

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 10:34-43 | Session 28 | The Meeting in Caesarea, part 2

Verse 34—

Then Peter opened his mouth. This is a familiar idiom (expression) used in the Bible. **Of a truth I perceive;** Peter is, for the first time, addressing a completely Gentile audience. He reassures himself (Doubting nothing, vs. 20) that it's okay he is in the room speaking to them because **God is no respecter of persons.** The **truth** Peter is speaking was from Deuteronomy 10:17. In other words, God is impartial when it comes to all people. This may seem strange considering Israel was God's chosen nation/people. But the point being made is that God judges impartially. At the outset of sin in the Garden, the whole human race rejected God, and in his justice could have destroyed us all. But through his grace he chose one small people group to work a program of redemption so in the end he might provide salvation for all nations—that promise was given in Genesis 12:1-3.

Verses 35,36,37—

Therefore, **in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.** There is nothing new Peter is preaching here. Like the Jews, if the Gentiles fear God and do good works, they will be accepted by God. Notice there is no mention of *grace*; only *fear and works*. Peter knew nothing of the message of justification by *grace through faith alone*. That good news would be revealed to him later via the apostle Paul who received it directly from the Lord. At this point, the only way to be assured of entrance into the kingdom of God was by belief in Jesus as Messiah, and by works. Notice how commentators get this wrong:

There is considerable debate about Peter's words that God **accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right.** This does not teach salvation by works because a person's first responsibility before God is to fear Him, which is tantamount to trusting Him and reverencing Him.¹

This is the same prophetic message God had **sent to the children of Israel**, that **Jesus Christ** (Messiah) is the Prince of **peace** and, **he is Lord of all** (that is he is ***no respecter of persons***).

Again, this is not a new message, it was the same message **John** the Baptist **preached** (Mark 1:2-4). How the Gentiles would have known **that word**, is difficult to say except he says it was **published throughout**...that is, it was common knowledge of the day.

Verse 38—

That common knowledge included how **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth**, that is consecrating him as Messiah **who went about doing good and healing**, in essence, proving that He was **anointed by God**.

Verse 39—

As further proof, Peter claims **we are witnesses**. Who are the **we** he is referring to? Apparently, the disciples. In verse 41 he clarifies, **not to all the people, but...to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.** Verse 23 says *certain brethren from Joppa accompanied Peter*. The Greek word *from=apo* could be *certain brethren came out of Joppa and accompanied Peter*. Were some of the other disciples who ate and drank with Jesus after His resurrection with Peter?

Land of the Jews, literally region of the Judeans, i.e., Judea and Jerusalem (see Acts 1:8).

Whom they slew and hanged on a tree. The writers of the N.T. never used the word *cross* as we think of it today, i.e., two pieces of wood. In the Greek there are two words used for *the cross*, *stauros* and *xulon*. *Stauros* means a pointed upright stake, and *xulon* just means wood, or even tree. Our word *Cross* comes from the Latin word *crux*. The word crucified in English is translated from the similar Greek, *stauroo* (again meaning, a stake). The outcome was the same (death). As Jesus was crucified or **hanged on a tree** and while both hands and feet were nailed, it was likely not a two-piece cross which has become the universal symbol for Christianity. Our mental image of the cross comes from art and movies.

Verse 40,41—

God raised him up the third day, and shewed him openly; Not to all people. The apostle Paul, later in the book of 1 Corinthians 15 give an extensive list of the **witnesses** who saw Jesus after his resurrection.

Verse 42—

Peter's command was to **preach** Jesus as the **judge of quick (living) and dead**. The command was not for Peter to preach individual salvation by grace through faith.

Verse 43—

How is this **whosoever believeth in him** any different than Paul's preaching that will come later? Both Peter's and Paul's gospel required belief in Messiah/Jesus for eternal life, however the former required adherence to the O.T. promises and commandments, and the latter to *belief alone* in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:8,9; not of yourselves, not of works).

¹ Toussaint, Stanley D. "Acts." *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck. Vol. 2. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985. 381. Print.