

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Gathering to Hear

(Jerry Fite)

While heaven rejoices over one soul who repents, and God provides for the earnest seeker of Him to find Him, not all of the conversions have been recorded in the New Testament. Those which are deserve our attention. Cornelius, the centurion, is noteworthy because he is the first of the Gentiles to be saved by the Gospel. It took miraculous intervention of God to awaken Peter toward the Gentiles (Acts 10:9-28). It was now time to reach those who were “afar off” as promised (Acts 2:39).

As Peter enters Caesarea, Cornelius receives him, having also been instructed by an angel to send for Peter. Cornelius says, *“Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou has well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord”* (Acts 10:33).

A Welcome Gathering

No one had to go find Cornelius and his friends and drag them from their houses to hear the preaching of God’s word. When Peter arrived, *“Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends”* (Acts 10:24). His welcoming spirit shines

forth as he tells Peter, *“thou hast done well that thou hast come.”*

A Reverential Gathering

Cornelius understood that he was in a special sense gathering *“in God’s sight”*. Surely, when Cornelius prayed, gave alms and feared God with his entire house he did not think he was hidden from “God’s sight”. His house where people lodged was now to be the place where he, his relatives, and friends would hear God’s word proclaimed. He had gathered to hear *“what God commanded”* Peter to speak. His heart and those gathered were filled with expectation and reverence for God and His message.

A Gathering to Be Saved

Cornelius had been told by an angel that he was to send for Peter *“who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house”* (Acts 11:14). Folks were gathering to hear words designed to save man from his sins. They were not gathering for a social visit, though there is a social component in any meeting. They were not gathering for “a singing,” though such gatherings are important to spiritual edification (Eph. 5:19, Col.

3:16). They were interested in their souls, and had been told that speaking the word to them would be Peter’s divinely appointed purpose for coming to them. They were waiting to hear the word to be saved.

Our Gathering This Week

We are having a gathering this week at the meeting house of the Parkview church of Christ. While we will meet each evening and rejoice in seeing one another, we with reverence will gather, knowing we are gathering to hear the commanding word of God. While singing and praying will occur in each worship service, the focus will be upon the word. We are gathering each service with this theme of meditation: *“Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law”* (Psalm 119:18). Each lesson is designed to wake us up to some realities of God’s law that we sometimes take for granted, and even forget. The lessons will also encourage souls to be united with God. Hopefully our gathering will be not only an edifying gathering, but it will be a soul saving gathering.

Will you join my family and me, as we long to hear God’s word, and welcome each speaker of God’s Word?