

**Acts 10:1 ¶ There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,**

**Acts 10:2 A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.**

Luke opens this chapter introducing us to a man in Caesarea, Cornelius, a Roman centurion (captain of 100) of the Italian Regiment. Most Jews would not have kind words about members of the Roman military, but this man was known as a very religious man that feared God, as did **all** those in his household (family and servants). He was also known for his generosity in giving to the needy and for being a great man of prayer.

This man's testimony is one that every Christian should hope to have. I liked the observation made by JFB regarding praying and giving: "The one denotes the spiritual outgoing of his soul to God, the other its practical outgoing to men."

**Acts 10:3 He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.**

**Acts 10:4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.**

**Acts 10:5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter:**

**Acts 10:6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.**

**Acts 10:7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;**

**Acts 10:8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.**

One day about 3 p.m. Cornelius saw and heard from an angel of God in a vision; later in the chapter we will learn that this occurred during a time of prayer that had followed a time of fasting. Not only did he see this angel and hear him speak, he also heard the angel address him by name. It frightened him, but he was able to communicate with him and ask him what he wanted. The angel told him that God had taken notice of his prayers and charitable deeds—implied, and He was pleased. Not said but understood was that the instruction that follows was God's response. Cornelius was to send some men to Joppa to contact a man called Simon that was also known as Peter and invite him to his home. He was told that Peter was staying with Simon the tanner that lived by the seashore. As noted in the previous chapter, I believe the tanner's house would be easy to locate. The angel then said that Peter would tell him what he should do.

When the angel left and the vision ended, Cornelius called two of his servants and gave them the instructions for their errand. He sent them on their way to Joppa with the escort of one of his godly, trustworthy soldiers. His actions prove that he was confident that his vision was from God.

**Acts 10:9 ¶ On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:**

**Acts 10:10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,**

**Acts 10:11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:**

**Acts 10:12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.**

The servants left on their journey the next day and neared the city around the noon hour. Peter had gone up to the housetop to pray and became very hungry. Before he could get something to eat, however, he fell into a trance—an altered state of consciousness. He saw heaven open and something that looked like a big sheet knotted at the four corners lowered to the earth. In the sheet were all kinds of fourfooted animals, crawling things (the Greek references reptiles), and birds.

**Acts 10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.**

**Acts 10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.**

Peter then heard a voice telling him to get up, kill and eat. Peter basically said, “No way; I have never eaten anything that is designated as common (not kosher) or unclean.

Peter knew it was the LORD speaking to him, and he still said “no.” At least he had a reasonable excuse compared to the puny excuses we make most of the time.

**Acts 10:15 And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.**

**Acts 10:16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.**

The voice spoke again in answer to Peter’s comment declaring, “Do not call what God has cleansed common.” Evidently, Peter had to experience three rounds of communication before he was able to fully process what had happened and the sheet was taken back up to heaven.

This scripture again brings up thoughts about how God speaks to us. Frankly, most of my conversations with God are “mind to mind or heart to heart.” I have never received a communication from God anywhere near as specific as Peter’s.

**Acts 10:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate,**

**Acts 10:18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.**

**Acts 10:19 ¶ While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.**

**Acts 10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.**

Peter did not doubt the validity of his vision; he was, however, unsure as to what it meant. While he was pondering his vision, the Holy Spirit spoke to him and told him that He had sent three men to look for him. He was to go down and meet them and go with them as requested. It was at that time that the men sent from Cornelius showed up at Simon's house and asked to see Peter.

**Acts 10:21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?**

**Acts 10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.**

Peter went downstairs and identified himself as the man they were seeking. He asked them why they had come. They informed him that a centurion by the name of Cornelius had been given a message from God to send for him because Peter had something important to tell him. They described Cornelius as a just man that feared God and was well liked by the Jewish people.

**Acts 10:23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.**

**Acts 10:24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.**

**Acts 10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.**

**Acts 10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.**

Peter invited the men to stay with him for the night, and then took off with them the next morning. Luke also tells us that six other believers (cf 11:12) from Joppa went with Peter.

In light of his vision, Peter didn't hesitate to "lodge" the visitors even though they were Gentiles. It was interesting to note that the Greek for "lodge" included the thought of acting as host and entertaining one's guests. Peter immediately acted in accordance with the principle that God had presented to him in his vision.

David Guzik brought up the fact that Jonah had sailed from Joppa in order to avoid acting in obedience to God's command. He states, "Jonah ran from God's call, thinking he could get away from the Lord, and he did not share God's heart for the lost. Peter was willing to re-examine his traditions and prejudices in light of God's word, and he shared God's heart for a lost world."

The next day found Cornelius waiting for them as they came to Caesarea; he had invited a large group of his friends and relatives to hear what Peter had to say.

In other words, Cornelius was waiting with confident expectation for Peter's arrival; he had complete faith in the truth of God's word.

As Peter approached, Cornelius met him and fell in worship at his feet. Peter quickly informed him that such action was not appropriate because he, too, was just a man.

**Acts 10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.**

**Acts 10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.**

**Acts 10:29 Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?**

"gainsaying" = denying or contradicting

They continued to talk as they headed into the home, and then Peter saw the large gathering. Peter didn't dance around the issues. He pointed out that it was unlawful for a Jew to keep close company with non-Jews. God, however, had shown him that he was not to consider any man to be "common or unclean." For that reason he had not hesitated to respond to the summons from Cornelius, but he wanted to know why they had sent for him.

**Acts 10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,**

**Acts 10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.**

**Acts 10:32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.**

**Acts 10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.**

Cornelius spoke up and told Peter about his visit from the angel and that the angel said that he had specifically come in answer to his prayer because of his generosity to others before God. He had been given specific instructions to send to Joppa to the house of Simon the tanner in order to find Peter. The angel had told them that Peter would have something to tell him when he arrived, and they were waiting to hear Peter teach them according to God's command.

**Acts 10:34 ¶ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:**

**Acts 10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.**

Peter immediately shared with them the same lesson that God had taught him in

his own vision. "God is no respecter of persons." Every person that fears Him and does righteous works is accepted with him.

This attitude went totally against the accepted practices of the Jews of that day. Again David Guzik shares an interesting observation quoting from William Barclay: "...it was common for a Jewish man to begin the day with a prayer thanking God that he was not a slave, a Gentile, or a woman. A basic part of the Jewish religion in the days of the New Testament was an oath that promised that one would never help a Gentile under any circumstances, such as giving directions if they were asked. But it went even as far as refusing to help a Gentile woman at the time of her greatest need - when she was giving birth - because the result would only be to bring another Gentile into the world."

Important point—One didn't have to become a Jewish proselyte to be accepted of God. Jesus had ushered in a new covenant of salvation through faith to all people. As I have often heard quoted, "The ground is level at the foot of the cross."

**Acts 10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)**

**Acts 10:37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;**

**Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.**

Peter goes on to explain that God had sent Jesus of Nazareth in the power of the Holy Ghost to heal all that were oppressed of the devil—and that includes everyone that is unsaved and a slave to sin and the flesh. Peter further explains that the power of the Holy Ghost spoke to the truth that God was with Jesus. God specifically sent Jesus to preach the gospel of peace to the children of Israel throughout the land of Judea, beginning from the Galilee. He revealed that the baptism preached by John was intended to prepare the hearts of the people to receive the truth that Jesus was sent to share.

**Acts 10:39 And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:**

**Acts 10:40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;**

**Acts 10:41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.**

**Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.**

**Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.**

Peter goes on to explain that he and the six men with him had witnessed all that Jesus had done throughout the land, including in Jerusalem. He then clarifies that this same Jesus that had been put to death by crucifixion. However, Jesus did not stay in the grave; God raised Jesus up to new life on the third day after

His death. Peter emphasized that he knew this for fact because he (and the other men with him) and many others of His disciples had seen Jesus after His resurrection and had even shared meals with Him.

Peter then shared that Jesus had commanded His followers to preach to the people and share with them that God had appointed Him as Judge of the living and the dead—implied, the Judge that determines one’s eternal state. All the prophets foretold that the Messiah would be the One through whom all (“whosoever”—including the Gentiles) that believed in Him would be forgiven of their sins—completely pardoned of the judgment required by their sin.

*Genesis 12:1&3 “Now the LORD had said unto Abram... And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”*

*Isaiah 42:5 “Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.”*

*Daniel 7:13 “I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”*

*Malachi 1:11 “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.”*

**Acts 10:44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.**

**Acts 10:45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

**Acts 10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,**

**Acts 10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?**

**Acts 10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.**

As Peter was speaking, the Holy Ghost gave evidence to the faith of those listening to Peter by empowering them with the gift of tongues. Peter and his fellow believers understood that they were giving honor to God and recognized this gift as the very one with which they had been empowered at Pentecost.

Peter understood that God was affirming his vision once again. God is no respecter of persons; He loves every person and desires that all come to repentance and be saved—as he later affirms in his epistle.

*2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**”*

Peter knew that these new believers were just as qualified to be water baptized as believing Jews, so he commanded that be done. (I would assume by the six men accompanying him.)

The new believers in Caesarea asked Peter to stay with them for a while (implied—and he did).