proof of his salvation. That's all they need! That's what they want to believe!
 - (b) I agree with the fact that his prayer was heard and answered. But I do not agree with their conclusion concerning his salvation at that point!
 - (c) If they were saved at this point, they were saved three days before they believed in Jesus Christ and three days before they were told the "words whereby they should be saved," 11:13,14; Cf. Ac.10:8,9,23,24,25 – three "tomorrows".
 - (d) Note this truth: The Lord has not authorized alien sinners to pray through for pardon in this age; but to believe and obey the gospel, Mk.16:15,16; 2Th.1:6-9.
 - (e) The Lord didn't say, "He that believeth only, or he that believeth and prays through shall be saved."
- (2) Some wonder why the angel didn't tell Cornelius what to do to be saved. If would have saved a 60 mile trip and three days' waiting!
- (a) Answer: Angels were not and are not authorized to preach the gospel to save sinners.
 - (b) Only men, human agents, were so authorized!
- (3) Others might say, since the Lord heard his prayer, why didn't he tell Cornelius what to do to be saved, or just speak salvation to his soul, instead of going to all the trouble of sending for Peter to do it?
- (a) Answer: The Lord's plan of salvation calls for the human agent, and he would not and will not operate contrary to his

own plan. Prov.28:9; Mt.7:21-23;
Lk.6:46.

- (4) In spite of this, some will still argue, “The Lord hears the alien’s prayer and speaks salvation to his soul directly.”
 - (a) He didn’t do so in Cornelius’ case. He had to send for Peter to tell him “what thou oughtest to do” (10:6), or to tell him “words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (11:14).
 - (b) He had to hear, believe and obey the gospel of Christ to be saved, Mk.16:15,16; 2Th.1:6-10; Rom.1:16,17
 - (c) Where is the proof, other than the sinner’s own imagination, that the Lord hears the alien’s prayer and speaks salvation to his soul directly today?
- (5) In spite of this, some will still argue, “An angel appeared to me and told me what to do!” Or, “Appeared to me as proof of my salvation before and without baptism for the remission of sins.”
 - (a) Why didn’t the angel do this for Cornelius? For there is no doubt that an angel appeared to Cornelius in a vision!
 - (b) Such an argument made by those today is first of all without proof than an angel appears to anyone today for any purpose. And secondly it is contrary to God’s revealed plan of salvation. Cf. Gal.1:6-9.
- (b) Once again, Why send for Peter?
 - (1) The answer is simple, Ac.10:6, 22,29-32.
 - (2) Because Peter had the words of salvation commanded of God, Ac.10:33; 11:13,14; 15:7
 - (3) Because the apostles, not the angels, had the keys (the means of entrance) to the kingdom of heaven, Mt.16:19; 18:18.
 - (4) Because the apostles, not the angels, had power to remit sins, Jno.20:19-23.

- (a) This they did, or this power they exercised, by preaching the gospel with its conditions of pardon – thus telling sinners what to do to be saved, Mk.16:15,16; Lk.24:47; Ac.2:21-38; 1Cor.1:21; 4:15; 15:1,2.
 - (5) Because the N.T. was not yet written.
 - (a) The gospel had to be revealed through inspired men and not the written word at that time.
 - (b) A God-called and God-sent preacher had to tell the sinner what to do, since he could not then read it in written form. Cf. 2Cor.4:4-7; Rom.10:11-17.
 - (c) Cornelius promptly obeyed this vision, 10:7,8.
- (2) Secondly, there is Peter's vision or trance on the house top where he had gone to pray, which is **MIRACLE #2**, 10:9-16.
 - (a) Its purpose was to convince Peter that he, as a Jew, could and should go preach to Cornelius and his household, who were gentiles – that he was been sent to them for this purpose, 10:19,20,25-29.
 - (b) The arrival of Cornelius' messengers immediately after his vision experience helped Peter interpret the experience, 10:17-23a.
 - (c) Peter was obedient to this vision and departed for Caesarea in company with the three messengers from Cornelius and an additional six Jewish brethren from Joppa, 10:23b; 11:12.
 - (d) One outstanding lesson of the vision and of Peter's preaching to the Gentiles is that all men are to be recognized as equal before the gospel, each saved alike, 10:28; 11:4-11; 15:6-12.
 - (1) This, as we shall see later in our study, is why another of the miracles was worked in this case of conversion – that is, the miraculous outpouring of Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his household.

- (e) Sometimes a quibble is made on 10:15 claiming the expression “God hath cleansed” means Cornelius and his household were already “saved.”
 - (1) If so, the angel didn’t know it and put Cornelius and his messengers to much unnecessary bother.
 - (2) If so, the angel didn’t tell the truth, 10:6; 11:13,14.
 - (3) If so, the Holy Spirit didn’t know it and put Peter to much unnecessary trouble, 10:19,20; 11:12.
 - (4) If so, the Lord must have become “trigger happy” and beat Peter to the “draw” and then forgot to stop the action set in motion by the vision and allowed Peter to go on a useless mission of God’s own making.
 - (5) If so, they were saved before they heard what they “must do” or before they heard “the words whereby they must be saved,” or before they heard and believed, Ac.11:15; Cf. Rom.10:17.
 - (3) Thirdly, the Spirit spoke directly to Peter instructing him to go doubting nothing, which is **MIRACLE #3**, and which Peter obeyed, 10:19,20-23.
3. Thus Peter, the preacher, and the sinner are brought together in the sinner’s house, 10:24-33.
- a. Note the reception Peter received upon his arrival at Cornelius’ house and Peter’s reaction to it, 10:24-26.
 - (1) Cornelius, along with his kinsmen and friends he had called together, eagerly awaited Peter’s arrival, V.24.
 - (2) When Peter arrived Cornelius “fell down at his feet, and worshipped him,” V.25.
 - (3) This was a “No! No!” and Peter reacted accordingly, explaining why, V.26. Cf. Ac.14:14,15; Rev.22:8,9. See Psa.81:9; Mt.4:10; Col.1:18 (angels); Rev.9:20 (devils).
 - b. Then followed Peter’s introductory speech, Vv.27-29.
 - (1) He began by explaining or reminding them of the prevailing attitude of the Jews toward association with

those of “another nation;” with foreigners; namely, Gentiles: “It is an unlawful thing,” Vv.27,28a.

- (2) Then he informed them that “God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean,” V.28b; Cf. 10:9-15; 15:8,9.
 - (3) Then Peter said this is why he had come without hesitation or reluctance, V.29a.
 - (4) Though Peter already knew why he had been sent for, he asked to hear it from the lips of Cornelius himself: “for what intent have ye sent for me?” V.29b. Cf. 10:18-22.
- c. Cornelius then answered Peter’s question by rehearsing his earlier experience in the vision and requested Peter’s message from God, Vv.30-33 (emphasize v.33).

4. Peter obliged Cornelius in the sermon that followed in Vv.34-48, wherein:

- a. Peter preached the universality of God’s love and plan to make men righteous, Vv.34,35.
 - (1) “God is no respecter of persons,” V.34.
 - (2) All in every nation (both Gentile and Jew) who fear God and work righteousness are accepted with him, V.35. Cf. Psa.119:172.
 - (3) This was a difficult lesson for the Jews to learn, 10:45; 11:1-18; 15:1-6.
 - (4) Peter himself had only three days before learned this in spite of what he had preached on Pentecost. Even then he later had trouble with it. Cf. Gal.2:11-16.
- b. Peter, in his sermon to Cornelius, reviewed the earthly ministry of Jesus of Nazareth on through his death, burial and resurrection from the dead; in other words, he preached Jesus as the risen Lord and Savior to Cornelius, Vv.36-41; Cf. Ac.8:5; See Rom.1:4; Ac.2:36.
- c. In the sermon, Peter affirmed the divine authority under which he preached (that of Jesus himself under the Great Commission), and declared the comprehensive condition for the salvation offered to all in Jesus’ name, Vv.42,43.
- d. Then Peter specifically commanded these believing Gentiles “to be baptized (in water) in the name of the Lord,” Vv.47,48.

- (1) This he did because it was required by the Great Commission under which he operated as an apostle of Jesus Christ, Mt.28:18-20; Mk.16:15,16.
- (2) The obvious purpose then of this command was “for, in order to, the remission of sins,” Ac.2:36-38; 22:16; 1Pet.3:21; Rom.6:3-6; Gal.3:26,27.
- (3) Thus we have another example of the execution of the Great Commission recorded in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

C. FOR EMPHASIS, NOTE WHAT CORNELIUS HIMSELF AND HIS HOUSEHOLD HAD TO DO AND WHY THEY HAD TO DO IT IN ORDER TO BE SAVED.

1. Remember the reason for which Peter was sent to them, 10:6,22,32,33; 11:13,14.
2. Peter’s sermon reveals that they had to do exactly what the people on Pentecost, the Eunuch and other had to do, 10:34,35.
3. Specifically, they had to:
 - a. Hear the word of the gospel, Ac.15:7.
 - b. Believe it, Ac.15:7. Cf. Rom.10:17; 1Cor.1:21.
 - c. Repent, Ac.11:18. Cf. Ac.17:31; Lk.24:47.
 - d. Be baptized in water in the name of the Lord for the remission of sin, Ac.10:47,48. Cf. Ac.2:21,36-38; 22:16; 1Pet.3:21.
4. What they had to do to be saved is exactly what you will have to do if you are every saved!

D. CONSIDERATION OF AN OBJECTION FILED BASED UPON A MISUNDERSTANDING AND MISAPPLICATION OF WHAT IS SAID IN AC.10:44-46, WHICH PERTAINS TO MIRACLE #4 IN THIS CASE OF CONVERSION.

1. Note what these verses say about the Holy Spirit being poured out on the Gentiles. See also Ac.11:15.
2. Some object and argue that “this miraculous outpouring of the ‘gift of the Holy Spirit’ proves Cornelius and his household were saved before and without water baptism in the name of the Lord.”
 - a. Ben Bogard’s argument.
 - (1) The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit, Jno.14:16,17.
 - (2) But, Cornelius and his household received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized in the name of the Lord, Vv.44-48.
 - (3) Therefore, they were saved and in God’s family before being baptized.
 - b. If his argument is true, it also proves:
 - (1) They were saved before they heard and believed, 11:15; for Peter, in Ch.11, where he was reviewing the case of Cornelius before his Jewish brethren in Jerusalem in the order in which it took place, said: “And as I began to speak...” Cf. Rom.10:17; 1Cor.3:5; 15:11; Heb.11:6.
 - (2) The Baptist church, for which Mr. Bogard was a preacher, is not the family of God. Because according to Bogard’s argument they were saved and in God’s family before their baptism. Yet no one is in the Baptist church till baptized!
 - c. His argument is an example of an argument:
 - (1) Which proves too much; therefore, proves nothing!
 - (2) Wherein scripture is simply arrayed against scripture to try to defend a false position, and which therefore smacks of the tactics of Satan in Mt.4:1-10.
3. Why then was “the gift of the Holy Spirit” miraculously poured out upon Cornelius and his household? What was the purpose of it?
 - a. Negatively, the Holy Spirit was poured out on Cornelius and his household:
 - (1) Not to save them. The words they were to hear were for that purpose, 10:6; 11:13,14. Cf. 1Cor.1:21.

- (2) Not to give them faith whereby they could be saved. The preaching of the gospel was to do that, Rom.10:15-17. Cf. Jno.20:31; 1Cor.3:5; 15:11.
 - (3) Not to purify their heart. That was to be done by their faith, Ac.15:7.
 - (4) Not to give them remission of sins. That was to be done by their faith and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, Ac.10:43; 2:36-38; 26:18; Mk.16:15,16.
 - (5) Not to purify their soul. That is done by their obeying the truth or the word, which by the gospel was preached unto them, 1Pet.1:22-25.
 - (6) Not to sanctify them. This is done by the truth, the word of God, and their faith in Jesus Christ, Jno.17:17; Ac.26:18.
 - (7) Not to convert them. This is done by the law or the testimony of the Lord, Psa.19:7.
- b. Positively, the purpose of the Holy Spirit being poured out on them is evident when we consider the use made of it in the context.
- (1) Its purpose was to convince the six Jewish brethren from Joppa, who accompanied Peter, that the Gentiles were gospel subjects as were the Jews; that God would and did accept the Gentiles on the same basis as he accepted the Jews; to prove to them that Gentiles could be and would be saved just as the Jews were saved, Ac.10:44,45.
 - (2) Its purpose was to convince the Jewish brethren back in Jerusalem (and everyone else) of this same truth.
 - (a) This is the use Peter made of it in Ac.11:1-18. Emp.Vv.1-4 and Vv.15-18.
4. Since God does nothing without purpose, a review of the purpose of each of the *four miracles* involved in this case of conversion is in order.
- a. **Miracle #1:** To have Cornelius send for Peter to tell him what to do to be saved.
 - b. **Miracle #2:** To convince Peter that God is no respecter of persons and to get him to go to the Gentiles to tell them “words whereby they could be saved.”
 - c. **Miracle #3:** For the same purpose as miracle #2.
 - d. **Miracle #4:** To convince other Jews of what Peter had been convinced already – that the Gentiles were gospel subjects just as the Jews were – the be saved in the same manner as the Jews were to be saved.

E. IN SPITE OF THE CLAIMS OF MANY TO THE CONTRARY, WHY IS IT THE CASE THAT THOUGH CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD RECEIVED A MIRACULOUS OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THEY DID NOT RECEIVE THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH THE APOSTLES OF CHRIST RECEIVED ON PENTECOST IN AC.2?

1. Because what they received is identified as “**the gift of the Holy Spirit**” in Ac.10:45, not “**the baptism of the Holy Spirit**” of Ac.1:5, which was “**the promise of the Father**” to the Apostles of Lk.24:48,49
 - a. This “gift of the Holy Spirit” they received was a spiritual gift that enabled them to “speak with tongues, and magnify God,” 10:46.
 - b. This “gift of the Holy Spirit” they received is the same as that promised to baptized believers in Ac.2:38,
 - (1) where Peter promised **WHAT** they would receive, but did not say **HOW** they would receive the gift;
 - (2) whereas Ac.8:14-17 reveals **HOW** and **WHEN** baptized believers received the gift of the Holy Spirit, or “spiritual gifts.” Cf. Ac.19:5,6; 2Tim.1:6.
 - c. “The gift of the Holy Spirit” enabling them to “speak in tongues,” etc. – is the same as that promised by Jesus to baptized believers in Mk.16:17, where he also said **WHAT**, but not **HOW**; where, once again, Ac.8:14-17 answers the question of **HOW**.
 - d. Moreover, the expression “the gift of the Holy Spirit” is a general or generic expression referring to miraculous gifts (1Cor.12-14), whether imparted directly as in Ac.10:45 and 11:17 or by the laying on of the apostles’ hands as in Ac.8:16,17; 19:6; 2Tim.1:6.
2. Because “**the baptism of the Holy Spirit**” was a special, specific promise Jesus made to his chosen apostles and to no one else. If so, where is the record of it? Jno.14:16,25,26; 15:26,27; 16:7,12-15; Jno.20:19-23; Lk.24:44-49; Ac.1:1-8; 2Cor.12:12.
 - a. This promise to his apostles was fulfilled, Ac.2:1-11,14a; Eph.3:1-5; Gal.1:6-12.
 - b. Cf. this special, specific promise with other such promises the Lord has made; such as:
 - (1) Salvation, Mk.16:15,16.
 - (2) Eternal life, Jno.3:14-17; 1Jno.2:24,25.

- c. No promise of the Lord to one group or class may be transferred to another!
3. Because “the gift of the Holy Spirit” Cornelius and his household received did not endue them with the same power the apostles were endued with by means of “the baptism of the Holy Spirit,” Lk.24:48,49; Ac.1:4-8; 8:14-17; 19:5,6; 2Tim.1:6; Mk.16:19,20; Heb.2:3,4; 2Cor.12:12; Jno.20:19-23; 2Cor.5:18-20.
 4. Those who try to defend the position that Cornelius and his household also received “the baptism of the Holy Spirit”:
 - a. Fail to realize that Holy Spirit baptism was promised to the apostles of Christ and to no others.
 - b. Fail to grasp the purpose of Holy Spirit baptism, Lk.24:48,49; Ac.1:4,5,8; 5:30-32; 2Cor.12:12; Mk.16:19,20; Heb.2:3,4; 2Cor.5:18-20; Ac.8:14-17.
 - c. Fail to recognize that the apostles were the only ones with a mission that made it necessary for them to have need of Holy Spirit baptism, and therefore were the only ones to be promised it and to receive it.
 - d. Fail to recognize how that what Cornelius and his household received was not like what the apostles received, either in power, purpose, results, or in scriptural designation (identification in name).
 - (1) If the same thing, why not identified in the same way?
 - e. Fail to see how what Cornelius and his household received was “**the like gift**” and “**fell on them, as on us at the beginning**,” Ac.11:15-17 – and yet was not “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”
 - (1) “The like gift” has reference, not to **Quantity** (i.e., measure or power), but to **QUALITY** (i.e., a distinctive attribute or faculty; a characteristic trait; the relative nature or kind or character of a thing).
 - (a) It was “like” or “equal” to what the apostles received only in quality, referring to certain characteristics.
 - (b) What they received was the “Holy Spirit”, a power of the Holy Spirit, but not the baptismal measure of the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - (2) “Fell on them, as on us at the beginning,” has reference to the **MANNER** in which received by them, not the **MEASURE**.

- (a) It fell on them directly from heaven – through no indirect, intermediate human agency, such as in Ac.8:17.
- f. Imply or unjustly assume that it is not necessary to have a promise from Jesus of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to be the recipient of it.
 - (1) How can one be the recipient of something the Lord never promised that one?
- g. Imply or unjustly assume there are different results from a reception of Holy Spirit baptism, for Cornelius and his household received neither the powers nor the results from their supposed baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- h. Implies and unjustly assumes there are degrees, powers, or measures in Holy Spirit baptism.
 - (1) But any two men baptized in the Holy Spirit would have equal measure of the power of it.
 - (2) Each apostle had the baptism of Holy Spirit and possessed the same office, the same apostolic authority, the same inspiration, the same power, etc.
 - (3) One apostle did not have more of the baptism and its power than another.
 - (4) One was no less inspired or empowered from on high than another.
 - (5) There is no indication that there would be or that there was any such thing as measures of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or of a limited Spirit baptism. If so, where?
 - (6) Therefore, if Cornelius and his household had been baptism in the Holy Spirit:
 - (a) They would have possessed all powers and rights imparted by it and belonging to it as possessed by the apostles. If not, why not?
 - (b) Thus, they would not have been inferior to the apostles of Christ in any respect.
 - (c) They would have known all the apostles knew.
 - (d) They could have done all the apostles did by means of the power of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
 - (e) It would not have been necessary for Peter to have told them anything.

5. The final word on the point, proof of the Holy Spirit baptism lies in the possession of the **COMFORTER** which the Lord Jesus Christ promised to his apostles, the plenary and verbal inspiration imparted to them alone.
 - a. Holy Spirit baptism was not promised in degree, and was not possessed in different measures.
 - b. It was that **clothing with power** – the Comforter, the Spirit of truth and inspiration, which was promised to the apostles and which they received.
 - c. This **Comforter** was synonymous with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Cf. Jno.14:16-18,26; 15:26,27; 16:7-15; Lk.24:48,49; Ac.1:4,5,8; 2:1-4.
 - (1) Properly defined, Holy Spirit baptism was **the clothing with power** which came on the apostles at Pentecost.
 - (2) It was not the **manner** of the Holy Spirit's descent from heaven that constituted the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but their being **filled** or **overwhelmed** or **endued** and **clothed** – it was the **result**, not the **manner** of descent, that defines the Holy Spirit baptism, which the apostles, and the apostles only, received.
 - d. Cornelius and his household were neither promised nor did they receive the **Comforter**, nor were they **clothed with such power!**
 - (1) They simply did not receive Holy Spirit baptism!
 - (2) But they did receive “the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
 - (3) There is a definite and distinct difference!

III. CONCLUSION

1. There are both *special* and *general* features in this case of conversion, which, when understood, clarify the whole case.
2. If you take from this case of conversion the *special* features (i.e., eliminate the miracles or let them serve their intended purpose as explained in the course of our study), you will find it to be just like any other conversion in its *general* features.
 - a. They heard, 10:33-43.
 - b. They believed, 15:7.
 - c. They repented, 11:18.
 - d. They were baptized, 10:47,48; Cf. Ac.2:41.

- e. These are the ***general*** features of conversion and are found in every conversion, even today.
3. The ***special*** features (the miracles) are not needed today in our conversion.
- a. Because the inspired word, the perfect law of liberty, the full and complete will of God, is in written form in the N.T. today, which we can read and understand. Cf. Eph.3:1-4.
 - (1) We do not have to come into contact with an inspired man or the “earthen vessel” in whom the gospel was found at that time.
 - (2) We have it in written form in the N.T.
 - b. Because the question at that time concerning divine acceptance of the Gentiles in Christ by means of the gospel of Christ separate and apart from the Law of Moses is forever settled.
4. Why not take this case as an example of honesty? Why not follow this example in wanting to learn and obey the truth of God’s word as it applies to us?
5. The truth is, we must be saved exactly like they were saved, if we are to be saved at all!
6. If Cornelius, this morally good, devoutly religious, God-fearing man, couldn’t be saved in any other way, neither can we!
7. In summary, note what this case proves concerning salvation:
- a. The universality of the gospel plan of salvation in Christ.
 - (1) It is for all races: Gentiles as well as Jews; each is saved in Christ by means of the gospel of Christ.
 - (2) It is for all classes of people: moral, immoral, good, bad.
 - b. Aliens are not saved separate and apart from the word of God, the gospel of Christ, either by:
 - (1) Prayer.
 - (2) A good moral life.
 - (3) The Holy Spirit being poured out on them.
 - (4) Having an angel appear unto them.
8. Will you, then, not heed the word and obey the gospel today?!