



Week 9 Acts 9.32-11.18 The Conversion of Peter

9:32-43 Peter heals Aeneas; Peter prays for & revives Tabitha

1) Some commentators have noted that Luke (in his Gospel and in Acts) often pairs a story about a man with a story about a woman. Hows does this particular pairing set-up the story that follows about Cornelius?

10:1-8 An angel meets with Cornelius, tells him to send for Peter in Joppa.

2) Luke details Cornelius' pious character prior to his knowledge of Christ. While Cornelius' cultural identity is a major shock to the Jewish Christians in the story, he's basically a "good guy." Do you wonder why God didn't choose the worst of all Gentiles (like he did amongst Jews with Saul)? Who in your own life would fit the profile of Cornelius?

10:9-23 Peter's vision and meeting with the men who came from Cornelius.

3) In vs. 15, Jesus says, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." When did God make these animals clean? How could Peter have known that this shift had taken place?

4) There are two sides being worked on by God's Spirit in this story. Is it a story of conversion for both Cornelius (and others gathered) *and* for Peter? What are each of them being converted from and to? Is it possible to have multiple conversions, or is that a confusion of terms?

10:24-33 Peter at Cornelius' house

5) Discuss any questions you may have about this section.

10:34-43 Peter preaches to the gathered group

6) Peter's sermon to the group tells the story of Jesus as a Jewish man sent by Israel's God (esp. vv. 36-39), but does so with regard to the whole world (esp. vv. 34-35, 43). Have we become so used to the global Jesus that we have forgotten his Jewishness? What would the danger be of forgetting Jesus' deeply Jewish identity?

10:44-48 The Holy Spirit falls on all who heard, they are baptised.

7) The gift of the Spirit and the baptism of those who are converted confirms the theology given by Jesus to Peter in his vision. How do we confirm the theology we have received today (regarding salvation, unity in Christ, the empowerment of the Spirit, etc.)?

11:1-18 Peter defends his experience before the apostles and believers in Judea.

8) The news of this event travels to Jerusalem. In vs. 2 we read that Peter was criticized for his role in the event. Why do you think there was such resistance to the idea of Gentiles being brought into the church? "Circumcision" is the issue that is named, but is there also a deeper issue at work here?

9) Peter defends his actions and Luke includes his entire defense speech (which follows a classic rhetorical format). When our understanding of Christ is challenged by others holding to worldly perspectives (within the church or outside of it), how do we go about "defending" what we have learned from God? What are the dangers and benefits of engaging in such a defense?