



#23 JESUS' SALVATION

ACTS 10:1-48

7.20.2014

INTRODUCTION

- **Q.** What's the first word you think of when I saw "American Patriot and Al Qaeda"?
- This actually brings us to our text in **ACTS 10:34-48.**
- **Something incredible happens!** It becomes crystal clear that the gospel is not only for the Jews; it is also for the Gentiles (those who are not Jewish).
- The significance of this whole Jew and Gentile thing seems lost on those of us from the 21st century. The way Jews and Gentiles thought about one another would be somewhat close to the way American Patriots and Al Qaeda think about one another. They hated one another in every way.
- **Now, this is a really long account** (the longest in the book of Acts actually!) so I'm going to summarize the first and second act, and then focus in on the climax in act 3, when Peter preaches.

CONTEXT

1. **In Caesarea**, which is in northern Israel, there was a devout, God-fearing, Roman Centurion named Cornelius. (Caesarea = seat of the Roman government in Israel. Centurion = like an army Captain (100 men). Likely very wealthy. Roman = Not Jewish. The Romans conquered Israel, stealing it from the Jews and enforcing a strict and demanding tax, so the Roman government could stay in control and conquer other lands. Devout God-fearer = He knew about God, prayed to God, and gave to the poor)
 2. **An angel appeared to Cornelius** and told him that he needs to send for a guy in Joppa named Simon Peter—he's told that Peter will tell him a message by which he will be saved.
 3. **Peter is in Joppa and receives the same vision 3 times**—white sheet, four corners of the earth, clean/unclean animals. He is told by Jesus, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." Peter says, "no way, Lord."
 4. **Jesus tells Peter not to call anything common** that God has made clean.
 5. **About that time**, these men that Cornelius had sent arrive and they start asking for Peter.
 6. **Then God the Holy Spirit tells Peter**, "Go with these guys; I have sent them."
 7. **The next day Peter goes 31 miles north** with these guys to Caesarea to Cornelius' house.
 8. **When they get to his house**, Cornelius bows down to worship Peter.
 9. **Peter is brought in to a group of Cornelius' friends and family**, and makes sure they understand that by Jewish tradition he shouldn't even be there—but God has told him otherwise.
 10. **Peter asks Cornelius why God has sent him there**, and Cornelius said because we need to hear what Jesus has commanded you! God told me that He sent you here to preach to us.
- **Q. Why did all of this happen?**
 - **#1. Because Jesus wanted Cornelius, his friends and family to hear the gospel and be saved!**
 - **#2. Peter wouldn't have gone otherwise.**
 - You see, God chose the nation of Israel (the Jews) as His covenant people. He gave them the Law, he gave them the Prophets, and Jesus came through their line. Instead of thanking God for his grace, they, in large part, looked down on those who weren't Jewish—they were racist.

- Now, before we start pointing fingers...
- **Q. Are you Racist? Classist? Nationalist?**
- **A.** That's not something I've ever heard someone admit to. Most don't. I think because most people don't think they're racists—even if they are; most people don't think they're nationalists—even if they are; and most people don't think they're classists—even if they are.
- **A.** But, as the saying goes, “The proof is in the pudding” or “Actions speak louder than words.”
- I don't think Peter would've thought he was a racist. But the proof is here...
- So God sends him a vision, he sends Cornelius an angel, and tells Peter to Go!

Peter realizes that his views have been wrong! As he says, “Truly, I understand that God shows no partiality... it doesn't matter which race you are... it doesn't matter what nation you're from.”

- **Now Peter shares the good news about Jesus with these Gentiles.** And within his gospel announcement, I think we see at least **THREE THINGS** that we need to *KNOW* and *BELIEVE* in order to destroy all kinds of Racism, Classism, and Nationalism that still mat dwell in our hearts.
- **The simplest way to describe the reason for Racism and the like is this:** We all want to have worth, so in order to get it, we compare ourselves to others and find ways to convince ourselves that we have worth because we're better than they are.
- So, here are **THREE THINGS**, from Peter's sermon, that we need to know to defeat this.

1. JESUS IS LORD OF ALL

³⁴ So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that **God shows no partiality**, ³⁵ but in **every nation anyone** who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (**he is Lord of all**)...

Q. WHY WOULD WE THINK AND ACT AS IF WE ARE SUPERIOR?

- One of the ways we seek establish our worth is by inherently exalting ourselves above others. We ascribe worth to our race, our class, our nation and we cling to that!
- “If I can just make sure I'm better than someone else, I'll feel worthy, I'll feel like my life is justified.”

Exalting ourselves (which is what we're doing in Racism) is the foundation of sin. We don't want to submit to Jesus as Lord; we want to be Lord!

Q. HOW DO WE REPENT FROM THINKING AND ACTING AS IF WE ARE LORD/KING?

- We need to understand that **Jesus is Lord; not us.** He's the exalted One; not us.

APPLY

When we see and trust that Jesus is the LORD—He's the King; the glorious One; the exalted One—we will stop trying to exalt ourselves above others.

2. JESUS SAVES BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

Q. WHY WOULD WE THINK AND ACT AS IF WE ARE SUPERIOR?

- **Another way we seek to establish our worth is through our works.** And in order to feel as if our good works are “good enough” we have to have someone to compare them with! A typical way to do that is by comparing races, classes, and nations to one another.

The Jews compared their works to the Gentiles works—“We obey the Law, they don’t. We are circumcised, they aren’t.”

Seeking to establishing our worth through our works is ludicrous—our works can never live up when compared to our own standards, let alone the Law of God!

So instead of comparing our works to the Law of God, we compare our works to others, which is equally as crazy because God doesn’t judge on a curve.

Q. HOW DO WE REPENT FROM COMPARING OUR WORKS TO OTHERS—FROM TRYING TO ESTABLISH OUR WORTH THROUGH OUR WORKS?

- We need to understand that Jesus saves by grace through faith.
- Peter starts blasting these Gentiles (and us!) with the good news that *our worth is not achieved by our works; our worth is achieved by Jesus works in our place!*

14x Peter mentions Jesus here.

36 As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of **peace** through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), 37 you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: 38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. 39 And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, 40 but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, 41 not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be **judge of the living and the dead**. 43 To him all the prophets bear witness that **everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.**”

44 While Peter was still saying these things, **the Holy Spirit fell on all** who heard the word. 45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. 46 For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God.

APPLY

- When we see and trust that our worth comes by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus alone, we will be freed from trying to establish our worth through our works.
- We’ll be freed from comparing ourselves with others! We’ve all already been compared to the Law, and none of us measured up! But in stepped Jesus, he measured up for us!
- **The gospel destroys all hints of Racism!** You’re not better than anyone. You’re so bad Jesus had to die for you. You’re not worse than anyone, you’re so loved Jesus was willing to die for you.

3. JESUS MAKES US FAMILY

Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

- **Baptism is an outward sign of an inward reality**—namely, that I trust that Jesus has lived, died, and arose to take away my unworthiness and give me His worth by grace.
 - It is an outward sign showing that we are united to Jesus!
- **It is a declaration that says “I am no longer ultimately defined by my race, my class, or my nation; rather, I am defined by my Savior and King, Jesus.”**
 - Therefore, it is also an outward sign showing that we are united to all Christians

GALATIANS 3:27-28 ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Jesus makes us family—family with different races, classes, and nationalities. We were all of different bloodlines, but now we are of one bloodline, *THE* bloodline—the bloodline of the cross of Jesus Christ.

As John Piper has written, “The bloodline of Jesus Christ is deeper than the bloodlines of race. The death and resurrection of the Son of God for sinners is the only sufficient power to bring the bloodlines of race into the single bloodline of the cross.”

Q. Do you realize and live like you’re not the Lord; Jesus is?

Q. Do you understand and believe that you’re not defined by your works; you’re defined by Jesus’ works for you?

Q. Do you see that other Christians are more than like-minded—they’re family?

May the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ destroy every hint of racism in our hearts.