

ACTS CHAPTER 10

Cornelius's Vision (Acts 10:1-23a)

Now there was a man named Cornelius at Caesarea. This city was the headquarters for the Roman forces of occupation. It was located 48 kilometers (30 miles) north of Joppa and named in honour of Augustus Caesar. Cornelius was a centurion which means that he was the commander of 100 men of a division in the Roman army. The division itself consisted of 400 to 600 men and was called the Italian Regiment. Cornelius was a devoted man and one who feared God, as did everyone else in his home. He gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. Almsgiving is a religious practice which involves giving materially to another as an act of religious goodness.

About the ninth hour of the day (which is about 3 o'clock in the afternoon) he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, "Cornelius!"

And staring at him and being very alarmed, he said, "What is it, Sir?"

And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended and are remembered before God."

"Now send some men to Joppa to get a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; he is staying with a tanner named Simon also, whose house is by the sea."



Photo 4. The
harbour at Caesarea



Photo 5. The theatre at Caesarea

When the angel who was speaking to Cornelius had left, he called two of his servants and a devoted soldier of those who were his personal assistants, and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

On the next day, as the three men were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour (which is about 12 o'clock noon) to pray. And he became hungry and desired to eat. But while the food was being prepared, he fell into a state of mind God produced and used to communicate with Peter. It was not merely imagination or a dream. And Peter saw the sky opened up, and saw an object like a great sheet coming down, being lowered by its four corners to the ground. And there were in the object all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. So including animals both clean and unclean according to Leviticus 11.

A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"

But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."

Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky. Now while Peter was puzzled by the meaning of the vision, the men who had been sent by Cornelius and who had asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate. They asked if Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.

While Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Three men are looking for you."

"Get up, go downstairs and go with them without hesitation, for I have sent them Myself."

Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?"

They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you."

So Peter invited them in and had them stay overnight.



Map 3. Shows the location of Caesarea and Joppa



Photo 6. Remains of the ancient Roman aqueduct at Caesarea

Peter at Caesarea (Acts 10:23b-33)

And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him.

But Peter raised him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am just a man.”

Peter allowed no chance for misunderstanding – he was not to be worshipped. As Peter talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled.

And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean.

“That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me.”

Cornelius said, “Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour (which is about 3 o’clock in the afternoon); and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, and he said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.

‘Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.’

“So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”



Photo 7. The hippodrome at Caesarea

Gentiles (non-Jews) Hear Good News (Acts 10:33-48)

Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

“The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all) — you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John the Baptist proclaimed.

“You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

“We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.

“God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, that is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

Those who ate with Jesus after He rose from the dead received unmistakable evidence of His bodily resurrection.

“And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

“Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers (male circumcision is the surgical removal of some or all of the foreskin from the penis) who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles (non-Jews) also. For they were hearing them speaking in other languages and exalting God.

Then Peter answered, “Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?”

And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay on for a few days.



Photo 8. Remains of the ancient Roman aqueduct at Caesarea

QUESTIONS OF ACTS CHAPTER 10

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE TEXT OF CHAPTER 10

1. Who did Cornelius fear with all his household?

2. When Peter said “By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean”, what did the voice say to him?

3. Who told Peter to go downstairs and go with the three men of Caesarea without hesitation, for He had sent them Himself?

4. What did Peter do and say when Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him?

5. What was it for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him?

6. What did Peter most certainly understand now about God? _____

7. The word, preaching peace through Jesus Christ, was being sent to whom?

8. With whom and with what was Jesus of Nazareth anointed by God?

9. What had all the prophets witnessed of the Messiah (the Anointed in Hebrew)?

10. How did all the circumcise believers who came with Peter knew that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles (non-Jews) also?

ACTS CHAPTER 10 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

Cornelius's Vision

1Now *there was* a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, **2a** devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the *Jewish* people and prayed to God continually. **3**About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had *just* come in and said to him, "Cornelius!" **4**And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed, he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God. **5**"Now dispatch *some* men to Joppa and send for a man *named* Simon, who is also called Peter; **6**he is staying with a tanner *named* Simon, whose house is by the sea." **7**When the angel who was speaking to him had left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants, **8**and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

9On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. **10**But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; **11**and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, **12**and there were in it *all kinds of* four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. **13**A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!" **14**But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean." **15**Again a voice *came* to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no *longer* consider unholy." **16**This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.

17Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate; **18**and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there. **19**While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. **20**"But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them *Myself*." **21**Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?" **22**They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was *divinely* directed by a holy angel to send for you *to come* to his house and hear a message from you." **23**So he invited them in and gave them lodging.

Peter at Caesarea

And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. **24**On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. **25**When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped *him*. **26**But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am *just* a man." **27**As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled. **28**And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and *yet* God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. **29**"That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me."

30Cornelius said, "Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, **31**and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. **32**'Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to

come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon *the tanner* by the sea.’ **33**“So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”

Gentiles Hear Good News

34Opening his mouth, Peter said:

“I most certainly understand *now* that God is not one to show partiality, **35**but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him. **36**“The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)— **37**you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. **38**“ *You know of Jesus of Nazareth*, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and *how* He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. **39**“We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. **40**“God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible, **41**not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by God, *that is*, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. **42**“And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead. **43**“Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

44While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. **45**All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. **46**For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, **47**“Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?” **48**And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE(r),

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