

In our previous passage, Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and the Apostle Peter were receiving simultaneous visions. Cornelius was a Gentile who greatly respected the Jewish faith but had not fully converted. He gave to the poor and continually sought God in prayer. An angel appeared to him and told him to send for Peter. Meanwhile Peter was in a trance on the roof of the home where he was staying as a guest. He saw a sheet let down before him with animals the Jews considered as unclean. The laws God gave to Moses told them never to eat these animals. God told Peter to kill them and eat them. Peter was shocked, but God told Peter what God cleanses he should not call unclean. This happened three times and then there was a call from the courtyard gate. The men that Cornelius sent had just arrived. The Spirit told Peter not to hesitate to go with them. Arriving at Cornelius home Peter asked why they had sent for him.

³⁰ And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.' Acts 10:30-31 Cornelius was careful to say exactly what the angel had told him. God had taken note of his prayers and the alms he gave to the needy (James 1:27).

Four days had passed since Cornelius vision of the angel. He had the vision during prayer at the time of the Jews' evening sacrifice. He sent his men at once on the first day. They must have stayed the night at a half way point as it was a thirty-mile trip. The second day the men arrived in Joppa at noon and spend the day and night in Capernaum. The third day was a day of travel halfway to Caesarea. They arrived on the fourth day since the angel's message to Cornelius. I am detailing those four days to show that Luke is recording historical events. Geography and times stated match up. These details show us this not a fictional account but actual events that we should consider as the working of God in the world to establish the church.

Cornelius recounted the vision to Peter. There are other passages in Scripture of angels appearing with bright clothing (Acts 1:10; Mark 16:5). Moses face glowed from being in God's presence (Exodus 34:34-35). On the Mount of Transfiguration the disciples said that Jesus' face shined like the sun and His clothing became white as light (Matthew 17:2). The report of a glowing countenance has been said of men of God who dedicated much of their time in prayer. The children in the streets of New York called the missionary Adonirum Judson "old glory face." Something of the glory of God lingers on those who spend time in God's presence.

³² Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.'³³ So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." Acts 10:32-33 This is a Holy Spirit set up of epic proportions. Cornelius household and friends are open and eagerly anticipating what the Lord commanded Peter to tell them. Cornelius recognized they were in the presence of God. Luke had used the phrase "in the presence of God" in Luke

Commented [PW1]: James 1:27 (ESV)

²⁷ Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Commented [PW2]: Acts 1:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes,

Commented [PW3]: Mark 16:5 (ESV)

⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.

Commented [PW4]: Exodus 34:34-35 (ESV)

³⁴ Whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would remove the veil, until he came out. And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded,

³⁵ the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

Commented [PW5]: Matthew 17:2 (ESV)

² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

1:19 where the angel Gabriel said he stands. This was more than the omnipresence (present everywhere) of God, but rather a special sense that God was miraculously working in their midst (Genesis 28:16). Luke has given quite a build up to this dramatic moment. What comes next is the culmination of these divine revelations.

³⁴ So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. Acts 10:34-35 How can anyone anywhere in the world be acceptable to God? It is only through Jesus' sacrifice, though they may not even be aware of it. Coming under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, a person may realize God is the judge. This is called prevenient grace (John 6:44). It is grace that brings us to a place of recognizing that in our selfish dispositions we have rebelled against the goodness of God. Their repentance and acceptance of forgiveness from God saves them through the death of Jesus for their sins. Then that person makes every effort to live by their sanctified conscience and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

If we don't see this truth, that God's grace reaches out to the world, we feel we have to apologize for the gospel being exclusive. Jesus said He is the light that lights every man who comes into the world (John 1:9). God loves the world and is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). Nature proclaims the gospel (Romans 1:20). Certainly, the Holy Spirit works on every heart, though only a minority will humble themselves and respond to this grace that God gives us (Matthew 7:14). Cornelius responded by abandoning the gods of the Romans and listening to the words of the Old Testament. He probably had discovered a Greek speaking synagogue in Caesarea where he could hear the Scriptures read. When you respond to God's grace by seeking God with all your heart, you will find Him (Deuteronomy 4:29), and thus the angel was sent to direct Cornelius to a fuller revelation of the gospel.

This revelation that Peter received answers the question: "what about the native who never heard?" It explains how those in under the Old Covenant were saved (Romans 4:3). It explains why missionaries find people so ready to accept the gospel without resistance. Some unreached people even have revelations that line up with the gospel. This is why we are beginning to hear so many stories of Muslims in countries closed to the gospel who have visions of Jesus inviting them to come to Him. They truly fear God and make every effort to live in a way that is pleasing to God. Their works do not save them (Ephesians 2:8-9). It is the work of God's grace that causes them to fear God's justice and hope in God's forgiveness and grace. This is the revelation Peter received and he adds no qualifiers. Let me be clear. It is only the death and resurrection of Jesus that makes salvation possible, as Peter went on to explain. Salvation is a matter of the heart responding by faith to the grace given through the working of the Holy Spirit (Romans 10:10), not the mind understanding soteriology (the theological workings of salvation).

³⁶ As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), Acts 10:36 The fact that people can come to God without a full understanding of the gospel doesn't mean there is no need to proclaim the Word. Paul

Commented [PW6]: Genesis 28:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it."

Commented [PW7]: John 6:44 (ESV)

⁴⁴ No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Commented [PW8]: John 1:9 (ESV)

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

Commented [PW9]: 2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Commented [PW10]: Romans 1:20 (ESV)

²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Nature has been referred to as the second gospel because of this verse and others like it.

Commented [PW11]: Matthew 7:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Commented [PW12]: Deuteronomy 4:29 (ESV)

²⁹ But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Commented [PW13]: Romans 4:3 (ESV)

³ For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Commented [PW14]: Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Commented [PW15]: Romans 10:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

combines both supernatural revelation of the gospel and the human proclamation of it in [Romans 10:14-18](#). The good news explains how it was possible to have peace with God through Jesus who is Lord over all. Notice that Peter said that the word of peace with God through Jesus was sent to Israel. Jesus came to Israel, as the prophets predicted, but the prophets also predicted that His message was for the world ([Isaiah 46:13](#); [42:6](#)).

³⁷ you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. Acts 10:37-38 The household of Cornelius and his friends had heard, as did most of Israel, about John the Baptist and Jesus. We don't know how clearly the message was passed on to Cornelius, but he was aware of the basic news of Jesus. This tells us that the accounts of miracles witnessed by thousands had indeed spread throughout the nation. This is another defense of the veracity of the Gospels. The Gospels weren't concocted at some later date to make Jesus a god. Eyewitnesses shared the news as they travelled and met others.

Jesus did what He did because He was anointed with the Holy Spirit and God was with Him. He only did what was good. He delivered the demon oppressed and healed every type of illness that was presented to Him, which not only shows He is the Messiah ([Isaiah 35:5-6](#)), but that He has power over all the effects of man's fall in Eden. The worst effect is our sinful nature that we inherit from Adam ([Romans 5:12](#)). Jesus even has the power to break the chains of sin ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)).

^{39a} And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. Acts 10:39a The Apostles' calling was to give an account of what they saw and heard, but mainly regarding Jesus' victory over death ([Acts 1:22](#)). That is the proof that He is the Savior and that His sacrifice was accepted by God. As the Apostle Paul said, *¹⁴ If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.* (1 Corinthians 15:4).

^{39b} They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. Acts 39b-41 Jesus didn't run around the streets of Jerusalem to tell the crowds He had risen. That might have started a violent revolution. He appeared to His disciples and to as many as five hundred of His followers at one time ([1 Corinthians 15:6](#)). Some have tried to argue that this was a mass hallucination, but that theory has been debunked. It would be as fantastic a miracle as the one skeptics are trying to disprove. The fact that Jesus ate and drank emphasized his physical presence ([Luke 24:42](#)). Hallucinations don't consume physical food.

⁴² And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. Acts 10:42 Here is the Great Commission given to the Apostles ([Matthew 28:19-20](#); [Mark 16:15](#)). Jesus will judge

Commented [PW16]: Romans 10:14-18 (ESV)

¹⁴ How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

¹⁵ And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?"

¹⁷ So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

¹⁸ But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

Commented [PW17]: Isaiah 46:13 (ESV)

¹³ I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory."

Commented [PW18]: Isaiah 42:6 (ESV)

⁶ "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations,

Commented [PW19]: Isaiah 35:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

Commented [PW20]: Romans 5:12 (ESV)

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

Commented [PW21]: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Commented [PW22]: Acts 1:22 (ESV)

²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection."

Commented [PW23]: 1 Corinthians 15:6 (ESV)

⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.

Commented [PW24]: Luke 24:42-43 (ESV)

⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish,

⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.

Commented [PW25]: Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded... [1]

Commented [PW26]: Mark 16:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

everyone (John 5:22). This is one key point in the Gospels that is often overlooked. Peter said for a person to be acceptable to God the first thing is that they fear Him. We must recognize that God is just and that we deserve judgment. We are right to emphasize God's love, but **if we neglect that we are sinners and should justly receive God's wrath, we will not see the need for a Savior or appreciate salvation.** We will all stand before Jesus and give an account of our lives (Romans 14:10). Unless we have responded to the Spirit who draws us to Jesus by coming to Him for the forgiveness that He purchased for us on the cross, we will face the justice we deserve.

⁴³ *To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.* Acts 10:43 There is a book that is distributed by Spirit of Martyrdom, *All That the Prophets Have Spoken*. It goes through the prophet's predictions of a coming messiah in Arabic to help the Muslims understand how the prophets predicted the Messiah would be the sacrifice for our sins. Luke had recorded in his gospel Jesus' words explaining to the disciples that all the Scriptures pointed to His coming and the work He would do for our salvation (Luke 24:44). Anyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through his name, which is to say because of who He is and what He has done. (JNTC).

⁴⁴ *While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.* Acts 10:44 This crowd was not yet baptized, nor had they yet made a declaration of their faith, and the Holy Spirit was poured out on them. They believed that Jesus would save them from the wrath they deserved by forgiving their sins (Acts 11:14).

⁴⁵ *And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.* ⁴⁶ *For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God.* Acts 10:45-46 The Jews may have thought that only they would receive the Holy Spirit, as Joel prophesied the Spirit would be poured out "upon your children" (Joel 2:28). This Pentecost for the Gentiles was a paradigm shift. Peter began his message by saying God doesn't put one nationality or ethnicity above another. This was the evidence that the revelation he received was really from God. It was the same gift the disciples had received at Pentecost so that they could understand there was no difference between Jew and Gentile believer (Ephesians 2:13-16). One of the disciples must have had a gift of interpretation to know that the languages they spoke declared the greatness of God (1 Corinthians 12:10). There were numerous parallels to the Jewish Pentecost in Acts chapter two. The Spirit was poured out. They spoke in tongues. They were heard extolling God and were then baptized.

Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷ *"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"* Acts 10:47 Can Gentiles be included in the church? Absolutely! The Holy Spirit evidence said they already were. They were then baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus, a public declaration of their faith (Romans 6:4; 10:9-10).

Commented [PW27]: John 5:22 (ESV)

²² The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

Commented [PW28]: Romans 14:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;

Commented [PW29]: Luke 24:44 (ESV)

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

Commented [PW30]: Acts 11:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

Commented [PW31]: Joel 2:28 (ESV)

²⁸ "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

Commented [PW32]: Jews did believe there would be righteous Gentiles in the Kingdom.

Among the nations there are righteous people "who have a share in the world to come."

Tosefta, Sanhedrin 13:2

Commented [PW33]: Ephesians 2:13-16 (ESV)

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility

¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,

¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

Commented [PW34]: 1 Corinthians 12:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

Commented [PW35]: Romans 6:4 (ESV)

⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Commented [PW36]: Romans 10:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

¹⁰ For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days. Acts 10:48 They have a new Master, Jesus! Peter was going to stay for some days so that they would be taught more fully. This would be the first Greek speaking church in Caesarea consisting mostly of Gentiles. It was a sign of things to come. It was the outworking of Jesus' command to take the message to the world (Acts 1:8).

This shift took dramatic revelations along with evidence to which the disciples could relate to get the Jewish church out of the prejudices of their culture. I think we all have those prejudices that we must overcome, and part of the way to do that is to meet brothers and sisters in Christ who are the very ones you are hesitant to embrace as part of the family of God. When you see the same Spirit at work in them, the barriers go down. What ethnicity or features put you off? Maybe your family had a bad experience and it has caused you to consider a race or a figure or personality or occupation somehow less than you would think of others. I challenge us all to make an effort to find someone in that group that loves the Lord and get to know them. Look for Jesus in them and your attitude will change. If they do not know the Lord, remember that Jesus died for them and pray that you can share Jesus' heart for their lost soul. Ask for an opportunity to share the gospel with them.

The church needed to be convinced that reaching out to Gentiles was of God. We'll see that in the next chapter. The struggle of how to accept Gentiles will continue in Acts and the letters from Paul. Regardless, God's plan to reach out to the world with the message of the gospel had begun and there would be no turning back. Jesus promised that when this gospel of the kingdom is proclaimed in all the world, then the end will come (Matthew 24:14).

Are you ready? Are you seeking God with all your heart like Cornelius did? Has conviction of sin and the fear of the justice of God led you to the cross to find forgiveness in Jesus? Has it caused you to do what is right and pleasing to God? How has your life changed since coming to Jesus? Is He first in your life? There is no more important matter to deal with than your relationship to God.

Questions

- 1 Review the buildup that preceded our passage for today.
- 2 What did Cornelius mean by "in the presence of God"?
- 3 What did Peter realize/understand?
- 4 How can man be acceptable to God?
- 5 What about the native who never heard?
- 6 Must we understand soteriology to be saved?
- 7 What can we learn from Cornelius household knowing of Jesus?
- 8 In what way was Peter fulfilling his apostolic calling?
- 9 How do we know Jesus' resurrection was physical?
- 10 What sign did God give to prove the Gentiles were in Christ?

Commented [PW37]: Acts 1:8 (ESV)

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Commented [PW38]: Matthew 24:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”