

# Acts 9-10

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Paul has escaped to his home town of Tarsus. The action turns to Peter. He has ventured out of Jerusalem into different towns in Judea.

(Acts 9:32) Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all *parts of the country*, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.

Lydda is about 20 miles NE of Jerusalem.

(Acts 9:33) There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. (34) And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. (35) **So all who dwelt** at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

The LORD healed a paralytic thru Peter and "all who dwelt at Sharon and Lydda turned to the Lord: turned: reversed direction! Jews require a sign!

(Acts 9:36) At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. (37) But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room.

(Acts 9:38) And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them.

(Acts 9:39) Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

(Acts 9:40) But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. (41) Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

(Acts 9:42) And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

Once again, the LORD, through Peter, raised this women from the dead. The act added credence to the gospel message of the disciples living in this area.

(Acts 9:43) So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner.

A quick note: tanners, who dealt with hides of both clean and unclean animals was considered unclean by their Jewish brothers. This may be somewhat interesting when we consider what happens next!

## Chapter 10 – Peter Gets a Lesson in Cleanliness!

Peter stays in Joppa, quite comfortable with his brethren. But that comfort was about to be challenged.

*We are about to witness the first-fruits of the gentiles.*

(Acts 10:1) There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment,

A centurion is a captain of 100 soldiers;

(Acts 10:2) a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

Gentiles were known to be God-Fearers and/or Proselytes. The proselyte was one who made formal conversion to the Jewish religion, and if male, underwent circumcision to demonstrate his commitment to Jewish law. They also had to perform a ritual bath to show the washing away of the uncleanness of the gentile.

The God-Fearer were gentiles who revered the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and were allowed to attend the local synagogue; they also gave alms to the poor. They were known to be supportive and kind to the Jews in the town in which they lived.

(Acts 10:3) About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

Ninth Hour: 3pm

(Acts 10:4) And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.

The Lord heard the sincere prayer of this gentile God-fearer and saw his generosity and kindnesses towards others.

Clarke

**Come up for a memorial:** This form of speech is evidently borrowed from the sacrificial system of the Jews. Pious and sincere prayers are high in God's estimation; and therefore are said to ascend to him, as the smoke and flame of the burnt-offering appeared to ascend to heaven.

These prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God: this is a manifest allusion to the meat-offering, which, in [Lev 2:16](#), is said to be a memorial, (speaking after the manner of men), to put God in remembrance that such a person was his worshipper, and needed his protection and help. So the prayers and alms of Cornelius ascended before God as an acceptable sacrifice, and were recorded in the kingdom of heaven, that the answers might be given in their due season.

Make note of Cornelius' attitude: "What is it?". Ready and willing to hear.

(Acts 10:5) Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. (6) He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." (7) And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually.

(Acts 10:8) So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

(Acts 10:9) The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.

Rooftops were flat and often used for praying.  
Peter goes up at noon.

(Acts 10:10) Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance

Trance = *ek'-stas-is* (*bewilderment, astonishment*) *The english word ecstasy comes from this greek word.*

(Acts 10:11) and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.

(Acts 10:12) In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.

(Acts 10:13) And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

(Acts 10:14) But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

Peter has a habit of saying "no" to the LORD:

Matthew 16:21-22 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. (22) Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" (16) But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

John 13:6-8 Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" (7) Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." (8) Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

(Acts 10:15) And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

(Acts 10:16) This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Evidently, it took the LORD 3 times to impress upon Peter that it is the LORD that ultimately decides what is clean and unclean.

(Acts 10:17) Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.

The Greek word for 'wondered' is stronger; it means "doubted" or "thoroughly perplexed" to the point where the person doesn't quite know how to react!

In perfect timing, the men from Cornelius arrive at the house.

(Acts 10:18) And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

(Acts 10:19) While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. (20) Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

This time, it is the Holy Spirit who speaks to him. He doesn't tell Peter that the three men are Gentiles! He simply commands him to go meet them and go with them. "Doubting" in the Greek means to "separate thoroughly", so, the Holy Spirit is telling Peter "Do not separate yourself from these men because I sent them to you".

(Acts 10:21) Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am

he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"

(Acts 10:22) And they said, "Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you."

Ok....well at least you didn't come to tell me that the word 'trinity' isn't in the Bible!

(Acts 10:23) Then he invited them in and lodged *them*. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

The vision and the commandment of the Holy Spirit is having its intended effect. Without any hesitation, Peter actually invites them into the house and has them lodge overnight.

Once again the Greek adds something: the word Lodge means to entertain, that is, be a good host.

(Acts 10:24) And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends.

This was about 30 miles.

(Acts 10:25) As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. (26) But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I myself am also a man."

Peter's reputation preceded him. It is likely that the miracles that Peter did through the Holy Spirit were told to many surrounding towns.

Peter rightly understood that no man should bow unto another man.

Even John, in heaven, learned the same lesson when he bowed before an angel!

However, Jesus, our God-Man, our Savior, did accept this type of worship.

(Acts 10:27) And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together.

Cornelius invited friends and family to hear the words that God told Peter to speak. This was a really big deal!

(Acts 10:28) Then he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. (29) Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"

Peter, and many of the Jewish Christians, still followed the Law and the traditions of the Elders; He confesses that God himself has taught him that he should not call ANY man common or unclean.

But, all he knows is that he was to come and speak, but the details were not known to him.

(Acts 10:30) So 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, (31) and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. (32) Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' (33) So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

(Acts 10:34) Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. (35) But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. (36) The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—

(Acts 10:37) **that word you know**, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached:

(Acts 10:38) how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

(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 killed by hanging on a tree.

(Acts 10:40) Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, (41) not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead.

(Acts 10:42) And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge of the living and the dead.

(Acts 10:43) To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

Peter through the Holy Spirit's direction and power, shares the gospel with them...the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection and that "through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins."

The keyword: "whoever". Jesus said this to Nicodemus:

**John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

Perhaps what they heard was "whoever Jew believe"; Today you might hear "whoever of the elect believe".

(Acts 10:44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

Peter evidently was finished but the Holy Spirit, knowing that the hearts of the listeners had believed the message of Jesus, fell on them receiving both Himself as the promised gift and His power as well.

(Acts 10:45) And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

Again: the word astonished, in the Greek, means amazed to the point of being at 'wits end';

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

The gift of tongues was given, I believe, so that the Jews would truly understand that these gentiles were saved!

(Acts 10:47) "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?"

Even more incredible, Peter admits that they received the Holy Spirit "JUST AS WE HAVE"!!

Perhaps speaking to the Jews that were with Peter, he asks if there are any objections to baptizing these new believers;

(Acts 10:48) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

As much as this was a miracle for Cornelius and his entourage, and I don't want to imply anything differently, I think that the greater miracle was breaking down thousands of years of prejudices, hatreds, and separation. In the mind of the Jew, God would never save a gentile unless he/she converted to Judaism first; This attitude was still very apparent even after salvation came to them (More on that next week).

But a different story was declared:

Isaiah 42:5-7 Thus says God the LORD, Who created the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: (6) "I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles, (7) To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.

Isaiah 60:1-3 Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you. (2) For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, And deep darkness the people; But the LORD will arise over you, And His glory will be seen upon you. (3) The Gentiles shall come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Genesis 12:2-3 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Jesus was the seed that came to bless the whole earth!

Peter, thru his obedience to the LORD, started something that would truly change the world. Finally, Peter walked thru a common and unclean door and began to fulfill what Jesus commanded the disciples and apostles:

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*" Amen.

And the commandment was important enough to repeat it just before he taken up to Heaven:

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

That day in Joppa, when Peter was content NOT to go to the gentiles, the LORD caused him to travel to Caesarea to witness to the gentiles. Many, many years before, the prophet Jonah boarded a ship in Joppa to escape his calling to go to the Ninevites! God and a huge fish he prepared had another idea! Jonah too was finally obedient and the result was the salvation of the Ninevites: they believed and were spared; Cornelius and his guests believed and were saved.

Salvation for the world was not an afterthought because the Jews rejected Jesus. The gentiles were unaware of the promises of God to Abraham; the Jews neglected to fulfill their calling as a light to the nations! But

GOD, would have saved you regardless of what the Jews did or didn't do!