

Acts :10:25-26,34-35,44-48

October 11, 2020

Acts 10:25-26. Stand up! I myself am also a man

25. When it happened that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell down at his feet, and worshiped him. 26. But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up! I myself am also a man."

25. "When it happened that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell down at his feet, and worshiped him"

I can understand why Cornelius would fall down at Peter's feet to worship him.

1. Angel of the Lord has commanded Cornelius to send for Peter (10:5-6)
2. Cornelius can assume that Peter is, at the least, a God-sent emissary—or, at the most, a deity.
3. Either way Cornelius takes the safe course by falling down at Peter's feet and worshipping him.

Does this sort of thing happen today?

Do we put our clergy on a pedestal?

What is the difference between UMC and Roman Catholic...Pope, etc?

26. "But Peter raised him up, saying, 'Stand up! I myself am also a man'"

Peter refuses to allow Cornelius to worship him.

Then Peter spells out his rationale in more detail.

Acts 10:34-35. God doesn't show favoritism

34. Peter opened his mouth and said, "Truly I perceive that God doesn't show favoritism; 35. but in every nation he who fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."

34. "Peter opened his mouth and said, 'Truly I perceive that God doesn't show favoritism'"

The Hebrew Scriptures always prohibited Jewish people from showing favoritism to wealthy or powerful people, and made it clear that Yahweh did not show favoritism to privileged people (Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 10:17-18; 2 Chronicles 19:7).

1. It is evident to me that Peter speaks of favoritism toward the people of Israel.
2. These covenants were all preliminary to the covenant established by Jesus (Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20; 1 Corinthians 11:25).

35a. "but in every nation"

Peter's phrase, "every nation," clearly means people from Gentile nations.

35b. "he who fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him"

The standard for righteousness in the past has been adherence to Jewish law.

However, Peter says that he now understands that fearing God (having reverence for God) and doing what is right are now the criteria by which God will judge.

1. Peter then went on to preach a Pentecost-like sermon to these Gentiles (10:34-43).
2. Rather than go verse by verse in these notes, **I would like to read it together and share our thoughts and ideas.**

He concluded what we just read with these words, “All the prophets testify about him, that through his name everyone who believes in him will receive remission of sins” (10:43). Given the presence of Gentiles, the word “everyone” is significant.

Acts 10:44-46a. The Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word

44. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word. 45. They of the circumcision who believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles. 46a. For they heard them speaking in other languages and magnifying God. 46b. Then Peter answered, 47. “Can any man forbid the water, that these who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we should not be baptized?”

44. “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word”

Just before being interrupted, Peter was saying “that through his name EVERYONE who believes in him (Jesus) will receive remission of sins” (10:43). God chooses that pregnant moment to interrupt Peter—to endow “all those who heard the word” (including the Gentiles who were present) with the Holy Spirit.

This sequence is highly unusual, since the gift of the Holy Spirit usually follows baptism (2:38; 8:14-17; 19:1-7).

45. “They of the circumcision who believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out on the Gentiles”

Just like the crowd at Pentecost who heard the apostles speaking in various languages, “were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, ‘What does this mean?’” (2:12).

This verse doesn’t tell us that Peter was surprised, although I’m guessing he was probably shocked that these Gentiles would receive the Holy Spirit prior to baptism.

But the circumcised believers haven’t been able to understand God’s intention to admit Gentile believers into the church without prior conversion to the Jewish faith. I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY THEY WOULD HAVE QUESTIONS...

46a. “For they heard them speaking in other languages and magnifying God”

The speaking in tongues is a certain sign that these Gentiles have received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of speaking in tongues at Pentecost was twofold.

1. it confirmed to the crowd that something miraculous was taking place.

2. it helped the apostles to communicate with people who otherwise could not have understood them.

This speaking of tongues by Gentiles also has two purposes.

1. it confirms to the Jewish believers that God has blessed these Gentiles with his Spirit.
2. it enables the Gentile believers to praise God, and to glorify his name.

47a. “Can any man forbid the water, that these who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we should not be baptized?”

Peter, who has so recently been converted from his Jews-only perspective, now provides the initiative for baptizing these Gentiles. He obviously believes that they need baptism even though they have already received the Holy Spirit.

Note that Peter says nothing about circumcision as a prior condition to baptism.

47b. “who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we”

The reason for Peter’s advocacy is that he has seen evidence by their speaking in tongues that God has gifted these Gentiles with the Holy Spirit. Peter understands that gift as God’s welcoming sign to Gentiles.

I think we can readily agree that there is no distinction between the Jewish believers and the Gentile believers. Both have received the same Spirit.

BASED ON THIS SCRIPTURE, WHAT DISTINCTION CAN WE MAKE BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND ALL OTHER RELIGIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD?

ACTS 10:48. HE COMMANDED THEM TO BE BAPTIZED

48. He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay some days.

48a. “He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ”

Apparently Peter does not baptize the Gentile believers personally, but orders other Christians—presumably those who accompanied him from Joppa (10:23)—to administer it.

48b. “Then they asked him to stay some days”

Not long ago, Peter would have refused the hospitality of a Gentile’s home and table, because he believed that it was God’s will that Jews should maintain their separateness from Gentiles.

While this verse does not explicitly tell us that Peter accepts this invitation, it strongly implies it. Just as there was no reason to withhold the water of baptism from Gentiles, there is no reason for Peter to decline Gentile hospitality.