

THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

SESSION 34 | ACTS 10:34-43

ACTS 10:34-43 | PETER'S ADDRESS TO CORNELIUS AND COMPANY

- Verses 34-35 – (also contained in session 33)
 - Peter's *perception* (the literal meaning of the Greek καταλαμβάνω [katalambano] is to *fully grasp*) is that **God is no respecter of persons**.
 - That is, *He doesn't care who you are or what you look like* (προσωπολήπτης [protopolemptes] is literally *to take the face into account*).
 - Rather, God accepts people from anywhere who **feareth him, and worketh righteousness**.
 - Though we always say that Cornelius was the first "gentile Christian," or the first gentile to "receive the Gospel," we must make note here of two things:
 - The Gospel is not found in verse 33. What Peter declares is works-based acceptance before God.
 - The perception stated by Peter is nothing new. Compare Deuteronomy 10:17, Numbers 15.16, and the stories of Namaan and Jonah.
 - Peter's message in verses 34-35 are correct, but they are not anything new.
- Verses 36-37 –
 - This is such plain passage, with great implications.
 - *The gentiles already knew the word which God sent unto the children of Israel*.
 - This was the word of **peace** by **Jesus Christ**, the Messiah (an interpretation made sure by the parenthetical statement **he is Lord of all**).
 - The words *peace, Christ, and Lord* are words of the "prophetic plan" of Messianic reign and restoration.
 - This is not a presentation of something *new*, but of something that has been since the beginning (Compare Romans 1:2, which speaks of the same message of good news).
 - The specific aspect of the prophetic plan that is under discussion is the earthly ministry of Jesus, which was designed as proof of His Messiahship.
 - This ministry **began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached**.
 - These verses therefore definitively set John's Baptism and Jesus' ministry as being connected to the prophetic plan, which was **published throughout all Judea** (unlike the mystery, which would come later).
- Verse 38 –
 - This verse gives further clarification to **that word** (v. 37). Specifically, the message was that **God anointed Jesus of Nazareth** and that He **went about doing good, and healing....**
 - The good works He did, along with His miraculous works, were proof that He was Messiah.
- Verse 39 –

- Peter testifies that he (and, presumably the other apostles) are **witnesses of all things which he did**. That is, not witnesses of the mystery, (a new work as of yet unrevealed) but witnesses of what God *had done* in Jesus the Christ.
- Peter and company testified **in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem**.
 - This translation is confusing since Jerusalem was the largest city of **the land of the Jews**.
 - The Greek word translated **land** is χώρα [chora] (from which we get the English word *coral*) and means a *district or region* and the word translated **Jews** is Ἰουδαῖος [ioudaios], or *Judeans* (people who live in Judea).
- Concerning **hanged on a tree**, refer to Bullinger's Companion Bible appendix 162 for an interesting discussion of whether the instrument of crucifixion was a stake or a cross.
- Verses 40-41 –
 - Part of the evidence of the Messiahship of Jesus was the resurrection.
 - It is strange, therefore, that God **shewed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God**. Those witnesses were the ones who **did eat and drink with him after he rose**.
 - Presumably Peter is not speaking of all who *saw Him* after the resurrection (compare 1 Cor 15:6), but to the people who would specifically be **witnesses** of the resurrection (an interpretation given verification in v. 42).
- Verse 42 –
 - Note that the message which Peter was **commanded...to preach** was that Jesus was the One that was **ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead**.
 - This is far different from the message of Grace that would later be revealed to Paul. This is a “Kingdom Gospel” message.
- Verse 43 –
 - It is true that **all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins**. Some mistakenly use this to “prove” that the mystery was really no mystery at all, but has always been proclaimed of the prophets. Here is the error of their assumption:
 - If Paul calls his message a mystery previously unrevealed, then that which has previously been revealed must not be that of which Paul speaks (or Paul is a lunatic).
 - Paul himself said that he also spoke among the Jews, **saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come** (Acts 16:22).
 - Isaiah 28:16 (quoted in Romans 10:11) speaks of a cornerstone in Zion, and a **sure foundation** upon which **He that believeth shall not make haste** [to judgment]. John 3:16 also records this truth, long before the mystery, and even long before the cross.
 - Therefore, the mystery must not be *believing in Messiah for eternal life*. Rather, it is *believing in the completed work of Christ on the cross and thus receiving immediate and personal salvation outside of any Kingdom promises or requirements*. Note that this is *not* the message of Peter in this passage.