

Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time

Sunday Forum – February 14, 2016

Peter and the Jewish Christian Church



St. Peter Freed from Prison – Gerrit von Honthorst (1590-1656)

Opening Prayer – For the Human Family – BCP, p. 815

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Acts of the Apostles – Introduction

Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles – 2 volumes by the same author

Luke the Physician – traveling companion of Paul (Colossians 4:14)

Purpose and diction

“I” and “We” in Gospel and Acts

Movement of Holy Spirit

Spirit in Mary

Spirit in Jesus

Spirit in Apostles

Peter

Paul

Spirit from Jerusalem, into Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth, and Rome

Mission of Jesus and Apostles among Jews and Christians

Jesus: Messiah for Jews alone, or for Jewish “outsiders” and Gentiles also?

Genealogy – from Adam

Light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel – Luke 2:32

Samaritans and Gentiles

History of God working among non-Jews – Luke 4:25-27

Healing of centurion’s slave – faith of centurion – Luke 7:9

Visits village of Samaritans – Luke 9:51-56

Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37

Healing of lepers – Samaritan alone gives thanks – Luke 17:11-19

Acts of the Apostles

Jesus Movement is called The Way – Luke’s name for the followers of Jesus

Jesus and all his original close followers were Jews

Should The Way be merely a new “denomination” within Judaism?

Pharisees

Sadducees

Essenes

Zealots/Sicarii

Am Ha’aretz

The Way

Open only to Jews, and thus be a new “denomination”?

Semi-Jews?

God-fearers

Proselytes

Or should The Way be open to all, without Gentiles needing to become Jews first?

Peter vs. Paul

Peter – Conversion from Exclusivity to Inclusivity

Peter initially holds “exclusive” view – only Jews can become followers of The Way

Peter’s Vision and Encounter with Cornelius – Acts 10

Peter’s Vision

Kosher Food (Acts 10:14) and Table Fellowship (Acts 10:28)

Spirit in vision and voice for Peter and Cornelius

Spirit moving synchronously

Spirit falls upon Gentiles – Acts 10:44

Baptism of Gentiles – Acts 10:47-48

Table Fellowship – Acts 10:48

Acts 10

¹In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. ²He was a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God. ³One afternoon at about three o’clock he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him, “Cornelius.” ⁴He stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” He answered, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa for a certain Simon who is called Peter; ⁶he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside.” ⁷When the angel who spoke to him had left, he called two of his slaves and a devout soldier from the ranks of those who served him, ⁸and after telling them everything, he sent them to Joppa.

⁹About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." ¹⁴But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." ¹⁵The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." ¹⁶This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven. ¹⁷Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon's house and were standing by the gate. ¹⁸They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there.

¹⁹While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, three men are searching for you. ²⁰Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them." ²¹So Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?" ²²They answered, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." ²³So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging. The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴The following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵On Peter's arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him. ²⁶But Peter made him get up, saying, "Stand up; I am only a mortal." ²⁷And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled; ²⁸and he said to them, "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?" ³⁰Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this very hour, at three o'clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazzling clothes stood before me. ³¹He said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. ³²Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' ³³Therefore I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say."

³⁴Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷"Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.