

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 13: CHAPTER 10

21 August 2015

THE GOSPEL IS OPENED TO THE GENTILES

Cornelius receives direction from God:

Vss. 1-8 Cornelius was a Gentile. He was a Roman centurion; an officer in charge of 100 soldiers.

Cornelius was a devout man (devoted to the true God). This resulted in his whole house also fearing God. God had respect for his prayers and his alms so He sent him instructions through a vision. He is instructed by an angel to send men to Joppa to get Simon Peter. Cornelius sent two servants and one soldier (also devout men) to find Peter in Joppa (1 day's journey).

Note: Philip was in Caesarea, but Peter had the keys to open the door of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 15:7, Matt. 16:18-19)

It's important to note here that God didn't speak directly to this lost man, nor did the angel tell him how to be saved. The angel instructed Cornelius to find a MAN to tell him what he needs to know to get saved. This is still God's method today. God ensures that sincere seekers of God always receive the information they need. That information will always come through the witness of a believer.

God shows Peter a vision which reveals that the Gentiles are to be included in the church:

Vss. 9-16 As Peter is praying, God gives him a vision of a great sheet coming down from heaven to earth containing "all manner" (clean and unclean) of animals. God commands Peter to rise, kill, and eat.

The Law (Lev. 11 and other scriptures) instructs the Jews not to eat "unclean" beasts. These beasts were unclean to the Jew only. God used this as a visible way to set Israel apart from the other nations as a peculiar people.

Because Peter is fully aware of these dietary restrictions under the Law, he refuses three times to obey the Lord's command to eat them (vss. 14-16). God tells Peter "**What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.**" God has not cleansed any animals; He is obviously referring to something else. He is using these animals to show that the restrictions imposed on the Jews under the Law have now been removed in this New Testament dispensation.

Cornelius' men arrive in Joppa and tell Peter about God's dealings with Cornelius in a vision.

Vss. 17-22 While Peter struggled with the meaning of the vision he had seen, the three Gentile men arrived at his door. The Holy Spirit told Peter that He sent these men to fetch him and that he should "**go with them, doubting nothing**" (vs. 20). Peter received the strangers. They tell him about Cornelius and the vision he saw. These men are full of praise for the man who sent them. Cornelius was obviously a fine, godly man. But he was lost.

Peter goes to Caesarea to find out what God wants him to do:

Vss. 23-33 Peter lodged the Gentile visitors and then went with them the next day to Caesarea. Cornelius (an unsaved religious Gentile), upon meeting Peter, bows down to him (ignorantly), but Peter refuses his worship (vs.26). Peter is not the first Pope, but if he were, all succeeding Popes ought to follow this example.

Cornelius had invited many friends and family members (all Gentiles) to wait for the man summoned by God (vs. 24, vs. 27). Peter speaks to them, reminding them that it is against the law for a Jew to keep company with a Gentile (vs. 28), but now God has shown him something different. The Holy Spirit has now given Peter understanding of the vision he saw, that all men are on equal footing before God. Peter asks Cornelius why he sent for him (vs. 29).

In verses 30-33 Cornelius describes his experience of four days earlier (the vision, the angel, and the instructions to send for Peter). He tells Peter they are all there to hear what God has commanded him.

Peter preaches the Gospel to the Gentiles in the household of Cornelius:

Vss. 34-43 Peter preaches the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ—and salvation freely given to anyone who believes, whether Jew or Gentile.

Vss. 44-46 “**The Holy Ghost fell on all them (Gentiles) which heard the word.**” The evidence of this (vs. 46), is that the Gentiles all spoke in tongues (languages not previously learned). This was for the benefit of the believing Jews (vs. 45) who were present with Peter. It proved to the Jews that salvation is also available to the Gentiles. Previously, the Jews were God’s peculiar people (Deut. 14:2). Now, Christians (comprised of Jew and Gentile) are God’s peculiar people (1 Pet. 2:9). (See Rom. 3:29).

Believers’ Baptism

Vss. 47-48 Upon witnessing the proof that the Gentiles had believed and received the Holy Ghost, Peter commands them to be baptized.

Jews did not need to be commanded to be baptized. They knew what to do (Acts 1-9). This explains Acts 2:38. When the men in Acts 2 heard the gospel, they asked Peter “What shall we do?” Peter logically goes to the next step and tells them to get baptized—because that’s what believers do. Peter would not have made baptism available to those men if he didn’t believe they were saved. (See Acts 2:21, Romans 3:22).

NOTES:

Six men who “**saw heaven opened.**” (vs. 11).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Peter has a habit of rebuking the Lord (vs. 14): see Matthew 16:22, Mark 8:32, John 13:8.

The sheet being let down from heaven (vs. 11) is a picture of Ephesians 3:1-7.

Seven men who are called a “**just man**” (vs. 22)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

“**God is no respecter of persons**” (vs. 34) –this is a recurring theme throughout the Bible:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____

In the book of Acts, the **Gospel** is always the same.

In the book of Acts, the **receiving of the Holy Spirit varies**, depending upon:

Who got saved: Acts 2, Jews (familiar with John’s baptism). Acts 8, Samaritans (needed to accept the authority of the Jewish apostles). Acts 10, Gentiles (with Jewish believers present). Acts 19, respecters of the Law (needed to accept the authority of the apostles). What they all have in common is that they believed first (see Eph. 1:13).