

## **Acts 10 - Peter and the Gentiles – Part 1**

### **QUESTIONS:**

#### **What is the meta-message of the book of Acts?**

The Christian movement is not against Rome. Jesus came for everyone...  
...for Gentiles...for Romans.

#### **Why is that important for Acts?**

- Paul is constantly being arrested...and thrown in jail
- yet he is a Roman citizen
- the destruction of the Temple is either immanent or has been done recently...

Peter is staying in Joppa on the coast (end of Ch 9).

Around 30 miles north on the coast is the Roman port city, Caesarea. Caesarea was the Roman capital of the Judean province, so it was a **governmental city** with a full military detachment and this is where **King Herod lived and ran the region**.

**10** At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. <sup>2</sup> He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. <sup>3</sup> One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" <sup>4</sup> Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. <sup>5</sup> Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup> He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." <sup>7</sup> When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants **and a devout soldier** who was one of his attendants. <sup>8</sup> He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

A centurion (an officer who commands 100 men) named Cornelius has a vision telling him to send for a man named "Peter" in Joppa.

### **QUESTION:**

Why doesn't the angel just tell the gospel to Cornelius?

As the men are traveling down to Joppa, Peter is on the roof of the house praying...and he has a vision.

<sup>9</sup> About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. <sup>10</sup> He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. <sup>11</sup> He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. <sup>12</sup> It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds.

### **QUESTIONS?:**

- What does Peter see in the vision?
- Why does he have this same vision three times?

<sup>13</sup> Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

<sup>14</sup> "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

<sup>15</sup> The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

<sup>16</sup> **This happened three times,**  
and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

<sup>17</sup> **While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision,** the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. <sup>18</sup> They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

<sup>19</sup> While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you.

<sup>20</sup> So get up and go downstairs.

**Do not hesitate to go with them,** for I have sent them."

Look at v20:

*"Do not hesitate to go with these three men. I have sent them."*

[does this remind anyone of our text in *1 Kings 13* with the young prophet?

<sup>21</sup> Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

<sup>22</sup> The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." <sup>23</sup> Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

What happens when Peter meets Cornelius? [C falls at P's feet]

v28 P announces that "it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me..."

**QUESTIONS:**

**Why does Peter say** "it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile...?"

Why does Peter ask "Why did you send for me?" v29

Cornelius tells his story...the vision, etc.

<p><sup>34</sup>Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism..."</p>
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v34 "I now realize..."

And Peter shares the gospel.

v34 "I now realize..."???

In Peter's presentation he says,

v37 "You know what has happened..."

v44 While P is speaking the HS falls on the people listening.

v45 "those with Peter were astonished..."

**QUESTION:**

Why is Peter astonished?

- he had a vision 3 times
- he heard Cornelius share his story of having a vision

v47 "Surely no one can stand in the way of these people being baptized."

**QUESTION:**

**Why would Peter say that?**

[ Listen to the students' answers to see if they are getting into the text...]

**Probably leave this alone and cover it Wednesday...**

Notice v45:

The circumcised believers were astonished...that God moved "even on the Gentiles."

Now, look at Acts 11:2,

"...the circumcised believers criticized Peter, saying <i>You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them.</i>"

After P defends his actions, he says in v17 "if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"

**QUESTIONS:**

Why is this such an important chapter?

I believe it is one of maybe the top 5 passages of importance in the NT...excluding the gospel material.

Why would I say that?

There is no need to write anything about this today -- take a writing break.

On Wednesday I am going to cover some of the historical background that sits behind this story.

Check Canvas for some of the reading I want you to do before you come to class on Wednesday.