

# Acts Chapter Ten

## Acts 10:1-8

Now *there was* a certain man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man, and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the *Jewish* people, and prayed to God continually. About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had *just* come in to him, and said to him, "Cornelius!" And fixing his gaze upon 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. "And now dispatch *some* men to Joppa, and send for a man *named* Simon, who is also called Peter; he is staying with a certain tanner *named* Simon, whose house is by the sea." And when the angel who was speaking to him had departed, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were in constant attendance upon him, and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

- Gospel to Ethiopian eunuch—son of Ham
- Gospel to Saul of Tarsus—son of Shem
- Gospel to Cornelius—son of Japeth

Caesarea was a place that the governor usually resided. There are archeological discovers that identify Pontus Pilate being located here.

## Gospel to Cornelius

- This is a significant military assignment...not a backwater.
- This garrison town is a major trade center built up by Herod the Great in order to force all traders to come through and pay a large tax.
- Centurion—officer of Rome—a military that the entire world feared. A centurion is a mid rank officer who commands 100 under him.
- Italian cohort—32 different cohorts in Roman Empire—Italian volunteers considered among the most faithful.
- He was a seeker—devout (his worship was rightly directed)—supportive of Jewish faith, but not identified with it—generous (rich young ruler had not responded like this)—centurion had been living into Romans 1:19-20
- We begin a supernatural encounter where God is taking the gospel to the gentiles. Cornelius is given a vision so clear (Acts 10:30)—he regards it as actually happening.

- Called by name
- Man with earthly power responds with taking a position of humility before Jesus.
- God has received your prayers
- An angelic messenger is sent to Cornelius—but gospel is delivered through a man.
- Peter is staying in Joppa (Tel Aviv is a part of 'old Joppa')—30 miles away to the south.
- Paul had been in Caesarea—Acts 9:30

### **Acts 10:9-16**

**And on 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. And he became hungry, and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; and he beheld the sky opened up, and a certain object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all *kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air*. And a voice came to him, "Arise, Peter, kill and eat!" But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean." And again a voice *came* to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no *longer* consider unholy." And this happened three times; and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.**

- God begins—through visions—to speak to several people about a matter—to bring confirmation.
- God uses the distraction of hunger in the midst of prayer to speak to Peter.
- A vision speaks to a 'mind's-eye'—so this voice speaks to a 'mind's-ear'.
- For emphasis—God repeats the vision 3x.
- Jewish food laws were extensive—set the Jews strictly apart from all their neighbors—Jews were forbidden to eat with non Jews as well (those you eat with are considered family. God had emphasized that Jews were to be separate and not compromised with the world.
- In OT—separation between holy and common—Holy became common when it came in contact with the common—could only be made holy again through ritual cleansing. When something was made holy it was called consecration—when it was made common, it was called desecration.
- 'By no means, Lord'—similar to Peter's response in Matthew 16:22 and John 13:8.

- God brings interpretation to vision—teaching Peter that Mosaic system is being fulfilled.

### **Acts 10:17-23**

**Now 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; and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there. And while Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. "But arise, go downstairs, and accompany them without misgivings; for I have sent them Myself." And 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?" And 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." And so he invited them in and gave them lodging.**

**And on the next day he arose and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.**

- Until now, gentiles who wanted to worship God had to become proselytes of Judaism...renouncing their ethnic past and embracing Mosaic law.
- God is not dissolving all distinctions and calling for a new 'tolerance'. God does not accept us as we are—He invites us as we are. Invitation includes repentance, forgiveness, baptism and the Spirit.
- Holy Spirit said—in Acts 10:13,15—referred to as 'voice'.
- Centuries prior—Jonah had come to Joppa—refused to be sent with a message from God to 'outsiders'.
- Jesus had met with a devout centurion in Matthew 8.
- Peter not told that gentiles were being sent—he opens door to 2 gentile servants and a soldier (Acts 10:7)—welcomed them as guests.

### **Acts 10:24-29**

**And on the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. And when it came about that 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." And as he 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. And so I ask for what reason you have sent for me."**

- Cornelius knew that since God initiated the plan, He would bring it to completion. He gathers an audience in anticipation, since he is highly influential.
- Peter enters house of a gentile—this is about conversion of Peter as well as Cornelius.
- Cornelius bows/worships—anticipating Peter's worth, since God had sent him (He is still a pagan—familiar with the demands of Roman deities). In scripture—whenever worship is offered to men or angels—it is refused ( Rev 19:10). Jesus freely received the worship of men (Ma 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25,28:9)
- First time that Peter has ever been inside a gentile home.

### **Acts 10:30-33**

**And Cornelius 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, and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. 'Send therefore 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.' "And so I sent to 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."**

- Vision came to satisfy Cornelius's hunger as well.
- This audience is prepared soil and Peter has been prepared by the Holy Spirit to speak.

## Acts 10:34-41

And 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 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. "And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. "God raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should 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."**

- According to William Barclay—it was common for the Jewish male to begin his day with a prayer of thanking God that he was not a slave, a gentile or a woman.
- God is not one to show partiality—Deuteronomy 10:17 fulfilled
- This is the turning point for the gospel to go to the gentiles.

Peter's Message (sharing the foundation of God's promises and calling on the Jews)—Jesus was: (to declare Jesus—Deity)

- Baptized
- Anointed with H.S. and power
- Went about doing good and healing
- There were many witnesses
- Crucified
- Resurrected
- Followers sent out with gospel
- Foretold in prophecies
- Jesus is Judge

So much of the message was about the work of God with Israel. Israel is seeing the fulfillment of all God has promised them—in Jesus. They will have to repent and believe as well. Peter presents the same gospel to gentiles as the Jews.

Jesus brought the message of Peace (vs 36)—not with Rome—but with God and man. He really was Messiah—though He did not fulfill Israel's expectations.

Pay attention to the activity of God in Peter's message.

### **Acts 10:42-43**

**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."**

- God has made Jesus—Judge of all. There is judgment for all.
- Peter presents the facts concerning Jesus. Death and resurrection are central message. Relationship is with a risen Savior.
- Open invitation is extended to the world.

### **Acts 10:44-48**

**While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. And all the circumcised believers who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues 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 him to stay on for a few days.**

- This incident is considered the Gentile Pentecost. Tongues/outpouring are considered evidence of all that God is doing—bearing witness to their salvation. Salvation came when each listener responded with believing faith. Hearts are changed by the H.S. before they even give voice to what took place.
- First gentile Jesus dealt with—Roman centurion from Capernaum (foreshadows this—Matt 8:5-13).

- God is granting repentance leading to life—Acts 11:17-18). He is blessing them while they are still gentiles.
- Holy Spirit interrupts Peters' sermon—great work is being accomplished—Peter recognizes this.
- Tongues/exalting God—what the tongue was about—audience was God and not man—I Cor 14:2

Jesus told His disciples—take the gospel to Jerusalem—Judea and Samaria—ends of the earth. We saw Jerusalem in Acts 2—Samaria in Acts 8—whole world in Acts 10.

Isaiah 60:1-3 is being fulfilled.

# Acts Chapter Ten—Workbook

## Key Words:

## Harmonize:

Read Leviticus 11:4-7, 13-19, 29-30....as context for this chapter.

## Dig:

- 1) What do we learn about Cornelius in chapter 10? From what we know, can we assume anything?
- 2) How does God regard generosity in Cornelius' life?
- 3) How does the Lord communicate with Cornelius?
- 4) How many times is the vision repeated to Peter? Why would a vision be repeated?
- 5) What else happens at the 'ninth hour' in scripture?
- 6) What is Peter told to do in his vision? How does Peter interpret this instruction?
- 7) How does the vision effect Peter's response to Cornelius?
- 8) What actions did Cornelius take 'by faith'? What actions did Peter take 'by faith'?
- 9) What do we learn about angels from reading this chapter?

10)What does Peter learn about God from his interaction with Cornelius?

11)How does Peter's message to the Gentiles differ from the one he made to the Jews in chapter two?

12)What verses could Peter use to support what he says in Acts 10:43?

**Discuss:**

- 1) In verse 23, Peter goes to Joppa with other 'brethren'. Why would this be especially important in this situation?
- 2) Is there a difference between demonic possession and demonic oppression? What gives the devil such an opportunity?

**Point of Prayer:**

Ask the Lord to show you a way to exercise your faith this week.

**Integrate:**

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

**Application:**

- 1) List five things that you think you are known for.
- 2) When was the first time you encountered prejudice?

- 3) Do you have any cross-cultural relationships? How did you develop these relationships?
- 4) Why is the story of Cornelius important in the Book of Acts?
- 5) When was the last time God did something that surprised you?
- 6) Have you ever believed you were right about something—and then had the Lord change your mind?
- 7) What are the benefits to being your gender, your age, your nationality? What are the drawbacks?
- 8) What were the benefits of growing up in your particular natural family? What were the drawbacks?