

20-21 Bible Study #10

11/17/20

Acts 10

Administrative Information

- The Bible Study Class will be presented via Zoom every Tuesday morning from **9:30 A.M. until 10:30 A.M.** beginning **September 15, 2020** and ending **May 11, 2021** except for the following Tuesdays related to a holiday:
 - **Nov 24, 2020 – Thanksgiving Week**
 - Dec 21, 2020 – Christmas Week
 - Dec 29, 2020 - New Year's Week
 - Mar 30, 2021 – Holy Week
- The same class will be given via Zoon every Tuesday evening from **7:30 P.M. until 8:30 P.M.**
- Contact info: email: biblestudy@straymonds.org ; Tel: (703) 644-5873
- Inclement weather decisions will be **based on Fairfax County Public School announcements (once we are back in the classroom)**

Reminder

- We will **not meet** for Bible Study on **Tuesday, November 24, 2020**
- Enjoy a **Happy Thanksgiving**

Review of Last Week

- We saw where *Saul of Tarsus* was supporting the *Sanhedrin* in the stoning of Stephen
- Then, we saw *Deacon Philip* pick up *Stephen's* mantle and preach the Gospel in *Samaria*
- Also, we saw *Philip*, in response to the Holy Spirit, interact with a God-fearer eunuch from *Ethiopia* resulting in his baptism
- Because of this success, the Church in Jerusalem sent *Peter* and *John* to administer Confirmation on the *Samaritans* who had been baptized
- The rest of the class dealt with the conversion of *Saul* at *Damascus* his baptism, and eventual travel to *Jerusalem* where with the help of *Barnabas* he was introduced to the Apostles
- Finally, when the Jews wanted to kill *Saul* because of his conversion he was sent home to *Tarsus*
- Lastly, we looked at *Peter's* move into Judea where he raised a woman from the dead

Acts 10

- **Acts 10:1-8** *“At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort,...he sent them to Joppa”*
 - Luke introduces us to this Roman centurion (officer over 100 men) from Italy (Italian cohort) living in *Caesarea* (the Roman port city on the Mediterranean sea and Roman administrative capital)
 - These troops were not the usual Syrian-raised Roman soldiers
 - He was the worst kind of occupier one could imagine as a Roman Gentile
 - Luke tells us that he was a God-fearer who accepted and worshipped the monotheistic God of Abraham
 - He, however, was not circumcised nor practiced Kosher or was a member of the people of God

Acts 10 (Cont)

- **Acts 10:23-27** *“The next day he rose and went off with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him... he went in and found many persons gathered”*
 - We will see that six brethren will go with *Peter* to *Caesarea*
 - Father pointed out that *Cornelius* was the evangelist in this story as he had already converted one soldier and his servants to this new way
 - So he calls together his household and friends to meet with Peter, and indicates that he was only a God-fearer at this point
 - The phrase “he worshipped him” meant that he bowed down before him
 - Peter pulled him up saying: *“I am just a man”*
 - After a brief conversation, Peter entered into the house of *Cornelius*

Acts 10 (Cont)

- **Acts 10:28-33** *“and he said to them, you yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or visit anyone from another nation...To hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord”*
 - Father said that it is important for us to understand the dynamic of what is going on here
 - Today, very few of us would identify ourselves as a Jew
 - We would say that we are Christian
 - But, Peter identified himself as a Jew
 - Many Jews (including Peter) had accepted Jesus as the Christ, but they still considered themselves as Jews

Acts 10 (Cont)

- In this scene, Peter said that God had shown him that he should not call any man unclean, and therefore he agreed to go to Caesarea with the men
- Upon his arrival, he asked *Cornelius* what he wanted
- Peter wondered why Peter did not begin preaching and/or offering baptism?
- What was the hindrance slowing him down?
- Cornelius tells him of his dream in which God told him to send for Peter who would have something to tell him
- He said that is why he gathered all these people here

Acts 10 (Cont)

- **Acts 10: 34-37** *“And Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him....beginning from Galilee after the baptism which John preached”*
 - Father asked that we highlight these words “shows no partiality” and “fear”
 - He will use this phrase often in the future for this is the basic context we are dealing with here
 - Peter was meeting with a bunch of unclean, uncircumcised, unkosher, and unholy Gentiles who were not a part of the people of God, but were obviously God-fearers
 - He somehow realized that they were related to his dream and that for some reason God had shown him that they were clean and pure!
 - So, Peter says: Let me tell you the story of Jesus who was anointed with the Holy Spirit at His baptism

Acts 10 (Cont)

- **Acts 10:38-39** *“how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed,...They put him to death by hanging him on a tree”*
 - Father indicated that this was the reference in which the New Testament authors understood that the baptism of Jesus was a manifesting of His anointing
 - This was where they began to see him as the Messiah, the Christ
 - But, the Jews put Him to death by hanging Him on a tree which was seen as a curse from Deuteronomy (**Deuteronomy 21:22**)

Acts 10 (Cont)

- **Acts 10:40-42** *“but God raised him on the third day and made him manifest; not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses...and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of all the living and the dead”*
 - Father pointed out that it said that God raised him from the dead after they had killed Him
 - This is what we will hear Paul say later on when he addressed some Gentiles
 - We can see that the Gospel preached to the Gentiles was different than that which was preached to the Jews
 - Father contrasted Peter’s speech here with his speech to the Jews at Pentecost
 - Earlier, he quoted from the Psalms and about Abraham and David
 - We should also look at the words of Stephen to a bunch of Jews before his martyrdom

Acts 10 (Cont)

- When the Apostles preached the gospel to the Gentiles, they paired it down to these basics
- Their message was simply: “God sent a representative to him, He sent His son, the people killed him, but He rose from the dead and some day He will return to judge the living and the dead
- That was the basic message, and we will see it again in Paul’s speech in Athens

Acts 10 (Cont)

- **Acts 10:43** *“To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name*
 - Father asked us to look at this language as it should remind us of Acts 2:38 where the Jews were cut to the heart to which Peter told them to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit
 - What was missed in this situation was the theme of baptism
 - Peter was not sure what to do with these people (Gentiles) even though this was not the first time they had encountered God-fearers
 - This was something the church had been wrestling with for some time
 - These people were not circumcised, did not keep Kosher, and were not really Jews so could they be baptized?
 - Today, we are on the other side of this question, at that time, they were facing the beginning of this question

Acts 10 (Cont)

- **Acts 10:44-45** *“While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles”*
 - Father asked that we highlight the word “circumcised”
 - The six brethren who came along with Peter were circumcised and this is what this entire section is about
 - There were two groups here: those along with Peter who were circumcised and the God-fearers with Cornelius who were not
 - The circumcised were amazed when they witnessed the gifts of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the Gentiles (which means uncircumcised)
 - Thus, this is about the Jews vs. the Gentiles as well as the circumcised vs. the uncircumcised

Acts 10 (Cont)

- **Acts 10:46** *“For they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God”*
 - They heard them speaking and extolling God in “languages” which the disciples understood
 - This was the same thing that they had witnessed at Pentecost
 - This will become an issue later on

Acts 10 (Cont)

- **Acts 10:47-48** *“Then Peter declared, Can anyone forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days”*
 - Father pointed out that it does not say: “Peter said,” it says “Peter declared”
 - Why didn’t he just direct them to get some water to baptize them?
 - He addresses his question to the six disciples, as it seems obvious that this practice had been forbidden
 - Most likely, those who had established the practice were members of the group who had said that one may not be baptized until they were circumcised (the so-called “Circumcision Party”)
 - It would appear that the early church at this stage was already debating what to do with such people

Acts 10 (Cont)

- Here, Peter sees this problem after the Holy Spirit had already descended upon these Gentiles
- Thus, he asked, who could deny them baptism?
- The Holy Spirit had just fallen upon a bunch of uncircumcised, unkosher people
- This gift was supposed to be something one received after baptism (somehow the cart is before the horse here)
- This meant that circumcision and kosher had nothing to do with baptism
- So Peter says, “I think we need some water”
- He appears to want to regularize this uncomfortable situation
- Therefore, Peter commanded that they be baptized because most likely there was a debate going on among the six disciples and Peter
- As we will soon see, this will become a problem in the near future (**Acts 11**)

Acts 11

Acts 11

- **Acts 11:1-3** *“Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God...the circumcision party criticized him saying ‘Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?’”*
 - Father said that this did not seem like a ‘fun party’
 - The Circumcision Party demanded that anyone desiring to convert to Judaism had to become a proselyte meaning they had to be circumcised and practice kosher
 - They therefore criticized Peter for eating with uncircumcised (non-kosher) men
 - Father reiterated that there were two issues in this discussion which will play a role for the near term of the early church to include a requirement for:
 - Circumcision
 - Obeying all of the Kosher Laws
 - This will be very obvious as we look at Paul’s letters to the Galatians and Romans

Acts 11 (Cont)

- **Acts 11:4-18** *“But Peter began and explained to them in order.... ‘Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance unto life’”*
 - Peter then related the story to them saying that he was in a house praying, had a dream which indicated what was about to happen
 - He asked them what they expected him to do after he witnessed the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Gentiles after he had spoken to them
 - He said that he remembered how Jesus had talked to the apostles about the coming gift of the Holy Spirit
 - After witnessing this, as strange as it might seem, he decided to baptize them
 - Father pointed out that Peter did not say that this resolved the problem as it will be a problem for the early church for the next century

Acts 11 (Cont)

- **Acts 11:19-26** *“Now those who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenician and Cyprus and Antioch,...For the first time”*
 - The word “Greek” here means a Gentile from Antioch, which was part of Syria
 - At this point, we are talking about the Gentile versus the Jew
 - There were a few more Gentiles like Cornelius to whom the hand of the Lord was with and it would appear that great numbers believed
 - The news of this came to the Church in Jerusalem, and they decided to send Barnabas to Antioch because he was a Greek speaker
 - He went to Tarsus to find Saul who was a Jewish Christian who also spoke Greek
 - Remember, at this point, almost all Christians were practicing Jews
 - Barnabas and Saul worked together for a year in Antioch forming a church
 - This was the first time and place where we heard these followers of new way referred to as Christians

Acts 11 (Cont)

- **Acts 11:27-30** *“Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch...sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul”*
 - There was a famine spreading all over that geographic area including Antioch
 - The Christians in Jerusalem were already in dire straits as they tried to live in a community
 - They had very limited funds as they had sold their homes awaiting coming destruction of the city
 - Thus, the Church in Judea was heavily persecuted and lacking in funds
 - Right from the beginning of Paul’s ministry, he was collecting money from the Gentile and churches he was establishing to bring relief to the Christians of Judea