

## Acts 10

Peter has been used by the Lord to confront the Sanhedrin and reach out to the Samaritans. He has overcome the prejudices toward occupations like tanning hides. He surely heard of the Ethiopian Eunuch who was a Gentile convert. But one major prejudice remains. The Gentiles were considered unclean to Jews. You couldn't have one in your home. If you bought something from them, you need to ritually purify it. The very dust from Gentile countries was thought to defile. There had to be some kind of miraculous intervention for this hurdle to be overcome.

1 Caesarea was an amazing port built by Herod the Great. It was Rome's main access point into Palestine and housed government officials. The Italian regiment is well known to have existed in Palestine at the time. Cornelius was over 100 men in that regiment that protected Roman interests in the area, but he was an unusual Roman. He would have earned his position through examples of bravery and acts of valor in battle. He was a man's man! Centurians were noted for level headedness and tenacity.

2 Devout and God fearing mean that he respected the Torah. He believed in the God of Abraham and tried to please God with his behavior. He led his whole family to follow his faith. He lived the motto of loving your neighbor as yourself by giving generously to those in need. He was regularly in prayer. The description is a man of sincerity, but not a circumcised convert to Judaism. He was seeking the truth. Isaiah 55:6-7; Jeremiah 29:13

3 Cornelius was seeking the truth. The believers were not going to go to him because he was a Gentile. He would not go to Christians because the Jews saw them as a perversion of Judaism. God intervened. People don't see angels every day. They are there when human intermediaries cannot, or will not do what must be done. (Hebrews 1:14) Just as an angel had to appear to Philip to get him to go to speak to the Jewish convert from Ethiopia (Acts 8:26), so now it took an angel to connect this seeker and Peter. 3PM is the most important time of prayer for the Jewish people. (Acts 3:1)

4 Angelic appearances always inspire awe and fear. This hardened soldier was shaking in his sandals and asked, "What is it Lord?" God had seen his giving and heard his prayers. Note that God sees even the unredeemed's giving to the poor. What was he praying? By the answer, I'd think it was a prayer to be reconciled to God. That is one prayer any sinner can pray and expect to be heard. (Malachi 3:7)

5-6 The angel doesn't deliver the word of salvation. That is man's job. He just gives the instructions necessary to get the seeker together with the man who has the word to deliver. (Then notable exception is Revelation 14:6)

7-8 Cornelius instantly obeyed, sending two of his servants and a devout soldier. It is a good hour drive today (about 30 miles), but then it must have been several days journey.

9 Peter may have been observing the 9am and 3pm Jewish prayer tradition. (Daniel 6:10) As they are arriving (they must have walked all night! Or gone by horse) God was preparing Peter through a vision. Without this vision, Peter would never have gone into

a Gentile home. God can orchestrate things if someone is truly seeking Him! In the process, Peter is going to drop his last big prejudice. God knows how to do 2 birds with one stone or 1000 with 1 or ... (How did Jesus' ministry prepare Peter for this?)

10-13 He fell into a trance. He was having a vision in broad daylight. God was asking him to do something that was forbidden by Jewish Law. Leviticus 20:25-26 Wouldn't you balk at that? Isn't the Word our guideline? It's interesting that God would ask him to do that when he was hungry. Did already have a desire in his heart to share the good news with Gentiles?

14-15 Did the coming of Christ change the dietary laws? What were the dietary laws for? (Refer to last verse from Leviticus) In what ways had that changed? How does God make something clean?

1 Timothy 4:4-5 How does God make anything clean?

16 What is the significance of 3 times in Scripture?

17-18 God was orchestrating the arrival of the Gentiles at Peter's door at the very time he was trying to understand what God was trying to convey by the vision. Often times we can tell God is in something by the way events coincide.

19-20 Peter got the instructions from the Holy Spirit before he discovered they were Gentiles.

21-22 Imagine how this must have peaked Peter's curiosity. He was surely wondering how the vision played into the angelic visitation this Gentile had. What did Peter have to say other than the Gospel?

23 Wait a minute! Gentiles stayed overnight in Simon's home? That is horrible for devout Jew. Peter must have already been getting the message unless the messengers were Jewish, but remember, the soldier is Italian.

24 God has set up a huge preaching opportunity. Cornelius knew something amazing was about to happen. You don't see angels everyday, so he invited all his friends. Is that what you do? When God does an amazing thing in your life, do you try to find as many friends as possible to share it with?

25-26 Cornelius thought Peter must have been a god if the angel told him to listen to him. That is the difference with true Christianity and false religions is that Christians will not accept worship of others. We know we are mortal sinners saved by grace. As much as we may mature in this life, we are never worthy of worship.

27-29 Peter understood God's message. That is why he housed the visitors. That is why he entered their home. Now he wants to know what else God has in store.

30-33 Corny recounts the angelic visitation and Peter understands why he is there.

34 -35 What is the far reaching impact of Peter's statement? How does it affect your theology? Next week - Peter's message and God's results. Deuteronomy 10:17