

The First Gentile Converts

Text: Acts 11:18

Introduction:

- A. The watchword of the day is “The good people of all religions will be saved.”
 - B. Cornelius was certainly a devout (dutiful, pious) man.- Acts 10:1-2,22
 - C. He will be a good test case for this popular doctrine.
 - D. What can we learn about conversion from the first Gentile converts?
- I. Will all devoutly religious people be saved?
- A. There never was a more devout man than Cornelius (any denomination would accept him).
 - 1. He feared (“to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience” - Thayer) God with all his house.- Acts 10:2
 - 2. He gave much alms to the people.- Acts 10:2
 - 3. He prayed to God always.- Acts 10:2
 - 4. He was a just man.- Acts 10:22
 - 5. Although a Roman centurion, he had a good reputation among all the Jews. - Acts 10:22
 - B. Yet, Cornelius needed salvation.- Acts 11:14
- II. God is no respecter of persons. - Acts 10:34-35
- A. It took three miracles to cause Peter to make this statement.Acts 10:1-23.
 - B. The truth in the statement must be therefore both difficult to accept yet important to realize.
 - C. Peter applied the truth to God.
 - 1. Negatively: He is no respecter of persons.- verse 34
 - a.”to accept or reject one or another, because of who he is, and not because of what he does”(Pulpit Commentary).
 - a. Sin condemns all.- Romans 3:9,23; 6:23
 - c. All will be judged by the same standard.- Romans 2:1-11; 1 Peter 1:17
 - 2. Positively: The obedient of every nation shall be saved.- verse 35
 - a. God loves all.- John 3:16; Titus 2:11
 - b. The Gospel is for all.- Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2:39; Romans 10:11-13
 - c. Obedience is required of all.- Acts 10:35
 - D. This truth also applies to Christians.
 - 1. God was showing Peter a lesson about his own duty.- Acts 10:15, 19-20,28-29; 11:1-4
2. What was his duty?
- a. Do good to all men.- Matthew 5:43-45; Galatians 6:10
 - b. Take the Gospel to all.- Mark 16:15
 - c. Show no respect of persons.- Galatians 2:11-12; James 2:1-9

III. God sends the same Word to all. - Acts 10:34-43

- A. There have been many important messages in history.- e.g., Abraham Lincoln, “Gettysburg Address”
- B. To the household of Cornelius, the message of Peter in Acts 10 was the most important ever spoken.- Acts 11:13-14; 10:33
- C. What were the characteristics of the word Peter spoke?
 - 1. Source: God - Acts 10:36; Galatians 1:11-12
 - 2. Subjects: All Men - Acts 10:34-36; Mark 16:15; 2:36-40; 15:7-9; Romans 10:11-13
 - 3. Purpose: Peace - Acts 10:36; Matthew 10:34-37; Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:6-7
 - 4. Authority: Jesus Is Lord - Acts 10:36; Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 1:1-2
 - a. witnessed by anointment with Holy Spirit and power - Acts 10:37-38; Isaiah 61:1; Matthew 3:16-17; Luke 4:14-22
 - b. witnessed by miracles - Acts 10:38-39
 - c. witnessed by resurrection - Acts 10:39-42
 - d. witnessed by prophets- Acts 10:43
 - 5. Enforcement: Judge of Living and Dead- Acts 10:43
 - 6. Invitation: Remission of Sins- Acts 10:43

IV. Steps in the Conversion of the Household of Cornelius

- A. Had Right Attitude- Proverbs 4:23
 - 1. He feared God.- Acts 10:2,22,34-35
 - 2. He was interested in spiritual matters. - Acts 10:24
 - 3. He was taught to respect God rather than man.- Acts 10:25-26
 - 4. He was open and receptive to truth.- Acts 10:33
- B. Heard the Word - Acts 11:13-14; 10:33; 11:1
- C. Believed - Acts 15:7-9
- D. Repented - Acts 11:18
- E. Baptized - Acts 10:48
 - 1. It was water baptism, not Holy Spirit baptism.
 - a. The Holy Spirit had already fallen upon them.- Acts 10:44
 - b. Peter called for water.- Acts 10:47
 - 2. It was in the name of the Lord.- Acts 10:48
 - 3. It was only for those who could understand the Word.- Acts 10:33

Conclusion:

- A. Eliminate the miracles, and Cornelius salvation was like all others. - Acts 10:34-35
- B. Cornelius is a wonderful example of an honest seeker who was **SAVED**.- Acts 10:33
- C. You can in like manner be saved.- Acts 10:34-35