

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Church – Part 34

I. Exposition of Chapter Ten (Continued).

A. Verses 17-23 - Peter Called to go to Caesarea.

1. Verses 18-20 – “And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.’”

a. The three men sent by Cornelius now arrive to Simon the Tanner’s house and while Peter is praying and pondering the vision he just had, the Holy Spirit spoke to him. This is the only time Luke records that the Holy Spirit spoke directly to Peter. We don’t know whether this was an audible voice or simply an impression from within but Peter definitely knew the Holy Spirit was giving him instruction supernaturally.

b. You’ll note in **verse 20**, it states; “...for I (the Holy Spirit) have sent them.” – The Holy Spirit was directly involved with the message from the angel to Cornelius (cf. **verses 3-6**). This shows again how the Holy Spirit is active in the Church and, if we let Him be, He is still active in our midst. (NOTE: **This also shows the Personhood of the Holy Spirit.**)

2. Verses 21-23 – Peter meets the three men from Caesarea.

“How great must have been Peter’s astonishment, when he faced suddenly the three Gentiles at the gate. But could he doubt after such a vision? Was not the presence of these three men, uncircumcised, unclean Gentiles, an explanation of the vision? The Holy Spirit furthermore had told him that they were sent by Himself and that he was to go with them....The full light must have flashed upon the Apostle of the circumcision. He called them in and lodged them. This was certainly breaking away from Jewish customs. On the next morning we see a company leaving Joppa.”¹

a. Verse 23 – “Then he invited them in and lodge them. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.” - It seems that gradually, Peter is allowing his prejudices to drop away. Regarding this verse, Dr. Stanley Horton writes:

“Ordinarily a Jew would not invite a Gentile into his home. Peter must have done some explaining of his vision to his host Simon to be allowed to show the three men hospitality for the night. Then, in the morning, Peter went with them. But he was careful to take six ‘of the brothers from Joppa’ with him (see Acts 11:12). He knew other believers would call him into question for going into a Gentile house, so he wanted some reliable witnesses. Just to be sure, he took double the two or three required by the Law (see Matt. 18:16; Deut. 19:15).”²

B. Verses 24-33 - Peter meets Cornelius.

1. Verse 24 – “And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends.”

a. From this verse, we see that Cornelius who had such a sensitivity and hunger for God, was also concerned about others spiritual welfare. He brought together many, if not all, the people he cared about to hear from a man who he was convinced had a message from God. Dr. Bob Utley writes:

“Cornelius, expecting a speaker from God, had called all his close family, friends, servants, and possibly other soldiers. They may have all been waiting for hours and hours. What a spirit of anticipation and expectation must have filled this house! All of these would have been discussing the vision and its message.”³

2. Verses 25-27 – Peter and Cornelius’ first Encounter. Cornelius must have been extremely excited. The fulfillment of the vision and message he received from the angel of God was coming to pass. In his enthusiasm, he greeted Peter by falling down and worshiping him. Peter was quick to correct him by saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.” (verse 26). (cf. 14:11-18).

3. Verses 28-29 – Peter addresses the entire crowd of people. Horton suggests that it’s implied that Peter was surprised by the amount of Gentiles who had gathered to hear what he had to say.⁴ Concerning what Peter said in **verse 28**, it seems clear that the meaning of the vision he had prior to coming is now very clear. Peter states; “But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

¹Arno C. Gaebelain, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Exposition* (New York: “Our Hope” Publication Office, 1912), 200.

²Stanley M. Horton, *Acts: A Logion Press Commentary* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 201.

³Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 137.

⁴Horton, 202.

“Peter got the message! The animals in the sheet represented all human beings made in the image of God (cf. Gen. 1:26–27). God’s love for Cornelius and his family and friends showed Peter the worldwide scope of the gospel! This would confirm the witness of Philip and Stephen.”⁵

4. **Verses 30-33 – Cornelius rehearses to Peter what happened to him.** Take note of the last thing Cornelius says (verse 33) – **“...Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”** (English Standard Version [ESV]). Cornelius was aware, and apparently wanted the others to be aware, that as they gathered together to hear what Peter had to say, God’s presence was there as well. This was a sacred moment for this group of people and it was a turning point for the Church. It was now clear that the Gospel was intended for all people no matter their background, culture or race.

“Cornelius and his kinsmen knew the messenger was sent of God and that the message he brings was God’s message. Peter knew he was sent and that souls had been prepared to hear the message. How blessed the meetings of God’s people might be if such were always the case, and the servant of Christ were conscious in dependence on the Lord as His messenger, sent of God, and if those who come to hear, came expecting God’s own message for their souls.”⁶

C. Verses 34-43 - Peter’s Message - This the first sermon in Acts addressed to a Gentile audience. It is similar to the ones Peter preached in 2:14-40 and 3:11-26, except that this one has more information about Jesus’ earthly ministry probably because the Gentiles would have known less about it. Also this message contains no quotations from the Old Testament, though there are many allusions to the Old Testament.

1. **Verses 34-35 - “Then Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.’”** a. The first part of this revelation given to Peter is that God doesn’t show partiality or think of one race of people better or more deserving than any other race. In addition, He doesn’t see one individual person as better or more deserving than any other person. Note **Romans 3:9** and then verse 23 which read: **“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”**

b. This flies in the face of those who believe in the Calvinistic predestination doctrine which says that God chooses some to be saved and others not to be. Dr. Bob Utley states concerning this: **“God has *no* favorites (nations, races, or individuals)! If this is true then how does predestination work? Or how is Israel special? Be careful of modern systems of theology!”⁷**

c. The second statement Peter makes, can bring a misunderstanding. We know from other Scriptures that we are NOT saved by works but by faith in the grace of God (cf. **Ephesians 2:8-10; Galatians 2:16**). We do know, however, that genuine faith will lead to good works (cf. **James 2:14-26**).

Warren Wiersbe helps with this when he states:

“Acts 10:35 does not teach that we are saved by works, otherwise Peter would be contradicting himself (Acts 10:43). To ‘fear God and work righteousness’ is a description of the Christian life. To fear God is to reverence and trust Him (Micah 6:8). The evidence of this faith is a righteous walk.”⁸

2. Verses 36-39 – The Earthly Ministry of Jesus.

- a. **Verse 36 – “The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ – He is Lord of all.”** – Dr. Thomas Constable gives some insight about this verse: **“All of this verse is a kind of caption for what Peter proceeded to announce to Cornelius and his guests. Its three main emphases are: first, that the message to follow was a presentation of revelation that God had sent to the Jews. Second, it was a message resulting in ‘peace’ that comes through Jesus Christ. Third, Jesus Christ is Lord of all, both Jews and Gentiles. ‘Lord of all’ was a pagan title for deity, which the Christians adopted as an appropriate title for Jesus Christ. ‘He is Lord of all’ expressed Peter’s new insight. It is probably the main statement in the verse.”⁹**

⁵Robert James Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, vol. Volume 3B, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 2003), 137.

⁶Arno C. Gaebelein, *The Acts of the Apostles: An Exposition* (New York: "Our Hope" Publication Office, 1912), 203.

⁷Utley, *Luke the Historian: The Book of Acts*, 138.

⁸Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 446.

⁹Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Acts* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2019),