

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter Ten

Cornelius Meets Christ

Focus Verse: **Acts 10:15**

“And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.”

I. Study Introduction

- A. Ever wonder how the “heathen” find out about Christ - we learn it by the experience of a man named Cornelius
- B. Ever wonder “what” Christians are supposed to preach? We learn from Peter’s encounter with Cornelius!

II. Study Outline - Cornelius Meets Christ - Acts 10

A. The Sinner’s Search (Acts 10:1-33; Jer 29:13)

1. *The Search for God Starts From _____* (10:1,2) - Most people are waiting on an *external event* to get them interested in eternity, but something has to happen on the inside - a hunger!
 - a. We meet a certain man
 - 1) Named _____
 - 2) A Centurion in the Roman army - 100 men under him. There are 4 centurions mentioned in the Bible, and they are ALL men of integrity and good character (Mt 8:10; Acts 27:43; Mk 15:39; and here).
 - 3) Of the Italian band - portion of the army that was made up of Italians - others were made up of other nations
 - b. Cornelius is a _____ man
 - 1) He is devout - had his whole house interested in God - in subjection - and following him!
 - 2) He fears God - not just knowing about God!
 - 3) He gave much money to his local Jewish synagogue
 - 4) He prays always - had great faith AND works!
 - 5) But not saved (Cf 11:13,14) - Like Roman Catholics:
 - a) Roman, and Italian
 - b) Devout, and God fearing
 - c) Looking for, and receiving visions from angels
 - d) Quick to bow down to and worship Peter (10:25,26)
2. *The Search for God is Aided By ____* (10:3-8)
 - a. When a man goes seeking for the truth, God will make sure that he finds it (Ro 2:7,8; Pr 8:17; Jer 29:13). He may not like what he finds, but it’ll be placed in front of them!
 - b. Cornelius has a vision from God - still a time of visions
 - 1) At 3pm in the evening an angel appears
 - 2) Talks to Cornelius, and gives him clear instructions
 - 3) Cornelius calls the angel ‘Lord’ - had visions before
 - 4) Supposed to send for a specific person - **Simon Peter**
 - 5) Told exactly where to send for him (no phone-book) in Joppa 30 miles south of Cesarea
 - c. Notice that God worked on the hearts of all peoples - not just the Jews. **Balaam** was a Gentile prophet (Num 22-24). **Jethro** was a Gentile priest of God (Ex 18)
3. *The Search for God is Hindered by _____* - misconceptions, and other “baggage” (10:9-18)
 - a. *Sometimes by the seeker.* People stop themselves from obtaining what they seek most for (forgiveness, and heaven) by pride, self-righteousness, and their own form of religion (2Tim 3:1-5). Cornelius here seeks **visions** and worships **men**
 - b. *Sometimes by the _____.* May have so much spiritual baggage from their past that they do nothing for God in the present! Bitterness, prejudice, busy-ness, and denominational vision (seeing the Bible through what they have been taught).
 - 1) Peter is locked into the Jewish mind-set of racial superiority. Thinking only the Jews are worthy of the truth, or that only the Jews would be able to receive the truth - very Calvinistic (like saying only the elect can receive it).
 - 2) God uses the cleansing of unclean meats to teach that **God can cleanse anything.**
 - 3) To be *common* or *unclean* meant “dirty,” or “filthy”
 - a) When Christ died, the ceremonial laws and “ordinances” were blotted out (Col 2:13-18). Dietary laws can no longer affect your relationship with God
 - b) The Civil and Moral laws were _____ - eternal!

- c) But, diet **can** affect your ability to serve God - eating unclean food hurts your health (ie, pork, shellfish)
 - d) Don't worry about eating ham, just don't eat too much of it (1 Tim 4:1-5). And wash your hands. Not very spiritual, but good sense!
4. *The Search for God is Completed by _____* (10:19-33)
- a. God has revealed Himself through three things: **Creation** itself (Ps 19; Rom 1), **His Son** (John 1), and **the Bible**.
 - b. But He uses Christians to do the following (Acts 26:16-18):
 - 1) Re-direct people's attention to God's "signals" and directions (*to _____ their eyes*)
 - 2) Engage them in reasonable debate and consideration of the Scriptures (Acts 17:2; 24:25) - to open their minds!
 - 3) Compel people to make a decision (*turn them from sin*)
 - c. When Christian's fail to do their job, the _____ are held responsible (Cf Acts 18:6; 20:26; Ezek 3:18-21)
 - d. So now, Peter is called into action - "**go and preach**" (Acts 1:8), not to just the Jews, but *to all peoples* - doubt nothing!
 - e. And off Peter goes - simply obedient, even though not fully understanding! When you go with a Bible under your arm, and a learning spirit (not a show-off), you will go far!
 - f. Peter hears just how worthy this man is for him to come, and how that Cornelius was _____ of God (10:22), and that Cornelius **had** to hear the word of a Jewish Apostle (John 4:22) in order to get saved. He had to have an authority!
 - g. Cornelius was _____ for Peter to arrive (10:24). He had called together everyone possible so that they ALL could hear the truth and be saved (Cf **Rahab**, Josh 2:12-21; 6:25; and **Lot**, Gen 19:12-14). *We should do as much!*
 - h. Peter gets an unwelcome welcome - Cornelius bows and _____ him (10:25,26)! God hates this, as does Peter!
 - i. Peter explains that this meeting is at the hand of God - not a normal occurrence due to Israel's separation from the Gentiles by God. Allows Peter to show that a lot of things have changed because of the cross!
 - j. Asks *Cornelius* to explain what he is looking for (10:29) - it is best to allow the person to express their spiritual needs. Guide them into an understanding of their hunger without telling what to ask of you! Watch the Holy Spirit work!
 - k. Cornelius goes back over the events of the past few days, but he focuses on the event about to happen - he is anxious to hear what God will have Peter to say! This is how people need to be with the Bible - anxious to hear what God has to say through it!

B. **The Soul-Winner's Message** (Acts 10:34-48)

1. The soul-winner's message can be summed-up in a 217 word sermon preached by an uneducated fisherman to an army captain in Acts 10! What we will be dealing with here are three things:
 - a. A Mission Field - Cornelius' household
 - b. A Missionary/Soul-Winner - Simon Peter
 - c. A Message preached to the first Gentile to hear about Jesus
2. Peter has just arrived at the house of Cornelius and proclaims 7 things - these are the same seven things that each one of us need to be able to present to people. The Gospel message proclaims:
 - a. **Salvation is Extended to ALL** (10:34,35) "*whosoever*"
 - 1) God is no respecter of persons! Only impressed with Jesus!
 - 2) What every person really needs is only _____
 - 3) A person must desire to repent from sin, and to do right!
 - 4) A person must come on God's terms as given in the Bible
 - b. **Christ is Our Example to Follow** (10:36-38) - *This is WHO we preach!* What we just read summed up the life of Jesus!
 - 1) As Peter said in 2 Pet 1:16, we are not following "cunningly devised _____," but the God/Man, Jesus Christ!
 - 2) Our goal is not to present "philosophy", but a _____!
 - 3) Our Living Example - not a doctrine, movement, or fantasy. Aren't you glad He is real (Cf 1 John 1:1,2):
 - a) He gives *peace* (36) - the world cannot give (John 14:27)
 - b) He brings *power* (38) "*more than conquerors*" (Ro 8:37)
 - c) His life is our *pattern* (38) - that of doing good (**real** "good," not fake)
 - d) His works brought *preservation* - Healed and put things back together and made them last! Not just a feeling

- c. **The Death, Burial, and Resurrection is the Greatest Event in History** (10:39-41) *This is WHAT we preach!*
- 1) The world focuses its calendar on the Birth of Christ (AD) - the Christian on the other hand focuses his calendar on the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection! All eternity hung on those events, including your salvation!
 - 2) This becomes the *meaning* of the Gospel - the preaching of not only the *death* of Jesus, but the burial, and the _____ (1 Cor 15:3,4)! Make all three part of it!
- d. **The Great Commission is Still in Effect** (10:42; Matt 28:19,20)
- 1) We are commanded to be a witness, and PREACH this Gospel to the whole world! This commission has not gone away! It is what brought this church full of believers into existence!
 - 2) The Great Commission demonstrates this world is STILL important to God, and worth sacrificing for, so they might hear!
- e. **Judgment Day is Coming** (10:42) - *This is WHY we preach!*
- 1) We must keep *eternity* in view - not get caught-up in things of this world, but in the place Jesus has prepared for us (heaven)!
 - 2) All will be held accountable (you can't live any way you want):
 - a) _____ at the great white throne judgment (Rev 20:11)
 - b) _____ at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:10)
 - 3) It is not "WHAT" you know that counts, but rather "WHO" you know! I know Jesus Christ personally!!!
- f. **Jesus Christ is Everything You Have Been Waiting For** (10:43a)
- 1) All the prophets pointed to _____ - point everyone either to the Lamb (His first coming), or the Lion (His second coming)
 - 2) All of your _____ point to Jesus - He alone is the fulfillment of those needs - Lonely, health failing, hungry?
 - 3) Don't look for another (Mohammed, Moroni, Matraya, Bhudda), you cannot find a better answer than *Jesus!*
- g. **Salvation is Only Obtained by Faith in Jesus** _____ (10:43b)
- 1) It is not a "religious" issue - Cornelius was religious (10:2)
 - 2) It is not a matter of "sincerity" - He was sincere. Jesus said NOT that ye must be "sincere," but rather "ye *MUST* be born again!"
 - 3) It is not an issue of good works verses bad works (10:2) - but WHO do you know personally that according to the Bible can get you into heaven?
 - 4) Requires Child-Like *Faith*, on God's Terms
 - 5) The result is "the **remission** (taking away) of sins" - Complete forgiveness!

III. Conclusion

- A. Just as Cornelius would have died and gone to Hell if he had not heard this message, so too will all the religious people of Ireland! They need soul-winners with a message!
- B. How about you? Religious? Or are you "born again" because you received the Son of God as your substitute just as Cornelius did?
- C. Have you heard this message? Have you received Jesus Christ as your personal savior? If you are saved, are you being like Peter and telling the Missionary Message at all who will hear? Let's be like Peter!

IV. Study Questions