

## WHY SEND FOR PETER? Acts 10:29

### Introduction

- A. Take heed how (Luke 8:18) and what (Mark 4:24) you hear.
- B. The gospel is simple enough for all (Luke 10:21).
- C. Any person can be saved, but it takes all of the person, nothing withheld.

### I Misconceptions of the apostles

- A. Jesus said, "Go preach to all nations," but the apostles heard it as if it were "Go preach to the Jewish nation."
- B. Jesus said "to every creature," but they heard "to every Jewish creature."
- C. Jesus said believers who would be baptized would be saved; the apostles heard it as Jews who would be baptized would be saved.
- D. Their question at the ascension even showed this (Acts 1:6).
- E. So, for nearly 10 years they preached only to Jews.
- F. The Holy Spirit interceded and completed their education about the universality of the gospel (Acts 15:8-9).

### II Consider the case of Cornelius.

- A. He was devout, feared God with all his house, gave much alms, and prayed to God always (vv. 1-2).
- B. His servants added that he was righteous and well respected among the Jews (v. 22).
- C. For a Gentile who was a Roman soldier, this was quite extraordinary.
- D. Who among us will dare to compare with Cornelius?
- E. If morality and good character is all it takes, here is the perfect example.
- F. Yet, he was lost without Christ (Eph. 2:12-13; Col. 1:21; Rom. 6:23; John 8:24; 14:6).
- G. It is a shame for any man to be lost, but especially a good man.

### III Why send for Peter?

- A. Morality did not save him.
  - 1. "Devout" means devoted to God; would your neighbors say this about you, or do they see you skipping times of worship?
  - 2. Fear of God indicates deep respect.
    - a. This deep respect was true of Cornelius.
    - b. It was also true of his family, his children ("with all his house").
    - c. Who today can claim all their family to be true to Christ?
  - 3. Giving alms means gifts to the poor and needy.

- a. However, it mentions "much alms."
  - b. Cornelius was known as a generous person.
  - c. His benevolence to the poor and needy was "much."
  - d. Are you known in your family, your business or job, and your social circles as a generous person?
  - e. Or, are you known to be able to pinch pennies, and be insensitive to the poor, the needy, the widows?
4. He prayed to God, not just occasionally, but habitually.
    - a. Are you known as a person of prayer?
    - b. If I could ask your children, would they have heard Mother and Daddy pray, pray regularly in the home circle?
  5. Picture in your mind what a typical denominational preacher would have said during a funeral sermon, that Cornelius was such a good man that "surely God would not condemn him to hell"! And all that time, without Christ, where would Cornelius have been?
- B. Miracles did not save him.
1. Vision to Cornelius
  2. Angel speaks to him.
  3. Trance (v. 10) to Peter involving a vision (v. 17)
  4. Holy Spirit baptism on the house of Cornelius
  5. Gentiles speaking in tongues
  6. If ever God intended to save a person by miracles, here it could have been.
  7. But still, Peter was needed: why?
  8. Peter was needed because Cornelius was still lost in sin.
- C. Ignorance did not save him.
1. The Spirit came upon this house prior to their hearing about Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of the world (11:15).
  2. Prior to this time, Cornelius was ignorant of Jesus as the Christ.
  3. He knew something about God, perhaps what we generally regard as a "Patriarchal system," followed by Gentiles in OT times.
  4. He was such a good man, but his ignorance did not excuse him.
  5. Peter still needed to come.

#### IV Preaching the gospel was needed.

- A. Cornelius did not know Jesus.
- B. The servants related that Cornelius was told Peter had words that were needed (v. 22).
- C. Cornelius requested of Peter to hear "all things commanded thee of the Lord" (v. 33).

- D. Peter said his charge was to preach the word (v. 42).
- E. The apostles and brethren in Judea heard Gentiles had received the word of God (11:1). To "receive" is to "believe" (John 1:11-12).
- F. Peter defended his actions with Cornelius, relating what the angel said to Cornelius about words being spoken that would save (11: 13-14).
- G. The brethren were satisfied (11:18).

#### Conclusion

- A. Hearing and obeying the word were necessary for Cornelius.
  - 1. He did hear words that would save.
  - 2. He received them, indicating belief.
  - 3. He was granted repentance to life (11:18).
  - 4. He was also baptized (10:48).
- B. So, why send for Peter?
- C. It was because there is no salvation outside Jesus' way.
- D. Will anyone here be an exception?
- E. Peter learned in this case that all persons are amenable to the same responsibilities to Jesus Christ (10:34-35).
- F. If Cornelius could not be saved any other way, neither can we.