

Acts Lesson 8
How Shall Gentiles Enter the Kingdom?
Peter, Cornelius, Antioch
Chapters 10-11

Text: Acts chapters 10-11

I. Questions for the Bible student

Pick one or two for discussion.

1. Luke seems to devote quite a sizable part of the book to the events around Cornelius. There is the detailed account in chapter 10, and then immediately there is a second detailed account in chapter 11. The two accounts relate some different details. Why the repetition? Why write two accounts of same event, back to back?
2. Chapter 11 includes another defense. Luke takes particular care to record a number of these, it seems to me to be a device he uses. We have already seen two by the Apostles before the Jews, and Stephen's before the Jews. The sermon on Pentecost begins as a defense against the charge of drunkenness. There will be several more later in the book. Why would Luke record these defenses in this way? Because there are so many, should we assume that one of the multiple purposes of the book is as a defense (apologia) of Christianity to the world? Does Christ, His church, His way, still have to be defended today?
3. I have said that several previous events previous in the book were of cosmic, or universal significance as far as the Father is concerned. What do you think about chapter 10? Does this chapter carry heavy significance, or is it just the unfolding of the story?
4. Why would Luke go to such lengths to portray Cornelius as a good and devout man?
5. I have said Acts is a book of firsts. There is another in this chapter; what is it? Note that 11:3 gives a strong clue.
6. Chapter 10 is very important one when studying the Holy Spirit. If you are making an effort to track His work in the book, you will need to study this chapter in detail. It contains the second recorded baptism of the Holy Spirit; the first was in Acts 2. How are the two accounts similar? How are they different? Was the purpose of the Holy Spirit "falling" on Cornelius the same as the Apostles?
7. One of the missions of the Spirit is to lead (Mt 4:1; Lu 4:1; Ro 8:14; Ga 5:18). How does the Spirit lead Peter in this chapter? Cornelius?
8. Acts 10:6 and 10:33 mention that Peter will give commands to Cornelius. How many did Peter give that are recorded in the text? What was it, or were they?

II How shall the Gentiles enter the kingdom?

Through Abraham (circumcision), Moses, Sinai covenant, to Jesus then to the kingdom? Or directly through Jesus to the kingdom?

Difficult for some Jewish Christians to accept that Gentiles enter kingdom through Jesus apart from circumcision, first covenant, Jewish election. Recurring problem in first century (Galatians, Colossians, Ephesians). Jewish Christians in chapter 11 accept it and glorify God.

III. Peter's sermon

Not one gospel for Jews and another for Gentiles!

Jesus is Lord of all; He lived, died, rose again; He is Judge of all; remission of sins through Him

IV. A few other thoughts

The difference Jesus makes is evident in the changed lives of these people. Ancient prejudices are being repudiated because of the power of His love.

Sub-theme of benevolence continues to be seen, but now it is a Jewish/Gentile congregation sending aid to Jerusalem.

The name Christian given: the Name we are called by, saved by, live by, is the Name we wear. (1 Peter 4:16)

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