

Three Great Victories of a Roman Army Officer

Acts 10:1-8, 44-48

Introduction:

- A. A great day in world history: First Gentile convert to Christ.
 - 1. Jewish prophets had foretold it. (cf. Rom. 15:8-12).
 - 2. Jesus had commanded it. (Mark 16:15,16; Matt. 28:18-20).
- B. A great day for Cornelius: A Roman Officer (Centurion).
 - 1. He may have shared in many victories as a soldier.
 - 2. He had shared in none greater than the three on this day:

Discussion:

- I. A Victory Over Depending On Being “Good Enough”. vv. 2, 22).**
 - A. He was a good man.
 - 1. In devoutness – feared God, prayed (v. 2)
 - 2. In character – Generous (v. 2) and Just (v. 22)
 - 3. In reputation. (v. 22).
 - 4. In influence. (v. 24).
 - B. He was a lost man. (11:13,14).
 - C. One's goodness does not compensate for his sins.
 - 1. Young ruler's goodness did compensate for his covetousness. (Luke 18:18-23).
 - 2. Apollos' preaching and knowledge did not compensate for his error. (Acts 18:24-28).
 - 3. Pharisee's strict obedience did not compensate for his sins of heart. (Matt. 23:23).
 - 4. No one's goodness can compensate for a single sin or lack of obedience to Christ:
 - a. “He may not have been baptized, but...”;
 - b. “He may not attend church, but...”;
 - c. “He may do such and such, but”
- II. A Victory Over Racial and Religious Division. (vv. 34,35).**
 - A. Jesus had died to erase such division. (Eph. 2:12-16).
 - B. Deep prejudices and divisions did not immediately disappear.
 - 1. It took a miracle to get Cornelius to send for Jewish teacher. (v. 3ff).
 - 2. It took a miracle to get Peter to go to a Gentile. (vv. 9-16,28; cf. Gal. 2:11-14).
 - 3. It took miracles to get Jews to accept Gentiles. (cf. Acts 11:12-15).
- III. A Victory Over The Guilt And Condemnation Of Sin. (Acts 10:47,48).**
 - A. Water baptism for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21).
 - 1. Not baptism alone.
 - a. Preceded by teaching (vv. 33-43; Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19; Rom.10:17).
 - b. Faith (Acts 8:36; Mk. 16:16).
 - c. Repentance. (Acts 2:38).
 - d. Confession (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:10).
 - 2. Not baptism for its own sake - but “in name of Jesus” - to obey Him.
 - 3. Not baptism's own power - but the power of the resurrection. (1 Pet. 3:21)
 - B. Water baptism rather than Holy Spirit baptism frees from sin.
 - 1. Baptism in name of Jesus is for remission of sins. (Acts 2:38).
 - 2. Baptism of Holy Spirit is not baptism in name of Jesus. (Acts 8:16).

Conclusion:

- A. Let us preach gospel to good moral people as well as others.
- B. Let us preach gospel to folks different from us as well as those like us.
- C. Let us obey God in whatever we lack:
 - 1. If lack morality then become morally upright.
 - 2. If lack faith then become a believer; if lack repentance then...etc.
 - 3. If lack baptism then be baptized.