



DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

Set in God's Purpose... by Billy

READ : ACTS 10: 1-23

- Today we are continuing in our study of Acts to learn the ways of God.
- Firstly, He is no respecter of persons.
- Cornelius was not a Jew, but he was God-fearing in that he devoted himself to prayer and to deeds of charity.
- These actions ascended to God as a memorial (constant reminder)
- *Heb. 6:10* assures us that God does not forget the ministry of love to others.
- He is no respecter of persons, but He is moved by such actions.
- Even Jesus commended the offering of the woman with the alabaster ointment saying that it would be remembered wherever the gospel is preached. (*Matt. 26:13*)
- It is incredible to consider that God so values our prayers and our ministry to those in need.
- There are many God-fearing men and women just like Cornelius and God will reveal His salvation to such.
- Secondly notice that God is sovereign. Note how God reveals His will in a vision, apart from human agency.
- God, not Peter, orchestrates these events and initiates the mission to the Gentiles- this is the main theme.
- Prayer is the key to outworking of this mission.
- God decrees that the prayers of those who seek Him will be effective in bringing about His sovereign purpose.
- Why didn't God use Philip to teach Cornelius the way of salvation? He was a gifted evangelist and he was local (*8:40*)
- Because Peter had to have a revelation of God's purpose. Peter was seeking to live in the power of the Spirit. (*9:34,40*)
- But he was only human, and he retained human bias against others. He and the other leaders needed convincing that non-Jews were to be included in God's plan of salvation.

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- The Holy Spirit renders believers who are set in their ways responsive and obedient to the leading of the Lord.' (Erikson)
- Thirdly, we note that God is a God of revelation.
- God reveals His will primarily through the Word made flesh, i.e. Jesus Christ, and His gospel.
- He uses various means to do this: evangelism, teaching, prophecy, and in this case, visions.
- Peter went into a trance - his consciousness was withdrawn from external things in preparation for the vision. (Sproul)
- What happened next was a major turning point for the church regarding focus and direction and Luke goes into great detail to recount it. (*Acts 10, 11 and 15*)
- The vision is of a large sheet lowered from heaven full of animals, reptiles, birds and insects. (*Lev. 11:20-25 and Deut. 14:4-20*)
- This happened 3 times and a command was given to him to rise, kill and eat. (v.13)
- Peter true to his principles, refused probably thinking that this was a test of his faithfulness to God's law. (Strauss)
- Then the voice declares..'*What God has cleansed no longer consider unholy*' (v.15). Peter was greatly perplexed by the vision because his human understanding of God's ceremonial law told him something different.
- Once he accepted this vision as being true...'*it would be a short step from recognizing that Gentile food was clean to realizing that Gentiles themselves were clean also*' (Marshall) (*1 Tim. 4:4*)
- Lastly, we can see that the Lord is our Shepherd..He leads and guides into paths of righteousness.
- Just as Peter is wondering what just happened, the visitors from Cornelius arrive at the gate. (v.17)
- "*The Spirit said to him, 3 men are looking for you, but get up go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings for I have sent them myself.*" (v19-20)
- Perplexity and misgivings vanish when God's guiding hand is felt upon the life of the believer. Now Peter was beginning to see essential things.
- *ACTS 10:34-35 and ACTS 10:44 and COL. 2:16-17 (NLT)*