

**Acts 10:1-11:18 (#17) 8.16.20 (20063)**  
**The Radical Gospel**

I. **The Lord is way ahead of us all the time. Acts 1:8. The Lord initiates the next phase of gospel expansion. Some 8 years after Pentecost. Acts 10:1-11:18**

**A. He sends an angel to instruct Cornelius. 1-8**

1. A Gentile centurion. (occupying force in Palestine)
  - a) Caesarea: Roman Capital of Palestine.
  - b) Centurion: commander of 80-100 soldiers (like a captain); cohort was about 600 men, (like a battalion), 6 centurions per Cohort
2. A God-Fearer. Not quite a convert to Judaism.
  - a) But a Gentile who respected Judaism and monotheism.

**B. He personally convinces Peter. 9-33.** Peter would probably not have believed an angel about this Torah issue. It took three times for the Lord himself to convince him.

1. The vision of God's purpose in the world—to cleanse the unclean: 9-16 (Lk.19:10)
  - a) Seek and save the Lost. Lk.19:10 – even Gentiles!
2. The shape of Peter's obedience in the world—Yes, Lord.. 17-33
  - a) Even before he completely grasped the big picture. 19

**C. He sovereignly regenerates the Gentiles. 34-48. *This was all God's idea.***

1. **Through the gospel.** (Rom.1:16-17). Note how Peter proclaims Jesus as risen Lord. 34-43. Compare Rom.10:9-10, 8:1-2
  - a) You can have peace with God. 34-36
    - (1) Meaning, we don't already have it. Rom.5:6-11
  - b) Through repentant faith in Jesus the Messiah as the risen Lord. (Matt.28:18-20)36-38
    - (1) Repentant faith (11:18) is faith that starts with the awareness that we need to be forgiven of our sins more than we need instructions in spirituality.
    - (2) Saving and judging Lord of all.
  - c) Who was crucified, raised from the dead, seated at God's right hand. (Lord of all) 36-40 (Acts 2:23-24)
    - (1) Temporal Death on our behalf. Christ's death, burial, resurrection and ascension = the guts of the gospel.
    - (2) Eternal (Res) Life on our behalf. Rom.4:22-5:1
  - d) So that we can be forgiven and survive the coming judgment.
    - (1) Jesus is the judge. Jn.5:22,27; Acts 17:31
2. **By the Spirit.** Jn.3:3,7; Titus 3:3-7; 1 Pet.1:3, 23; Rom.8:1-8
  - a) *Note that the Spirit came in the message, before Baptism. Rom.1:16-17*
  - b) *Being born again (Jn.3) is being a Christian. God does this.*
3. **Into the Body of Christ. Baptized immediately.** Matt. 28:18-20; Rom.6; 1 Cor.12.
  - a) *Note: the angel did not preach the gospel to Cornelius. That's not how it works. The angel told Corny to listen to Peter. The gospel is apostolic—or it is not real (Gal.1:1-11).*
  - b) The body of Christ is missional. Christians baptize new Christians and they become one body and one family.
  - c) The Spirit is at work in and through us. Phil.2:12-13
4. **The first Gentile church is born!** Like an oak from an acorn.
  - a) Plant the gospel and a church grows from it.
  - b) Church traditions do not create churches, the gospel, the Word/Spirit of God does.

**D. He patiently challenges the Church in Jerusalem to catch up with what he's doing. 11:1-18.**

**1. The "circumcision group" challenges Peter. 1-3**

- a) They believed totally and angrily that in order to come to the Jewish Messiah, a Gentile had to convert to Judaism.
- b) If it had been anybody but Peter, along with his six Jewish Christian friends, the Jerusalem group would not have accepted this move of God among Gentiles.
- c) This comes to a head in chapter 15 because of the Antioch ministry. Paul becomes the champion of Gentile outreach. See Galatians and Romans especially.

**2. But most of them finally get on board. 16-18**

- a) They fell silent. But it came up again in ch.15

**II. 4 Closing Questions to help us hear from the Lord:**

A. If this was God's plan all along, why did he not just have a big apostolic staff meeting and show the whole group what he showed Peter?

1. *Because thinking, praying, and struggling through the entailments and ramifications of the gospel are part of spiritual growth in this age.*

B. If regeneration gives us God's life, why do we find ourselves off page with Jesus about things? Did Peter really say, No Lord?

1. *Because sometimes we try too hard to please God without listening to the actual words of the Lord – Like a kid who gets partial instructions, then runs off to do the thing on his own. Peter did this before, too.*
  - a) Matt. 16:21-23. You won't suffer, Lord ...
  - b) Jn 13:8. You won't wash my feet, Lord.
  - c) *He had in each case erred by trying too hard to "please God" without actually listening to what the Lord was saying ... This can happen today!*
  - d) *We can be more impressed with our own spiritual enthusiasm than with really thinking and living in the Word of the Gospel.*

C. If Jesus told the first Christians that he intended to reach others, why were they resistant? (The circumcision group)

1. *Because we all have un-examined attitudes within our own hearts.*
  - a) Racial, religious, national prejudice (Gal.2:14)
    - (1) Racism was universal and the Jews were no exception.
    - (2) Many in Israel were intensely nationalistic and not at all concerned with the Lord's kingdom if it went beyond Israel.
  - b) Jesus rebuked the Jews for un-examined traditions. Matt.15
2. *We are unaware of our blind spots, the difference between preferences, traditions, and gospel/ KingdomThink.* See **Gal. 2:11-14**
  - a) It wasn't his commitment to rules that was at stake, but his commitment to Jesus and gospel thinking.

D. If God approves of good behavior, why is a nice guy like Cornelius not saved yet?

1. *Because godly religious actions don't save you—Jesus does. Many people are apparently godly and good, but have not repented and believed in Jesus Christ to rescue them. Monotheism and generosity are not enough. We need the gospel.*
2. *Note: the point here is not that Cornelius was a "good guy" and therefore God saved him.*
3. *It had to have been the Lord who motivated him to listen to Judaism in the first place. (Jn.6:44,65).*
4. *You can pray all day and give millions, but if you don't give your heart to Christ – it's not worth beans.*