

Cornelius Does Not Help "Faith Only" Advocates

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The account of Cornelius' conversion in Acts 10 does not support the false doctrine of "faith only salvation." If one actually reads the entire book of Acts, by the time he gets to chapter 10 he has already read of thousands of people who were required to be baptized for their sins to be forgiven. In Acts 10 and subsequent chapters the reader will find even more people who were required to do the same. In fact, Luke had already recorded the purpose of baptism in Acts 2:38, 40 (for the forgiveness of sins, to be saved).

The following are some slides from a sermon on this topic. This first one shows that the requirements for salvation were the same in Acts 2 (speaking to the Jews on Pentecost) as they were in Acts 10 (Cornelius, Gentiles).

SAME PLAN OF SALVATION FOR JEWS (Acts 2) AND GENTILES (10,11)				
	Acts 2:38,40	Acts 10:43	Acts 10:48	Acts 11:18
COMMAND	Repent and be baptized	believeth	be baptized	repentance
TO WHOM?	every one of you	whosoever	them	the Gentiles also
BY WHAT AUTHORITY ?	in the name of Jesus Christ	through his name	in the name of the Lord	
FOR WHAT PURPOSE?	remission of sins...Save yourselves	shall receive remission of sins		unto life

"Peter...shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do...in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him...believeth...be baptized" (Acts 10:5,6,35,43,48).

The same pattern is seen clearly throughout Acts:

EXAMPLES OF CONVERSION IN THE BOOK OF ACTS					
CONVERSION ACCOUNT	BELIEVE	REPENT	CONFESS	BE BAPTIZED	AFTER BAPTISM
3000 saved (Acts 2)	Believed (v37, 41)	Repented (v38)		Baptized (v38-41)	Remission of sins; Saved; Added to church (38-41,47)
Samaritans (Acts 8)	Believed (v12)			Baptized (v12)	
Simon (Acts 8)	Believed (v13)			Baptized (v13)	
Ethiopian (Acts 8)	Believed (v37)		Confessed (v37)	Baptized (v38)	Rejoiced (v39)
Saul (Acts 9, 22)	Believed (9:6)			Baptized (9:18)	Sins washed away (22:16)
Cornelius (Acts 10, 11)	Believed (10:43)	Repented (11:18)		Baptized (10:48)	Accepted by God (10:35)
Lydia (Acts 16)	Believed (v14)			Baptized (v15)	Was judged to be faithful (v15)
Jailer (Acts 16)	Believed (v31, 34)			Baptized (v33)	Rejoiced (v34)
Corinthians (Acts 18)	Believed (v8)			Baptized (v8)	
Ephesians (Acts 19)	Believed (v4)	Repented (v4)		Baptized (v5)	
One must hear the Word of God (Romans 10:17)	One must believe in Christ (John 8:24)	One must repent of sins (Acts 17:30)	One must confess Christ (Matthew 10:32)	One must be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27)	In order to be saved (Hebrews 5:9)
The Great Commission	<i>"...make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them..."</i> (Matthew 28:19 ASV) <i>"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved..."</i> (Mark 16:16)				

The context of Acts 10 shows that more than belief was necessary:

- Luke already recorded how to be saved earlier in the book! (Acts 2:37-41; 8:12-13, 35-39; 9:18)
- 10:6 – “what thou oughtest to do” (must do); compare 9:6; 11:14; 22:16
- 10:35 – fear God and work righteousness
- 10:47-48 – commanded to be baptized (for same reason as Acts 2:38; 22:16; cf. 10:43)
- 11:18 – They understood that repentance was implied in this (more than mere belief)

We know belief alone does not save:

- If a living faith (with works) is required (James 2)
- If salvation is only in Christ, and one must be baptized into Christ (2 Tim. 2:10; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27)
- If any believers were still lost (Jn. 8, 12; Acts 2, 9)
- If a figure of speech can be used in which a part is put for the whole (Num. 20:12; Jn. 3:36; Acts 10:35; 11:18; 19:2-3; Jas. 1:27). (Look up “synecdoche”)
- If other passages state that more than belief is necessary for salvation (Mt. 7:21; 1 Pet. 1:22; 3:20,21; Heb. 5:9; Jas. 2; 1 Jn. 2:3-6)

We know belief alone does not save:

If believing in Jesus includes believing what He said! Jesus said people must:

- **Believe (Jn. 8:24)**
- **Repent (Mt. 4:17)**
- **Confess Him before men (Mt. 10:32)**
- **Be baptized to be saved (Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:16)**
- **Be faithful (Rev. 2:10)**

Water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ:

- **Is the point at which we become disciples of Christ, Christians (Mt. 28:19; Acts 11:26)**
- **Is when we are saved (Mk. 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21)**
- **Is the point at which we enter the one body of the saved (Acts 2:37-41, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4; 5:23)**
- **Is the point we enter into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), where salvation is (2 Tim. 2:10)**
- **Is the point at which our sins are forgiven, washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Col. 2:11-13)**
- **Is the new birth required to enter the kingdom (Jn. 3:5; Titus 3:5; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:17)**
- **Is the point at which we contact Christ's blood (Mt. 26:28 -> Acts 2:38; Rev. 1:5 -> Acts 22:16)**

Regarding these Gentiles receiving miraculous power before water baptism:

- See Balaam's donkey (Num. 22:28); Wicked King Saul (1 Sam. 19:15, 23); and Caiaphas (Jn. 11:49-53)
- Miraculous power was separate from salvation in Acts 8:12-18; 19:1-6
- 1 Cor. 14:22 says tongues are a sign for unbelievers (in this case, any Jews who might not believe that Gentiles should receive water baptism for salvation; cf. Acts 10:47; 11:1-18)
- Today miraculous gifts are no longer available or needed (Zech. 13:1-4; 1 Cor. 13; Eph. 4; Heb. 2:3-4)

Conclusion

If a person really wants to know what God requires of Him, he will diligently search the Scriptures and find the harmony in all that God revealed (Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:15). It would be terrible negligence to ignore what one has already read in Acts and come to some conclusion in Acts 10 that does not harmonize with the rest of Acts, nor the entirety of the Scriptures. God requires more than faith alone, and any honest person who examines the evidence should be able to see that (Luke 8:15).

Passages emphasizing faith or grace in the New Testament were usually written with the purpose of convincing unbelievers that Jesus is the Son of God or teaching people not to keep works of the Law of Moses to be justified under this New Covenant. Context must always be considered! Nobody today has to obey Moses (Matthew 17:1-4; Romans 7:1-4,7; Galatians 5:4; Colossians 2:14-17), but nobody today will become saved until he believes in and obeys Christ (Matthew 7:21-27; Acts 10:35; Romans 6:16-18; Colossians 2:11-13; Hebrews 5:9; 1 Peter 1:22).

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