



Handout for week of 3/26/18 Mk. 16:01-7& Acts 10:34-43

Connie May © 2/22/18

www.theark1.com

Link to [Beck](#) (paywall)

Stone, Naomi. [The Golden Flames of the Beloved](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [Our Utmost.....](#)

[Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

[Roll Away the Stone](#)

Acts 10: 34 Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly I am beginning to understand that God shows no partiality, 35 *but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.* 36 *You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all.* 37 That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: 38 how 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. 39 We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; 40 but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, 41 not 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. 42 He 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. 43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

COMMENTARY:

The setting is the house of Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Regiment, part of the military occupation force in Palestine. Cornelius, already a believer in God, has had a vision (vv. 1-8). As a result, he has invited Peter to visit. It is against Jewish law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile, but Peter comes anyway, with “some ... believers from Joppa” (v. 23).

The Greek here is rough, full of grammatical errors, unlike the rest of Acts, so we may well have Peter's unedited words. He tells the assembled company that God does not favor Jews over others: anyone, whatever his nationality, who reveres God and lives in unison with him “is acceptable to him” (v. 35). In vv. 36-38, Peter summarizes Jesus' earthly ministry; he applies prophecies found in Isaiah 52:7 and 61:1 to Christ. (Psalm 107:20 says “... he sent out his word ...”) Christ is Kyrios, “Lord of all” (v. 36). In baptism, the Father “anointed” (v. 38) Jesus “with the Holy Spirit” and with the “power” of God (but he was already integral with God's very being.) The good news (“message”, v. 37) spread throughout Palestine (“Judea”); he “went about” (v. 38) “doing good” and combating evil, doing deeds so powerful that it is clear that he was God's agent: he is a model for all to follow. He suffered death as one guilty of a capital offence, per Deuteronomy 21:23: he hung on a “tree” (v. 39) and was cursed. (By Jesus' time, the “tree”, a pole, had acquired a cross-arm.)

But, although cursed, the Father “raised him” (v. 40) and “allowed him to appear” to those chosen by God – to be “witnesses” (v. 41). In Luke 24:41-43, Jesus eats broiled fish with them, so he was clearly humanly alive again, i.e. physically brought back from death, resurrected. Jesus, the Kyrios, is the one appointed by God to set up the Kingdom and to judge both those who are alive and those who have died at Judgment Day (v. 42). Then v. 43: he fulfills many Old Testament prophecies: he is the one through whom sins are forgiven. Forgiveness is now available to “everyone who believes”, not just to Jews. Vv. 44-48 tell of the immediate gift of the Holy Spirit to “all who heard the word”. The Jews “who had come with Peter” (v. 45) are “astounded” that even non-Jews receive the Spirit – the evidence being that they too speak “in tongues” (v. 46), praising God. Peter then commands that the converts be baptized.

CORNELIUS

There may have been many gentiles who were baptized but the “catch” of them all was made by Peter. He was a Roman Centurion named Cornelius. Centurions were non-commissioned officers, roughly equivalent to Sergeant-Majors. They were in charge of Centuries--companies of approximately 100 men. They were vital to the daily routine and battles of the soldiers. Cornelius was called a “God-fearer”. This indicates that he accepted most of the beliefs of Judaism, but rejected circumcision. Peter had just experienced a vision in which God told him that it was permissible to eat non-kosher food. Had it not been for this revelation, Peter might never have entered the home of this important army leader. Jews avoided contact with pagans. The apostle's bold act would open the doors to all future conversions.