

# Great Truths Cornelius Can Teach Us

"So I sent men to you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear everything that you have been commanded by the Lord." (Acts 10:33).

*Acts 10*

## INTRODUCTION

- Ask any Christian to tell you what they know about Cornelius and they will tell you the same thing his gentile friends and family, and even Jews would say:
  - He was of marvelous moral character
  - He had a noble influence on his family, even among Jews (22)
  - He was a worshipper of the One True God
  - His life was characterized by piety
  - He prayed often
  - He was generous to the poor
  - He was a positive force in his family and eventually lead them all to obey the Gospel just like he did. (Acts 10:1-2, 22)
- Apart from all the obvious and most often studied truths about Cornelius, there is one text that may be overlooked by many of us, Acts 10:33.
- This short passage offers us a lot of beneficial information about the Centurion.

**BIBLE VERSE**

So I sent *men* to you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, **we are all here present before God to hear everything that you have been commanded** by the Lord.

Acts 10:33

## 1 A Gentile Worshiped the God, not gods

**EXPLANATION**

- It was not uncommon for gentiles to worship a variety of gods
  - Romans 1:21
  - Acts 14:15
  - 1 Thess. 1:9
- At some point in his life, Cornelius had embraced and believed in: "You shall have no other gods before Me." - (Ex. 20:3)

**APPLICATION**

- This theology must have come from the Jews' presence and influence in Caesarea. But also from what Paul told the Romans 1:20 ("For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly

perceived, being understood by what has been made, so that they are without excuse.")

- Cornelius knew there was a greater power than humanity that must have created the heavens and the earth, man and all living things - he searched and inquired until he found the One True God of the Jews.
- We must learn from Cornelius and seek until we find the truth. (Romans 10:14-15; "How then are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? How are they to believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? 15 But how are they to preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news of good things!")

## 2 Cornelius Knew God was Active in Human Affairs

### EXPLANATION

#### "...we are all here present before God..."

- This phrase implies that God was aware of Peter's meeting in Cornelius' house, but also approved it!
- Not all men of God understood that God was and is aware of human affairs:
  - Patriarch Jacob when he was fleeing from Esau. At Bethel, he said, " The Lord is certainly in this place, and I did not know it!" Gen. 28:16
  - Jonah the prophet attempted to hide from God by hiding in the belly of a ship and running away from the presence of God (Jonah 1:3)
  - Yet a Gentile had more presence of mind to clearly understand and respect this aspect of the Creator's nature.

## APPLICATION

- God has always been in control of the entirety of His creation. This does not mean that He controls His creation like puppets, but will make sure that all things will work out for His purpose and design. (Romans 8:28)
- What God wants for all His creation is that all people will one day become Christians, especially YOU: "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9

## 3 The Gospel Must be Preached by Humans

## EXPLANATION

"(we are here to) **hear everything that you have been commanded.**"

- Cornelius had a vision where an angel gave him instructions, but the angel did not preach to him nor did the angel save him.
- The centurion did not receive a special fuzzy feeling to confirm his salvation.
- Cornelius received instructions and confessed that the message of the saving Gospel comes from the mouths of humans.
- Acts 11:14; "and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household."

## APPLICATION

- Too many people today claim they were saved when they experienced a "better felt than told" feeling.
- Proverbs 16:25; "There is a way *which seems* right to a person, But its end is the way of death."
- Our feelings and emotions are not to be trusted as accurate guides for our eternal destiny - we need to trust only what the scriptures teach.
- Galatians 1:8; "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!"

## 4 Cornelius Recognized God's Sovereignty

### EXPLANATION

- " hear everything that you have been **commanded** by the Lord"
- Cornelius respected that God is the giver of commandments and He sets forth terms and conditions for salvation.
- John 14:6; "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

## 5 The Centurion Knew He Had to Obey All Things

## EXPLANATION

- Cornelius sent for Peter to hear **all** the things he needed to obey
- He did not ask Peter to give him a list of things to choose from, but all things
- Naaman full of leprosy asked God for help. Once he was told what to do, at first he refused to do it God's way. (2 Kgs. 5:12; "Are Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, not better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage." Jordan)

## APPLICATION

- Too many denominations and religious sects exist today and just as many have their way to "get you to heaven."
- People are fascinated with these "ways" to heaven, they embrace those "ways" and will not consider God's way at all!
- Consider what God says:
  - Mark 16:16
  - Acts 2:38
  - 1 Peter 3:21; "Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,"

# 6

## Cornelius Understood Peter Had the Keys to the Kingdom

## EXPLANATION

- Jesus had given Peter the keys to the Kingdom - The Gospel. He used those keys in Acts 2, 8 and now in Acts 10.
  - Acts 2 -Jews
  - Acts 8 -Samaritans
  - Acts 10 -Gentiles
- Cornelius believed that Jesus had commissioned Peter to be a spokesperson and preacher of the Gospel and was willing and eager for him and his entire household to listen to the words of salvation.
  - Luke 10:16; "The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me; but the one who rejects Me rejects the One who sent Me."
  - 2 Cor. 5:20; "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."
  - Acts 11:13-14; "Send *some men* to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here;14 and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household."

## CONCLUSION

- "Cornelius' understanding and disposition, as reflected in this solitary sentence, is stunning indeed. It truly reveals something of the depth of his soul. Are we willing to listen as he teaches us?"
- What happened with Cornelius was so taboo that it took two chapters to explain it:
  - To many of the Jews, it was unheard of and unacceptable for Jews to enter the house of a Gentile.
  - Now Peter was claiming the Gentiles were part of the Kingdom of Jesus!
  - Acts 11:1-4; " Now the apostles and the brothers *and sisters* who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, the Jewish *believers* took issue with

him, 3 saying, “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” 4 But Peter began and explained *at length* to them in an orderly sequence”

- Let us not prove rebellious to the Word of God!
- Plan of salvation using Cornelius' conversion

## REFERENCES CONSULTED

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Eric said in reference to this chapter: “The world changed, and few seemed to notice.” I differ because it was so controversial that it took two chapters, back to back to defend what happened..

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What are some reasons the event described in Acts 10 can be called “the Gentile Pentecost” even though it did not occur during the Jewish celebration of Pentecost?



What might be the relevance or implication for us of Peter's words "These Gentiles have been given the Holy Spirit, just as we have" (Contemporary English Version)?

Do people in our church have negative feelings about other cultures which the Lord needs to confront?

In what ways does this event in Acts 10 emphasize that the fullness of the Holy Spirit is for all believers everywhere rather than it just being a one-time event only for the 120 in the Upper Room (Acts 2)?.

Jackson, Wayne. "Six Great Truths Cornelius Can Teach Us." *ChristianCourier.com*. Access date: May 28, 2022. <https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/393-six-great-truths-cornelius-can-teach-us> All points are taken from this article

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Chapter 10 is pivotal in the Book of Acts, for it records the salvation of the Gentiles. We see Peter using "the keys of the kingdom" for the third and last time. He had opened the door of faith for the Jews (Acts 2) and also for the Samaritans (Acts 8), and now he would be used of God to bring the Gentiles into the church (see Gal. 3:27–28; Eph. 2:11–22)

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