

Lesson III.

PETER AND CORNELIUS

April 20, 1902

Acts 10: 34-44. Study Acts 10: 34-48. Commit to memory vs. 42-44. Read Acts 10: 1-34.

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did

both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Revised Version—1 And; 2 Acceptable to; 3 He; 4 Good tidings of peace; 5 That saying ye yourselves know; 6 Beginning; 7 Even Jesus of Nazareth, how that God anointed him; 8 Country; 9 Also; 10 Hanging him; 11 Gave him to be made manifest; 12 Charged; 13 This; 14 Is; 15 Bear; 16 Everyone that believeth on him.

EXPLANATION

Connection—While Peter tarried in Joppa at Simon's house (ch. 9: 43) a surprising call came to him. It was from a Roman centurion, or captain of a hundred (ch. 10: 3-6, 22). Peter was prepared by a surprising vision (vs. 9-20), which next Sabbath's lesson treats in detail. Just now, notice the sort of man Cornelius was: a Roman army officer, who had learned to reverence and worship the God of the Jews,



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(vs. 1, 2) although still a Gentile. His goodness and his prayers had led to the angel's visit (vs. 3, 4) and the message to Peter, vs. 5, 6. Peter came, v. 24. Their meeting was memorable, vs. 25-29. There could be no better frame of mind for hearing a sermon than that indicated in the latter part of v. 33. The occasion is of peculiar interest as the introduction of the Gentiles into the Christian church.

34, 35. Then Peter opened his mouth. The expression bids us look for something solemn and weighty (compare Matt. 5: 2). What follows is evi-

dently the mere outline of a lengthy discourse—the "notes" of the sermon. I perceive. God had taught it him by the vision, vs. 9-16, 20. Respector of persons; a single word in the Greek, meaning to treat anyone, not according to what he is, but according to, say, his wealth, social position, nationality, color. God does not so do. In every nation; whether Jew or Gentile. Feareth him; the first table of the Ten Commandments. Worketh righteousness; the second table. Accepted of him; and so ready for the higher gift of v. 43. It is character God looks to, not nationality. All must be saved in the same way, for all alike are sinners.

36, 37. The word; the gospel message of salvation, 1: 31; 8: 14, 25. The children of Israel; the Jews, so called from their great ancestor Jacob, whose new name was Israel, Gen. 32: 38. Preaching peace; peace between the sinner and his God, Isa. 57: 17; Rom. 5: 1; Eph. 2: 14, 16, 17. It is only through the crucified and risen Saviour that peace can come. He is Lord of all; of Roman and Jew, heathen and Christian alike. (See margin of Bible for many "references" as to Christ's lordship.) Began from Galilee; after the temptation in the wilderness, Luke 4: 14. The baptism which John preached; and which Cornelius would know by report, a baptism of repentance as a preparation for the coming of the Saviour, who would grant forgiveness and peace (Matt. 3).

38-41. Contain an outline of the great facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let the scholars pick them out one by one and try to imagine how new and marvellous they would be to Cornelius.

42, 43. More wonderful still, the Judge of quick (the living) and dead; and the one who can give remission (the blotting out) of sins. For the witness of the prophets see Is. 53: 11; Jer. 31: 34; Dan. 9: 24; Mic. 7: 18; Zech. 13: 1; Mal. 4: 2.

44. The Holy Ghost fell on all them; Gentiles though they were, as on the apostles and disciples, ch. 4: 31. Read the remainder of the story, vs. 45-48. It tells how astonished Peter's companions were at the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Gentiles; and of Peter's proposal to baptize them.