

The Awakening of Peter

Acts 10

The Jewish view of any gentile was very harsh. They had no dealings with them whatsoever and considered them to be little more than fuel for the fires of hell. This is about to change according to God's will, but not planned by the Jewish Christian's at that time.

I. God is always seeking and preparing hearts for him. Vv. 1-8

- a. The Romans were very theistic with many gods that they served.
- b. Cornelius is one of 32 others who have this position empire-wide.
- c. He was **blessed to be where he could learn about God** and was obedient to what he gained.
- d. Unfortunately, all knowledge concerning God came from the **severely prejudiced Jews - his only window to see God in the entire world.**

**** Jewish woman who was always meeting kind Christians*

*****Hindu who had read the bible and was convinced**

II. God is always seeking to prepare us to testify of Him. Vv. 9-20

- a. **Peter was apparently in exile** for a time to the less Judaic coast.
- b. This is only the **second time we've heard of Joppa**. It is where Jonah departed to flee from obeying God.
- c. There are **no known accounts being spread to the Romans/gentiles up to this point**. Only Candace's eunuch had heard the message in chapter 8.
- d. **Jews despised the Gentiles and most certainly any occupying ones.**

*****God was already preparing Peter.**

1. The Sanhedrin had killed Jesus and many other believing Jews at this point. Those he admired had fallen.
2. It is likely this is his hiding place away from Paul's persecutions.
3. He was in hiding at a tanner's house who were notoriously 'unclean' because of their business.
4. He's in Joppa where no Jew went unless they had to.

III. God wanted Peter's obedience and awaken him to his mission. Vv. 21-29

- a. **Peter had seen thousands saved at this point** and knew exactly what needed to be said.
- b. **He hadn't, however, said these words to Gentiles ever** who he still considered as unclean to him and God. **Notice he condescends to them in his greeting!!**

There was no law in scripture concerning such things. It had been passed through custom into law without God's approval.

*****God's plans were to bring salvation to these Romans and to open the opportunities of such, but he had other irons in the fire...**

IV. God is far more interested in who we are than what we do. Vv. 34-48 look at the circumstances:

- a. The **knowledge that Cornelius and his friends needed was small**.
- b. Anyone could have shared this, but **Peter needed to experience what God could easily do without him.**

c. **If the angel or anyone had said "trust in Jesus who is God's son" salvation would have come immediately** as Cornelius was more than ready.

*****Peter is this one who needs to be 'converted' to see the will of God for His global goal.****

Acts 11:1-18

'Go into all the world and make disciples of every nation...'

'You will be my witness in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and into the uttermost parts of the **world...**'

We saw the reservation of the church and the extra push from God to get them out of there through command and then persecution by Paul.

Now we'll see God begin to bring the message of salvation to the gentile nations in spite of the Jews.

I. Outward religion majors on the minors. Vv. 1-3

A. They had heard that Gentiles had received God's word.

Is it possible that they only heard Peter had gone into this house?

Or...did they stop listening when they heard he entered??...

B. They see the violation of their customs and very ungodly laws **but not the fact that many were saved.**

*****They major on the minor, and minor on the major.*****

So which is of most importance to them, that the Peter maintains his Jewish tradition or that the Gentiles got saved???

II. Outward religion is concerned about status quo.

A. The **concern of most people is to maintain their place and comfort** to a degree that they desire.

B. This is **subjective** to the individual or group.

>What will it do to our image?

>What if this continues?

>What might we find at our own church?

>what if Gentiles became believers and came to worship at Jerusalem? – the horrors

C. I've also encountered those whose **faith is in the teacher and his message rather than God's word.**

*****If change isn't allowed to the extent that God desires, the church will die in its own era or culture.*****

If the church ceases to be biblical it will become traditional or cultural- if it survives at all.

III. True religion is all about relationships to God.

A. It is a who, not what happened.

Does our daily tradition take precedent over doing God's will?

B. Is what we consider the norm for God and church required or a means to an end?

*****The moment that tradition takes precedent over scripture or even when it is equated with the same, the church is in peril.*****

IV. True religion places the scriptural fact- God's word- above all traditions even when it isn't comfortable.

Let's recap what God has been doing with them:

- A. they have been sequestered in Jerusalem with many saved.
- B. They have been dispersed because of persecution that arose upon the martyrdom of Stephen.
- C. They still have gone only to Jews even though these previous events (the scattering) have lent to sharing otherwise.
- D. Jesus' own commands and the push of other important scripture have shown that God's goal also includes the vast world that is super majority gentile.

*****If they stayed in their tradition where would the church be today?*****

We would still be wholly pagan.