

# Acts 10 Commentary

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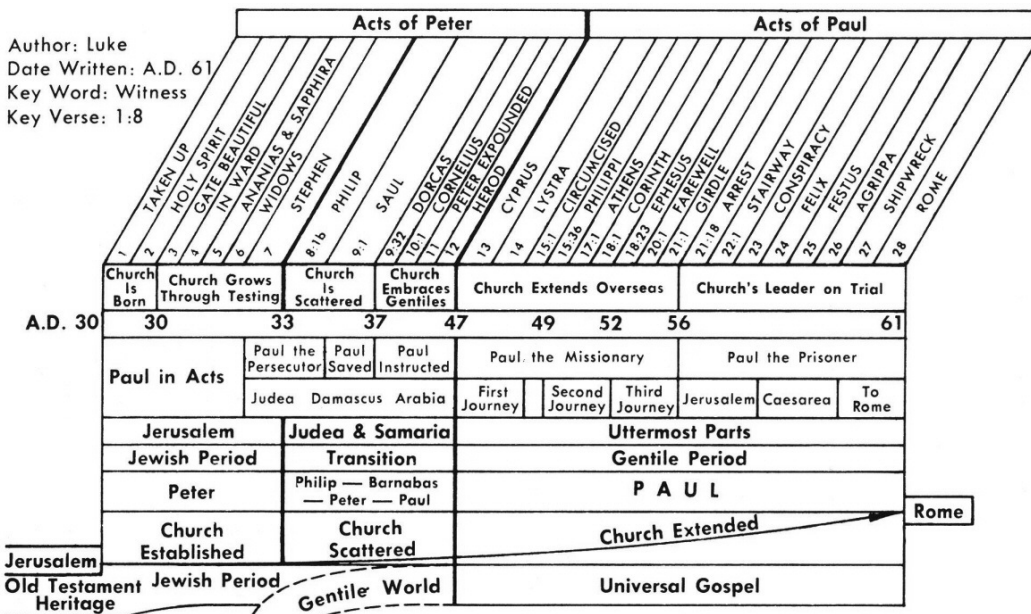
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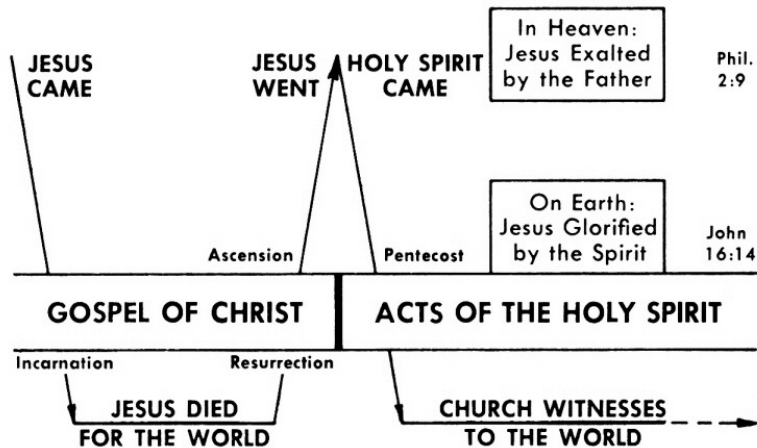
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Author: Luke  
 Date Written: A.D. 61  
 Key Word: Witness  
 Key Verse: 1:8



Click chart to enlarge  
 Chart from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission  
 See Charles Swindoll's Interesting Chart on Acts

### THE EXPANDING WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH



Click chart to enlarge

**Acts 10:1** Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort,

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

- Cir A.M. 4045. A.D. 41. in.
- Acts 8:40; 21:8; 23:23,33; 25:1,13
- **a centurion** Acts 22:25; 27:1,31,43; Mt 8:5-13; 27:54; Luke 7:2
- **of what was called the Italian cohort** Acts 27:1
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### John Hannah's Outline

- C. The witness of Peter (Acts 9:32-11:18)
1. His witness at Lydda and Sharon (Acts 9:32-35)
  2. His witness at Joppa (Acts 9:36-10:22)
    - a. The raising of Dorcas (Acts 9:36-43)
    - b. The preparation for further ministry (Acts 10:1-22)
      1. The angelic message to Cornelius (Acts 10:1-8)

2. Vision of Peter (Acts 10:9-16)
3. The Spirit's message to Peter (Acts 10:17-22)
3. His witness at Caesarea (Acts 10:23-48)
  - a. Peter's meeting with Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:23-33)
  - b. Peter's message before Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:34-43)
  - c. The result (Acts 10:44-48)
4. His witness in Jerusalem (Acts 11:1-18)
  - a. Peter's conflict with the Jews (Acts 11:1-3)
  - b. Peter's explanation of his actions (Acts 11:4-17)
  - c. The result (Acts 11:18)
- D. The witness of the persecuted church (Acts 11:19-12:25)
  1. The witness in Antioch (Acts 11:19-30)
    - a. The beginning of the church (Acts 11:19-21)
    - b. The instruction of the church (Acts 11:22-26)
    - c. The ministry of the church (Acts 11:27-30)
      1. Agabus' prediction (Acts 11:27-28)
      2. The church's relief (Acts 11:29-30)

**TIME APPROXIMATION** - When do the events in Acts 10 occur in relation to the preceding events? There are a number of resources that give dates of the historical events in Acts, but the reader should understand that they are all approximations. One problem is that there is even disagreement on the date of Jesus crucifixion and resurrection, some sources saying A.D. 33 and others A.D. 30. That said, the dates listed below are simply to give you a sense of the span of time of the historical events in the Book of Acts.

Thus Pentecost would be 30-33, Stephen's stoning 31-33, Paul converted 33-34, Paul's meeting with Peter in Jerusalem 36-37, Paul ministers in Syria/Cilicia 37-45, Peter's witness to Cornelius 38. Thus the events in Acts 10 occur from 5-10 years after the Church is born in Acts 2.

- [ESV Timeline](#) - below is an excerpt from the larger chart.

- 33 (or 30) Jesus returns to Judea, is crucified, and resurrected. James the brother of Jesus becomes a believer after witnessing the resurrected Jesus (1 Cor. 15:7; Acts 12:17). Jesus ascends to the Father's right hand (Acts 1). Jesus' first followers receive the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and begin to proclaim the gospel (Acts 2).
- 33/34\* Paul witnesses the resurrected Lord on the way to Damascus and is commissioned as an apostle to the nations (Acts 9; Gal. 1:15-16).
- 34-37 Paul ministers in Damascus and Arabia (Acts 9:19-22; 26:20; Gal. 1:16-18).
- 36 Pilate loses his position for incompetence.
- 36/37\* Paul meets with Peter in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26-30; Gal. 1:18).
- 37-45 Paul ministers in Syria, Tarsus, and Cilicia (Acts 9:30; Gal. 1:21).
- 38\* Peter witnesses to Cornelius (Acts 10).

\* **The Asterisk indicates approximation.**

/ **The slash mark indicates "either/or"**

- [Biblehub Timeline](#)
- [Book of Acts Story and Structure](#)
- [BlueLetterBible Timeline](#) - see excerpt below

Event	Reference	Year (AD)
Descent of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2:1-13	30
Setting Up of the Church	Acts 2:40-47	30
First Persecutions ( <a href="#">Illustration</a> )	Acts 4:1-22; 5:21-42; 7:1-60	35
Philip at Samaria	Acts 8:4-13	35
Conversion of Saul ( <a href="#">Illustration</a> )	Acts 9:1-9	36

Event	Reference	Year (AD)
First Gentile Converted	Acts 10:1-48	40
Founding of Church at Antioch	Acts 11:19-30	43
Writing of Matthew's Gospel	Matthew	43

**Below is a Basic Acts Timeline (Ben Witherington - The Acts of the Apostles)**

A.D. 30—Jesus is crucified under Pontius Pilate. Resurrection appearances, Pentecost, initial growth of the church in and around Jerusalem.

A.D. 31–33—The events of Acts 3–7 transpire with mounting concern on the part of Jews and especially the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem. The rising tension results in vigilante action taken against Stephen, and then an authorized effort under Saul to disrupt and even destroy this new messianic sect, involving persecution and even the death of some Christians (cf. Acts 8:1–3 to Gal. 1:13). The persecution led various Christians such as Philip to go elsewhere, such as Samaria, and bear witness (Acts 8:4–40). THE FIRST EIGHT CHAPTERS OF ACTS COVER ONLY THE PERIOD FROM ABOUT 30 TO 33.

A.D. 33 or 34—Saul is converted on the road to Damascus during his period of persecuting the church (Acts 9; Galatians 1).

A.D. 34–37 or 38—Saul is in Damascus and Arabia; he returns to Jerusalem for the first time as a Christian in 37.

A.D. 37–46—Saul sent off to Tarsus and home region. In the meantime, Peter has a notable ministry up and down the Mediterranean coast between Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea, involving at least one notable Gentile and his family. This, in turn, leads to a report to the Jerusalem church (Acts 11). The precise timing is unknown.

A.D. 43—James (brother of John) is killed, and Peter is imprisoned.

A.D. 44—Agabus's prophecy in Antioch; Herod Agrippa dies.

NOTE THAT LUKE'S DATA FOR THE PERIOD A.D. 37–46 ARE CLEARLY SKETCHY. HE IS BETTER INFORMED ABOUT THE PERIOD AFTER THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL (49), IN PARTICULAR ABOUT THE PAULINE PART OF THE STORY.

A.D. 46–48—famine in Judea.

A.D. 48—Second visit by Paul to Jerusalem (with Barnabas, cf. Galatians 2) for famine relief to Jerusalem (Acts 11:29–30).

A.D. 49—Claudius expels Jews from Rome; Priscilla and Aquila go to Corinth; Jerusalem council (Acts 15).

A.D. 50–52—Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 15:36–18:23).

A.D. 51 or 52—The Gallio incident in Corinth (Acts 18).

A.D. 53–57—Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 18:23–21:26).

A.D. 57–59—Paul in custody under Felix, and then briefly under Festus.

A.D. 59–60—Paul goes to Rome (for a fuller discussion of the Pauline material for the period from 48 to 50, see below).

A.D. 60–62—Paul under house arrest in Rome.

**James Montgomery Boice** rightly states that "The tenth chapter of Acts is one of the most important chapters in Acts, perhaps also one of the most important chapters in the Bible. It is so important because it tells how a gospel that was originally thought of in exclusively Jewish terms came by the intervention and revelation of God to be practically as well as theoretically a gospel for the whole world. Gentiles should be especially thankful for this chapter, since it is because of this revelation that they are able to come to God as Gentiles. (Acts: An Expository Commentary)

This chapter describes God's flinging open the door of His Church to Gentile believers and thus marking a key transition point in the spread of the Gospel in the Book of Acts. As noted in Acts 9, it is clear that God's Spirit was moving Peter step by step (from Lydda to Joppa to Caesarea) toward fulfillment of Acts 1:8 and the taking of the Gospel to the Gentiles. So in Acts 8 we see the conversion an Ethiopian eunuch, a son of **Ham**, in Acts 9, the conversion of Saul, a son of Shem, and, in Acts 10, Cornelius, a son of Japheth. These represent the three divisions of humanity after the flood (cf Genesis 6:10).

**Stanley Gundry** - This passage divides into a vision seen by a centurion named Cornelius (Acts 10:1–8); a complementary vision seen by Peter (Acts 10:9–16); Cornelius's invitation to Peter (Acts 10:17–23a); their meeting each other (Acts 10:23b–26); Peter's explanation of why he came (Acts 10:27–33); his presentation of the gospel (Acts 10:34–43); and the conversion of his Gentile audience (Acts 10:44–48). The dovetailing of the two visions that make this episode possible displays God as inaugurating his plan to bring Gentiles en masse into his kingdom. (Commentary on the New Testament: Verse-by-Verse Explanations with a Literal Translation)

**Chuck Swindoll** has a telling opening title for Acts 10:1-23 - "**Facing the Prejudice Sin-Drome!**" Swindoll follows by saying "For all our many differences, such as race, creed, culture, gender, and nationality, people all over the world have at least one thing in common: prejudice. It's a stubborn, thorny weed that grows in every heart and draws nourishment from the rotting compost of our fallen, sinful nature. Cut it to the ground, poison its leaves, or pull it out by the roots . . . and it'll be back before you know it. The creeping infestation of prejudice can happen so gradually it goes unnoticed. And it takes hold in unexpected ways. We're familiar with the most common variety, racial prejudice. Some nurture a secret bigotry against people with certain colors of skin, specific nationalities, different cultures, or even particular accents. Other types of prejudice take more subtle forms: political affiliation, economic stratum, marital status, religious background, the presence of tattoos, style of clothes or hair, or even the use of cosmetics. It's a universal problem. Your prejudice might not be my prejudice, but some form of it tries to grow in every heart. Even so, some people do a better job of weeding than others. Peter, the hero of the Jerusalem congregation and arguably the most courageous Christian in the first two decades of the church, struggled with prejudice. Fortunately for Peter and the church, the Lord would not let that sinful attitude remain; He would soon uproot it." (Acts - Swindoll's Living Insights Commentary)

**Stanley Toussaint** rightly points out that "The importance of this event is seen in the fact that Luke recounts it three times—here in Acts 10, again in chapter 11, and finally in Acts 15:6–9. The geographic extension of the gospel in Acts is an initial fulfillment of Jesus' words in Matthew 8:11: "Many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places ... in the kingdom of heaven."" (Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Pohill** - Acts 10:1–11:18 is the longest single narrative in all of Acts. This in itself witnesses to the great importance Luke placed on the incident. (

Luke does not give us specific dates, but an old resource, the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge (TSK), has a note at the beginning of Acts 10 of circa AD 41. (Lenski says Summer of AD 38). The previous TSK note is at Acts 5:1 corresponding to the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira around AD 34. And so the events in Acts 10 would suggest the Church is about 6-7 years old. On the other hand, some like Kistemaker think Acts 10 takes place as much as 10 years after the inception of the Church ("In the closing years of its first decade"). Others like Swindoll think it is more like 5-6 years old. In any event, the time clearly had arrived to obey Jesus' commission to "Go therefore and **make disciples** (learners) of **all the nations** (INCLUDING GENTILES), baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (cf Acts 10:47, 48), 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Mt 28:19-20)

**Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius** - He was a Gentile and a Roman commander of a cohort. "The name **Cornelius** was common in the Roman world from 82 B.C. onwards, when Cornelius Sulla liberated ten thousand slaves, all of whom took their patron's name as they established themselves in Roman society." (Longenecker - Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**Caesarea** - Aka as "Caesarea by the Sea" "[Caesarea Maritima](#)" ([see map showing Caesarea on coast in relation to Joppa](#)), was located in Samaria, south of Mt Carmel and north of Joppa. It should be distinguished from [Caesarea Philippi](#) (north of Sea of Galilee, at base of Mt Hermon, only archaeological remains). **Caesarea Maritima** was largely **Gentile** and was a center of Roman administrative power (capital of Roman province of Judea) and the location of many of Herod the Great's building projects (Herod built an aqueduct [\[pix\]](#) to bring in fresh water and an amphitheater [\[pix\]](#). Herod constructed [a safe harbor for ships](#), something not true in Joppa - see description [Josephus, Ant. 15.9.6](#) [Note: Caesarea Maritima had previously been known as Strato's Tower and was a second-class harbor because of a shallow entrance and exposure to the strong southern winds]). Peter would travel roughly 30-36 miles from [Caesarea Maritima to Joppa](#) (via the road through inland Antipatris)

While Joppa was an ancient city, **Caesarea Maritima** was more recent, having been built by Herod the Great to honor Caesar Augustus. He began in 25BC and it took him 12 years to complete the building program. Caesarea became like a small New York City. All of the streets led to the harbor. The Herodian kings and Roman procurators had their official residences here. At one time the population was up to 200,000, and consisted of a mixture of Jews and Gentiles. [In 1961 a stone was excavated](#) at the amphitheater with the names Tiberias Caesar and Pontius Pilatus, the only known inscription of this infamous name.

**Caesarea Maritima** in NT Acts 8:40; Acts 9:30; Acts 10:1; Acts 10:24; Acts 11:11; Acts 12:19; Acts 18:22; Acts 21:8; Acts 21:16; Acts 23:23; Acts 23:33; Acts 25:1; Acts 25:4; Acts 25:6; Acts 25:13

**Caesarea Maritima** was the scene of several very significant and interesting New Testament events:

- Baptism by Peter of Cornelius, et al, the first Gentile converts (Acts 10:47,48). This marks the beginning of the Gospel to the Gentiles (and as most of us are Gentiles, Caesarea Maritima has a very special significance in our hearts!)
- Headquarters of Pontius Pilate. From here the Roman procurator set out for the Passover festival in Jerusalem, where he sentenced Jesus to death.

- In order to escape from the Jews in Jerusalem who wanted to kill Saul, he was sent to Tarsus from Caesarea (Acts 9:30). The Scripture is silent on this part of Saul's life in Tarsus, and the length of time he was there from 8-10 years. It will be fascinating some day to speak with him and ask him what transpired during this time. How sad that about all that remains of Christianity is St Paul's Church.
- After Peter escaped imprisonment by King Herod, he went down from Judea to Caesarea to spend time (Acts 12:19).
- Paul sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea and went on to greet the church at Jerusalem and then went down to Antioch (Acts 18:22) just before he began his third missionary journey in Acts 18:23.
- After completing his third missionary journey, he sailed back to Caesarea and stayed in the house of Philip the evangelist (wouldn't you have wanted to be a fly on the wall!). (Acts 21:8) At Philip's home, a prophet named Agabus bound Paul's hands and feet with his belt, foretelling how the apostle would be handed over to the Romans (Acts 21:10-11). Paul's arrival at Jerusalem marked the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 21:17).
- After Paul was taken into Roman custody in Acts 23:10, the Jews hatched a plot to ambush him, but the son of Paul's sister overheard the plot and told the Roman commander (Acts 23:16, 21, another ambush was planned 2 years later! Acts 25:3), he ordered Paul taken by night to Caesarea (Acts 23:23) with an explanatory letter to Felix (Acts 23:33).
- Paul was imprisoned for more than two years at Caesarea Maritima (Acts 24:27), at which time Felix was succeeded by Porcius Fesús (Acts 24:27).
- Festus traveled from Jerusalem to Caesarea and on the day after he arrived he took his seat on the tribunal (judgment seat, bema) and ordered that Paul be brought to him (Acts 25:6)
- King Agrippa II, son of Agrippa I (Acts 12:1) who ruled Palestine from AD 53 until his death (AD 92/93) arrived at Caesarea with his sister Bernice with whom he carried on an incestuous relationship (cf Josephus 20.7.3). And so here at Caesarea Paul made his famous defense before King Agrippa (and Festus) (Acts 25:23-27, Acts 26:1-23, Festus accused him of being crazy - Acts 26:24, Paul's response in Acts 26:25-27, which led to Agrippa's famous response "In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian" (Acts 26:28) to which Paul replied "I would wish to God, that whether in a short or long time, not only you, but also all who hear me this day, might become such as I am, except for these chains." (Acts 26:29)
- In AD 66 difficulty between the Jews and Romans at Caesarea sparked the Jewish revolt which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Titus in AD 70.
- After Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70, [Caesarea Maritima became the center of Christianity in Palestine](#). A Church council held at Caesarea in AD 195 determined that Easter should be celebrated on a Sunday.

**A centurion of what was called the Italian cohort**(the Cohores II Miliaria Italica Civium Romanorum) - Cornelius was a non-commissioned officer, but most importantly, he was a Gentile who feared God. "The Italian Cohort has been identified as cohorts II Italica which is known to have been stationed in Syria in A.D. 88." (NET Note) **Lenski** adds that "thirty-two such Italian cohorts were stationed in the different provinces of the empire. They were made up of Italian volunteers and were considered the most loyal Roman troops."

**Centurion** (1543) (**Hekatontarches** from **hekatón** = one hundred + **archo** = to command) means a commander of a hundred soldiers, a centurion, and would be our equivalent of an army captain or company commander. **Centurion** is from Latin centurio an officer in charge of a hundred soldiers (the Latin equivalent being used by Mk 15:39-45). "The favourable references to centurions in the New Testament suggest that they may have been carefully chosen because of their quality of character. Some even became believers in Jesus Christ (Matthew 8:5-13; Matthew 27:54; Acts 10:1-2; Acts 23:17-18; Acts 27:43)." ([Bridgeway](#)) Centurions received double the salary of ordinary soldiers. It usually took fifteen years or more of military service to work one's way to the rank of centurion. **Zodhiates** - Ending in -ēs, hekatontárchēs (Acts 10:1, 22; 24:23; 27:1, 31). Ending in -os, hekatóntarchos (Matt. 8:5, 8, 13; 27:54; Luke 7:2, 6; 23:47; Acts 21:32; 22:25, 26; 23:17, 23; 27:6, 11, 43; 28:16) (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

**Polybius** says "that the **centurions** were chosen by merit, and so were men remarkable not so much for their daring courage as for their deliberation, constancy, and strength of mind." Another translation says "They wish centurions not so much to be venturesome and daredevil as natural leaders, of a steady and sedate spirit. They do not desire them so much to be men who will initiate attacks and open the battle, but men who will hold their ground when worsted and hard pressed and be ready to die at their posts" ([Histories 6.24.9](#)). Barclay translates it this way "Centurions are desired not to be overbold and reckless so much as good leaders, of steady and prudent mind, not prone to take the offensive to start fighting wantonly, but able when overwhelmed and

hard-pressed to stand fast and die at their posts."

**NET Note** - A centurion was a noncommissioned officer (**ED**: who had worked his way up through the ranks) in the Roman army or one of the auxiliary territorial armies, commanding a centuria of (nominally) 100 men. The responsibilities of centurions were broadly similar to modern junior officers, but there was a wide gap in social status between them and officers, and relatively few were promoted beyond the rank of senior centurion. The Roman troops stationed in Judea were auxiliaries, who would normally be rewarded with Roman citizenship after 25 years of service. Some of the centurions may have served originally in the Roman legions (regular army) and thus gained their citizenship at enlistment. Others may have inherited it, like Paul.

**Fausset Bible Dictionary** - It is a propriety in the New Testament that centurions are so often favorably noticed. Good conduct was generally the cause of their promotion to the command of a century (properly 100 men). Truthful straightforwardness would make them open to conviction. For instance, the one whose faith Jesus so commends in Matthew 8; Cornelius, whom Peter was by vision sent to, and who is described as "devout, fearing God with all his house, giving much alms to the people, and praying to God always" (Acts 10); Julius, the centurion of Augustus' band, who entreated Paul courteously and saved his life when threatened by the soldiers (Acts 27:1; Acts 27:3-42; Acts 27:43). In Acts 24:23 translate "the centurion," namely, the commander of the horse who had conveyed Paul to Caesarea after the other of the two centurions had come back with the infantry (compare Acts 23:23; Acts 23:32). The centurion at the Lord's crucifixion uttered the testimony so remarkable from a Gentile: "certainly this was a righteous man"; Luke's explanation (Luke 23:47) of what a Gentile would mean by saying, "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54).

**What was a Roman centurion?** - During the New Testament era, a Roman centurion was a professional military officer commanding a platoon of troops called a "century." This could be anywhere from nearly one hundred to several hundred men. Each Roman legion was composed of nearly 5,000 men, divided into multiple cohorts, each cohort composed of multiple centuries. As a result, a legion could contain as many as sixty centurions. Their importance was based on seniority, with the senior centurion in a legion being in a position of great prestige. Some historians have compared the top-level centurions to medieval knights. Roman centurions represented the bridge between enlisted troops and commissioned officers, in much the same way as warrant officers do in the modern U.S. military. Soldiers were appointed as centurions by virtue of their bravery, loyalty, character, and prowess in battle. Centurions were held to high standards of conduct and were expected to fight on the front lines with their men. In fact, the centurion's designated place in formation was at the end of the very front row. As a result, Roman centurions were well paid and held in high esteem, and they experienced high rates of injury and death during war. The combination of wealth, power, and prestige made them influential in society.

**Hekatontarches** - 20x in 20v - centurion(16), centurion's(1), centurions(3). Two uses in **Septuagint** - 2 Ki 11:10, 15 = "captains of hundreds" Matt. 8:5; Matt. 8:8; Matt. 8:13; Matt. 27:54; Lk. 7:2; Lk. 7:6; Lk. 23:47; Acts 10:1; Acts 10:22; Acts 21:32; Acts 22:25; Acts 22:26; Acts 23:17; Acts 23:23; Acts 24:23; Acts 27:1; Acts 27:6; Acts 27:11; Acts 27:31; Acts 27:43

**Cohort** (4686)(**speira**) was a Roman military technical term for the tenth part of a legion, normally containing 600 troops (Acts 10.1). **Speira** also could refer to a detachment of soldiers as in a troop, band or company (Jn 18.3)

**Bob Utley on Italian cohort** - Usually a Roman cohort is made up of 600 men. This particular one was made up of a thousand Roman volunteers who were stationed in Syria. We know from historical evidence that they were called an auxiliary cohort

**John Phillips on Italian cohort** - The Italian cohort would have been a cohort **levied** (caused to enlist) in Italy.

**Larkin** - A cohort had ten centuries and was the equivalent of a modern military battalion. This battalion was an auxiliary unit, not part of a regular Roman legion. Such a battalion of archers was first made up of Roman soldiers and then filled out in the provinces. ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Wikipedia** - A **cohort** (from the Latin *cohors*, plural *cohortes*) was a standard tactical military unit of a Roman legion, though the standard changed with time and situation, and was composed of between 360-800 soldiers. A cohort is considered to be the equivalent of a modern military [battalion](#).

**Gilbrant** - In its earliest occurrences in classical Greek **speira** described anything "twisted or wound around or together" (Liddell-Scott). Thus it could be used of a "band" of men, a tactical unit of soldiers. In classical usage it can also denote the coils of a serpent, a mode of hairdressing, a knot in wood, etc. However, a "cohort" is its only meaning in the New Testament, a translation of the Latin *cohors*. (In other Greek literature *speira* also represents *manipulus*, one-third of a cohort.) The "cohort" in the regular Roman legions typically had 600 men but could number as many as 1,000 in the auxiliary forces (all New Testament references, apparently; see Bruce, *New International Commentary on the New Testament, Acts*, p.202). One "cohort" was stationed in Jerusalem while Judea was a Roman province. This cohort was active in the arrest of Jesus (John 18:3,12), in His crucifixion (Matthew 27:27; Mark 15:16), and in the arrest of Paul (Acts 21:31). Two other "cohorts" are mentioned by name: one originally

made up of volunteers recruited in Italy (Acts 10:1), the other (Acts 27:1) wearing the name of Emperor Augustus, "a title of honor bestowed on select cohorts of auxiliary troops" (ibid., p.477). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Zodhiates** adds **speira** was "Spoken of a band from the guards of the temple (John 18:3, 12). These were Levites who filled the menial offices of the temple and kept watch by night (Sept.: Ps. 134:1 [cf. 2 Kings 12:9; 25:18; see especially 1 Chr. 9:17, 27ff.]). They were under the command of officers called *stratēgós* <G4755>, temple wardens (Luke 22:52), or *chilíarchos* <G5506>, colonels or chief captains, commanders of one thousand soldiers." (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament](#))

**Speira** - 7x in 7v - Matt. 27:27; Mk. 15:16; Jn. 18:3; Jn. 18:12; Acts 10:1; Acts 21:31; Acts 27:1. No uses in the Septuagint.

#### Related Resources:

- Holman Bible Dictionary [Augustan Cohort Cohort Italian Cohort](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Cohort](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Cohort](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Cohort](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Cohort](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Cohort](#)

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**Jack Andrews** records Some Facts about how the Jews felt about Gentiles:

- Strict Jews would have nothing to do with Gentiles.
- They would not be a guest in a Gentile home or would not invite a Gentile to be their guest.
- Dirt from a Gentile country was considered defiled.
- They would shake the dust off their feet before they entered into Israel.
- They would not eat food prepared by the hands of Gentiles.
- If they purchased cooking utensils from Gentiles they had to be purified before being used.
- Gentiles were considered unclean and defiled. ([Expository Sermons](#))

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#### What's Wrong With That?

Read: Acts 10:1-8

Cornelius [was] a devout man and one who feared God with all his household. —Acts 10:1-2

A prominent senator was dropped from the "Green Book"—the list of Washington societal elite who are invited to special functions. Why? Because he never attended the events. Instead, he went home each night to be with his family.

Then he discovered he had cancer. A difficult career choice faced him. The night before he announced his decision not to run for office again, he said to his wife, "You know, the only thing I'll probably ever be remembered for is that I loved my wife." To which she replied, "And what's wrong with that?"

Families that are built on love, respect, and togetherness instead of social climbing or the pursuit of successful careers are a nation's hope for survival. And when their values reflect a love for Jesus Christ, they hold a special place in God's plan for the world.

Cornelius was a Roman soldier who feared God even before he came to know Christ. God used him to spread the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10:24-48). Rome could have used more families like his.

God-fearing families provide stability to individuals and nations when adversity strikes. And there's everything right about that.

Think About It

How do strong families provide stability for a nation?

Did my parents teach me about Christ? How can I

be a godly influence in my family? My nation?

A nation is only as strong as its families.

By Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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**Try A Little Kindness**



Read: Acts 10:1-8,44-46

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you. —Ephesians 4:32

Cornelius, a first-century Roman military official, was assigned the task of maintaining order in turbulent Judea. Most Romans of that time believed in many gods—but not Cornelius. He feared the one true God, gave generously to the needy, and prayed regularly (Acts 10:2). Even though the Jewish people didn't accept him as one of their own, God recognized him as one of His. Cornelius agreed with God about what was good and he acted accordingly.

Because of Cornelius' kindness and prayers, God chose him for a special assignment and sent an angel to tell him what to do. The angel didn't explain why, and he didn't say what the outcome would be, but Cornelius followed the instructions. Because he obeyed, he and his household became the first Gentile believers to receive the Holy Spirit.

The example of Cornelius reminds us that God not only sees the good we do but is on the lookout for people who share His values. He wants to make them His partners in changing the world.

Today is World Kindness Day. If we follow the example of Cornelius, perhaps God will use our simple acts of kindness to change our world.

Lord, compassion is part of Your character, and kindness is one of the best ways to show the world what You are like.  
May Your compassion fill my heart and spill over into the lives of everyone I encounter. Amen.

Kindness is the oil that takes the friction out of life.

By Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Acts 10:2 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.**

KJV 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.

- **devout** Acts 10:7,22; 2:5; 8:2; 13:50; 16:14; 22:12; Luke 2:25
- **one** Acts 10:35; 9:31; 13:16,26; 1 Kings 8:43; 2 Chr 6:33; Job 1:1; Ps 102:15; Eccl 7:18; Isaiah 59:19; Daniel 6:26; Rev 15:4
- **with** Acts 10:7; 16:15; 18:8; Genesis 18:19; Joshua 24:15; Job 1:5; Ps 101:6-8
- **gave many alms** Acts 10:4,22,31; 9:36; Ps 41:1; Isaiah 58:7,8; Luke 7:4,5; Ro 15:26,27; 2 Cor 9:8-15
- **and prayed** Acts 9:11; Ps 25:5,8,9; 55:17; 86:3; \*marg;; Ps 88:1; 119:2; Pr 2:3-5; Daniel 6:10,16,20; Mt 7:7,8; Luke 18:1; Col 4:2; 1 Th 5:17; James 1:5
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CORNELIUS A DEVOUT GOD-FEARER

**A devout man and one who feared God with all his household** (cf [Acts 10:22, 35](#)) - These are wonderful traits but none can save a man's soul from Hell. Tragically, there will be many "devout" men and women in Hell because they failed to believe in Jesus Christ. Faith alone saves, not devotion, no matter how sincere. In the case of Cornelius these traits represent the soil of a man's heart that had been plowed and prepared by the Holy Spirit for the seed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When a man accepts the light he receives, God will give him the light he needs to be saved. Cornelius reminds us of the Ethiopian eunuch regarding whom **John MacArthur** wrote "The eunuch is a classic example of one who lived up to the light he had. God then gave him the full revelation of Jesus Christ through Philip's ministry." (Acts Commentary) In Acts 10 God gives visions to a saved Jew and an unsaved Gentile in order to reach the Gentile man through the Jewish man!

**THOUGHT** - You might enjoy an incredible book by **Don Richardson** entitled "[Eternity in their Hearts](#)" which addresses the question "Has the God Who prepared the Gospel for all people groups also prepared all people groups for the Gospel?" (cf Eccl 3:11, Acts 17:27). It is truly fascinating ([read some reviews](#)).

The question might be asked if genuine seekers after God are saved even if they have never heard the Gospel? The answer from this story of the seeker Cornelius is "no," they must still hear and respond to the Gospel (cf Acts 11:13,14). But this story also demonstrates that the omniscient, omnipotent God is able to use His power to make sure they hear the Gospel as did Cornelius. See Stedman's in depth answer below.

**Jack Arnold** - An unsaved man has the promise that "blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied (filled)" (Matt. 5:6) and "you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" (Jer 29:13). If the unsaved man seeks truth honestly, he will find the truth in Christ. You remember when Gus Marwieg was with us at our last Missions Conference. He told us how, as an idol worshiper in the jungles of Liberia, Africa, he began to seek for the true God. He hungered, he sought, he wanted to know God. Through a series of circumstances he walked out of the jungle and came into contact with some Christians. He was gloriously saved. He sought more light and God made sure he would come into contact with someone who could give him the gospel of Christ. ([Acts 10:1-23a The Seeking Sinner and the Bigoted Believer](#))

**Ray Stedman** adds "you will notice that the Holy Spirit very clearly is underlining for us a very important fact. Here is a man who is religious, devout, sincere, earnest, and prayerful, but he is not regenerate. He is not yet saved. There are many people today who think that all you need to do to be acceptable in God's sight is to be religious, to be sincere, to be generous, to live a good, clean, moral life. Here is a man exactly like that, but he is not yet born again. You see, those characteristics are not eternal life; they are the prelude to eternal life. They indicate a heart that is hungry, open, and ready, but which has not yet received Christ. There are many people like this today, earnest people, sincere people, perhaps many here this morning, who are moral, upright, and generous, but who are not yet born again. All the morality and generosity will come to no avail until it leads you to the gift of God which is eternal life in Jesus Christ. That is what you need. That is what this man needs, and God is moving to answer the need. This answers the great question about the Bible which I am asked more frequently than any other, especially by non-Christians. I hear it again and again. "What about the man who has never heard of Jesus Christ? What about the man who lives up to the light he has, and is faithful to what he knows, but has never heard of Jesus Christ? What happens to him?" Here is a story of what happens to a man like that. When he is obedient to the light that he has, God will take it upon himself to give him more light and to lead him to the place where he can come to know Jesus Christ. This is in line with what you read in the epistle to the Hebrews Chapter 11, Verse 6, where it says, "Without faith it is impossible to please God." It goes on to say, "For whoever would draw near to God..." must have two qualifications, just two. He must believe: That God exists and that he rewards those who seek him, i.e., that he will meet someone who is seeking after him, and give him more light along the way. That is what you find very clearly here in the case of Cornelius, is it not?" ([Acts 9:32-10:23 The Cure For Death](#)) (Related Resource: [What happens to those who have never heard about Jesus?](#))

**J Vernon McGee** - In America today he would pass for a Christian, a Christian of the highest degree, an outstanding man. But he actually was not a Christian. He had not even heard the gospel.

**Warren Wiersbe** - He was devout, honest, generous, and sincere; but he was not a saved man. It is possible to be very religious but still be lost! Were it not for the fact that God in His grace spoke to Cornelius, he would never have become a believer. We see here a fulfillment of Christ's promise in John 7:17, "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know the truth." (borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#))

**Chuck Colson** was a man in some ways like Cornelius and his story shows how God sovereignly moved in his life just as He did in the life of Cornelius - In his book, Born Again, he tells that in the midst of the personal horrors of the Watergate affair, he visited the home of a successful businessman, who told him of the change Jesus Christ had made in his own life. He gave Colson a copy of C. S. Lewis's book, Mere Christianity, and challenged him to go home and read it. Colson was so unnerved by the encounter that as he drove from the man's house he stopped his car, "And then I prayed my first real prayer. 'God, I don't know how to find You, but I'm going to try! I'm not much the way I am now, but somehow I want to give myself to You.' I didn't know how to say more, so I repeated over and over the words, 'Take me.' I had not 'accepted' Christ - I still didn't know who He was. My mind told me it was important to find that out first, to be sure that I knew what I was doing, that I meant it and would stay with it. Only that night, something inside me was urging me to surrender - to what or to whom I did not know." Then as he read Mere Christianity the gospel was communicated to him. He bowed his head and prayed, "Lord Jesus, I believe you. I accept You. Please come into my life. I commit it to You." This was God's sovereign hand in the life of this man soon to be an imprisoned criminal but now for the first time in his life set free! What a paradox!

It is instructive to look at some of the **synonyms for devout** to get a real sense of the heart of this battle-hardened Roman Centurion - adoring, ardent, faithful, fervent, passionate, pious, religious, sincere, zealous, earnest, fervid, genuine, godly, heart-and-soul, heartfelt, holy, intense, orthodox, prayerful, reverent, revering, serious, venerating, worshiping.

**Devout** (2152) (**eusebes** from **eu** = well + **sebomai** = reverence <> **Sebomai** is from root "**seb**" = sacred awe) describes one who is has an attitude of reverence exhibited in one's actions. In secular Greek use **eusebos** described practical piety towards one's parents. Eusebes is found only 3x in the NT - The first two uses refer to Cornelius who was not yet a believer in Jesus - Acts 10:2; Acts 10:7; 2 Pet. 2:9 refers to believers - "the Lord knows how to rescue the **godly** from temptation." It follows that **eusebes** can refer to unbelievers characterized by piety but not spiritual enlightenment, or to believers characterized by a holy life. The Greek root was also commonly used in the Greco-Roman world of Paul to describe respect for the pagan gods (e.g., Roman "gods" like Jupiter, Augustus, Mars, Venus, etc.) For example in one ancient text we read "Can there be any better or more **reverent** (godly) way to honor the gods than by doing what they command?" In summary, **eusebos** means reverence or awe that is well directed - living lives that are pleasing to God. It is not talking "godly" but living "godly".

In the case of Cornelius **devout** was an apt description for he was a man who looked both **Godward** (prayers) and **manward** (alms)! A **devout** man does not "keep it to himself" but his devout life spills over like a refreshing spring of living waters onto those around him. What about us?

**THOUGHT - GOD-FEARERS VERSUS PROSELYTES** - Luke uses the description those who fear God (or God fearers) several times in Acts to describe Gentiles who were in some way seeking the one true God - See Acts 10:5, Acts 10:35, Acts 13:16, Acts 13:26, Acts 17:4, 17:17. Some include Acts 13:43 but the phrase there is "God-fearing proselytes" which would describe a Gentile who had fully converted to Judaism even receiving circumcision (which we know Cornelius had not done - Acts 11:3). The God-fearers like Cornelius had not fully converted to Judaism and were referred to as "proselytes of the gate."

**Bob Utley** notes that "To be a full convert one had to (1) be circumcised if a male, (2) baptize himself in the presence of witnesses and (3) if possible, offer a sacrifice in the Temple. These requirements prevented many interested Gentiles from becoming full proselytes. (Acts 10)

**Stanley Toussaint** says Cornelius although not circumcised "did worship Yahweh. Evidently he attended the synagogue and to the best of his knowledge and ability followed the Old Testament Scriptures. Nevertheless, he had not entered into New Testament salvation (cf. Acts 11:14)."

**NET Note** - The description of Cornelius as a devout, God-fearing man probably means that he belonged to the category called "God-fearers," Gentiles who worshiped the God of Israel and in many cases kept the Mosaic law, but did not take the final step of circumcision necessary to become a proselyte to Judaism.

**John Phillips - God-fearer** was one of the many Gentiles who were greatly attracted to the moral, ethical, and spiritual aspects of Judaism. Many of them attended the synagogue and were instructed in the Scriptures and even observed the Sabbath and, to some extent, the Jewish dietary laws. They drew the line, however, at becoming full proselytes by circumcision, baptism, and sacrifice. (Exploring Acts)

**Wikipedia** - There are **two kinds of proselytes** in [Rabbinic Judaism](#); *ger tzedek* (righteous proselytes, proselytes of righteousness, religious proselyte, devout proselyte) and *ger toshav* (resident proselyte, proselytes of the gate, limited proselyte, half-proselyte) A "righteous proselyte" is a [gentile](#) who has converted to Judaism, is bound to all the doctrines and precepts of the Jewish religion, and is considered a full member of the Jewish people. The proselyte is circumcised as an adult (*milah l'shem giur*), if male, and immerses in a [mikvah](#) to formally effect the conversion. A "gate proselyte" is a [resident alien](#) who lives in the Land of Israel and follows some of the customs. They are not required to be circumcised nor to comply with the whole of the Torah. They are bound only to conform to the [Seven Laws of Noah](#) (do not worship idols, do not blaspheme God's name, do not murder, do not commit fornication (immoral sexual acts), do not steal, do not tear the limb from a living animal, and do not fail to establish rule of law) to be assured of a place in the [world to come](#). (**ED: THIS LATTER OF COURSE IS A FALSE TEACHING - FOR ONLY FAITH IN CHRIST ASSURES ONE OF A PLACE IN THE WORLD TO COME!**)

**Homer Kent** agrees with much of Wikipedia's analysis noting that "adherents to Judaism to a limited extent (i.e. "*proselytes of the gate*"). They attended synagogue worship, acknowledged the God of Israel, and complied with some Jewish customs. They were not circumcised, however, and thus were regarded by Jews as not full "*proselytes of righteousness*."" (Jerusalem to Rome: Studies in Acts)

Notice how Luke in effect gives us a descriptive definition of "**devout**" as (1) one who feared God, (2) gave many alms and (3) prayed regularly. In Acts 10:22 Luke adds to Cornelius laudable description referring to him as "a righteous ([dikaios](#) - yet he is not

yet justified by faith. Cf Simeon in Lk 2:25+) and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews."

**Longenecker** - In sum, Cornelius was a noble and spiritually sensitive Roman army officer, who seems to fit Virgil's picture of the Gentile world as one that "stretched out its hands in longing for the other shore" (Aeneid 6.314). (Expositor's Bible Commentary - 1981)

**Barclay** - Cornelius was a **God-fearer**. In New Testament times this had become almost a technical term for Gentiles who, weary of the gods and the immoralities and the frustration of their ancestral faiths, had attached themselves to the Jewish religion. They did not accept circumcision and the Law; but they attended the synagogue and they believed in one God and in the pure ethic of Jewish religion. Cornelius then was a man who was seeking after God, and as he sought God, God found him.

**Larkin** - Luke does not quite use "God-fearer" (hos phoboumenos or hos seboumenos) as a technical term (Acts 10:2, 22, 35; 13:16, 26, 43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7). But it does point to that class of monotheistic Gentiles who worshiped the God of the Old Testament, kept the Old Testament ethical code, attended synagogue, observed the sabbath and practiced the main requirements of Jewish piety (Levinskaya 1990). Because they refused to become proselytes, Jews still regarded them as ritually unclean Gentiles. ( [The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

The **fear** that Cornelius had of Yahweh reminds us of Solomon's descriptions that "fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Pr 1:7) and "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Pr 9:10). Cornelius' fear of God was about to lead to full knowledge of the Holy One and His way of salvation!

**Feared God with all his household** - What is the Holy Spirit teaching us? It is a testimony to the winsome, winning character of Cornelius (**THOUGHT**: O, to be such a holy aroma to our family and friends! cf 2 Cor 2:14-16) He led them by example. His trust in Yahweh along with this integrity (his talk matched his walk), led his family (including his household slaves) to follow, so they too became "fearers" of the living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Keep in mind, much like modern day America (with its manifold, variegated "*gods and goddesses*"), his children would have had a plethora of pagan gods and goddesses to choose from (cf [List of Roman "deities"](#)), but they chose Yahweh. And notice Cornelius "evangelistic" act in Acts 10:24 where he "called together his relatives and close friends" to hear what Peter had to say. I have frequently read (and heard from various pulpits) a common, cute saying "Go into the world and preach the Gospel. If necessary use words." Yes, our lives are to "make room" for our lips. Our good actions are to make room for the good news. But Cornelius presents us with the proper pattern - a good man is to be a gospeling man. Of course, in this case Cornelius did not yet know the Gospel, but he clearly knew Peter had some sort of news and he wanted all to hear. And so I say Cornelius gives us a good pattern to pursue. This ancient Roman Centurion "[throws down the gauntlet](#)"! Brothers and sisters, will we accept his challenge and be bold "gospeling" men and women for the glory and honor of our King?

As R C H Lenski says "This was more than just family religion; this man's faith reached out all around him."

**Jack Andrews on all his household** - Men: Our families will not by chance come to God! It is our responsibility to lead them to the Lord. Take the initiative and stay with it and be consistent. ([Expository Sermons](#))

**Fear** ([5399](#))([phobeo](#) from [phobos](#) = fear; English = [phobia](#)) means to be in an apprehensive state that can range from mild uneasiness to stark terror as when one is frightened, terrified or alarmed. However, in the NT and in the case of Cornelius the idea is that of reverential awe rather than cringing fright. This type of fear is expressed by one who senses that they are in the presence of an infinitely superior Being. This attitude of reverential fear is what motivated the early church to seek to faithfully serve the Lord (Acts 9:31).

Puritan **Charles Bridges** defines **fear of God** as "that affectionate reverence by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's law. His wrath is so bitter, and His love so sweet; that hence springs an earnest desire to please Him, and—because of the danger of coming short from his own weakness and temptations—a holy watchfulness and fear, 'that he might not sin against Him.'" (ED: cf Joseph's attitude in Ge 39:9)

It is notable that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus addressed **almsgiving** and **prayer** two of the cardinal teachings of the Jews (fasting being the third - Mt 6:1-18) correcting their misunderstanding that these practices in any way gained them righteous standing before God. And so here a Gentile is practicing these disciplines from a sincere heart and not in an attempt to merit righteousness before God.

Notice his **faith** (God fearer), his **family** (followed his lead), and his  **fervor** (alms, prayers).

**John Phillips** writes "'Faith without works is dead" (James 2:26+), says James. This man exhibited his faith Godward by his works manward." (Exploring Acts)

**And gave many alms to the Jewish people** (cf Acts 10:22) - This act did not merit salvation but in context is another piece of the evidence that substantiates the fact that Cornelius was sincerely pursuing God. **Gave...alms** is the very phrase used by Jesus in Mt 6:2 describing the right and the wrong way to give alms! Luke could have said Cornelius gave many alms, but what is more striking is that this Gentile Roman officer gave his alms to Jews! We need more "race blind," "color blind" men like Cornelius!

Cornelius' actions toward the Jews remind us of Jesus' words of commendation when He returns as King of kings to rule and reign for one thousand years (cf Mt 25:31, 32 note word "nations" - see [comment](#) or [here](#))...

"The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, **to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine** (THE JEWS), even the least of them, you did it to Me.' (Mt 25:40)

**Alms (charity)** (1654)([eleemosune](#)) refers to sympathy, compassion and in the NT refers to the "exercise of benevolent goodwill" (BDAG), the benevolent activity toward the poor in the form of donations, almsgiving, charitable giving. **See more detailed discussion of almsgiving** in discussion of Dorcas' **charity (alms** - same Greek word [eleemosune](#)). Luke has 10 of the 11 NT uses of **alms** - Lk. 11:41; Lk. 12:33; Acts 3:2; Acts 3:3; Acts 3:10; Acts 9:36; Acts 10:2; Acts 10:4; Acts 10:31; Acts 24:17.

**And prayed to God continually** - **A T Robertson** says "Begging of God." This is an amazing statement, but we know that even believers go to God's throne of grace through our Great High Priest. And yet here Luke states Cornelius prayed to God continually. I know believers (some I know very well) who do not pray without ceasing! (Gulp!) God seems to clearly have heard his prayers. Although, he was unlikely to have been praying for a vision, God gave him a divine vision. God knows the heart and He saw this man's sincere seeking. This is made clear in Acts 10:4 when he heard in the vision "**Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God.**" Gentiles who were pagans prayed to false gods, but Luke specifically says Cornelius prayed to the true and living God. He responded to the light and truth that had been revealed to him about God, and as the next verse shows, God gave him more light, more truth. This is an immutable principle and truth about God.

**Larkin on prayed...continually** (aka *regular prayer*) - the Jewish practice was three times a day: m. Berakot 4:1; compare Dan 6:10. ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Prayed** (beseech, request) (1189)([deomai](#) from **deo** = to bind) means to ask for something with the sense of pleading, beseeching or begging, even asking for with a sense of urgency and a sense of need. When used in the context of prayer **deomai** means to make petition, to plead, to ask in prayer, to implore (pray for earnestly) and emphasizes the existence of a need. **Deomai** is a strong way to ask for something - a leper imploring Jesus to heal him (Lk 5:12), a father's desperate plea to Jesus to cast a demon out of his son (Lk 9:38). The related word [deesis](#), means prayer for a particular need (supplication). What was Cornelius' greatest need? Of course, his greatest need was the same as that of every man born in Adam (Ro 5:12+) and that was the need to be reborn by the Spirit and to be transferred from in Adam to in Christ (1 Cor 15:22, Jn 3:3-6).

One other note of interest is that Luke uses **deomai** and not [proseuchomai](#), which carries with it a notion of worship whereas **deomai** emphasizes the intensity of the request.

**Continually** is interesting in that it is two Greek words, the prepositoin **dia** (through) and **pantos** (all), which literally means "through all" and the idea is not so much praying *constantly* as praying *regularly* and so that Cornelius was making prayer his way of life. Prayer for Cornelius was not "hit or miss," but more "hit" than "miss." **Dennis Hamm** writes "In at least four places in the NT (Luke 24:53; Acts 10:2; Heb 9:6; Heb 13:15), the phrase **dia pantos** seems to reflect a cultic background like that assumed in the Septuagint uses of the term. For that reason, in these contexts **dia pantos** should be translated as "**regularly**" rather than the more common translations of "**constantly**" or "**without ceasing**." (Expository Times, 2004, Vol 116, pp 50-54).

**Bruce Barton** - GOD SEEKS Cornelius's story demonstrates God's willingness to use extraordinary means to reach those who desire to know him. God does not play favorites and does not hide from those who want to find him. God sent his Son "to seek and save those ... who are lost" (Luke 19:10NLT) because he loves the whole world—and that includes Peter, Cornelius, and you. Even at this very moment, the Father is drawing men and women, boys, and girls to himself (John 6:44). Watch for signs today of God at work in the heart of someone who is spiritually hungry. (Life Application Commentary [Acts - Page 170](#))

**John Stott**: It is difficult for us to grasp the impassable gulf which yawned in those days between the Jews on the one hand and the Gentiles (including even the "god-fearers") on the other. Not that the Old Testament itself countenanced such a divide. On the contrary, alongside its oracles against the hostile nations, it affirmed that God had a purpose for them. By choosing and blessing one family, he intended to bless all the families of the earth. . . . The tragedy was that Israel twisted the doctrine of election into one of favoritism, became filled with racial pride and hatred, despised Gentiles as "dogs", and developed traditions which kept them apart. No orthodox Jew would ever enter the home of a Gentile, even a God-fearer, or invite such into his home.

**Jack Andrew** writes that "Jack Taylor said prayerlessness is "that state in which a person prays less than he ought, less than the Father desires, and less than that one himself knows he should."" ([Expository Sermons](#))

**Wiersbe:** It is interesting to see how religious a person can be and still not be saved. Certainly, Cornelius was sincere in his obedience to God's law, his fasting, and his generosity to the Jewish people. . . The difference between Cornelius and many religious people today is this: he knew that his religious devotion was not sufficient to save him. . . Cornelius was asking God to show him the way of salvation. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#) )

## PRAYER IN ACTS

1. Acts 1:13-14 -11 apostles and others - content not specified - answer not specified
2. Acts 1:24-25 -120 disciples -Discerning God's will for Judas' replacement - Matthias chosen
3. Acts 4:24-31 -12 apostles - Praise - Room shakes, filling with Spirit, empowered for bold witness
4. Acts 7:59-60 - Stephen - Final words before execution - Eternal reward
5. Acts 8:14-17 - Peter and John - For Samaritans to receive the Spirit - Samaritans received the Spirit
6. Acts 9:11 - Paul - Not specified - Saul's blindness healed and filled with the Spirit
7. Acts 9:40 - Peter - For Tabitha to raise from the dead - Tabitha is raised from the dead
8. Acts 10:1-8 - Cornelius - content not specified - Vision
9. Acts 10:9-16 - Peter - Ritual midday prayers - Vision
10. Acts 12:5, 12 - The Jerusalem Church - Peter's imprisonment - Peter supernaturally rescued
11. Acts 13:3 - The Antioch Church leadership - content not specified - Saul and Barnabas commissioned for 1st missionary journey
12. Acts 14:23 - Paul and Barnabas - Commendation of church elders - Not specified
13. Acts 16:25 - Paul and Silas - Their imprisonment - Supernatural rescue, salvation of jailer
14. Acts 20:36 - Paul and Ephesian elders - Paul's farewell - content not specified
15. Acts 28:8 - Paul - Publius' father - Publius' father healed

**Acts 10:3 About the ninth hour of the day he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, "Cornelius!"**

KJV 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.

- **saw** Job 4:15,16; Daniel 9:20,21
- **about** Acts 10:30; 3:1; Mt 27:46; Luke 23:44-46
- **an angel of God** Acts 5:19; 11:13; 12:7-11; 27:23; Luke 1:11; 2:10,11,13; Heb 1:4,14
- **Cornelius** Acts 9:4; Ex 33:17; Isaiah 45:4
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### A DIVINE VISION BRINGS AN ANGELIC VISITATION

**About the ninth hour of the day** - This is about 3 PM in the afternoon, not necessarily a strange time for a vision, for it was (for Jews and one like Cornelius who likely followed their custom of regular prayer) the time for afternoon prayer. (cf Ex 29:39, 41; 1 Ki. 18:29; Ps. 5:11; Da 6:10). In Acts 3:1+ Luke recorded that "Peter and John were going up to the temple **the ninth hour**, the hour of prayer." This substantiates the premise that Cornelius had incorporated some of the practices of the Jews. He was praying in his own house (Acts 10:30).

The OT describes another angelic visitation at a similar time Daniel recording that "while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man [Gabriel](#), whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness **about the time of the evening offering.**" (Da 9:21)

Luke alludes to the **ninth hour** in describing Jesus' crucifixion...

It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last. (Lk 23:44-46+)

**Kistemaker** - Two worlds meet in the encounter of the angel and Cornelius: the sinless world in which the angel moves and the sinful world to which Cornelius belongs.

**James Rosscup** explains God's hearing the prayer of an unsaved person - Even a person who is not actually saved, but highly interested, can pray. Many do, and they have their varying beliefs and reasons. The passage is not a plug for the effectiveness of such prayer. Yet it does reflect God's gracious working in a case where He wills to draw a person to come to faith (cf. Jn. 6:44, 65). God is sensitive to such prayer and can use even it as part of His means for ushering a person on to Him, as Acts 10:31 and the context illustrate....If God took note of prayer from a man who had not yet believed (Acts 10:43; 11:14), how precious must be the memorial of the saved who are tenacious in prayer (Lk. 2:36-38)!(An Exposition of Prayer in the Bible)

**He clearly saw in a vision**- Plainly. Manifestly. This vision was not an [illusion](#), not a distortion of his senses, distorting his perception of reality (we all have had those!). In broad daylight and wide awake God gave Cornelius this vision and thus there was no ambiguity about what he saw, because God is not a God of confusion (1 Cor 14:33)! Luke gives special attention to the visions to Cornelius and Peter repeating the account of this vision to Cornelius (Acts 10:3, 10:30; 11:13) and the vision to Peter (Acts 10:1-16, 28; 11:5). Cornelius gives us more detail that this angel was "a man (in the Bible [angels are always depicted as masculine](#)) stood before me in shining garments (WHICH EXPLAINS WHY HE BECAME **MUCH ALARMED** - Acts 10:4)." (Acts 10:30)

It is interesting to notice the two "**double vision**" parallels: (1) Saul (Acts 9:11-16) and Ananias (Acts 9:12) (2) Visions of Cornelius (Acts 10:3) and Peter (Acts 10:10-16).

**Clearly** (5320)([phaneros](#) from [phanerós](#) = apparent, manifest) is an adverb which has two meanings in the NT. Here in Acts 10:3, the sense is plainly, distinctly, in contrast to what is indistinct. This angelic vision was very clear to Cornelius. The other sense is publicly which is in contrast to what is done in secret. There are no uses in the Septuagint.

Here are the other 2 uses of [phaneros](#) in the NT...

Mark 1:45 But he (healed leper - Mk 1:40-44) went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer **publicly** enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

John 7:10 But when His brothers had gone up to the feast, then He Himself also went up, not **publicly**, but as if, in secret (BECAUSE OF HIS ENEMIES).

**Vision** (3705)([horama](#) from [horáo](#) = to see, behold; English - [panorama](#)) describes literally that which is seen, as opposed to a figment of one's imagination (Mt 17:9; Ac 7:31; 10:3, 17, 19; 18:9). It is something that is viewed with one's eye. It describes a supernatural vision used to give divine communication and is distinct from a dream.

**Larkin** makes a good point regarding the four episodes of visions in Acts noting that "Each time they function to give divine guidance for the advance of God's mission, especially in the face of human resistance or uncertainty (Ananias and Paul, Acts 9:10, 12; Gentile Cornelius and Jewish apostle Peter, Acts 10:3, 17, 19; 11:5; Paul and the European mission, Acts 16:9-10; Paul and the evangelization of Corinth, Acts 18:9; compare Acts 5:19-20; 8:26). ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**An angel of God who had just come in** - Note that this is not "**THE Angel of the LORD**," as described in the OT but is "**AN**" angel of God, former being a Christophany or pre-incarnate appearance of Christ in the OT, the latter being one of the angelic hosts created by Christ. Note also that God does not send an angel to preach the Gospel to Cornelius, for that is not their commission (but see possible exception in Rev 14:6,7<sup>±</sup>).

**Chan Wei Guan** - God sent an angel to tell Cornelius to go and send for Peter because he had the message of God. God used men to witness the Gospel; God did not use the holy angels. The holy angels cannot understand what sin is; they cannot understand why Jesus Christ, the Son of God whom they adored and worshipped, had to die for humanity. They just do not know how to open their mouth and tell a sinner, "Let me explain to you what sin is?" It is beyond them. It is easier for a sinner to tell another sinner what sin is just as it is easier for a beggar to tell another beggar where to find food.

**Angel** (32)([aggelos/angelos](#) possibly from [ago](#) = to bring) literally means a messenger (one who bears a message - Lk 1:11, 2:9, etc or does an errand). Most of the NT uses refer to heavenly angels (messengers) who are supernatural, transcendent beings with power to carry out various tasks.

Cornelius' angelic assistance is a good example of the writer of Hebrews' description...

"Are they (ANGELS) not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (CORNELIUS WOULD SOON "INHERIT SALVATION)" (Hebrews 1:14+)

**Angels** occur 21 times in **Acts** - Acts 5:19; Acts 6:15; Acts 7:30; Acts 7:35; Acts 7:38; Acts 7:53; Acts 8:26; Acts 10:3; Acts 10:7;

Acts 10:22; Acts 11:13; Acts 12:7; Acts 12:8; Acts 12:9; Acts 12:10; Acts 12:11; Acts 12:15; Acts 12:23; Acts 23:8; Acts 23:9; Acts 27:23

**And said to him, "Cornelius!** - God's messenger knew Cornelius' name. God knows your name.

**Malcolm Muggeridge** said that "All happenings, great and small, are parables whereby God speaks....The art of life is to get the message."

**J Vernon McGee** - (Cornelius) is an example of a man who lived up to the light which he had. John 1:9 says this of Jesus: "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This centurion had not met Jesus Christ nor come into His presence, but he was living up to the light that he had. Paul is referring to those who do not live by the light they have in Romans 1:19–20: "*Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*" This is God's answer to that oft-repeated question, "*What about the poor pagan, that 'good' heathen, who wants to know God but never had a chance? Is he lost?*" **The answer is that God will get light to such a person.** God will enable him to hear the Gospel. Now how will God get the Gospel to Cornelius? The barriers seem insurmountable. The church at this time—and for the first eight years—was exclusively Jewish. These Christian Jews were still going to the temple and observing many Jewish customs. They could do that under grace because they were trusting Christ. Then the Gospel broke over into Samaria. The Jews in Jerusalem were surprised, but they recognized the hand of God in this. Now how is God going to open the door of the Gospel to the Gentiles? Paul is to be the great missionary to the Gentiles, but God has Paul out in the desert in Arabia, training him there. It is Simon Peter who must open the door to the Gentiles. God used perhaps the most prejudiced and religious bigot, the greatest extremist of the day. Obviously, the Holy Spirit directed every move in getting the Gospel to the Gentiles. **My friend, all genuine Christian work is directed by the Holy Spirit. No other work amounts to anything. The Holy Spirit had to work in the heart of the Gentile; the Holy Spirit had to work in the heart of the Jew.** The Holy Spirit directed the bringing of the gospel to the gentile world. (Through the Bible)

#### Related Resources:

- [Does God still give visions to people today?](#)
- [How did God use dreams and visions in the Bible?](#)

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**GETTING OUR ATTENTION** - Cornelius had a vision featuring a heavenly messenger. God spoke to other Bible characters through a variety of means—the burning bush of Moses (Exodus 3:1-4); the talking donkey of Balaam (Numbers 22:21-30); the gentle whisper heard by Elijah (1 Kings 19:11-14); the strange object lessons of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 13:1-11). Simply put, God speaks to His people in remarkably different ways—through the written Scriptures, through the words of others, through circumstances and events. It is up to us to listen, to be perceptive, to be alert. **What is God trying to say to you today?** (Life Application Commentary)

**THOUGHT** - May God grant to each of us who read this story a heart to respond even as did young Samuel when he finally realized it was the LORD speaking to him. In Jesus' Name. Amen

"Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, **"Speak, for Your servant (Lxx = [doulos](#)) is listening** (Lxx = present tense)." (1 Sa 3:10)

**Acts 10:4 And fixing his gaze on 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.**

KJV 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.

- **fixing his gaze on him** Daniel 10:11; Luke 1:12,29; 24:5
- **What** Acts 9:5,6; 22:10; 1 Samuel 3:10
- **Your prayers** Acts 10:31; 2 Chr 6:33; 32:24; Ps 141:2; Isaiah 43:26; Mal 3:16; Luke 1:13; Php 4:6
- **and alms** Isaiah 45:19; Php 4:18; Heb 6:10; 13:16
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**HIS PRAYERS ASCENDED TO THE THRONE  
LIKE AN AROMA OF INCENSE**



**And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed** - In short, his eyes were riveted by the revelation and he was much afraid, which is saying something for a veteran Roman soldier who had clearly worked his way up through the ranks and must have been battle hardened!

**Lenski** points out that "This is quite regularly the effect produced when sinful men come into visible contact with the other world."

Compare Zacharias' similar reaction in Lk 1:11-12+ "And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and **fear gripped him.**"

**Fixing his gaze** (816)(**atenizo** from from **atenes** = strained from **a** = intensifies + **teino** = to stretch, extend or strain) means to look intently, to fix one's gaze on something, to stare at something, to gaze earnestly, to look straight at something, to fasten one's eyes upon.

Luke has the majority of the NT uses of **atenizo** -

Lk. 4:20; Lk. 22:56; Acts 1:10; Acts 3:4; Acts 3:12; Acts 6:15; Acts 7:55; Acts 10:4; Acts 11:6; Acts 13:9; Acts 14:9; Acts 23:1; 2 Co. 3:7; 2 Co. 3:13

**Much alarmed** (terrified) (1719)(**emphobos** from **en** = in + **phobos** = fear) literally means "in fear" and then alarmed, startled, terrified, thrown into fear, very afraid. All five uses are associated in some way with supernatural manifestations. Used in 5 verses - Of the women who found Jesus' tomb empty and were confronted by 2 angels (Lk 24:5) Of the 11 disciples who were frightened when Jesus suddenly stood in the room as the 2 on the road to Emmaus were relating what had occurred (Lk 24:33-36). Of Cornelius reaction to the angel. Of the reaction of Felix fearful reaction as Paul "was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come." (Acts 24:25). Finally of those in Jerusalem who were not killed in the great earthquake, their terror causing them to give "glory to the God of heaven." (Rev 11:13). There are no uses in the Septuagint.

**He said, "What is it, Lord?"** - "What is it, sir?" (Act 10:4NLT)

**Lord** (2962)(**kurios**) in this context is used as a respectful designation used in addressing persons of varying social or political rank, and equivalent to our sir (See Mt 27:63; Jn 12:21; Acts 16:30). **Kurios** in the Gospels is often in the sense of someone addressing a person as a superior.

**Robertson** - His prayers and his alms proved his sincerity and won the ear of God. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**And he said to him, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God"** - cf Acts 10:31 "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God." At first reading this sounds as if the angel is saying that Cornelius' alms and prayers merited something from God. Of course that is not the nature of the grace of God which cannot be earned. However Jeremiah 29:13 (in a promise given to Judah but applicable to any seeking heart) says "You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart." Proverbs 15:3 says "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good." In 2 Chr 16:9 we read "the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." In short the omniscient God saw the heart of the Gentile Cornelius.

**Bengel** has an interesting note on prayers and alms noting that prayers "precede: the alms follow, though in respect to men they are the more conspicuous of the two and therefore are put first in Acts 10:2...O how many things fall upon the earth, not ascend!—as a memorial We should pray and do good, even though we do not immediately feel (perceive) the effect.

**Kistemaker** - Since Cornelius was a God-fearer and not a Jewish convert, he was barred from presenting offerings to God in the Jerusalem temple. But his prayers and his acts of generosity to his fellow man had been accepted by God.

**Jack Arnold** adds "God was merely taking note of a hungry heart, a searching soul, for the Bible does say, "He who seeks finds" (Matt. 7:8). God never says, "Seek Me in vain!" No, if a man will follow the light he does have, he will receive more light until he finds Christ and then his search for salvation will end." ([Acts 10:1-23a The Seeking Sinner and the Bigoted Believer](#))

**Larkin** - What we see emerging to this point is the basic outline of the **"more light" principle of God's redemptive mercy** (compare Lk 8:18+ = "*take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given*"; Lk 19:26+ = "*to everyone who has, more shall be given*"). Cornelius has responded in faith and obedience to the "light" he has received, as evidenced by his piety. He fears the one true God, prays to him regularly and acts in love to the needy among God's people. Such obedience is not a "*works righteousness*" that earns salvation. This we can see by God's response. He does not declare Cornelius saved. Rather, he grants him "more light" by which he and his household may be saved (Acts 11:14). God's response is embodied in a command to send for the messenger who carries the gospel, the essential "more light" (Acts 4:12). **What have we done with the light we have received?** ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**A T Robertson** adds that Cornelius' "prayers and his alms proved his sincerity and won the ear of God." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**J Vernon McGee** - Now I do want you to notice that there are certain things that do count before God. These are things which can in no way merit salvation, but they are things which God notes. The prayers of Cornelius and his alms had come up for a memorial before God, and God brought the gospel to him. Wherever there is a man who seeks after God as Cornelius did, that man is going to hear the gospel of the grace of God. God will see that he gets it. (See [Thru the Bible Vol. 40: Church History Acts 1-14](#))

**Rackham** comments - The Jews had rightly perceived that the real punishment to be dreaded was to be forgotten or forsaken of God (Cp. Mt 27:46); and their constant prayer was 'Remember me, O God,' their anxious desire to find something to serve for a memorial of them before God. In particular this name of memorial had been given to that part of the meal offering—the handful of flour with oil and incense—which the priest burnt upon the altar and which ascended unto the Lord as a sweet savour. The fragrance of the incense called Israel to remembrance before JEHOVAH, as the sweet smell of Noah's sacrifice reminded him of Noah (Ge 8:21,22). This offering then accompanied the daily sacrifice and putting the Lord in remembrance made the sacrifice acceptable to him. It is evident that this was a foreshadowing of the 'perpetual memory' of the sacrifice of Christ which, to use human speech, by reminding the FATHER of the oblation upon the cross makes the Christian prayer and sacrifice acceptable and efficacious. One of the Psalmists however had seen that prayer itself was a sweet savour, when he said (Ps 141:2) "**May my prayer be counted as incense before You; The lifting up of my hands as the evening offering** (ED: Which would have been at the ninth hour here with Cornelius). So in the case of Cornelius, who as a Gentile had no share in the daily offering in the Temple, his prayers and alms went up to God and served as a memorial before him. God then remembered Cornelius, but the revelation for which he prayed was not to be given directly but like Saul he must be told by the church. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Alms (charity)** (1654) see discussion of [eleemosune](#)

**Prayers** (4335) ([proseuche](#) from **pros** = toward or immediately before + **euchomai** = to pray or vow) is the more general word for prayer and is used only of prayer to God. The prefix **pros** would convey the sense of being immediately before Him and hence the ideas of adoration, devotion, and worship. The basic idea is to bring something, and in prayer this pertains to bringing up prayer requests. In early Greek culture an offering was brought with a prayer that it be accepted. Later the idea was changed slightly, so that the thing brought to God was a prayer. In later Greek, prayers appealed to God for His presence. **Proseuche** is used 37 times in the NT (see below). Note the concentration of prayer in the **early church!** (Acts 1:14; Acts 2:42; Acts 3:1; Acts 6:4; Acts 10:4; Acts 10:31; Acts 12:5; Acts 16:13; Acts 16:16).

**Gilbert on alms have ascended** - What was given to men was regarded by God as a sacrifice to Him. (compare with Php 4:18+ = Paul, a Jewish believer, is commending the predominantly Gentile believers at Philippi for their generous support of his ministry and comparing their "offering" to the OT sweet-aroma offerings as in Lev. 1:9+).

**Ascended** (305) ([anabaino](#) from **ana** = upwards, up, as a pref. denotes up, again, back + **basis** = a foot) means to go up, to ascend, cause to ascend from a lower to a higher place. **A T Robertson** adds ascended or "**Gone up** like the smoke of incense in sacrifices." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

Both these words **ascended** and **memorial** recall the language of sacrifices. For example, in Leviticus 2:2+ Moses writes

"He shall then bring it to Aaron's sons the priests; and shall take from it his handful of its fine flour and of its oil with all of its frankincense. And the priest shall offer it up in smoke as its **memorial** (Lxx = [mnemosunon](#)) portion on the altar, an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD."

**Swindoll** adds that "The angel assured the soldier that his actions had been received by God with the same regard as the sacrifices of Hebrew worshipers; the image created by "ascended" hints at smoke rising from an altar (Acts 10:4; cf. Ge 8:21; Ex 29:18, 25; Lev. 8:28)." (see [Insights on Acts](#))

**The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia** says that "**Memorial** is a sacrificial term, that which brings the offerer into remembrance before God (ED: cf. Cornelius), or brings God into favorable remembrance with the offerer (**ED**: cf. "**in remembrance of Me**" in 1 Cor 11:24, 25); it is used of the burning of a portion of the cereal offering, on the altar (Lev 2:2, Lev 2:9, 16; 5:12, Nu 5:26)...."**Memorial**" occurs in the NT as the tr of [mnemosunon](#), "a token of remembrance" (Mt 26:13; Mk 14:9; Acts 10:4, "Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God," which suggests the sense in which "**memorial**" was used in the sacrificial ritual, and also the "better sacrifices" of the new dispensation)." (cf. Php 4:18+)

Whereas the pagan Romans and Greeks were offering up sacrifices to their so-called gods and goddesses, this Roman was "offering up sacrifices" with his lips (cf. Heb 13:15) to the true and living God and God acknowledged the prayers of his heart.

**Memorial** (3422) ([mnemosunon](#) from **mnaomai** = remember) is something that causes or preserves the remembrance of a person or thing. A memorial is "a memorial that which keeps alive the memory of someone or something. In the Septuagint [mnemosunon](#) is

used to describe a variety of **memorials** - God's "**Memorial Name**" (Ex 3:15), Passover (Ex 12:14 = "this day will be a **memorial** to you"), to mark Israel's crossing the Jordan River (Josh 4:7 = "So these stones shall become a **memorial** [Lxx = [mnemosunon](#)] to the sons of Israel forever"). In Malachi 3:16+ we see "a book of **remembrance** (Lxx = [mnemosunon](#)) was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name." In Ps 112:6 we read "The righteous will be **remembered** (Lxx = [mnemosunon](#)) forever."

**THOUGHT** - Have you ever thought of your prayers as a "memorial before God?" They are! John alludes to this in Rev 5:8+ writing that in Heaven there are "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." And again in Rev 8:3+ John describes "the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne." This is surely where the prayers of Cornelius were deposited. If we really believed the truth (and it is true) that God in some way remembers our prayers and they are before Him in Heaven, would that not motivate us to pray over everything and at all times? (cf 1 Th 5:17+). I am convicted as I write this note! See related discussion about how to store up for yourself treasure in heaven - Praying for People from Every Tribe, Tongue, People and Nation

There are only 2 other NT uses and both describe the woman who anointed Jesus prior to His crucifixion...

Matthew 26:13 "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done (Mt 26:12) will also be spoken of in **memory** of her."

Mark 14:9 "Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be spoken of in **memory** of her."

**Mnemosunon** - 43 verses in **Septuagint** - Exod. 3:15; Exod. 12:14; Exod. 13:9; Exod. 17:14; Exod. 28:12; Exod. 28:23; Exod. 30:16; Exod. 39:7; Lev. 2:2; Lev. 2:9; Lev. 2:16; Lev. 5:12; Lev. 6:15; Lev. 23:24; Num. 5:15; Num. 5:18; Num. 5:26; Num. 16:40; Num. 31:54; Deut. 32:26; Jos. 4:7; Neh. 2:20; Est. 1:1; Est. 2:23; Est. 8:12; Est. 9:27; Est. 9:28; Est. 9:32; Est. 10:2; Job 2:9; Job 18:17; Ps. 9:6; Ps. 34:16; Ps. 102:12; Ps. 109:15; Ps. 112:6; Ps. 135:13; Isa. 23:18; Isa. 57:8; Isa. 66:3; Hos. 12:5; Hos. 14:7; Mal. 3:16

**Bruce Barton** comments that "The angel painted Cornelius's actions as offerings to God. That is a beautiful picture of what our properly motivated acts of faith are like—they ascend to God like the smoke of the sacrifice. This is the language of the Levitical sacrifice (see Leviticus 2:2), commonly applied to our prayers and good deeds done in Christ's name (see Philippians 4:18; Hebrews 13:15-16)." (Life Application Commentary [Acts - Page 172](#))

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**Jack Arnold** gives his testimony - **My own quest for salvation was something like that of Cornelius's search.** I was born in a pagan, non-Christian home, but from my youth I knew there was a God. In my youth I attended the Mormon Church, the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Christian Science Church. At one point in high school, I said the Lord's Prayer every night. I went to a liberal church occasionally and attended a youth group regularly, but I never heard the Gospel. I even did a few good deeds. In college I was still searching and I heard about Christ my freshman year. At that time I made some kind of superficial, external profession of Christ, but I was not saved. I even gave my testimony and people were blessed, but I was not converted. Finally, in my junior year at college, Christ came into my life and I took Him as my Lord and Savior. From that time, I stopped searching for a personal relationship with God because I had found it through Christ. ([Acts 10:1-23a The Seeking Sinner and the Bigoted Believer](#))

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**Warren Wiersbe** - In many respects, John Wesley was like Cornelius. He was a religious man, a church member, a minister, and the son of a minister. He belonged to a "religious club" at Oxford, the purpose of which was the perfecting of the Christian life. Wesley served as a foreign missionary, but even as he preached to others, he had no assurance of his own personal salvation. On May 24, 1738, Wesley reluctantly attended a small meeting in London where someone was reading aloud from Martin Luther's commentary on Romans. "About a quarter before nine," Wesley wrote in his journal, "while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." The result was the great Wesleyan revival that not only swept many into the kingdom, but also helped transform British society through Christian social action. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

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**A GIFT TO GOD** - Cornelius was generous in helping the poor. Here are eight common excuses for not helping the poor and needy:

- (1) They don't deserve help. They got themselves into poverty; let them get themselves out.
- (2) God's call to help the poor applies to another time.
- (3) I don't know any people like this.
- (4) I have my own needs.

- (5) Any money I give will be wasted, stolen, or spent. The poor will never see it.
- (6) I may become a victim myself.
- (7) I don't know where to start, and I don't have time.
- (8) My little bit won't make any difference.

Instead of making excuses, ask what can be done to help. Does your church have programs to help the needy? Could you volunteer to work with a community group that fights poverty? As one individual, you may not be able to accomplish much, but join up with similarly motivated people, and watch mountains begin to move. (Life Application Commentary)

**Acts 10:5 "Now **dispatch** some men to Joppa and **send** for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter;**

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

- **dispatch** Acts 10:32; 9:38; 15:7; 16:9
- **who is also called Peter** Mark 3:16; John 1:42
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## TWO SIMONS DISTINGUISHED

**Now **dispatch** some men to Joppa and **send for**** - The angel like a military commander issues 2 quick orders to Cornelius. The verb **dispatch** (pempo) means "dispatch someone, whether human or transcendent being, usually for purposes of communication." Both **dispatch** and **send for** are in the aorist imperative, a command to do this with a sense of urgency. Do not delay!

- See map of [Caesarea Maritima which is about 36 miles north of Joppa](#)

**Send for** (3343) (**metapempo** from **metá** = after + **pémpō** = to send, dispatch) means to send after or for, to summon to oneself. Summon means to ask to come and so to invite to come. Five of the 8 NT uses refer to Cornelius sending for Peter (Acts 10:5; Acts 10:22; Acts 10:29; Acts 11:13) Only 2 uses in the Septuagint - Ge 27:45 ("Then I will send and get you from there"), Nu 23:7 (Balaam says "Balak, the king of Moab, brought me from Aram"). Felix "used to **send for** him (Paul) quite often." (Acts 24:26)

**Metapempo** - 8x in 8v - brought(1), brought here(1), send(3), sent(4). Acts 10:5; Acts 10:22; Acts 10:29; Acts 11:13; Acts 20:1; Acts 24:24; Acts 24:26; Acts 25:3

**A man named Simon, who is also called Peter** - Note this small detail. The angel specifies that he is so send not for Simon the tanner, but for Simon Peter. What a difference there would have been if he had sent for the former! Our omniscient God knows how to send the right person, with the right message, at the right time!

**Jack Arnold** - Notice how God gets the gospel to Cornelius. He did not do it through an angel. Why didn't God just have the angel tell Cornelius about Christ? Because God has commissioned men, not angels, to preach the good news of Christ to this world. God sent an angel to Cornelius but he tells him where he can find a man who can tell him about true salvation in Christ. God has ordained, beloved, that the gospel should be preached by men like you and me. What a humbling thought and what a high responsibility. ([Acts 10:1-23a The Seeking Sinner and the Bigoted Believer](#))

**John Phillips** adds that "World evangelism may be slower that way, but it is sweeter. The testimony of a believer has special weight. "I was once lost like you, but one day Jesus saved me." No angel can talk like that. If a man had a choice to go and hear one of God's saints preach or go and hear an angel preach, Cornelius could tell them what to do. "Go and hear the man," he would say. "I heard an angel, and he told me to send for Peter." (See [Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary - Page 195](#))

**Acts 10:6 he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea."**

KJV 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. (BOLD ONLY IN KJV)**

- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## "FOLLOW YOUR NOSE"

**He is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea**(cf Acts 9:43) - Tanners required a good supply of water. Tanners are also located outside the main city because of the smell associated with tanning. Regarding this, **McGee** quips that "The angel tells him where to find Peter. He doesn't need more of an address. **The odor of those hides down in that vat will lead them to the right place!**"

**Ray Stedman** has a similar comment - If you are looking for a man who is living with a tanner he is not very hard to find. Just follow your nose and you will find him. Tanners are those who tan hides, and it is a smelly occupation. To find Peter they merely need to follow their noses when they get to Joppa. ([Acts 9:32-10:23 The Cure For Death](#))

It is interesting that after being used by God to raise Tabitha from the dead, Peter did not return to Jerusalem or continue his itinerant ministry in Samaria but in fact **"stayed many days** in Joppa with a tanner named Simon." (Acts 9:43) And keep in mind the **"many days"** is at an [odoriferous](#) home from which you would think Peter would want to leave quickly! Surely this is part of **God's providential hand** orchestrating events in Joppa and Caesarea by the Sea (The Spirit was leading these events Acts 10:19,20) to assure the door for the Gospel would be flung open to the Gentles!

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! (Ro 11:33+)

**Staying** (3579) ([xenizo](#) from [xenos](#) = a stranger as a guest; Eng - [Xenophobia](#)) means to entertain a guest. Xenizo is used 4x in this story - Acts 10:6; Acts 10:18; Acts 10:23; Acts 10:32. Xenizo is used in the exhortation "**Do not neglect** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Heb 13:2)

**John Phillips** - The herald angel was able to give Cornelius exact instructions for finding him. God never forgets a name, never loses an address, never makes a mistake, never has a moment's hesitation in knowing where we are or what we are doing. There is something immensely comforting in that to God's saints. He who tracks the journeyings of a hundred billion stars in each of a hundred million galaxies, who knows the path, the history, and the destiny of every speck of dust in cosmic space, knows all about me! In all my comings and goings by land and sea and air, He knows exactly where to find me any time He wants me. He knows how to send people across my path and into my life to fulfill His own inscrutable purposes. Nothing is more interesting in the book of Acts than to see how God keeps track of men. Does He need a man to meet an Ethiopian traveling at high speed away from Jerusalem with a great longing in his soul? He knows where Philip lives. Does He need a man to find blind Saul of Tarsus on the street called Straight? He knows where Ananias lives. Does He need a man to give the gospel to a good but still unregenerate Roman centurion? He knows Peter's present, temporary address. ([Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary - Page 195](#))

**Larkin** adds that "God deals with Cornelius this way to demonstrate that salvation comes to all people in the same divinely commanded and enabled way: through human messengers who proclaim the gospel (Lk 24:47). We need to constantly remind ourselves of this, whether we are considering the claims of the gospel and are tempted to wait for some extraordinary experience, or whether having received it and become a witness to it we are tempted to become lax in evangelism, thinking that there may be other ways God will save people." ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**THOUGHT** - Let me ask you (under grace, not with any legalistic intent) when was the last time you shared the Gospel with another human being who will one day spend eternity in either heavenly bliss or endless punishment? I know it can be uncomfortable, for none of us like to be rebuffed. But you may be the "Simon Peter" which the Lord is calling to share with that co-worker, relative, classmate, etc.

**Acts 10:7 When the angel who was speaking to him had left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants,**

KJV 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;

- **two** Acts 10:2; Genesis 24:1-10,52; Judges 7:10; 1 Samuel 14:6,7; 1 Ti 6:2; Philemon 1:16
- **and a** Acts 10:1; Mt 8:9,10; Luke 3:14
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CORNELIUS A MAN OF PRAYER

## AND A MAN OF ACTION

**When the angel who was speaking to him had left** - The angel departed but this verb [aperchomai](#) does not signify that he immediately vanished.

**THOUGHT** - There is a practical application - When we have heard a "Word from the Lord," via His living Word and His Spirit in our morning quiet time or from one of His living servants speaking forth the Word of truth in a Sunday sermon, we are then **responsible** to act on what we have heard. Cornelius could have sat around and relished the remembrance of his supernatural encounter, but instead he took action based upon his revelation. We need to imitate his pattern! So often we hear a great message, let's say a sermon on guarding our tongue, and even before we are out of the parking lot, our flesh has taken control of our tongue and we are spewing forth harsh, even angry words! Beloved, it ought not to be that way. We always need to receive the Word in **humility** (humble, bowed hearts devoid of pride, etc), ever mindful that God's Word has the power to save our souls (cf James 1:21+ - Here I am applying James' words to "present tense salvation" or [progressive sanctification](#) in dependence on the Holy Spirit - see [Three Tenses of Salvation](#)).

**He summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants** - Cornelius as a centurion understood the importance of prompt obedience to commands and here he responds immediately. Cornelius reminds us of the centurion in Lk 7:8 who understood that orders were to be carried out promptly. He is a living, convicting example of the wise saying of aged Solomon

Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity or planning or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol where you are going. (Eccl 9:10).

**THOUGHT** - Holy prayer does not make a man passive, but, to the contrary, activates that man's senses to take holy actions. Is that one effect of prayer in your life?

**Summoned** ([5455](#)) ([phoneo](#) from **phone** = voice) means to utter in a loud voice, to cry out or speak loudly. **Phoneo** also conveys the sense of to speak with emphasis. Jesus cried out in Mt 23:46, an angel in Rev 14:18 while demons shrieked as they were cast out (Mk 1:26).

**Servants** ([3610](#)) ([oiketēs](#) from **oikos** = house) means one who lives in the same house as another and then household slaves or domestic servants not as strongly servile as **doulos**. Many of these household or domestic slaves were well educated and held responsible positions in the households and their number included doctors, teachers, musicians, actors and stewards over great estates. It is also notable that the **oiketēs** or household slave describes one who generally held a closer relation to the family than other slaves. He is one of the household or like a "member of the family." Luke's description in Acts 10:2NET says Cornelius was a "devout, God-fearing man, as was **all his household** (Greek = **oikos**)." In other words, these two servants were undoubtedly "God fearers" and thus fully deserving of Cornelius entrusting them with such an important mission.

The **soldier** is described as **devout** which is the same word ([eusebeōs](#) from **eu** = good + **sebo** = to worship) describing Cornelius in Acts 10:2. In English if a quality that someone has **rubs off**, it starts to affect another person so that they begin to manifest that quality. Clearly Cornelius' godly character had "**rubbed off**" on those around him.

**THOUGHT** - Does my character "rub off" on others or does it "rub" others the wrong way?

**Acts 10:8 and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.**

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

- **he sent** Acts 10:33; 26:19; Ps 119:59,60; Eccl 9:10; Gal 1:16
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CORNELIUS' UNFLINCHING OBEDIENCE

Cornelius' response illustrates the words of Psalm 119:60

I hastened and did not delay to keep Your commandments.

**And after he had explained everything to them - Everything** (all things) would have included the details of the dramatic angelic

visitor and his commands to send for Simon Peter with the specific address in Joppa (there must have been only one tanner by the sea). Cornelius trusted these men. He "took them fully into his confidence in this matter, showing him tactful as well as devout." (Gilbert) It is worth noting that the angel never tells Cornelius the reason for which Simon Peter was sent. **There is a principle** - As Jesus said in John 7:17 obedience will lead to greater revelation (in this case the salvation of their souls!). Sometimes God answers our prayers without giving us the full and final answer. But if we are sure that it is God Who has answered, then we need to obediently step out in faith that whatever He has told us so far is all we need to know. Cornelius' response reminds me of Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

**Comment** - So while Cornelius' faith although not yet placed in Jesus as His Savior, was still a faith that believed it was God answering his prayers. His seeking faith would soon be replaced by a saving faith!

**Explained** (made known) (1834)(**exegeomai** from **ek** = out or as an intensifier + **hegeomai** = lead) means literally to lead out, then to unfold, giving a detailed report. **Exegeomai** gives us our English **exegesis** which means an explanation or critical interpretation especially of a Biblical text.

**He sent them to Joppa** - Acts 10:33 says he sent for Peter "**immediately**." Cornelius like a good military man obeyed the order from his Superior and sent those under him to carry out this order. There is a timeless principle here - Obedience brings blessing. The contrasting "corollary" is Delayed obedience is disobedience! Is there some instruction or exhortation from God which you are delaying to obey? ([What is good biblical exegesis? What is the difference between exegesis and eisegesis?](#))

**Sent** (649)(**apostello** from **apo** = from, away from + **stello** = to withdraw from, avoid) means to send off or send forth as a representative or envoy. **Apostello** includes the idea of "to send off on a commission to do something as one's personal representative, with credentials furnished" (Wuest) To send upon some business (Mt. 2:16; 10:5; 20:2).

**Paul Apple** writes that "This is a great message for those like Cornelius that see themselves as outsiders – God cares about you."

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**THE GREAT CONDUCTOR** - The picture in Acts 10 (and really the whole Bible) is of God orchestrating big events and individual lives to bring about his eternal purposes. God has a vast, cosmic plan that He is bringing to pass, and He is using willing, obedient servants to make it happen. Are you in a place and of such a mind to be used by the Great Conductor? Get ready! God may send someone across your path today who needs the benefit of your wisdom or gifts. (Life Application Bible) (Related Resource - The Providence of God)

**Acts 10:9 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.**

KJV 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:

- **Peter** Acts 10:8; 11:5-10; 1 Samuel 9:25; Zephaniah 1:5; Mt 6:6; Mark 1:35; 6:46; 1 Ti 2:8
- **the sixth** Acts 6:4; Ps 55:17; Daniel 6:10; Mt 20:5; 27:45; Eph 6:18
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DIVINE CHOREOGRAPHY

**Choreography** "is the art or practice of designing sequences of movements of physical bodies (or their depictions) in which motion, form, or both are specified...The word choreography literally means "dance-writing" from the Greek words **chorea** (circular dance) and **graphe** (writing). It first appeared in the American English dictionary in the 1950's." Indeed, here in Acts 10 we find God writing a "circular dance," for Cornelius' men were sent to Joppa and would "circle back" with Simon Peter, "divine dance steps" which would mark the beginning of a new and glorious "Act" in God's grand "Play of Redemption," an "Act" which continues to this day, as God's Spirit is still seeking Gentiles in the unreached people groups, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Lk 19:10+) What an awesome God we worship and serve!

Here we see the Spirit of God preparing Peter for the task he would be called to accomplish.

**THOUGHT** - The Spirit of God prepares and equips God's people for the work of God to which they are called.

**G Campbell Morgan** - Two men are thirty miles apart. They must be brought together. In order that they may meet, while Joppa is busy with its trade, and Caesarea with its great shipping interests, and will know nothing of what is going on; God within the shadows keeping watch above His own, sends the angel to Caesarea, and grants the ecstatic trance in Joppa. They were thus brought together. ([Acts of the Apostles](#))

**On the next day** - The day after Cornelius had explained everything to them. Here is a summary of the chronology

Day 1 - Cornelius' Vision - at ninth hour the time of afternoon prayer and 3 men sent (Acts 10:3, 7, 8 )

Day 2 - Peter's vision - 3 envoys arrive (Acts 10:9, 17)

Day 3 - Peter leaves with men (Acts 10:23) - they apparently spent the night en route

Day 4 - Peter arrives at Cornelius (Acts 10:30) which was "Four days ago to this hour."

In this passage we see the providence of God at work, for while Cornelius's men were coming to get Peter, God was preparing Peter through a vision. This is beautiful example of the mysterious, comforting truth of **divine providence**. And so we clearly get a glimpse of the mysterious ways of God by which He "works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph 1:11+), for in this section He was working simultaneously in the heart of Cornelius and also in the heart of Peter. And so in Acts 10-11 we encounter one of the most illustrative examples of God's providence at work, as we see His supernatural activities occurring in two cities, to assure that the Gospel is taken to the Gentiles!

As [Gotquestions](#) explains

"**Divine providence** is the governance of God by which He, with wisdom and love, cares for and directs all things in the universe. The doctrine of divine providence asserts that God is in complete control of all things....Through divine providence God accomplishes His will. To ensure that His purposes are fulfilled, God governs the affairs of men and works through the natural order of things. The laws of nature are nothing more than God's work in the universe. The laws of nature have no inherent power; rather, they are the principles that God set in place to govern how things normally work. They are only "laws" because God decreed them. How does divine providence relate to human volition? We know that humans have a free will, but we also know that God is sovereign. How those two truths relate to each other is hard for us to understand, but we see examples of both truths in Scripture."

**Jack Andrews** - As they were journeying to Joppa they found that the Lord Jesus went before them to prepare the way for them. The Lord often goes before us to prepare our way for ministry. As the servants of Cornelius drew near the city God was already at work in the city of Joppa and God was already at work on His servant. They came to the place that they were sent to! When we obey God's simple instructions we find that God will use us, bless us, and bless others through us. We need to be where God wants us at and when God wants us there. God's got work for us to do on: A dirt road, a desert Road (Phillip), a country lane, a city street, a neighborhood housing project, a city apartment complex. We need to make sure that we are sensitive to the Holy Spirit of God to know where He wants us and when He wants us there. ([Expository Sermons](#))

**As they were on their way and approaching the city** - God was sovereignly orchestrating the timing of these separate events as He was preparing Peter for a most unexpected entourage of three Gentile visitors sent on mission by Cornelius. It is worth noting that Luke does not give us these three men's names, but God knows their names and He will reward their faithful service in carrying out Cornelius' instructions. I would posit that we will want to meet these three men when we are in Heaven to personally thank them for their mission, which was one piece of puzzle by which Gentiles (this is most of us reading this note!) were brought into the Kingdom of Heaven!

**THOUGHT** - Perhaps you feel unappreciated for you are anonymous to many as were these three in Acts 10. If so, this story should greatly encourage you if you are faithfully fulfilling the mission you know God has given you to accomplish (cf Eph 2:10+). Be fully assured that your faithfulness in time will yield fruitfulness throughout eternity (cf 2 Cor 5:10+, Jn 15:16)! BE ENCOURAGED!

**Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray** -Note that **ANY TIME** is a good time to pray (Cornelius at 3PM, Peter at noon). **Rosscup** adds that "we see all-night prayer (Lk. 6:12+), pre-dawn prayer (Mk. 1:35), all evening (Mt 14:23), and other times, **indeed any time** (cf. Php 4:6+, 1 Th 5:17+)." Regarding the timing of prayer, see Paul's exhortation to the saints at Ephesus (in the context of spiritual warfare (Eph 6:10-17+) -- "With **ALL** prayer and petition pray at **ALL times** in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with **ALL** perseverance and petition for **ALL** the saints." (Eph 6:18+).



**Peter went up on the housetop** - Near Eastern houses Peter's day usually had flat roofs which could be accessed by outside stairs or a ladder. Remember that Simon the tanner's house was near the sea, so Simon the Stone (meaning of [petros](#) = Peter) would have had a great view of the Mediterranean Sea. The rooftop would also be cooler and provide a peaceful place to pray, free of distractions and allow Peter to focus on God. And the prevalent sea breezes coming off of the Mediterranean sea would waft away any offensive odors that were commonly associated with the tanning process!

**THOUGHT** - When I seek God, do I seek a location that will be free of distractions so that I can fully focus on God? Do I let my mind drift when I am praying?

**Thomas Page** adds that "The flat roofs of Oriental houses were used for many purposes, e.g. drying corn, hanging up linen, as places of recreation in the evening and as sleeping places at night (1 Sam. 9:25, 9:26; 2 Sam. 11:2, 16:22; Prov. 21:9); as places of devotion and even idolatrous worship (2 Ki 23:12 = for idolatrous worship; Jer. 32:29 = "offered incense to Baal on their roofs")." ([Commentary](#))

**KJV Bible Commentary** - The quietest and most retiring spot in an Eastern house is the housetop (cf. 1 Sa 9:25,26).

## **PETER A MAN OF PRAYER**

**About the sixth hour** would be about noon, "midday prayers." The psalmist says "Evening and morning and atnoon, I will complain and murmur, and He will hear my voice." (Ps. 55:17, cf Daniel 6:10+ = he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God). Do I pray at noon?

**Bob Utley on the sixth hour** - Although rabbinical Judaism had set aside 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to pray (the times of the daily sacrifices in the Temple), the Pharisees had added noon as another appropriate time.

**To pray** (4336) ([proseuchomai](#) from **pros** = toward, facing, before [i.e., [Coram Deo](#) before the face of God] + **euchomai** = originally to speak out, express a wish, then to pray or to vow - A Greek technical term for invoking a deity) in the NT is always used of prayer addressed to God (to Him as the object of faith and the One who will answer one's prayer) and means to speak consciously (with or without vocalization) to Him, with a definite aim (See study of noun [proseuche](#)). **Wuest** adds that the prefixed preposition **pros** "gives it the idea of definiteness and directness in prayer, with the consciousness on the part of the one praying that he is talking face to face with God...(thus [proseuchomai](#)) speaks also of the consciousness on the part of the one who prays, of the fact of God's presence and His listening ear (**ED**: But see Ps 66:18)."

**John G. Butler** said, "Those who pray are much more likely to learn about the will and way of God than those who do not pray." Peter prayed and God revealed His will and way to His servant.

### **Related Resource:**

- [How can I be sure I am praying according to the will of God?](#)
- See in depth study on The Will of God

### **Acts 10:10 But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance;**

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

- **he became** Mt 4:2; 12:1-3; 21:18
- **he fell** Acts 22:17; Numbers 24:4,16; Ezekiel 8:1-3; 11:24; 40:2; 2 Cor 12:2-4; Rev 1:10; 4:2,3
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But he became hungry and was desiring to eat** - The smells from the kitchen below likely wafted upward and Peter's stomach began to "growl." Why does Luke give us this detail (there is a reason for every detail in the Bible!)? It is 12 noon so his hunger is expected and provided a perfect preparation for God's "food" vision. What a meal Peter would soon be served! Our God is the God of infinite, finite detail! He is active in our lives in even the smallest, mundane, seemingly meaningless details. This is a truth that is good for us to remember, because at times we consider the "details" to be irritating intrusions in our lives. Remember that there are no chance occurrences with the omnipotent, sovereign God!

**Became** (1096)([ginomai](#)) speaks of something coming into existence, in this case hunger pangs!

**Hungry** (4361)([prospeinos](#) from **pros** = to, toward, intensifies meaning of **peina** = hunger, famine) probably means very hungry (others say it just means hungry). This is the only use and it is even rare in secular Greek (possibly one use). The fact that Peter was actually desiring ([thelo](#) - imperfect tense - again and again) would support the idea that he was very hungry.

**Guzik** comments on the fact that Peter **became hungry** writing that "This often happens during prayer; distractions in our body come as we try to direct ourselves to God. However, God used these very distractions to speak to Peter, as he fell into a trance." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Pastor Jack Andrews** quips that "When you and I are hungry we seek to eat! It is often when we are engaged in spiritual activity that we often get physically hungry. We see that often on Sunday mornings. When God is at work and moving in a service people often think about lunch. "When is the preacher going to get through?" "I can't take much more!" "Where are we going to go for lunch?" Many people have that attitude!" He then adds..."While the food was simmering in the pot Peter was seeing in prayer." ([Expository Sermons](#))

**John Phillips** rightly reminds us that "It is a constant battle to keep the mind on prayer. The body and its clamorous demands intrudes itself on even so glorious and thrilling a privilege as communing directly with the Lord of glory...It is interesting to observe how "all things work together" (Rom. 8:28). Peter was thinking about food. God used food as the basis for the vision that now fell upon him. Far from being put out by Peter's wandering thoughts He used them as the basis for the revelation now to be made to him." (Exploring Acts).

**But while they were making preparations** - The cooks were in the kitchen but the food was not yet ready. Think of God's orchestration of even these smallest of details. Peter sensed a gnawing hunger and had they rang the dinner bell, he may have left the roof top.

**He fell into a trance** - [Vincent](#) says "Literally, an ecstasy fell upon him." The same thing happened to Paul in Acts 22:17. Sadly some of us fall into a deep sleep in prayer!

**George Gilbert** on **trance** - A state of transport, in which one is not conscious of the body (see 2 Cor. 12:2), and in which the mind is peculiarly open to heavenly communications. The opposite of falling into a trance appears to be characterized in Acts 12:11 as 'coming to one's self.' ([Acts, the Second Volume of Luke's Work on the Beginnings of Christianity](#), 1908)

**Trance** (1611)([ekstasis](#) [English - [ecstasy](#)] from [existemi](#) = "be out of one's sense") literally means either a change of place or put out of place. Clearly it is figurative in this passage and describes a partially suspended state of consciousness. **Ekstasis** is a state where consciousness is wholly or partially suspended and the person feels himself to be outside himself. In the NT it is a state brought about by God (cf. Acts 11:5; Acts 12:11; Acts 22:17). Luke alone employs **ekstasis** with the sense of ecstasy or trance.

**Thomas Page** adds that **ekstasis** "represents a state in which a man, to a greater or less extent, ceases to be under the control of conscious reason and intelligence: he 'passes out of himself' ([existemi](#)) and needs 'to come to himself' again (cf. Acts 12:11). It may describe the effect of awe and amazement (cf. Acts 3:10, Acts 8:9, 8:11, 8:13), or fear (Mark 16:8), or as here and Acts 22:17 a complete loss of outward consciousness, 'a trance'." ([The Acts of the Apostles, 1895](#))

**Trance** is an abnormal state of wakefulness in which a person is not self-aware and is either altogether unresponsive to external stimuli but is nevertheless capable of pursuing and realizing an aim, or is selectively responsive in following the directions of the person who has induced the trance. Trance states may occur involuntarily and unbidden. The term *trance* may be associated with hypnosis, meditation, magic, flow, and prayer. It may also be related to the earlier generic term, altered states of consciousness.

**Holman Bible Dictionary** - Trance is descriptive of an experience in which a person received a revelation by supernatural means ( Acts 10:10 ; Acts 11:5 ; Acts 22:17 ). In these instances, the author of Acts, in reference to the experiences of Peter and Paul, seemed to be interested in showing that the trance was only a vehicle for a revelation from God. Luke illustrated that the trances that Peter and Paul experienced "happened" to them and were not self induced. The distinctions between "trance," "dream" and "vision" are not always clear.

**Wikipedia** on **trance** - Trance is an abnormal state of wakefulness in which a person is not self-aware and is either altogether unresponsive to external stimuli but is nevertheless capable of pursuing and realizing an aim, or is selectively responsive in following the directions of the person who has induced the trance. Trance states may occur involuntarily and unbidden. The term *trance* may be associated with hypnosis, meditation, magic, flow, and prayer. It may also be related to the earlier generic term, altered states of consciousness

## Related Resources:

- American Tract Society [Trance](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Trance](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Trance](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Trance](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Trance](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Trance](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Trance](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Trance](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Trance](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Trance](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Trance](#)

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**Bruce Barton - WITHOUT CEASING** Many Jews prayed legalistically—going through the motions of prayer at certain times of the day so as to fulfill their religious duty. Peter, however, had learned from his Master, Jesus, that prayer is more than ritual; it is communion with the Father, an expression of love and trust. When believers understand that prayer is the vital link to the living God, and when they begin to see prayer not as a luxury but as a moment-by-moment necessity in the Christian life, then, and only then, will they have intimacy with God and experience his power and presence. Make prayer a priority. (See [Acts - Page 174](#))

**Acts 10:11 and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground,**

KJV 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:

- **saw** Acts 7:56; Ezekiel 1:1; Luke 3:21; John 1:51; Rev 4:1; 11:19; 19:11
- **and an object** Genesis 49:10; Isaiah 11:6-14; 19:23-25; 43:6; 56:8; Mt 8:11; 13:47,48; John 11:52; 12:32; Ro 1:16; 3:29-31; 9:4; 15:9-12; 16:25,26; Gal 2:15; 3:28; Eph 1:10; 3:6; Col 3:11
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PETER SERVED A SMORGASBORD ON A SHEET**

**And he saw the sky opened up**- The word for **sky** is ouranos which is used 256 times in the NT and is translated **heaven** 218 times. Thus **sky** in this passage is clearly synonymous with **heaven**. **The sky opened up** is language of a vision or a [revelatory](#) act of God as shown by reviewing some of the other Biblical uses ([below](#)).

**S a w** (2334) ([theoreo](#)) (graphic present tense - was seeing) is derived from [theaomai](#) which means to look at something closely, attentively and even contemplatively, often with a sense of wonder (cf derivative of **theoros** = a spectator; gives us English = **theater**). **Theoreo** means to gaze, to look at carefully or to examine with emphasis on attention to details. The picture of this verb is of a person who is a [spectator](#).

And so here Peter is a "**spectator**" of the step-by-step unfolding of God's divine drama of deliverance (redemption), and in this "Act of the divine drama" he had a "front row seat" to allow him to clearly see the [prologue](#) of the [promulgation](#) of the Gospel of salvation to the Gentiles. Peter's feet were (figuratively) being shod with the preparation of the **Gospel of peace** (Eph 6:15+), which accomplishes the "abolishing in His (CHRIST'S) flesh the enmity (BETWEEN JEWS AND GENTILES), which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances (THE WHOLE JEWISH LEGAL SYSTEM - IN ACTS 10 IT WAS [EPITOMIZED](#) BY THE DIETARY REGULATIONS WHICH WAS LIKE A "WALL" BETWEEN JEWS AND GENTILES), so that in Himself He might make the two (JEWS AND GENTILES) into one new man, thus establishing **peace**." (Eph 2:15-22+). That's what the Gospel does to our prejudices, whether they are ethnic, racial, caste, rich, poor, or any other "wall" separating people!

**Opened up** (perfect tense - it opened and remained open) (455) ([anoigo](#) from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open or open

up and thus to give access to. To open one's eyes causing them to see into the truth of the Gospel (Acts 26:18).

Anoigo is used of the **heavens opened or divided** so that celestial (supernatural) things become manifest to natural men (See the New Testament [verses below](#)). There are also two parallel uses of anoigo in the Septuagint.

**Anoigo** is used in the Septuagint in Psalm 78 also in the context of food...

Yet He commanded the clouds above and **opened** (Septuagint- anoigo) the **doors of heaven**; He **rained down manna** upon them to eat and gave them **food from heaven**. (Ps 78:23-24)

**Anoigo** is used in the description of the vision that marked the beginning of Ezekiel's prophetic ministry to the Jews in captivity...

Now it came about in the thirtieth year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was by the river Chebar among the exiles, **the heavens were opened** (Septuagint - anoigo) and I saw visions of God. (Ezekiel 1:1)

In Luke 11:10 Jesus used this same verb **anoigo** in giving a promise regarding believing prayer, declaring that "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, **it will be opened**." Peter had "*knocked*" at the "*door of heaven*" and the door was **opened up** for him to see into the unseen, supernatural world, which ultimately would reveal to him God's will for the Gentiles to receive the Gospel and for him to be the means by which this task would be accomplished. Of course, at this time, Peter only saw a portion of the divine drama unfolding (pun intended ~ "sheet-like" object), but would soon participate personally in the next "act."

**And an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground-** Note the term of comparison (simile) "**like a great sheet**," so it looked like a sheet (or big sail) but was not an actual sheet.

**Object** (4632)(**skeuos**) refers to a hollow vessel or container of any material used for a specific purpose, with the meaning varying according to the context, here referring the "sheet-like" object containing the divine [menagerie](#). **Skeuos** is used three times in the context of Peter's vision (Acts 10:11, 16, Acts 11:5).

**Sheet** (3607)(**othone**) means literally fine linen and thus a linen cloth and then a sheet (only in Acts 10:11, 11:5 with no uses in the Septuagint). **BDAG** adds that **othone** was used in secular Greek to describe a ship's sail, perhaps helping us visualize what Peter saw in his vision. It is interesting that Peter was a fisherman familiar with sails and also on the roof top where sails of passing ships may have been visible (apologies, I couldn't pass up this bit of wordplay conjecture). One pastor writes Peter "probably looked out over the Mediterranean Sea and saw a huge white sail on a boat that blended into the blue sky of heaven."

It is also interesting that the derivative word **othonion** which means linen wrappings is used in Lk 24:12+ where Peter after running to Jesus' tomb, stooped down. looked and saw "**linen wrappings**" (**othonion**) but no body (cf Jn 20:5, 6, 7). Peter certainly had some incredible experiences with **sheets**!

**Vincent** adds "Originally *fine linen*; later, *sail-cloth* or a *sail*. Dr. J. Rawson Lumby suggests that the word **othone**, "applied to loose, bellying sails of ships," may indicate that the form of vessel which appeared to Peter "recalled an image most familiar to his previous life—the wind-stretched canvas of the craft on the Lake of Galilee" ("Expositor," iii., 272)." (Word Studies in the New Testament)

**Lowered** (2524)(**kathiemi** from **kata** = down + **eimi** = to be) means to let down from higher to lower place, as the paralytic on the cot lowered from roof to floor before Jesus (Lk 5:19+), of Saul's being lowered in a basket and escaping assassination (Acts 9:25+).

**Corners** (746)(**arche**) usually means first, the beginning, the origin, the commencement of something, and in this context is used to describe the point at which two surfaces or lines meet and thus the "corner" is where they come together. **Arche** has this meaning only twice in the NT, Acts 10:11 and Acts 11:5. "We say "end" or extremity for this use of the word." (Robertson [Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Vincent** on **corners** (**arche**) - Lit., beginnings; the extremity or corner, marking a beginning of the sheet. "*We are to imagine the vessel, looking like a colossal four-cornered linen cloth letting itself down, while the corners attached to heaven to support the whole*." The word is used in this sense by Herodotus, describing the sacrifices of the Scythians. The victim's forefeet are bound with a cord, "*and the person who is about to offer, taking his station behind the victim, pullsthe end* (archen) *of the rope, and thereby throws the animal down*" (iv., 60). The suggestion of ropes holding the corners of the sheet (Alford, and, cautiously, Farrar) is **unwarranted** by the usage of the word. It was the technical expression in medical language for the **ends of bandages**. The word for **sheet** in this passage was also the technical term for a bandage, as was the kindred word **othonion**, used of the linen bandages in which the Lord's body was swathed. See Luke 24:12; John 19:40; 20:5, 6, 7. Mr. Hobart says: "*We have thus in this passage a technical medical phrase—the ends of a bandage—used for the ends of a sheet, which hardly any one except a medical man would think of employing*" ("Medical Language of St. Luke"). (Word Studies in the New Testament)

Some like **Kent Hughes** have suggested that "The four corners of the sheet in the vision correspond to the four points of the

compass—north, south, east, and west." While we cannot be dogmatic that is a possibility as the Gospel would eventually go to Gentiles (and Jews) in the four "corners" of the world.

**A T Robertson** adds "Isaiah 11:12+ had said that Israel would be gathered from the four corners of the earth." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Four corners** - 18 uses in the Bible -

Ex. 25:26; Ex 27:2; Ex 27:4; Ex 37:13; Ex 38:2; Dt. 22:12; 1 Ki. 7:34; Job 1:19; Isa. 11:12; Ezek 7:2; Ezek 43:20; Ezek. 45:19; Ezek. 46:21; Ezek. 46:22; Acts 10:11; Acts 11:5; Rev. 7:1; Rev. 20:8

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### Verses on "Heaven Opened"

Mt 3:16 After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, **the heavens were opened**, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him,

Acts 7:56 and he said, "Behold, I see **the heavens opened up** and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus was also baptized, and while He was praying, **heaven was opened**,

John 1:51 And He \*said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see **the heavens opened** and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Revelation 4:1<sup>±</sup> After these things (WHAT THINGS? REVELATION IS NOT DIFFICULT IF ONE FOLLOWS THE TIME PHRASES AND ACCEPTS THEM AS LITERAL STATEMENTS) I looked, and behold, a door standing **open in heaven**, and the first voice which I had heard, like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after these things."

Revelation 11:19<sup>±</sup> And the temple of God which is in **heaven was opened**; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple, and there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm.

Revelation 19:11<sup>±</sup> (John writes) And **I saw heaven opened**, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

**Comment** - The first opening of Heaven in Revelation marks the beginning of the end (the seven year tribulation) and the last opening marks the dramatic ending of the great tribulation!

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### Acts 10:12 and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.

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

- Genesis 7:8,9; Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25; John 7:37; 1 Cor 6:9-11
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### AN ASSORTMENT OF ANIMALS KOSHER AND NON-KOSHER

**And there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air**- Recall that Peter is already staying with a Jewish man named Simon (almost certainly a believer in Jesus) who handled dead animals in his profession of **tanning** and thus was considered by most Jews to be unclean! This was surely preparatory work in Peter's heart which would soon overcome even greater prejudice. It is as if Peter's walls of prejudice were progressively being lowered - dwelling in the home one who had an unclean profession (a tanner), now accepting unclean produce (non-kosher animals) and (soon) accepting "unclean" people (Gentiles)! God's ways of carrying out His supernatural work using natural means are absolutely fascinating!

**Longnecker** - God frequently reveals himself not only in but also by means of our human situations. (Expositor's Bible Commentary)

**Polhill** - This is the same threefold division of the animal world as found in the Noah account of Gen 6:20 and the creation account of Gen 1:30. Cf. Ro 1:23. It thus symbolized the entire animal world and included clean as well as unclean animals. (NAC)

**Four-footed animals and crawling creatures** - The four-footed animals probably included the **unclean** hog among other creatures. "What a veritable Noah's ark of animals!" (Phillips)

**Robertson** - Fish are not mentioned, perhaps because the sheet had no water, though they were clean and unclean also (Lev. 11:9; Dt. 14:9). ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Related Resource:**

- [Theology of Unclean Food](#) - Gordon J. Wenham, Evangelical Quarterly 53.1 (January/March 1981): 6-15.

**Steven Ger** - In this sheet or sail is a miniature "wild kingdom"; a veritable menagerie of kosher and non-kosher animals (excluding fish, who would not be able to swim very well on a sheet, even within a vision) (**ED NOTE:** Actually fish are not mentioned, though they were clean and unclean also Lev. 11:9; Dt. 14:9). According to the kosher laws enumerated in the Torah, the only animals Jews are permitted to eat are those **four-footed animals that chew the cud and have split hoofs**, as well as specific kinds of birds. Every other animal is forbidden, including all reptiles (Lev. 11:1-47). (Acts - Twenty-First Century Commentary)

**Crawling creatures** - Peter would have been mindful of the words of Moses...

Whatever crawls on its belly, and whatever walks on all fours, whatever has many feet, in respect to every swarming thing that swarms on the earth, you shall not eat them, for they are detestable. 43 'Do not render yourselves detestable through any of the swarming things that swarm; and you shall not make yourselves unclean with them so that you become unclean. 44 'For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and **be holy, for I am holy**. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. 45 'For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall **be holy, for I am holy.**'" (Lev 11:42-45+)

It is surely no coincidence that this was the very passage Peter would later quote in his first epistle having come to fully understand what it was that really made a man holy...

As obedient children, do not be conformed ([suschematizo](#) - used in Ro 12:2+ = don't be poured into the "mold") to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, **be** (aorist imperative - Do this without delay or compromise!) holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 because (TERM OF EXPLANATION - WHY WE ARE TO BE HOLY) it is written, "**YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY** (PETER IS QUOTING Lev 11:44, 45)." (1 Peter 1:14-16+)

**Rich Catthers** - As Gentiles, we aren't all that familiar with the Jewish dietary laws. But to a good Jewish boy (like Peter), there are some animals that are edible, and others that aren't. Some of the inedible animals we would readily agree with – like "bats". Some of the inedible animals we would not want to stop eating, like pigs (bacon, ham, pork chops) and shrimp. ([Sermon Notes](#))

**Barton** adds that "These food laws made it difficult for Jews to eat with Gentiles without risking defilement." (See [Acts - Page 174](#))

**Jack Arnold** is probably correct explaining that "These **clean and unclean animals** all had a symbolic meaning which Peter would later come to understand completely. The sheet containing the clean and unclean animals represented all of humanity made up of both Jews and Gentiles. The **clean** animals were the Jews and the unclean animals were the Gentiles. The Jews hated the Gentiles. They thought them common and unclean. In fact, if a Jew even touched a Gentile on the street, he had to go home immediately and wash. A Gentile, if possible, was not to be spoken to and never invited into a Jewish home. The Jews felt themselves superior to the Gentiles and were filled with prejudice, pride, bigotry and snobbishness. The Jews often referred to the Gentiles as "dogs." The Old Testament taught that Jews were to be a separate people but they perverted this so as to believe they were a super race and they were to have no dealings at all with Gentiles. A Jew's religion, culture and background taught him to have no social intercourse with the Gentiles. Now perhaps we can understand better why Peter had to have this vision of clean and unclean animals. God was teaching him that the Gentile was no longer unclean." ([Acts 10:1-23a The Seeking Sinner and the Bigoted Believer](#))

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**Ray Stedman** gives some background on Jewish bias - This is most interesting, because here is an apostle, an inspired apostle, born again, filled with the Holy Spirit. And yet, present in his like is a great area of bigotry which has been there since he was raised as a Jew in Judea. As he grew up he was taught this kind of pharisaical bigotry. The Old Testament tells us that God has separated the Jews from the rest of mankind. He did not choose them because they were smarter or superior in any other way to anyone else. In fact, God tells them that he did not choose them on that basis. That is stated in the Old Testament very clearly. He chose them

because he wanted them to be a demonstration to all the other nations of the relationship God wants to have with every nation and every people. In other words, the Jews were to be the pattern of God's relationship to every people. Only in that sense were they called or chosen people.

But in typically human fashion, and I am sure we would have done the same thing, the Jews distorted that calling of God, that pattern of the Old Testament. They began to believe that God had called them because they were already a superior people, and that God was their exclusive possession, as well as that they were the exclusive possession of God -- that God was not interested in Gentiles, that he liked only Jews. This has given rise to anti-Semitism by the Gentiles in reaction. Many Gentiles are saying, in that shortest of all poems,

How odd  
Of God  
To choose  
The Jews.

But the Jews said it first. "How smart of God to choose the Jews." This whole idea had been accepted by the Jews as divinely encouraged and ratified. And so Peter grew up with the attitude that God did not like Gentiles. Gentiles were a sort of animal, not quite human. They were not even to be spoken to, let alone to be invited into your home. A good Jew, as Peter had been taught, would have nothing to do with a Gentile. If he even touched one accidentally on the street he would go home and wash. This bigotry was deep in the apostle's heart. ([Acts 9:32-10:23 The Cure For Death](#))

### Acts 10:13 A voice came to him, "Get up, Peter, kill and eat!"

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

- **Rise** Acts 10:10; Jeremiah 35:2-5; John 4:31-34
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DIVINE PHONICS

**Phonics** refers to the method of teaching people to read by correlating sounds with letters or groups of letters in an alphabetic writing system. Wikipedia says phonics is defined as "a method for teaching reading and writing of the English language by developing learners' [phonemic awareness](#)—the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate [phonemes](#)—in order to teach the correspondence between these sounds and the spelling patterns ([graphemes](#)) that represent them."

Peter perceives this **voice** to be that of the **Lord** (Acts 10:14).

**Steven Ger** - As had Saul on the road to Damascus, Peter now hears a [bat kol](#), the divine voice of God from heaven. The voice commanded Peter to pick himself up, walk over to the assembled menagerie, slaughter an animal of his choice and eat it. (Acts - Twenty-First Century Commentary)

**Wikipedia** on [bat kol](#) - In Judaism *bat kol* or *bat kōl* (**Hebrew**: **בת קול**, literally "daughter of voice", "voice of God") is a "heavenly or divine voice which proclaims God's will or judgment."<sup>[1]</sup> It signifies the [ruach ha-kodesh](#) (רוח הקודש, "the spirit of holiness") or serves as a [metonym](#) for God; "but it differed essentially from the Prophets", though these were delegates or mouthpieces of *ruah ha-kodesh*.

**Utley** adds - From the time of the closing of Malachi to the coming of the NT period there was no authoritative voice from God among the Jews. During this period when the Jews wanted to confirm something as being revealed from God they depended on something known as a [bat kol](#). We see this in the NT in Matt. 3:17; 17:5; also in Acts 9:7 and here.

**A voice came to him** - **Voice** is the Greek noun **phone** which gives us the English word "phonics" and which can mean a sound, tone or noise which is made in order to convey some significance. In this case the "divine phonics" came in the form of a supernatural voice. Was it an audible voice? We cannot say for certain and obviously God does not need to have sound waves hit our ear drums in order to make Himself known. God can easily "bypass" the ear drums and go directly to one's brain, which is where the sound waves on the ear drum are interpreted! The fact that Peter answers in Acts 10:14 does suggest this was an audible voice, because Peter begins to dialogue.

**THOUGHT** - The question arises does God still speak to His saints today? The answer is of course He does. However today the "divine phonics" come to us not so much through His audible voice as from an impression He brings to our mind, especially as we read and meditate on His Word and seek Him in prayer. (See

additional thoughts in [note below](#)).

**Get up, Peter, kill and eat!** - Kill and eat are both aorist imperatives indicating this was something Peter must do without hesitation. The idea of this command is "Do this now! Do not delay!"

**Marshall** - the point is that the Lord's command frees Peter from any scruples about going to a Gentile home and eating whatever might be set before him. It would be a short step from recognizing that Gentile food was clean to realizing that Gentiles themselves were 'clean' also."

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### Question: "Does God still speak to us today?"

**Answer:** The Bible records God speaking audibly to people many times (Exodus 3:14; Joshua 1:1; Judges 6:18; 1 Samuel 3:11; 2 Samuel 2:1; Job 40:1; Isaiah 7:3; Jeremiah 1:7; Acts 8:26; 9:15—this is just a small sampling). There is no biblical reason why God could not speak to a person audibly today. With the hundreds of times the Bible records God speaking, we have to remember that they occur over the course of 4,000 years of human history. God speaking audibly is the exception, not the rule. Even in the biblically recorded instances of God speaking, it is not always clear whether it was an **audible voice**, an **inner voice**, or a **mental impression**. God does speak to people today.

(1) **First, God speaks to us through His Word** (2 Timothy 3:16–17). Isaiah 55:11 tells us, "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: it will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." The Bible is God's Word, everything we need to know in order to be saved and live the Christian life. 2 Peter 1:3 declares, "His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by his own glory and goodness."

(2) **God can also "speak" to us through events**—i.e., He can guide us through arranging our circumstances. And God helps us to discern right from wrong through our consciences (1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Peter 3:16). God is in the process of conforming our minds to think His thoughts (Romans 12:2). God allows events to occur in our lives to direct us, change us, and help us to grow spiritually (James 1:2–5; Hebrews 12:5–11). 1 Peter 1:6–7 reminds us, "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

(3) **God may sometimes speak audibly to people.** It is highly doubtful, though, that this occurs as often as some people claim it does. Again, even in the Bible, God speaking audibly is the exception, not the ordinary. If anyone claims that God has spoken to him or her, always compare what is said with what the Bible says. If God were to speak today, His words would be in full agreement with what He has said in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16–17). God does not contradict Himself. ([Gotquestions](#))

### Related Resources:

- [What does it mean that God speaks in a still small voice?](#)
- [Why was God so evident in the Bible, and seems so hidden today?](#)
- [Is Jesus Calling a good book? Are there any doctrinal problems with Jesus Calling?](#)
- [Are there prophets in the church today?](#)
- [How can we recognize the voice of God?](#)

**Acts 10:14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."**

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

- **By no means** Genesis 19:18; Exodus 10:11; Mt 16:22; 25:9; Luke 1:60
- **for** Lev 11:1-17; 20:25; Deuteronomy 14:1-29; Ezekiel 4:14; 44:31
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PETER PROTESTS

**But** - Term of contrast. This one is easy to discern what Luke is contrasting! What God sent as [revelatory](#) vision had in Peter's mind with all his Jewish prejudices become a veritable nightmare, causing him to recoil in horror at the very thought of partaking of the unholy mixture of animals in the sheet!

We see a similar protest from Ezekiel



Then the LORD said, "Thus will the sons of Israel eat their bread unclean among the nations where I will banish them." 14 But I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I have never been defiled; for from my youth until now I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has any unclean meat ever entered my mouth."  
(Ezekiel 4:13-14+)

**A T Robertson - Not so, Lord** (Mēdamōs, kurie). The negative mēdamōs calls for the optative eiē (may it not be) or the imperative estō (let it be). It is not oudamōs, a blunt refusal (I shall not do it). And yet it is more than a mild protest as Page and Furneaux argue. It is a polite refusal with a reason given. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Vincent on by no means** - "With that simple and audacious self-confidence which in his (Peter's) character was so singularly mingled with fits of timidity and depression, he boldly corrects the voice which orders him, and reminds the divine Interlocutor that he must, so to speak, have made an oversight" (Farrar, "Life and Works of Paul"). Compare Matthew 16:22. (Word Studies in the New Testament)

**Guzik** comments that "Peter had a bad habit of telling Jesus "no" (Matthew 16:22, John 13:8). Compare Peter's response to God (**Not so, Lord!**) with Cornelius' response to God (**What is it, Lord?**). On that day, it seemed that Cornelius was more responsive to God than Peter was. Peter had pretty much put God in a box of limitations, and now God was going to shake Peter up to change his thinking. He can do the same for us. (Quoting Spurgeon Guzik writes) "Shake yourself up a little, my brother. If you are too precise may the Lord set you on fire, and consume your bonds of red tape! If you have become so improperly proper that you cannot commit a proper impropriety, then pray God to help you be less proper, for there are many who will never be saved by your instrumentality while you study propriety." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Peter said, "By no means** (NET = "Certainly not") - Peter clearly recognizes the **voice** in Acts 10:13 as from a supernatural source because he adds the term "**Lord.**" And even despite his recognition of the divine nature of the command Peter still makes a strong protest. This serves to demonstrate just how **ingrained** and **entrenched** the Old Testament dietary laws were in Peter's Jewish mind, even though He was a "new creature" in Christ (2 Cor 5:17+).

**THOUGHT** - Let's apply Peter's difficulty in making the transition from the Old to the New to our own lives. We once were entangled sinners but have now become saints set apart in Christ. And while many of the sinful patterns of thinking we had before we knew Christ did in fact disappear when we first came to faith, unfortunately not all of them went away (speaking from personal experience). And in this sense all of us believers in the New Covenant are a lot like Peter who was having difficulty shaking his old traditions and habits. Here in Acts 10-11 it took a **supernatural** work of God to effect that change in Peter (and yet he still lapsed back into his OT mindset in Gal 2:11-16, 14+). Are you still "wrestling" with some of the "baggage" you brought with you when you were transferred from darkness and the dominion of Satan to the Kingdom of Light and Christ? (cf Acts 26:18+, Col 1:12-13+) Don't be discouraged, beloved. Seek the Lord, and continue to daily "Put on your new nature, and be (**supernaturally**) renewed (present tense = a process not an arrival in this life!) as you learn to know your Creator and become like Him." (Col 3:10NLT+) Another application question - Do we ever call Him "Lord" and then argue with Him or disobey Him? (That's rhetorical of course).

**Swindoll** - Though grace abounds, prejudice dies hard...Legalists always seem to take pride in negatives, the things they would never do.

Peter had forgotten His Lord's teaching in Mark 7 in which Jesus in effect removed the restrictions regarding dietary laws...

After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man...When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. And He said to them, "**Are you so lacking in understanding** ([asunetos](#)) also? (AND FROM PETER'S REPLY HERE IN Acts 10:14 IT IS CLEAR HE HAS STILL NOT UNDERSTOOD JESUS' WORDS!) Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (**Thus He declared all foods clean.**) (Mark 7:14-15, 17-19)

**Comment by Ryrie** - Mark's comment that **all foods were clean** was written years after the church had begun and was directed at his Christian readers who may have misunderstood these Jewish ceremonial laws.

The writer of Hebrews explained to the Jewish readers who were being attracted to the Gospel (some of whom had already entered the New Covenant but were still being drawn back to their Old Covenant ways) that Christ had inaugurated a New Covenant and the OT dietary laws were no longer in effect...

When He said, "A **new covenant**," He has made the first (Old Covenant) obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear. (Hebrews 8:13+)

**Comment regarding the ceremonial law (like eating "Kosher" foods)** - The ceremonial laws are called hukkim or chuqqah in Hebrew, which literally means "custom of the nation"; the words are often translated as "statutes." These laws seem to focus the adherent's attention on God. They include instructions on regaining right standing with God (e.g., sacrifices and other ceremonies regarding "uncleanness"), remembrances of God's work in Israel (e.g., feasts and festivals), specific regulations meant to distinguish Israelites from their pagan neighbors (e.g., dietary and clothing restrictions), and signs that point to the coming Messiah (e.g., the Sabbath, circumcision, Passover, and the redemption of the firstborn)....**Christians are not bound by ceremonial law.** Since the church is not the nation of Israel, memorial festivals, such as the Feast of Weeks and Passover, do not apply. Galatians 3:23-25+ explains that since Jesus has come, Christians are not required to sacrifice or circumcise. There is still debate in Protestant churches over the applicability of the **Sabbath**. Some say that its inclusion in the Ten Commandments gives it the weight of **moral law**. Others quote Colossians 2:16-17+ and Romans 14:5+ to explain that Jesus has fulfilled the Sabbath and become our Sabbath rest. As Romans 14:5 says, "Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind." The applicability of the Old Testament law in the life of a Christian has always related to its usefulness in loving God and others (**ED**: cf Luke 10:27+) . **If someone feels observing the Sabbath aids him in this, he is free to observe it.** (See [What is the difference between the ceremonial law, the moral law, and the judicial law in the Old Testament?](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [What does it mean that Christians are not under the law?](#)
- [Does God require Sabbath-keeping of Christians?](#)
- [Do Christians have to obey the Old Testament law?](#)
- [What should Christians learn from the Mosaic Law?](#)
- [Law vs. grace—why is there so much conflict among Christians on the issue?](#)

**Graham Scoggie** has an interesting comment stating that "Whoever says '**not so**' should never add **Lord**;' and whoever truly says '**Lord**' will never say **Not so**."

Do you understand what Scroggie is saying? **Lord** is the word **kurios** which means master, sovereign, the one in complete control. How ludicrous in one moment to call Him "**Lord**," and with the same breath tell Him "**No**." That's a clear **contradiction** of terms. If He the sovereign Lord tells us to do something, and we respond with "**No**" our negative reply clearly does not acknowledge Him as **Lord**.

How like the old Peter he was in this moment...

So He \*came to Simon Peter. He \*said to Him, "Lord, do You wash my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter." Peter \*said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." (Jn. 13:6–8, cf Mt 16:21-23 where Peter said "God forbid it Lord!" that Jesus should be killed and raised).

**Spurgeon** adds that "**No, Lord**" "is a curious expression. If Peter had said, "No," there would have been a clear consistency in his language and tone. But "**No, Lord**," is an odd jumble of self-will and reverence, of pride and humility, of contradiction and devotion. Surely, when you say, "No," it ought not to be said to the Lord, and if you say, "Lord," you ought not to put side by side the word no. Peter always was a blunderer in his early days, and he had not grown out of his old habits of honest impetuosity. He meant well, and his expression was not intended to convey all that we might easily make of it. At any rate, it is not for us to condemn him. Who are we that we should sit in judgment on another saint of God? We are not without fault ourselves.

**ILLUSTRATION** - A young believer, facing the choice of obeying the call of God to the mission field or of continuing in a rewarding and comfortable business position, once consulted a veteran missionary. He explained how clearly God had called and yet how hard it was to make the choice to go. The missionary opened his Bible at this passage and pointed out to the young person Peter's words, "Not so, Lord." "You cannot say that," the wise, older man explained. "It is either 'Not so' or it is 'Lord.' The two words put together are a contradiction in terms. Now then," he continued, "take my Bible and take this pencil. Sit down here and pray about it. Then cross out one of the expressions. Cross out the words 'not so' and leave the word 'Lord,' or cross out the word 'Lord' and leave the words 'not so.' You cannot have it both ways." (John Phillips)

**Steven Ger** - An observant Jew, Peter maintained the laws of [kashrut](#), the kosher restrictions mandated in the Torah. Most of the animals on that sheet had been forbidden to Jews by God Himself. Even permitted animals must be ritually slaughtered in the prescribed kosher manner. Peter was not hungry enough to slaughter one of these on a housetop, lacking the proper implements of slaughter. He saw no inherent contradiction in his refusal of the sovereign deity's command, and reminded God that he had never in his life eaten any unholy or unclean food. (Acts - Twenty-First Century Commentary)

**Wikipedia** on [kashrut](#) - **Kashrut** is a set of Jewish religious [dietary laws](#). Food that may be consumed according to [halakha](#) (Jewish law) is termed **kosher** (/ˈkɒʃər/ in English, [Yiddish](#): כּוֹשֵׁר), from the [Ashkenazi](#) pronunciation of the [Hebrew](#) term *kashér* (כָּשֵׁר), meaning "fit" (in this context, fit for consumption). Among the numerous laws that form part of **kashrut** are the prohibitions on the consumption of certain animals (such as [pork](#), [shellfish](#) [both [Mollusca](#) and [Crustacea](#)], and most [insects](#), with the exception of certain species of kosher [locusts](#)), mixtures of meat and milk, and the commandment to [slaughter](#) mammals and birds according to a process known as [shechita](#). There are also laws regarding agricultural produce that might impact the suitability of food for consumption. Most of the basic laws of **kashrut** are derived from the Torah's Books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Their details and practical application, however, are set down in the [oral law](#) (eventually codified in the [Mishnah](#) and [Talmud](#)) and elaborated on in the **later rabbinical literature**.

**James Rossup** observes that " it is one thing to say no to God in prayer out of defiance, another to say no in a heart that is obedient but misunderstanding how things fit (Acts 10:14). God discerns, and is patient to teach the receptive to do what He wants, as He nudges Peter along by His Word here, and us by the completed Scripture." (Ibid)

### **JEWISH DIETARY LAWS: AN IMPORTANT DISTINCTION**

Think about why the command to **kill** and **eat** would provoke such strong negative reaction from Peter? Think of it this way - In Peter's day what marks clearly distinguished the Jews from the pagan Gentiles? There were primarily three visible distinguishing marks. There was (1) **circumcision** (although some pagan nations did practice this ritual), (2) **Sabbath keeping**, and (3) **dietary laws regarding clean and unclean foods**, all of which served to set the Jews apart from the Gentiles in a very visible way wherever they were dispersed. Even today, most larger supermarkets have aisles and even entire sections of "[Kosher](#)" foods. And so to the Jews these three markers would have been "sacred ground" and would continue to be enemies of the Gospel throughout these early years of the Church (cf Gal 3:1-3, etc) But back to the situation with Peter, clearly the food laws made fellowship with Gentiles awkward, to put it mildly! And yet Peter was about to receive an invitation to commune with a Gentile! To cross this "*cultural chasm*" would take a God-sized "[drawbridge](#)," ([pix](#)) and for this God orchestrates two visions, one for the Gentile God seeker and the other for the Jewish believer. God is good!

**Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean** - Here we see Peter's legalistic spirit -- he was proud of his having never done this! He had a superior attitude. Peter had been perfect! In other words Peter was steadfastly "kosher" regarding his diet. It is interesting that Peter uses the same description of Gentiles in Acts 10:28 declaring "God has shown me that I should not call any man **unholy** or **unclean**."

**Jack Arnold** adds that "**Legalism** is when a person is proud of the fact that he does not do certain things and tries either to force this same conviction on someone else or looks down the nose at someone who does a certain practice. As Christians, there are certain negative things we will not do because they are forbidden in the Bible and we must not do them. However, we must not become proud in our obedience to the negative commands and principles of Scripture. Pride about negatives never impresses the non-Christian world. Only a positive Christian attitude about life is attractive to the non-Christian world." (See Ray Stedman's [comment below](#) for more on legalism).

**A T Robertson** - I never did anything like this and I shall not do it now....At this moment he is in spiritual and intellectual turmoil. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**John Phillips** observes that "A tremendous struggle took place in Peter's soul. His ingrained religious prejudice, reinforced by the clear commands of biblical ritual law, strengthened by years of rabbinical teaching and tradition, and enforced by lifelong practice, warred against the clear demand of the vision. Peter, as always, blurted out what was on his mind. "Not so, Lord.""

**John B Polhill** has an excellent analysis - Some scholars feel that Peter's vision dealt more with food laws than with interaction with Gentiles. This is to overlook the fact that the two are inextricably related. In Lev 20:24b–26 the laws of clean and unclean are linked precisely to Israel's separation from the rest of the nations. The Jewish food laws presented a real problem for Jewish Christians in the outreach to the Gentiles. One simply could not dine in a Gentile's home without inevitably transgressing those laws either by the

consumption of unclean flesh or of flesh that had not been prepared in a kosher, i.e., ritually proper, fashion (cf. Acts 15:20). Jesus dealt with the problem of clean and unclean, insisting that external things like foods did not defile a person but the internals of heart and speech and thought render one truly unclean (Mark 7:14–23). In Mark 7:19b Mark added the parenthetical comment that Jesus' saying ultimately declared all foods clean. This was precisely the point of Peter's vision: God declared the unclean to be clean. In Mark 7 Jesus' teaching on clean/unclean was immediately followed by his ministry to a Gentile woman (Mk 7:24–30), just as Peter's vision regarding clean and unclean foods was followed by his witness to a Gentile. It is simply not possible to fully accept someone with whom you are unwilling to share in the intimacy of table fellowship. The early church had to solve the problem of kosher food laws in order to launch a mission to the Gentiles. Purity distinctions and human discrimination are of a single piece. (New American Commentary - Acts)

**Unholy** (2839)(**koinos**) means **defiled** (corrupted in regard to its purity or perfection), **unclean** (because it is treated as common and thus considered morally or spiritually impure) or **profane** (not holy because unconsecrated, impure, or defiled). **Koinos** describes spiritual desecration which occurs when one treats that which is considered sacred or holy (set apart to God) as ordinary ("not special"). In the ceremonial sense, this word describes something that is the opposite of pure, sacred, and holy. It is interesting that the derivative noun *koinonia* would come to describe the fellowship, communion and close association of believers as the result their common bond in Christ.

**Unclean** (169)(**akathartos** from **a** = without + **kathairo** = cleanse from **katharos** = clean, pure, free from the adhesion of anything that soils, adulterates, corrupts, in an ethical sense, free from corrupt desire, sin, and guilt) (See [akatharsia](#)) in a moral sense refers to that which is unclean in thought, word, and deed. It can describe a state of moral impurity, especially sexual sin (cf Rev 17:4+) and the word *foul* is an excellent rendering. The idea is that which is morally indecent or filthy. It is not notable that **every** use of **akathartos** in the Gospels (19x out of 30 total NT uses) is applied to filthy demonic spirits!

All NT uses of **akathartos** -

Matt. 10:1; Matt. 12:43; Mk. 1:23; Mk. 1:26; Mk. 1:27; Mk. 3:11; Mk. 3:30; Mk. 5:2; Mk. 5:8; Mk. 5:13; Mk. 6:7; Mk. 7:25; Mk. 9:25; Lk. 4:33; Lk. 4:36; Lk. 6:18; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 11:24; Acts 5:16; Acts 8:7; Acts 10:14; Acts 10:28; Acts 11:8; 1 Co. 7:14; 2 Co. 6:17; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 16:13; Rev. 17:4; Rev. 18:2

**A T Robertson** - Peter had been reared from childhood to make the distinction between clean and unclean food and this new proposal even from the Lord runs against all his previous training. He did not see that some of God's plans for the Jews could be temporary. This symbol of the sheet was to show Peter ultimately that Gentiles could be saved without becoming Jews. At this moment he is in spiritual and intellectual turmoil. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**John Stott** gives us background on just how amazing the events of Acts 10-11 were in light of the great cultural divide between Jews and Gentiles...

It is difficult for us to grasp the impassable gulf which yawned in those days between the Jews on the one hand and the Gentiles (including even the 'God-fearers') on the other. Not that the Old Testament itself countenanced such a divide. On the contrary, alongside its oracles against the hostile nations, it affirmed that God had a purpose for them. By choosing and blessing one family, he intended to bless all the families of the earth. So psalmists and prophets foretold the day when God's Messiah would inherit the nations, the Lord's servant would be their light, all nations would 'flow' to the Lord's house, and God would pour out his Spirit on all humankind. The tragedy was that Israel twisted the doctrine of election into one of favouritism, became filled with racial pride and hatred, despised Gentiles as 'dogs', and developed traditions which kept them apart. No orthodox Jew would ever enter the home of a Gentile, even a God-fearer, or invite such into his home (see verse 28). On the contrary, 'all familiar intercourse with Gentiles was forbidden' and 'no pious Jew would of course have sat down at the table of a Gentile'. This, then was the entrenched prejudice which had to be overcome before Gentiles could be admitted into the Christian community on equal terms with Jews, and before the church could become a truly multi-racial, multi-cultural society. (The Message of Acts).

**Gary Hill** in his discussion of **koinos** adds some interesting insights that help understand Peter's resistance to obey the command to eat "unclean" food...

Rabbinical (Jewish) laws often erred by imposing many regulations about what supposedly made certain types of cups, plates, etc., "**defiled**" (**koinos**). This bred much unwarranted legalism with the terrible result of calling all Gentiles "**unclean**" whom the Lord was calling to Himself. Because of this, the Jews missed out on their duty to evangelize. Example: If a Jewish person even touched an "**unclean** vessel," they could be barred from entering the Temple or synagogue. Much needless care was taken to keep all vessels "ceremonially clean" to meet rabbinical (man-made) standards about religious purity. Any contact (no matter how indirect) with something "**unclean**" required elaborate rituals of sacrifice (purification). Accordingly, the Pharisees meticulously followed religious formulas to clean vessels, strain wine, etc., in order to rid themselves of **supposed** defilement.

The Jews became preoccupied with minors and missed the "majors" – like living in faith, hope, love (cf. Mt 23:23 with 1Cor 13:13). **Their greatest error in this regard was avoiding Gentiles supposedly to escape "defilement." The Bible itself never prohibited nor discouraged them from having contact with Gentiles (non-Jewish people)! Indeed, this was needed for the outreach God desired the OT saints to extend to all people!** (See [athemitos](#) = properly, not acceptable to the prevailing custom or ordinary practice - used only in Acts 10:28; 1Pet 4:3). **The OT never prohibited Jews from eating with Gentiles, or coming in contact with them! This twisted idea, of "ceremonial defilement," (unfortunately) came from misguided rabbis....**The Pharisees in NT times were infamous for their distorted ideas about "ceremonial uncleanness," i.e. what was really "defiled" (**koinos**). Indeed, they often defined something as **koinós** ("defiled") which was morally neutral, or not "defiled" at all. They failed here by overly focusing on the physical, even petty things that supposedly made someone spiritually unacceptable to the Lord. Examples - The rabbis and Pharisees said touching a "defiled" plate made someone "unclean" if it had a rim. But touching a flat plate could not spiritually defile a Jew. So too, a person was supposedly defiled by touching an "unclean" object made of wood and metal – but the metal part could "not become unclean" or pass on impurity (Wm Barclay). Worse, they believed a person became "unclean" by standing in the shadow of an "unclean object" – another "holiness standard" defined by the rabbis (not the Bible!). (From this interesting resource [The Discovery Bible](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about what foods we should eat \(kosher\)? Are there foods a Christian should avoid?](#)
- [Why did the Old Testament Law command against the eating of pork?](#)
- [Theology of Unclean Food](#) - Gordon J. Wenham, Evangelical Quarterly 53.1 (January/March 1981): 6-15.

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**Ray Stedman** applies Peter's words "**I have never**" - Notice also the marks of [legalism](#) here. Peter says, "Lord, I have never eaten anything common or unclean." "I have never..." -- that is the language of legalism. "I have never done anything like that in all my life." This is the way you can recognize a legalistic spirit. It is being proud of the negative, proud that you have never done something. Now it is true that as a Christian, led of the Spirit, there are things you will not do. There are things that are wrong to do, that are harmful, and God has forbidden them for our own protection. It is not wrong that there are things that you will not do. What is wrong is being proud that there are things that you will not do. The grace of God is manifest by finding a degree of satisfaction, if you do at all, only in the positive, not in the negative. The world is not impressed by the fact that we Christians will not do certain things. We say, "I don't dance, I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't chew; I don't go out with girls that do" and we expect the world to be impressed. Well, they are not impressed at all. There are many of them who will not do certain things for reasons other than religion. There is no merit in that. No, if all we can say is that we don't do certain things then we have nothing at all to interest a non-Christian. What non-Christians are looking for are Christians who are able to do, able to live at a level of life that no non-Christian can, who have hearts that are filled with faith and confidence in the midst of a tumultuous and crumbling age . What impresses the non-Christian is to observe Christians whose homes are filled with loving acceptance of one another, who can communicate with each other, and thus are able to have a home that is bound together with warmth, joy, and peace in the midst of a world where homes are falling apart on every hand. (**ED: ALL THIS SUPERNATURAL LIFESTYLE BEING ENABLED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT!**) In short, they are impressed by Christians who **are able to do** (SUPERNATURALLY), **not able not to do** (NATURALLY). So Peter is proud of the fact that he had never done certain things and that marks him as legalistic....I have often used this story with those who are troubled about the background, the past, of someone else or of their own lives. The fact that someone has been involved in some thing evil in the past can brand them for the rest of their life. Even though they become a Christian and are forgiven of God, others treat them strangely because of their background. But that is doing exactly what Peter did. That is calling unclean what God has called clean. Sometimes we do this to ourselves. I have had people say to me, "I just can't forgive myself. The things that I've done are so bad that even though I know God has forgiven me, I can't accept myself." And I say, "Do you know what you are doing? You are calling God a liar. You are calling unclean what God has called clean. How dare you call unclean that which God has cleansed?" Oftentimes that has been effective in delivering them....Just this last week I learned that one of our former interns has been dismissed from his work as Youth Director of a church in Southern California. He was eminently successful in reaching into the youth culture of that area, bringing many of the hippy young people into church. The board of that church let him go, citing as their reason the fact that many were complaining because he was bringing in "the riffraff from the street." What a horrible, tragic, misconception of the gospel of Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save that which is lost! Yet how widespread that is in America today. My daughter at Wheaton College wrote to me and told of a moving incident that occurred at chapel there not long ago. Dr. Hudson Armerding, the President of Wheaton, got up in chapel and shared with the entire student body the dilemma that he was facing as a college president. Many supporters of the school were becoming upset by the fact that when they visited the campus they saw many long-haired youths there, and many with beards. This bothered them greatly and they had refused to give money because of it. Dr. Armerding said the school is really in a financial bind because of this trend. Their whole operation is being threatened by the withholding of funds by certain donors who had been strong supporters of the school, up until then. And the whole student body sat there breathlessly anxious to learn what the administration's stand would be. Then Dr. Armerding called out of the audience the young man who had the longest hair and beard in the whole student body, and asked him to come up. This was a complete surprise

to the young man, but he came to the platform. Dr. Armerding turned to him and said, "You have long hair, and you have a long beard. You represent the very thing that these supporters of the school are against. I want you to know that the administration of this school does not feel as they do. We accept you, and we love you. We believe that you are here to seek and to find the truth as it is in Jesus Christ." And he reached out and embraced him! The student body rose as one man in a moment of acclaim for their President, for his expression of that kind of love and acceptance. That is what God wants. The Spirit of Jesus Christ has come to remove all the middle walls of partition that separate human beings. Jesus said, "He that is with me gathers; but he that is against me scatters..." (Matthew 12:30, Luke 11:23). You can judge your life by that statement. What is your effect on others? Are you gathering? Are you healing? Are you harmonizing? Are you breaking down middle walls and healing schisms and bringing people together? Or are you dividing? Are you creating factions? Are you separating? Are you sending people into little groups that are each other's throats, one against the other? The great lesson that God taught the Apostle Peter on this occasion was that these Gentiles were to be his friends, and to be accepted by him. ([Acts 9:32-10:23 The Cure For Death](#))(See also his excellent message on [Legalism Galatians 5:13-26](#))

### Acts 10:15 Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

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

- **What** Acts 10:28; 11:9; 15:9,20,29; Mt 15:11; Rev 14:14-17,20; 1 Cor 10:25; Gal 2:12,13; 1 Ti 4:3-5; Titus 1:15; Heb 9:9,10
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD MAKES ALL FOODS KOSHER!

**Again a voice came to him a second time** - The voice ignores Peter's protest. The patience of God to speak a second time even after Peter's negative response. But this second time, the supernatural voice gives a reason Peter is to eat. In short, God said it, that settled it, whether Peter fully understood or not. In the **Charge of the Light Brigade**, there is a famous line that reads "*Ours is not to question why. Ours is to do and die.*" Recall that Peter had heard Jesus Who "was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it." (Luke 9:23-24+) Peter was being called to deny self, to die to self! That same call still holds for all who would call themselves genuine followers of Christ.

**THOUGHT** - What is it in your life that the Spirit of Jesus is calling you to obedience to His clear commands to deny self and die to self? Is it some "sacred cow?" Is it some "secret sin?" We all do well to follow Peter's example and enabled by the Spirit obey the voice of the Lord.

**Swindoll** - opinions or preferences of people can never supersede the declaration of God

**"What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."** - Recall Mark's parenthetical statement in Mk 7:19 that Jesus "**declared all foods clean.**" This is parenthetical because Mark's comment that all foods were clean was written years after the church had begun and presumably was directed at his Christian readers who may have misunderstood the Jewish ceremonial laws. What is clear now is that in Acts 10 God is establishing a new order, overturning the Old Covenant regulations having to do with ritual or ceremonial laws in the Mosaic Covenant, including clean and unclean foods, need for sacrifices, celebration of festivals and special days and even circumcision. (See Acts 10:14 above for related comments and resources on this topic)

**Barton** - This educating of Peter, as with the educating of most believers, took a little repetition. God was revealing something that would be startling to Peter's Jewish mind; God was basically nullifying the Jewish dietary laws and, by analogy, God was preparing Peter to meet an unclean Gentile. (See [Acts - Page 175](#))

The phrase **no longer consider unholy** is present imperative with a negative which means to stop an action in progress - Peter had just called unholy what God had invited him to slay and eat. Peter was to stop calling unholy what God had cleansed.

Both Jesus and Paul gave clear teachings on the subject of food, ritual law and ceremonial law...

Jesus taught

"It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." Matthew 15:11+

Paul taught

Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. Col 2:16, 17+

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**The Open Bible - Reconciliation Between Enemies**—The gospel of Jesus Christ not only reconciles humans to God but provides the basis for reconciliation between people who are natural enemies. In NT times the natural enemies who heard the gospel were Jews and Gentiles. Jews, whose faith rested on the OT, comprised all of the earliest converts to faith in Christ (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 11:19). The Jewish Christians did not want to consider Gentiles as Christians until they first became Jewish converts (Acts 15:1). One of the triumphs of the NT church was recognizing that all humans stand on level ground before the Cross of Christ—equally needy, equally redeemed by His death, equally worthwhile in His body (Eph. 2:11–18).

It is a scandal in the church of Jesus Christ when centuries later majority-race Christians exclude minority groups. That Native Americans, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanics, and other ethnic groups are despised and excluded from various Christian congregations is sin. One of the most powerful witnesses to the reality of the work of God in the modern world is interracial reconciliation (John 17:20–23). Hatred and suspicion cannot be solved by education and legislation. Only regeneration can change the fearful human heart (2 Cor. 5:16–20). Only the church has a compelling reason to reject natural racial hostility in favor of the supernatural love of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:19–22).

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**Steven Cole: Breaking Down Our Prejudice** - The ancient Greeks divided up the human race into two categories: Greeks and barbarians. The barbarian was literally a man who could not speak Greek, and so his words sounded to the Greek ear like “bar bar.” One Greek historian asked rhetorically, “How can men who can only bark ever rule the world?” Prejudice is not eradicated with brilliance, since Aristotle believed that the world’s climate maintained the difference between Greeks and barbarians. He explained that those who lived in the cold lands to the north had plenty of courage and spirit, but little skill and intelligence. Those who lived in the warm south had plenty of skill, intelligence, and culture, but little spirit and courage. Only the Greeks lived in a climate designed by nature to produce the perfectly blended character (Aristotle, Politics [7:7:2], cited by William Barclay, *Flesh and Spirit* [Baker], pp. 40-41).

1. We all are prone to prejudice.
  2. God is gracious to gently break us of our prejudice so that He can work through us.
  3. God’s purpose is to spread the gospel through us so that He will be glorified among the nations.
  4. When God confronts our prejudice, we must yield in obedience to Him.
  5. When we yield to the Lord and put to death our prejudice, He will use us mightily in His service. [Breaking Down Our Prejudice \(Acts 10:1-33\)](#)
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**QUESTION** - [What does the Bible say about what foods we should eat \(kosher\)? Are there foods a Christian should avoid? WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - Leviticus chapter 11 lists the dietary restrictions God gave to the nation of Israel. The dietary laws included prohibitions against eating pork, shrimp, shellfish and many types of seafood, most insects, scavenger birds, and various other animals. The dietary rules were never intended to apply to anyone other than the Israelites. The purpose of the food laws was to make the Israelites distinct from all other nations. After this purpose had ended, Jesus declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19+). Later, God gave the apostle Peter a vision that implied formerly unclean animals could be eaten: “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean” (Acts 10:15+). When Jesus died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament law (Romans 10:4+; Galatians 3:24-26+; Ephesians 2:15+). This includes the laws regarding clean and unclean foods.

Romans 14:1-23+ teaches us that not everyone is mature enough in the faith to accept the fact that all foods are clean. As a result, if we are with someone who would be offended by our eating “unclean” food, we should give up our right to do so as to not offend the other person. We have the right to eat whatever we want, but we do not have the right to offend other people, even if they are wrong. For the Christian in this age, though, we have freedom to eat whatever we wish as long as it does not cause someone else to stumble in his/her faith.

In the New Covenant of grace, the Bible is far more concerned with how much we eat than what foods Christians eat. Physical appetites are an analogy of our ability to control ourselves. If we are unable to control our eating habits, we are probably also unable to control other habits such as those of the mind (lust, covetousness, unrighteous hatred/anger) and unable to keep our mouths from gossip or strife. As Christians, we are not to let our appetites control us; rather, we are to control them (Deuteronomy 21:20; Proverbs 23:2; 2 Peter 1:5-7; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 2 Corinthians 10:5). [GotQuestions.org](#)

## Related Resources from Gotquestions.org

- [Why did the Old Testament Law command against the eating of pork?](#)
- [What does it mean to give glory to God whether you eat or drink \(1 Corinthians 10:31\)?](#)

**Acts 10:16 This happened three times, and immediately the object was taken up into the sky.**

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

- **three times** Genesis 41:32; John 21:17; 2 Cor 13:1
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE SHEET VISION: PART THREE

**This happened three times** - What happened three times? Clearly it was the same vision and same interchange which was repeated. The implication is that Peter remained unconvinced after the first vision which would account for the need to repeat this action three times. This is how God overcame Peter's scruples. On the other hand, Cornelius had no scruples and was glad to socialize with Jews. Peter was being prepared to enter Cornelius' dwelling, something heretofore he would have been loathe to do! God is able to break down our walls of prejudice. Do you have any prejudices (racial or otherwise) which God's Spirit needs to demolish?

If you are struggling with letting the walls fall down (re: prejudice), perhaps you might benefit from the [pithy](#) words of the great Scottish preacher [Alexander Whyte](#) who said

All so like ourselves. For, how we also bundle up whole nations of men and throw them into that same unclean sheet. Whole churches that we know nothing about but their bad names that we have given them, are in our sheet of excommunication also. All the other denominations of Christians in our land are common and unclean to us. Every party outside our own party in the political state also. We have no language contemptuous enough wherewith to describe their wicked ways and their self-seeking schemes. They are four-footed beasts and creeping things. Indeed, there are very few men alive, and especially those who live near us, who are not sometimes in the sheet of our scorn; unless it is one here and one there of our own family, or school, or party. And they also come under our scorn and our contempt the moment they have a mind of their own, and interests of their own, and affections and ambitions of their own. ([Whyte's Dictionary of Bible Characters - Cornelius](#))

**Comment** - And if you need a little added motivation to let the walls of prejudice in your heart fall down, take four minutes and listen to this old Maranatha chorus [Let the Walls Fall Down](#). Then surrender your pride to the Spirit, welcoming Him to do His work in your heart! You will be filled with His supernatural love, joy and peace when the walls fall down! (PS: If you enjoyed "Let the Walls Fall Down" [click here for over 30 minutes](#) of similar Maranatha choruses from the "Praise Band.")

**Kent Hughes** goes on to add "We too write off whole churches simply by what we have heard about them. We too shut out whole ethnic groups because of a bad experience with one person or family. We too mentally excommunicate those who do not agree with us on one secondary issue or another. Our sheets easily fill with educational, racial, cultural, and spiritual rejects, and we cry, "By no means, Lord—they are not my type!" The result, of course, is a Christianity that grows solely on homogeneous lines. We then only seek to win our own kind, and thousands never come to grace who, humanly speaking, would have if they were given the chance. The tragedy is compounded by the fact that, like Peter, we can have these unacceptable attitudes even while generally being in fellowship with Christ. Remember, Peter was praying when he had this vision. He had a beautiful attitude toward God but a lousy one toward the world! If we do not respond to Christ's prodding and let him change our heart attitudes, our relationships with people will suffer—and eventually our relationship with God as well." (See [Acts \(ESV Edition\): The Church Afire](#))

**Robertson** agrees that Peter remained unconvinced after one vision commenting that "Here is a striking illustration of obstinacy on the part of one who acknowledges the voice of God to him when the command of the Lord crosses one's preferences and prejudices. There are abundant examples today of precisely this thing. In a real sense Peter was maintaining a pose of piety beyond the will of the Lord. Peter was defiling what God had cleansed." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

The phrase **three times** of course recalls Peter's three denials that he knew Jesus (cf Lk 22:34, after the third denial = Mt 26:74).



Some commentators say in this present pericope, Peter refused to obey three times, but Luke only describes one specific refusal in Acts 10:14 explaining that he had never eaten anything unclean and unholy before. The three part sheet vision also recalls another, and perhaps more relevant event that occurred three times in John 21 where Jesus asks Peter three times if he loved Him (Jn 21:15, 16, 17 agapao...phileo, agapao...phileo, phileo...phileo). To each of Peter's affirmative replies, Jesus spoke of feeding His sheep - "Tend My lambs" (Jn 21:15), "Shepherd My sheep" (Jn 21:16) and "Tend My sheep." (Jn 21:17). (See in depth notes on [John 21:15-25](#)) In John 10:16 Jesus had clearly declared **I have other sheep, which are not of this fold**(i.e., Gentiles); **I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd** (i.e., the Church, cf Eph 2:16+)." This was in a very real sense a prophecy that the Gentiles would be gathered into the Kingdom of God under Christ the Chief Shepherd. And here in Acts 10-11, God is leading Peter to fulfill Jesus' prophecy by taking the Gospel to the Gentiles in Caesarea Maritima. How wonderful is God's word in one section which perfectly integrates with His words in this parallel section.

**Rich Cathers** makes an interesting comment - A principle in Scripture is that "truth" is determined by two or more witnesses. (Dt 19:15NKJV) "One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established." You will see this in places where a dream is repeated twice. When Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, it was significant that the theme of the two dreams was repeated. Joseph told Pharaoh: (Ge 41:32NKJV) "And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." ([Sermon Notes](#))

**And immediately the object was taken up into the sky**- God's revelation was accomplished. Now it was Peter's turn to respond!

**Immediately** (2117)(**euthus**) when used as **adverb** means immediately, right away, at once. The use of **euthus** with the meaning of **immediately**. This is a key word in the Gospel of Mark as evidenced by 11 uses in the first chapter (Mark 1:3, 10, 12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 28, 29, 30, 42, 43)!

**Luke's** uses **euthus** - Lk. 3:4; Lk. 3:5; Lk. 6:49; Acts 8:21; Acts 9:11; Acts 10:16; Acts 13:10

**F F Bruce** comments - The divine cleansing of food in the vision is a parable of the divine cleansing of human beings in the incident to which the vision leads up. It did not take Peter long to understand this: "God has taught me," he says later in the present narrative, "to call no human being profane or unclean" (Acts 10:30). Within the framework of the vision it is food that God has cleansed by dominical pronouncement, but in the wider narrative it is men and women, even Gentiles, whose hearts he has cleansed by faith (cf. Acts 15:9). Yet the cleansing of food is not wholly parabolic: there is a connection between the abrogation of the levitical food restrictions and the removal of the barrier between believing Jews and Gentiles, for it was in large measure the Gentiles' eating of food which was "unclean" (not kosher) by Jewish law that made association with them a source of "defilement" for Jews (cf. Acts 10:28). (NICNT - Acts)

**Kent Hughes** - Dr. H. A. Ironside said that when his father died, this passage was running through his father's mind, and he kept repeating, "A great sheet and wild beasts, and... and... and..." When he could not get the words out, he started over but stalled once more at the same place. Finally a friend bent over and whispered, "John, it says, '**creeping things**.'" "Oh yes," he said, "that is how I got in. **Just a poor, good-for-nothing creeping thing, but I got in**" Without a change in apostolic attitudes, none of us would have heard the gospel of the love of Jesus Christ. (Preaching the Word - Acts)

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**Life Application - AGREEING WITH GOD** Steeped in Jewish tradition and filled with certain biases, Peter was convinced his views on the Gentiles were correct. It took a three-part heavenly vision for God to change Peter's mind. One of the most basic and practical lessons from this encounter is that when God speaks, we must not challenge what he says. **Doubting God is the rebellion of Eden**. When God says something is so, we must not debate with Him. The right response is humble submission to His revealed truth. **Are you trying to argue with God over some point that He has already made clear?** (Bruce Barton [Acts - Page 175](#))

**Acts 10:17 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;**

KJV 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,

- **while Peter was greatly perplexed** Acts 10:19; 2:12; 5:24; 25:20; John 13:12; 1 Peter 1:11
- **the men** Acts 10:7-18; 9:43
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be-** At this point Peter does not understand the significance of his vision of clean and unclean. In English **perplexed** means to be filled with confusion or bewilderment or to be puzzled over what is not understood or certain.

**A. T. Robertson** paraphrased **greatly perplexed** as "to be completely at a loss to know what road to take," which is very apropos considering that Peter would soon determine take the road to [Caesarea Maritima](#), beginning a journey that would culminate in the initiation of an "evangelism explosion" of the Gospel to the godless, pagan Gentile world, the ripples of which would eventually impact most of us (Gentile believers) reading this note! We often speak of having a "life verse," but I would submit Acts 10 should be every Gentile believer's "life chapter!" ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Greatly perplexed** ("was very confused")(1280)([diaporeo](#) from **dia** = through, intensifies [= thoroughly] + **aporeo**= to be at a loss from **a** = negative + **poros** = a way) means to be completely at a loss to know what road (way) to take. To be thoroughly perplexed, to be in much doubt, to hesitate greatly. Luke uses the [imperfect tense](#) describing Peter's mental state as over and over he was perplexed. Peter did not know what to make of this supernatural vision. As Robertson says "When out of the ecstasy (trance) he was more puzzled than ever." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

This verb is used in the NT only by Luke - Lk. 9:7; Acts 2:12; Acts 5:24; Acts 10:17

**Vincent** on **diaporeo** - From **dia** = *through*, and **aporeo** = *to be without a way out*. The radical idea of the compound verb seems to be of one who goes *through* the whole list of possible ways, and finds no way out. Hence, *to be in perplexity*. Diaporeō is used as a reaction by people to a manifestation of God's power.

**Vision** (3705)(see preceding discussion of [horama](#))

**Behold** ([idou](#)) is an interjection which is used to garner the reader's attention, often to introduce something new and extraordinary.

Notice how the perplexing message was followed up by providential messengers. While this may not always occur when God speaks to us through His Word and by His Spirit, He may bring about providential circumstances that interweave what He has said in His Word.

**John Phillips** - Here we have a grand illustration of all things working together. Three men were at the gate calling his name, and Peter was on the roof pondering the purpose of a thrice-repeated vision. Moreover, in case Peter should still have doubts when he discovered that the strangers calling for him were Gentiles, the Holy Spirit told him bluntly he was to go with them. **It is not often in life we see the Lord showing His hand so prominently in our decisions. But can we doubt that He is at work and actively involved in each one of them? It is worth reminding ourselves of that when we come to a puzzling crossroad in life, when a decision one way or another will affect our life for a very long time. The Holy Spirit is actively involved and will enable us to make the right decision if we will wait on Him.** (ED: I WOULD ADD THAT IT IS TIMES OF A "PUZZLING CROSSROAD" WE NEED TO LEARN TO WAIT ON THE LORD IN PRAYER AND IN HIS WORD!) It is not usually wise to make a decision so long as the perplexity lasts. "If you don't know what to do, don't do it," was the best advice I ever received at one time of crisis in my life. Just wait a little while, and the perplexity will be resolved, and a clear intimation of the mind of the Spirit will be given. (**ILLUSTRATION**) Sometimes water run into a glass will be cloudy. If we set down the glass for a few moments the sediment will sink and the water become clear. It is so with our decisions. Waiting will often clarify the issues (ED: see another benefit of "waiting" on the Lord = Isaiah 40:31+). Many of our mistakes come from acting out of impatience. So Peter tarried on the rooftop until all of a sudden a pounding at the gate and the sound of his name being called coincided with a clear intimation from the Holy Spirit as to what course of action he should take.(Exploring Acts)

## A PROVIDENTIAL "COINCIDENCE"

**The men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon's house, appeared at the gate-**So as Peter is being perplexed, part of the answer to the riddle (so to speak) is approaching Simon the tanner's house as they sought Simon Peter. This is a small but interesting detail that the three had to stop (and take time) to ask for directions. Had they come straight to the tanner's house, they would have arrived before Peter's vision was finished (see Acts 10:19). Once again we see God's providence leaves nothing to "chance!" Beloved, if that is true in this story, it is likewise true in our day to day lives, filled with divine providence!

**Robertson** on **having asked directions** - "to ask one after another, to ask through, old verb, but only here in the N.T. It took diligent inquiry to find the obscure house of Simon the tanner."

**Vincent** on **having asked directions** - "Having inquired *out*;" having asked their way *through* (dia) streets and houses, until they found the dwelling of the tanner, who was an obscure man, and not easily found."

**Robertson on at the gate** - The messengers stopped right at the folding gates of the passage (pulōna) which led from the street to the inner court or house. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**William MacDonald** comments that "It is clear that the vision had deeper significance than the mere matter of eating foods, clean and unclean. True, with the coming of the Christian faith, these regulations concerning foods were no longer in effect. But the real significance of the vision was this: God was about to open the door of faith to the Gentiles. As a Jew, Peter had always looked upon the Gentiles as unclean, as aliens, as strangers, as far off, as godless (**ED**: cf Peter's statement in Acts 10:28). But now God was going to do a new thing. Gentiles (represented by the unclean beasts and birds) were going to receive the Holy Spirit the same as the Jews (clean beasts and birds) had already received Him. National and religious distinctions were to be dissolved, and all true believers in the Lord Jesus would be on the same level in the Christian fellowship." (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Ger** - The termination of the vision leaves Peter extremely perplexed and dumbfounded. Of course, the ultimate point of the vision and of God's statement to Peter is not about food at all, but rather that God had made Gentiles clean; that intimate contact would now be permitted between Jews and Gentiles. Reasoning from the principle of "light to heavy," or applying truth about that with lesser significance to that with greater significance, if God has declared food clean, then how much more so is this true about the Gentiles who are that much more significant than food. There is a faction within the church, however, who even now are still stymied by this passage. It is not the application of the vision that they find bewildering; they have no problem accepting Gentiles into the church. In fact, many of them are Gentiles themselves. Their difficulty is accepting the implications of the illustration God used to prove his point, that the kosher laws no longer apply to believers in Christ. This difficulty in accepting the teaching of an abstract visual illustration is probably related to a misunderstanding of the propositional truth taught by Paul and in Hebrews that the Torah, the Mosaic Law, the ministry of death and condemnation (2 Cor. 3:6-11), has been rendered inoperative by Christ's death and the subsequent establishment of the superior New Covenant (Heb. 8:6-13). **Consequently, these believers unnecessarily burden themselves (and often others) with self-imposed food restrictions, Sabbath keeping and various Mosaic minutia contained within the 613 commandments of Torah from which they select that which seems either most applicable or achievable. This is not to say, however, that believers in Christ do not possess the freedom to participate in and apply certain aspects of the Torah to their lives. Such freedom is fundamental to both Jews and Gentiles living under grace.** The problematic issue is not the exercise of a believer's freedom to live out his godly lifestyle of choice but, rather, the imposition of legal requirements to achieve either salvation or, more commonly, sanctification. This problem of pseudo-Torah observance is not a new one and will merit further discussion when Acts 15 is studied. (Twenty-First Century Commentary)

#### **Acts 10:18 and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there.**

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

- **And calling out** Acts 10:5,6; 11:11
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And calling out** - "A general summons to any one within, in order to make inquiries." ([Vincent](#)) Some commentators have speculated that they stood outside, knowing better than to enter the home of a Jew.

**They were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there**- Note the distinction they make -- they are not asking about Simon the tanner, but Simon the Rock (Peter).

**Staying** is the verb [xenizo \(see above\)](#) which is in the present tense, meaning Peter was continually (during his time in Joppa) lodging at the tanner's house. It is the same verb Luke uses when Peter invites the three Gentiles in and **gave them lodging** (Acts 10:23).

#### **Acts 10:19 While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, Behold, three men are looking for you.**

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

- **the Spirit** Acts 8:29; 11:12; 13:2; 16:6,7; 21:4; John 16:13; 1 Cor 12:11; 1 Ti 4:1
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PETER IS A SPIRIT DIRECTED MAN

O, that this passage would be the description of every blood bought, heaven bound believer! Spirit sensitive and Spirit directed men and women! Hearing and heeding men and women!

**While Peter was reflecting on the vision**- NET has "was still thinking seriously." Peter is still on the roof pondering the vision. His perplexity of Acts 10:17 was about to be explained as the Spirit speaks to him.

**Reflecting** (earnestly pondering)(**dienthumenomai** from **dia** = through or intensifies + **enthumeomai** in turn from **en** = in + **thumos** = mind, thought) so the idea is to think upon something, to think it through, giving it careful consideration. The present tense indicates Peter was kept on turning the vision over and over in his mind as he attempted to discover the meaning. **Robertson** comments that "Peter was revolving in his mind, through and through, in and out, to find the meaning of the strange vision." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Jack Andrews** - LESSON: When the Lord speaks to us through His word and by His Spirit we need to meditate on the word of God and the will of God for our lives. We need to spend time mulling over what God says to us in His word. As he was thinking about what he saw we learn of God's word to Peter. ([Expository Sermons](#))

**Vision** ([3705](#))(see preceding discussion of [horama](#))

**The Spirit said to him** - This is the first (and only) record by Luke that the Spirit spoke directly to Peter. Peter refers to this supernatural speech in Acts 11:12 stating that "**The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings.**" Luke does not tell us how He spoke, whether by an audible voice or by an impression to his heart and mind. It matters not how it occurred, but it definitely occurred and secondly that Peter discerned that the speech was supernatural.

**THOUGHT** - Does the Spirit speak to your heart as you read His Word? Beloved, while there is no new revelation, God's Spirit uses the completed revelation of the Bible to "speak" to our hearts. The Spirit of truth is like an inner compass in our lives when we immerse ourselves in the Word of Truth. Are you listening? Do you discern the direction of the compass and yet chose to walk another direction? In other words, do you hear and yet fail to heed? Or do you have unconfessed sin which muffles the still small voice of God? Confess and repent and you will hear Him speak through the Word He inspired. Yes, God still speaks because the Bible is God's Word and His written communication to mankind, so it a very real sense when you read God's Word or hear God's Word read or spoken, you are hearing God speak. YES OUR FATHER STILL SPEAKS TO HIS CHILDREN!

**Ryan Shelton** rightly reminds us of a basic truth about God we tend to overlook or forget - "Speaking is central to God. God himself is Word, and his speech commanded nothing to be everything (John 1:1-3). "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty" (Psalm 29:4). When God wants the dead to come to life he says, "Live!" (Ezekiel 16:6), and when Jesus wanted his friend to walk out of the grave, he spoke, "Lazarus, come out" (John 11:43). Even now, Jesus is holding together your molecules with his words (Hebrews 1:3). If Jesus were to stop speaking, you would stop existing." Indeed! ([Only Our God Speaks](#))

**John Piper** adds "God really has spoken. And this word is living and active. It is not a dead word. He really speaks today through the inspired Scriptures. He really, really does. He really does. Not just with information, but with himself by his Spirit. "The Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord" (1 Samuel 3:21). That really happens. God stands forth from his inspired word as we read it prayerfully and dependently. And, I would add this: the word in the Bible is more sure than anything you can hear outside the Bible. I base that on 1 Corinthians 14:37-38: "If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized." That is amazing. Paul is saying you can call yourself a prophet and get messages from God. You can call yourself spiritual and be tuned in to God, but if anything you say doesn't accord with what I say, you are not recognized, which means that outside the Bible we have fallible, uncertain impressions and messages. Inside the Bible we have rock-solid, dependable messages. So there are treasures and wonders and glories and dimensions of God to be seen in the Bible that we have scarcely seen. It seems to me to be folly to crave the lesser authority and the lesser riches outside the Bible than the riches and the greater authority that we have barely tasted, let alone digested, inside the Bible....But I will close with this. **Beware of craving the sensations of a voice.** Jesus warned against those who seek a sign

(Matthew 12:38–39). So here he is. He is standing there in front of the Pharisees and scribes speaking and they say: Give us a sign. What does that mean? It means that the voice of Jesus Christ the Son of God wasn't adequate. They needed something more. They needed to feel more, touch more, see more. They wanted more. And Jesus wouldn't give it to them. And I think we are in a situation today not unlike that. We hear more of the Son of God than anybody in Jesus's day ever heard, because we have all four gospels and those people got it in snatches. **Therefore we have the wholeness of the revelation that Jesus meant to communicate, and it is speaking to us every time we read the Bible. And if we turn away from that and say: But I need a sign. I need a voice. I need a tree to fall down in the woods when I am talking. I need something. We are putting ourselves in the position of those who demanded a sign.** Instead, I think our hearts should be: Oh, God, this is the way Paul taught the Ephesians to pray in Ephesians 1:18-19: Give my heart sight. Open my eyes to your power. Open my eyes to your wisdom. Open my eyes to your inheritance. You say stunning things that should blow me away and give me a sense of your worth beyond anything any message outside should give. So, **Father, if I am not seeing, if I am not hearing, have mercy upon me and open my eyes.** ([Does God Verbally Speak to Me](#))

#### Related Resources:

- [How can we recognize the voice of God?](#)
- [What does it mean that God speaks in a still small voice?](#)

There is only one place in Scripture where God is said to speak in a "still small voice," and it was to Elijah after his dramatic victory over the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:20-40; 19:12). Told that Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, king of Israel, was seeking to kill him, Elijah ran into the wilderness and collapsed in exhaustion. God sent an angel with food and water to strengthen him, told him to rest, and then sent him to Horeb. In a cave there, Elijah voices his complaint that all of God's prophets had been killed by Jezebel and he alone had survived. God instructed him to stand on the mountain in His presence. Then the Lord sent a mighty wind which broke the rocks in pieces; then He sent an earthquake and a fire, but His voice was in none of them. After all that, the Lord spoke to Elijah in the still small voice, or "gentle whisper."

The point of God speaking in the still small voice was to show Elijah that the work of God need not always be accompanied by dramatic revelation or manifestations. Divine silence does not necessarily mean divine inactivity. Zechariah 4:6 tells us that God's work is "not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," meaning that overt displays of power are not necessary for God to work.

Because He is God, He is not confined to a single manner of communicating with His people. Elsewhere in Scripture, He is said to communicate through a whirlwind (Job 38:1), to announce His presence by an earthquake (Exodus 19:18), and to speak in a voice that sounds like thunder (1 Samuel 2:10; Job 37:2; Psalm 104:7; John 12:29). In Psalm 77:18 His voice is compared to both thunder and a whirlwind. And in Revelation 4:5, we're told that lightning and thunder proceed from the throne in heaven.

Nor is God limited to natural phenomena when He speaks. All through Scripture, He speaks through His prophets over and over. The common thread in all the prophets is the phrase, "Thus says the Lord." He speaks through the writers of Scripture. Most graciously, however, He speaks through His Son, the Lord Jesus. The writer to the Hebrews opens his letter with this truth: "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world" (Hebrews 1:1–2). The difference between God speaking through the thunder and the whirlwind, then through the still, small voice, can be also considered as showing the difference between the two dispensations of law and grace. The law is a voice of terrible words and was given amidst a tempest of wind, thunder, and lightning, attended by an earthquake (Hebrews 12:18–24), but the gospel is a gentle voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and the free gift of salvation through Christ. The law breaks the rocky hearts of men in pieces, shakes their consciences, and fills their minds with a sense of God's fiery wrath and the punishment they deserve, and then the gospel speaks gently to them of the peace and pardon available in Christ.

**It is less important how God speaks to us than what we do with what He says. God speaks most clearly to us in this day through His Word. The more we learn it, the more ready we will be to recognize His voice when He speaks, and the more likely we are to obey what we hear.**

**Ed Comment** - As Warren Wiersbe said "It is good to **have** God's Word; it is even better to **hear** God's Word; but the greatest blessing of all is to **heed** God's Word (James 1:19–25)." (ED: As Samuel said " 1 Sa 15:22).

The Spirit speaks several times in Acts

(Acts 8:29) Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."

(Acts 11:12) "The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man's house.

(Acts 13:2) While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

(Acts 16:6) They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;

(Acts 16:7) and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;

(Acts 21:4) After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.

**Behold (idou)** = Pay attention Peter! Are you sensitive to the Spirit's insertions of **Behold** in the Living and Active Word of God? If you are not, then you are missing out (as they say) because there are 1172 "**beholds**" beginning in Genesis 1 (Ge 1:29, 31 - Speaking to Adam and Eve in a perfect environment) and ending in Revelation 22 (Rev 22:7, 12 = Speaking to every son and daughter of God!). In English the verb "**behold**" means to "see with attention!" Perhaps because "behold" is used so frequently, we become somewhat "numb" to it's presence and purpose. But that should not be! In the Scripture "behold" is virtually always an imperative or command (in the Septuagint, the OT uses of [hinneh](#) [= "behold" in Hebrew] are usually translated with the Greek imperative idou). Here is the point -- "**Behold**" is not just a suggestion but a command to pay attention! And truth be told, every time we open the Book and ask God's Spirit to open the eyes of our heart (Ps 119:25 "open" = Heb galah = uncover what is hidden, Lxx = [apokalupto](#) in the aorist imperative = a pleading by the psalmist!), we should be prepared to "see with attention!" (And to heed without hesitation).

As **C H Spurgeon** wisely said (parenthetically most everything Spurgeon said was wise!) - "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation."

**THOUGHT** - I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!" Next time you are doing your daily reading of the Word, use it as an opportunity to practice the "**5P's**" - **P**ause to **P**onder the **P**assage then **P**ractise it in the **P**ower of the Spirit.

**Three men are looking for you** - Peter has the supernatural vision repeated three times and now receives additional supernatural confirmation regarding the three men sent by Cornelius. While the number "three" occurs twice in this story and several times in Peter's lifetime, it is difficult to ascribe a definitive significance to the number.

**Bengel** on the Spirit's instructions - Peter was prepared by degrees for receiving this new direction (suggestion) of the Spirit. Believers are led gradually, so far as is sufficient for the time being, in each particular case.

**Looking** is seeking, the Greek verb [zeteo](#) (present tense) speaks of making an effort and implies their utmost diligence to the task their master Cornelius had given them.

Luke's uses of **zeteo** - Lk. 2:48; Lk. 2:49; Lk. 5:18; Lk. 6:19; Lk. 9:9; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 11:16; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 12:29; Lk. 12:31; Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 13:24; Lk. 15:8; Lk. 17:33; Lk. 19:3; Lk. 19:10; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:19; Lk. 22:2; Lk. 22:6; Lk. 24:5; Acts 9:11; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:21; Acts 13:8; Acts 13:11; Acts 16:10; Acts 17:5; Acts 17:27; Acts 21:31; Acts 27:30

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**Adrian Rogers - Learning to Yield to the Holy Spirit**- Let me give you a few suggestions about yielding to the Holy Spirit. Remember that his guidance is promised in the Gospels by Jesus himself. "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13).

Also his guidance is shown in the Book of Acts. "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee" (Acts 10:19). "After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not" (Acts 16:7). And in his Epistle to the Romans, Paul makes clear that the Spirit of God leads the people of God. "For as many as are led by the

Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Ro 8:14).

How can we tell, however, if it is the Spirit of God or some other voice? How can we assure ourselves that the Spirit is leading rather than autosuggestion or human impression? Many foolish and hurtful things have been done by people who claim to have been led by the Spirit of God or some "inner light."

One of the keys that I've found is to be aware of anything that disturbs our peace with God. Colossians 3:15 says, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." The Greek word translated as rule is a verb form of the word for a judge or a referee in an athletic game. I can tell when I'm "out of bounds" because the Holy Spirit will blow the whistle. If you are walking in the Spirit, you will hear the whistle.

There is authority everywhere, and we must yield. I was with some friends at a restaurant. We wanted to move some tables together so we could sit together. The waitress said, "You can't do that." To me it was obvious that we could and for practical purposes should. Had I been a manager in the restaurant, not only would I have encouraged it; I would have seen that it was done.

At the time of this event, I was serving as president of the Southern Baptist Convention—the world's largest evangelical denomination. Here's a waitress telling us that we could not do a very reasonable thing. My first impression was to just do it anyway, and so I started to move the tables. At that moment the Holy Spirit blew a whistle and said, "Adrian, you're out of bounds. She is in authority here." Indeed she was. I submitted, and I am glad that I did.

I have found that to yield to him in small things, everyday things, practical things makes it so much easier to yield in times of crisis. Oh, there is so much more in Jesus! We need to know it, reckon on it, and yield to it. Then, the mighty Spirit of God releases the awesome power of Kingdom Authority, and we can shout that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Ro 8:2)! (The Incredible Power of Kingdom Authority)

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**Charles Stanley - TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT IS TO OBEY THE INITIAL PROMPTINGS OF THE SPIRIT** -To whom do you turn for daily guidance on how to live, what to do, where to go, whom to see, how to make decisions? The Scriptures tell us that the only Guide worth trusting is the Holy Spirit. He is the only One who knows our past completely, from the moment we were conceived to the present, and who also knows our future, from this day to eternity. Only He fully knows God's plan and purpose for us, today and for each day of our lives. Only the Holy Spirit knows what is fully good and right for you. Any other opinion can reflect only part of the full truth, which the Holy Spirit knows completely. Jesus repeatedly referred to the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth. Note what He said about the Holy Spirit's activity in your life: "He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13). **The Spirit of truth is like an inner compass in our lives—always pointing us toward what Jesus would be, say, or do in any given moment** od desires to make His will known to you. He wants you to know what to do and when to do it. Trust the Holy Spirit to be your daily Guide! Throughout the Gospels, we see **Jesus guided every day by the Holy Spirit** After God poured out the Holy Spirit on the disciples, they too found themselves led in profound ways by the Holy Spirit. The verses below give just a few examples of how the Holy Spirit dealt with His people in ways that provided very personal and specific guidance. What He did for them then, He desires to do for you today. Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing (Acts 11:12). As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them" (Acts 13:2). Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia (Acts 16:6). The leaders of the early church relied on the Holy Spirit to give them this kind of specific, personal guidance, and we are wise to do likewise. Both Romans 8:14 and Ephesians 5:18 refer to our being "led by the Spirit"—**the norm of the Christian life**. You may ask, "Are there any conditions placed upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our lives?" Yes. First, we must stay yielded to the Spirit. (ED: WE MUST CONFESS AND REPENT OF ANY KNOWN SIN LEST WE GRIEVE OR QUENCH HIM!) We must say yes to the Spirit when He prompts us to take a certain action or say a certain word. We must give mental assent to the Spirit's direction, and then we must actually obey His prompting and follow through by doing or saying what He has called us to do or say. The Spirit often speaks to us in the stillness of our hearts with a word of conviction or assurance. When the Holy Spirit is directing us away from something harmful, we very often have a heaviness or a feeling of trouble, foreboding, or uneasiness in our spirits. When the Holy Spirit is directing us toward helpful things we tend to feel a deep inner peace, an eagerness to see what God will do, and a feeling of joy. How can you know if you are yielded to the Holy Spirit? You are yielded to Him when you can say to Him, "Here is what I desire. But if Your answer to this is 'no,' it's all right. I'll do what You say." Second, we must believe for His guidance. We are much more likely to hear what the Holy Spirit has to say to us if we are actively listening for Him to speak. We are much more likely to see the Holy Spirit's direction if we are looking for His signs. Hebrews 11:6 tells us that God is a "rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." We are to be diligent in seeking His guidance, asking for it, watching for it, anticipating it, and receiving it. The Holy Spirit has come to reveal the truth to us. He has come in His all-knowing ability to impart to us what we need to know in order to live obedient and faithful lives. Trust Him to guide you, now and always. (Amen). (Life Principles Bible)

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## Tuned In

Read: Acts 10:1-23

While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you." —Acts 10:19

God speaks to us primarily through His Word, the Bible. Sometimes, however, He directs in ways we do not expect.

Gary Dougherty, a co-worker at RBC Ministries, was walking home from church one evening when he saw a young man coming from the opposite direction. A strong urge came over Gary to talk with him about becoming a Christian. He hesitated at first, but then he said to this total stranger, "Pardon me, but I believe God wants me to tell you how to become a Christian."

"I just asked my girlfriend's mother that question," said the man, "but she didn't know." "You mean you want to become a Christian?" Gary asked. "Yes, I do!" he replied. Still incredulous, Gary asked him again and then shared the plan of salvation with him. That night a young man met Jesus as his Savior.

Some might call this a coincidence, but there's a biblical parallel in Acts 10 with Cornelius and Peter, two men who were in touch with God's Spirit.

Not all believers have equally dramatic experiences. But if God's Word, prayer, and obedience are a daily part of our lives, we will be tuned in to the Spirit's leading and be ready to convey God's love to others.

Father, thank You for Your Spirit,  
Fill us with His love and power;  
Change us into Christ's own image  
Day by day and hour by hour. —Anon.

When you open your heart to the Lord, He opens your eyes to the lost.

By Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Acts 10:20 "But get up, go downstairs and accompany them without misgivings, for I have sent them Myself."**

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

**NLT** Acts 10:20 Get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitation. Don't worry, for I have sent them."

- **get up** Acts 8:26; 9:15; 15:7; Mark 16:15
- **for I have sent them Myself** Acts 9:17; 13:4; Isaiah 48:16; Zech 2:9-11
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PETER'S DIVINE APPOINTMENT**

**But** ([alla](#)) is a Term of contrast. The Spirit is still addressing Peter. Here we see the contrast is sitting and reflecting in Acts 10:19 which needs to be changed to standing and responding. It is time to obey.

**Get up , go downstairs and accompany them** - **Get up** (arise, stand up) indicates Peter was most likely on his knees, a good posture when communing with God! The Spirit gives two commands, **go downstairs** in the aorist imperative means "Do this now without hesitation or delay" and **accompany them** which is in the present imperative signifying keep on accompanying them, the idea being to accompany them until they reach their destination, a destination Peter still does not fully comprehend.

**Matthew Henry** applies this passage to believers - Those that are searching into the meaning of the words of God, and the visions of the Almighty, should not be always [poring \(over\)](#), nor always praying, but should sometimes look abroad, look about them, and they may meet with that which will be of use to them in their inquiries; for the Scripture is in the fulfilling every day.

**Without misgivings** ("without hesitation" - NLT, no "second guessing") - A negative (meden) plus **diakrino** (see diakrino below). Why might Peter be hesitant to accompany them? What might be his **misgivings**? If one of these men was a Roman soldier, Peter would know immediately he was a Gentile and his lifelong prejudice would be tempted to "kick into gear" so to speak! And yet the Spirit says Peter is to listen to them without doubting, without making distinctions between Jew and Gentile like he had



been "programmed" to do all of his life! Old habits die hard don't they. In essence, the Spirit is telling Peter to lay aside his previous teaching (including his negative attitudes) regarding the Gentiles. Step by step the Spirit is guiding Peter to the goal of proclamation of the Gospel to the pagan Gentiles!

**Misgivings** (also in Acts 11:12+)(1252)(**diakrino** from **diá** = separation, root meaning = "two" + **krino** = distinguish, decide, judge) literally means to **judge between two** and has a range of meanings, including making a distinction between persons by evaluation (Acts 15:9+, Acts 11:12). **Diakrino** in the middle voice (reflexive, initiates and participates in the action) in Acts 10:20 means in essence to be at odds with one's self, take issue with and so to hesitate, doubt or waver. One author says it is pictured by the idea of divided in one's mind. This person is the one who is vacillating between two opinions or decisions. In this case clearly Peter's potential **misgivings** might be the fear of becoming ceremonially unclean.

In English **misgivings** describes uneasiness about the fitness of an action or feelings of uncertainty, apprehension, or doubt about whether something is right or will have a good result.

**Expositor's Greek Testament Commentary** on **without misgivings** - "nothing doubting," i.e., without hesitation as to its lawfulness, cf. Matt. 21:21, Rom. 14:23, Mark 11:23, James 1:6.

**Bengel** comments that **without misgivings** is "A requisite in the highest decree necessary in the case of a good action. Often long-continued doubt is suddenly, when need requires, taken away in life or at death."

**For** (1360)(**hoti**) in this context functions as a term of explanation. What is God (through Luke's record) explaining?

**I have sent them Myself** - NLT paraphrases it "Don't worry (THIS IS NOT IN THE GREEK BUT IMPLIED), for I have sent them." The Spirit takes credit for sending the men, even though it was Cornelius who actually directly them. God is behind the scenes and directs the scenes He is behind using men who still maintain their free will and right to make choices. Fascinating!

**Henry Jacobsen** wrote, "Peter was fast learning that God's program is fluid. The Lord is not limited to the traditions, customs, or prejudices of men. Being sovereign, He is free to modify His ways of working. He is not obliged to observe the fences and barricades, the forms and symbols of 'religion' within which men sometimes try to limit God. Where obstructions to His grace persist, God is free to destroy them."

**Stanley** - Have you ever noticed that God tends to guide us in stages? He rarely, if ever, gives us a road map to follow; instead, He asks us to take His hand and go where He goes, without doubting our final destination.

**Jack Andrews** - If we will hear the Spirit's voice and heed the Spirit's voice He will guide us to do the will of God and carry on the work of God. He will open up doors for us that will astound us and we'll have opportunities to be used mightily by the Lord. John Phillips wrote, "It is worthy reminding ourselves of that when we come to a puzzling crossroad in life, when a decision one way or another will affect our life for a very long time. The Holy Spirit is actively involved and will enable us to make the right decision if we will wait on Him." ([Expository Sermons](#))

**Matthew Henry** applies the principle - When we see our call clear to any service, we should not suffer ourselves to be perplexed with doubts and scruples concerning it arising from former prejudices or pre-possessions, or a fear of men's censure. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, and prove his own work.

**ILLUSTRATION** - When I was a young boy growing up in rural Texas in the 1930s, I remember that my maternal grandfather, Judge Lundy, didn't much care for "the way it's always been." At a time when unemployment for white men topped 25 percent, my granddad hired a black man named Mr. Coats and kept him employed for many years. When it came time for the man's wife to deliver a child, my granddad used his influence to make sure that it was in the hospital—probably the first black patients in that maternity ward and undoubtedly the last for quite some time. I learned from his example to honor authority but to question tradition. As it turned out, most of the hospital staff didn't have a problem with black people; they had just never thought to change what had always been. - Chuck Swindoll

**Acts 10:21 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?'**

KJV 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?

- **Behold** John 1:38,39; 18:4-8

- **what** Acts 10:29; Mark 10:51
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## WHY HAVE YOU COME?

**Peter went down to the men** - Peter obeys the command (aorist imperative - Do not delay!) to **go downstairs**.

**MacArthur** on Peter and Cornelius's obedience - Peter and Cornelius model the obedience God demands—both at the point of salvation and throughout the Christian life. The Bible repeatedly teaches that obedience accompanies true faith (cf. Matt. 7:21-23; 21:28-32; Luke 9:23, 57-62; John 8:30-31; 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10, 14; Acts 6:7; Rom. 1:5; 16:26; James 2:14-26; 1 John 2:3-4, 19). (See [Acts Commentary - Page 297](#))

**Expositor's Greek Testament Commentary** - Nothing had been spoken to him of his journey, but in the path of unhesitating obedience he was led to the meaning of the revelation (cf. John 13:7 = "Jesus answered and said to him [PETER], "What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.").

**THOUGHT** - Is this not a lesson we all need to learn and re-learn? Obedience is like a series of lily pads on a pond. Step out in obedience on the first pad and it become clearer which "lily pad" we are to step on next. What at first may seem confusing, is progressively made clearer. The corollary is that one of the surest ways to cause the "fog" to set in (so to speak), is to refuse to obey the initial clear instruction or command.

**Behold (idou)** - This interjection (in the aorist imperative calling for immediate attention) is used to arrest the hearer's or reader's attention and is in a sense a "key word" in Acts 10 - Acts 10:17; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:21; Acts 10:30. This is a chapter to "Behold" as it marks the transmission of the Gospel from the Jews to the Gentiles.

**I am the one you are looking for** - See note on [looking](#) above. Peter's spirit is sensitive to the providential presentation of 3 men at the front door, and thus recognizes that these men are the three who were looking for him (Acts 10:19).

**Looking for** (seeking) ([2212](#))([zeteo](#)) means to try to locate or find something (in this case some one).

**What is the reason for which you have come?** - Now the "[Sixty-Four Dollar Question!](#)" Why are you (three Gentile men) here?

**Acts 10:22 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."**

KJV 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.

- **Cornelius** Acts 24:15; Hosea 14:9; Habakkuk 2:4; Mt 1:19; Mark 6:20; Luke 2:25; 23:50; Ro 1:17; Heb 10:38; 12:23
- **well spoken of** Acts 6:3; 22:12; Luke 7:4,5; 1 Ti 3:7; Heb 11:2; 3 John 1:12
- **and hear a message from you** Acts 10:6,33; 11:14; John 5:24; 6:63,68; 13:20; 17:8,20; Ro 10:17,18; 2 Cor 5:18; 2 Peter 3:2
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## REPORT FROM A RIGHTEOUS GOD-FEARING CENTURION

**They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews** - This five fold description is similar to Luke's earlier description in (Acts 10:1-2+) with a "**devout**" replaced by "**righteous**." In Acts 10:1-2 Cornelius' acts of kindness to the Jews are replaced in the present passage by the affirmative reception by the Jewish community in Caesarea (cf Lk 7:5).

**Jack Arnold** - For you who are not yet Christians, what is the lesson you can learn from the life of Cornelius? Cornelius teaches the insufficiency of human goodness for salvation Cornelius was a good man, a sincere man, a devout man, a benevolent man, a generous man a family man, a witnessing man, a religious man, a praying man and a seeking man, but he was not a Christian man. It was not until he heard the message of Jesus Christ from Peter and responded to Christ by faith that he was truly saved, born again and a man in whom Christ lived. Are you saved, friend? You may be religious and not regenerated. You may be humanly good

but not born of God. You may be a churchman and not a true Christian. You are not a Christian until you put your trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior alone to save you. ([Acts 10:1-23a The Seeking Sinner and the Bigoted Believer](#))

**Gilbrant** explains that "His uprightness was the result of his being a fearer of (the one true) God. He had turned his back on all the whole pantheon of Roman gods, goddesses, and semi-divine heroes of their mythology. All those things which were part of his religious background and upbringing in heathenism were now behind him." (Ibid)

**THOUGHT** - Cornelius was **righteous** because he was a God-fearing. We see this pattern in Job's life "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, **fearing God** and turning away from evil." (Job 1:1). A healthy fear of God was the motivation in his life and should be the motivation in our life dearly beloved of God. Do you truly fear God? Do you fully understand that one sin of yours deserved eternal damnation? Do you understand that every time you willfully sin, you are shaking your fist at God and frankly are putting yourself at risk that He might just say "Enough! I am taking you home now!"

**Steven Cole** adds that dikaios "means to be of sound mind, especially in the sense of not being impulsive. The sensible man is not swayed to extremes by his fluctuating emotions. He doesn't give in to impulses that would be sinful or harmful. He is level-headed. He lives in light of his priorities and commitments. ([Breaking Down Our Prejudice Acts 10:1-33](#))

**Righteous** (1342)(**dikaiois** from **dike** = right, just) defines that which is in accordance with high standards of rectitude. It is that which is in right relation to another and so in reference to persons defines the one who is morally and ethically righteous, upright or just. Righteous in this context does not mean Cornelius is justified or declared righteous by faith because he has not yet heard the Gospel from Peter. But as far as men go, Cornelius' behavior is characterized by accepted standards of morality or justice. He's the kind of man you would like to have as your neighbor and soon he will be a believer.

**Well spoken** (3140)(**martureo**) means the Jews bore witness or testified to the character of Cornelius.

**Was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you** - As Luke had described in Acts 10:3-6+ except now he adds "**holy**" to angel. This would have been the "clincher" for Peter as he now clearly realized that God was moving in some manner that he did not yet fully comprehend. This fact would encourage his unhesitating obedience.

**Divinely directed** (5537)(**chrematizo** from **chrema** = an affair, business, sum of money, Acts 4:37, 8:18, 24:26, property Mt 19:22) in the NT means to impart a divine message (an injunction or warning). **Chrematizo** in this sense speaks of a divine oracle or declaration (Lk 2:26+), as well as a divine warning (Heb 12:25, 8:5, Mt 2:12, 22). In a second usage in the NT chrematizo means to bear a title and so to be called as in Acts 11:26 where "the disciples were first called Christians". (used with this sense in Ro 7:3). In the Greek papyri **chrematizo** meant to transact business, of official pronouncements by magistrates and of a royal reply to a petition as well as an answer of an oracle or as describing a revelation from a deity. Josephus uses chrematizo in the sense of to receive a response from God.

**Vincent** - The verb (**chrematizo**) means to *give a response to one who asks or consults*: hence, in the passive (AS IN Acts 10:22), *to receive an answer*.

Luke's uses of **chrematizo** - Lk. 2:26; Acts 10:22; Acts 11:26 (= "**called** Christians")

**To come to his house and hear a message from you** - In Acts 10:20 Peter had been commanded by the Spirit to accompany them and now he sees that the "**them**" is Gentiles and the destination is a Gentile house. The purpose is that Cornelius might **hear a message** from Peter. While neither the three envoys (cf Acts 10:4-6, 7-8) nor Peter knew exactly what his **message** was to be, clearly Peter is progressively gaining more insight into his vision of clean and unclean, albeit not yet completely grasping the full significance. Step by step the divine drama is unfolding.

**Matthew Henry** on **hear a message from you** - they know not what words, but they are such as he may hear from thee, and not from any one else so well." Faith comes by hearing (Ro 10:17). When Peter repeats this, he tells us more fully, they are words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved, Acts 11:14.

**Larkin** comments that "Obedience to the Spirit will lead to understanding. Understanding demands further obedience. God by his word was breaking down prejudicial barriers as his witnesses obeyed. What breakthroughs does God want to bring about through us as we obey?" ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Message** is **rhema** which signifies a spoken word and is the same word Luke used earlier in descriptions of Peter in the context of speaking forth the Gospel...

Acts 2:14+ But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my **words** (**rhema**).

Acts 5:20+ (Angel of the Lord speaking to the apostles as he releases them from jail) "Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole **message (rhema)** of this Life."

**Acts 10:23 So he invited them in and gave them lodging. And on the next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.**

KJV 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.

- **gave them lodging** Genesis 19:2,3; 24:31,32; Judges 19:19-21; Heb 13:2; 1 Peter 4:9
- **on the next da** Acts 10:29,33; Eccl 9:10
- **some of the brethren from Joppa** Acts 10:45; 9:38,42; 11:12; 2 Cor 8:21
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE PARTITION BEGINS TO FALL

**So** (Therefore) ([oun](#)) - Term of conclusion. Peter concluded that there was something supernatural about these Gentiles showing up the same day he himself had experienced a supernatural encounter. The Spirit had clearly spoken to him. Thus Peter receives not only the men but their message. Thus we begin to see a change taking place in Peter's "kosher, anti-Gentile heart" and he takes the first step toward "inter-ethnic" reconciliation. This is not a reflection of human reasoning or methodology. It is clearly God's grace at work to remove a man's legalistic bias, that long standing, potent (and pride filled) prejudice which heretofore had prevented cross cultural ministry of Jews to Gentiles.

**THOUGHT** - One thinks of ethnic, inter-racial tensions still so prevalent in much of American society and how the solution ultimately is not humanistic natural reasoning but only the holy supernatural Gospel that can bring about reconciliation of men who have borne life-long prejudices (and even overt enmity) toward other men created in the image of God!

Peter is beginning to learn that the middle wall or "the barrier of the dividing wall" in the Temple had been irrevocably broken down and the enmity (between Jews and Gentiles) had been abolished in Christ even as Paul explained in his epistle to the Gentile believers in Ephesus....

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. **14For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,** (See [dictionary discussion of the barrier wall in the Temple](#) the purpose of which was to prohibit Gentiles from going into the inner areas reserved only for Jews. On the wall was a sign that said in essence the penalty of a pagan transgressing this wall was death! See this wall in the picture below - on the right is the Court of the Gentiles which is as far as they could go.) **15** by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, **16** and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. **17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR;** **18** for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.(Eph 2:13-18+).



Click to enlarge

Keep in mind the stigma of Jews associating with Gentiles as illustrated in this exhortation from the [book of Jubilees](#) - "Separate yourself from the gentiles, and do not eat with them, and do not perform deeds like theirs. And do not become associates of theirs. Because their deeds are defiled, and all of their ways are contaminated, and despicable, and abominable." (Jub. 22:16).

## THE RED CARPET TREATMENT

**He invited them in and gave them lodging** - Peter puts out the "welcome mat" to three men the Jews referred to as "dogs!" Keep in mind he still has not eaten (recall it was a little after noon and he was surely still hungry) but now is giving them a warm welcome. Peter adds a new meaning to the old saying "[guess who's coming to dinner!](#)" A Jewish man inviting a Gentile in was clearly a step in the right direction, clearly stepping across traditional social boundaries. This would have been difficult for Peter, humanly speaking, because remember he still does not understand the significance of the vision. The vision was about clean and unclean food, not clean and unclean people. But he is stepping out in faith based on the revelation he has been given and will soon receive a fuller revelation. And he was undoubtedly filled with (controlled by) the Spirit Who had just directed him. And what God commands us to do, He enables us to accomplish! (cf Php 2:13NLT+).

**THOUGHT** - This story illustrates that this is the way God's Spirit reveals truth to our hearts. We hear God's Word, and whether we can fully understand what He is commanding or instructing, we make the conscious choice (enabled by the Spirit - cf Php 2:13NLT+) to obey His Word. And when we do, we place ourselves in the position of being able to have still more truth revealed to our heart by His Spirit (cf Jn 7:17). Have you stunted your growth in grace and Christ-likeness because you have repeatedly refused to obey a command or instruction that you know God has clearly (perhaps even repeatedly) revealed to you? Confess and repent and obey and enter into the divine blessing of more truth that will transform you more and more into the image of Jesus (cf 2 Cor 3:18+ where "mirror" ~ The Word).

Centuries earlier there had been another prejudiced Jewish man at Joppa who the LORD had commanded "**Arise, go** (both commands) to Nineveh (Assyrians) the great city and **cry** against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me." (Jonah 1:2) And how did Jonah respond? "Jonah rose up to flee to [Tarshish](#) from the presence of the LORD. So he went down to Joppa, found a ship which was going to [Tarshish](#), paid the fare and went down (WHEN YOU RUN FROM GOD, THE DIRECTION IS ALWAYS "DOWN!") into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD." (Jonah 1:3+) Jonah was not even willing to preach "bad news" to these disgusting Gentiles! And why? Because he knew God's character later declaring that "You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and One Who relents concerning calamity." (Jonah 4:2). So here in Acts 10:23 we see God's Spirit is working on Peter's heart to tear down the **partitions of prejudice** that had been ingrained in the Jews for hundreds of years! Their problem was not so much anti-Semitism (as in our day), but their vicious anti-Gentilism (so to speak)! Jonah ran away from the Gentiles while Peter ran toward them, willing to re-examine his traditions and prejudices in light of God's word.

**THOUGHT** - Are you more like Peter or more like Jonah? Is there some individual or some group with whom you refuse to share the Good News because of personal bias and bigotry? Indeed, in effect you would rather see them go to hell than to heaven! Then learn from Peter, not Jonah (cf Ro 12:14+).

Don't miss the subtle nuance of the Greek verb Luke uses for **gave them lodging**. Peter did not just coldly say come in and take a room. He readily received them. warmly welcomed them and entertained them as guest which is the meaning of the verb [xenizo](#) which is a verb that speaks of [hospitality](#), of kindness in welcoming guests or strangers. **Xenizo** is in fact the same verb Luke used three times to describe Peter's lodging with Simon the tanner (Acts 10:6+, Acts 10:18+, Acts 10:32+)!

**Gave...lodging** ([3579](#)) see preceding note on [xenizo](#)

**Charles Swindoll** - To the Hebrew mind, what a person did revealed their true beliefs, regardless of the emotions involved. According to 10:23, Peter responded by committing two great cultural transgressions: he extended hospitality to Gentiles, and he agreed to accept the hospitality of Gentiles in the despised city of Caesarea. (Ibid)

**NET Note** - When Peter entertained them as guests, he performed a culturally significant act denoting acceptance.

**Boice** adds "A Jew would not normally have done that. Normally a Jew would have said, "Well, it is nice to meet you, but we need to stay out here in the street. You can't come inside." Or he might have said, "If you go down this street a little way, I think you'll find an inn where you can stay." Or, "You can camp out on the beach. I think you'll manage all right there." No orthodox Jew would have invited Gentiles into his house. He would not have sat down at the same table with them. He would not have had fellowship with them. It was forbidden." (PETER BROKE ALL THESE "PARTITIONS"! ([Acts: An Expository Commentary - Page 177](#)))

**Guzik** - By entertaining these Gentile guests, Peter went against the customs and traditions of Israel, but not against God's Word. Possibly, at this very moment, God flooded Peter's heart with an understanding that though the Old Testament said God's people were not to become like their pagan neighbors, it also said God wanted His people to become a light to their neighbors who didn't know the true God. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**G Campbell Morgan** adds "I think angels watched that house that night (**ED: AND I WOULD ADD WITH JOY AND AMAZEMENT!**, with the despised tanner (who was) a fellow-disciple, the great apostle, (and) the three Gentiles as they lodged (together)." Indeed, there must have been a fierce spiritual struggle in the heavenlies, for Satan knew full well the implications of the coming strategic meeting between Peter and Cornelius! Perhaps in heaven some day we will be allowed to hear or see the supernatural struggle which occurred on this fateful night! ([Acts of the Apostles](#))

**Charles Swindoll** - Back in the 1970s, Ronald Sider wrote a book that bothered me from the first page to the last—for all the right reasons. Many consider *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* one of the most influential books ever written up to that time on the subject of Christian responsibility. I cried through some parts and ground my teeth in others. I squirmed as he probed the issue of prejudice and exposed examples of blatant partiality. By the end, I had to face the facts and accept my responsibility as a Christian—middle-class by American standards, yet affluent with respect to a world in which more than one billion people continue to starve. At the beginning of the third chapter, Sider asks a penetrating question: "Is God biased?" We embrace a biblical theology that says no. Our behavior, on the other hand, suggests we believe otherwise. What we say we believe matters less than what we declare by our actions. (See [Insights on Acts](#))

**And on the next day he got up and went away with them** - Since this all began around lunch time, the 3 Gentiles stayed with Peter and Simon the Tanner for the rest of the day. One can only imagine the conversations! And remember the 3 envoys did not fully comprehend why they had been summoned to bring Peter. And note that in getting up and going with them Peter is obeying God. Peter is not a puppet and this is a choice that he made personally. So they began their trip which would enable them to cover about 15-20 miles on foot, which would only be half way, so that they had to spend the night somewhere at the end of day 3 and finish up the last half of their trek the next day arriving in the afternoon as shown in the chronological summary below:

Day 1 - Cornelius' Vision - at ninth hour the time of afternoon prayer and 3 men sent (Acts 10:3, Acts 10:7, 8±)

Day 2 - Peter's vision - 3 envoys arrive (Acts 10:9, 17±)

Day 3 - Peter leaves with the three Gentile men (Acts 10:23) - they spent the night en route to Caesarea.

Day 4 - Peter arrives at Caesarea Maritima and the residence of Cornelius "Four days ago to this hour," (Acts 10:30, cf Acts 10:3ff±) which would be the ninth hour or about 3 in the afternoon.

**And some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him** - Acts 11:12 says there were **six brethren**. Unlike Jonah, neither Peter nor these six Jewish men fled for [Tarshish](#) (Jonah 1:3).

We discover later that these six men accompanying Peter were also Jews who believed in Jesus (Acts 10:45±). It is interesting that these Jews would be willing to follow Peter's lead, for they too undoubtedly had a built in anti-Gentile bias and unlike Peter they had not seen the "sheet vision." Why did these Jewish believers go with Peter? Luke does not specifically say, but first of all Peter's words and witness were undoubtedly Spirit filled, and thus convicting and convincing. It seems logical to assume that Peter wanted these six men to serve as witnesses, because Jewish believers fellowshiping with Gentile believers was a major turning point in the spread of the Gospel and was likely to incense the more legalistic orthodox factions among the Jews.

**Gilbrant** on Peter taking six Jewish witnesses with him - He knew he would be called into question by other believers for entering a Gentile house, so he wanted witnesses he could depend on. Just to be sure, he took double the two or three required by the Law (Deuteronomy 19:15; compare Matthew 18:16).

**G Campbell Morgan** - In the taking of these men there is detected the anxiety of Peter, his wonder, and his perplexity. He had seen the vision; some gleam of light had broken upon his mind, and he was quite conscious that the journey toward the house of the Gentile was an entirely new movement; so he took with him six brethren, Hebrews, who were Christians. ([Exposition of Acts](#))

**Accompanied him** (4905)([sunerchomai](#)) means they went along or traveled with Peter. Peter knew that his being a Jew and going into a Gentile's house would cause an uproar so he wisely was "arming" himself with these 6 men. Wisdom includes the ability to foresee and prepare for difficult situations before they arise. This is not always possible, but it was in this case and again it reflects Peter's being open to the guiding of the Holy Spirit, the "spirit of wisdom" (cf Isa 11:2+).

**Bengel** on the six Jewish believers who **accompanied** Peter to Caesarea - They were not divinely ordered to go; and yet it was with a pious feeling they did so. Many things are often left to the free discretion of the godly; in which, however, they are governed (guided) by the secret hand of GOD. Afterwards it became evident, how advantageous it was, that so many witnesses were present: Acts 11:12 (They enabled him to meet the charge of those of the circumcision, Acts 11:2).—συν λθων, went with) A holy company, consisting of ten men of various ranks.

**Jack Andrews** - Too many churches still have prejudices that need to be broken down and done away with. Too many in the church

still have hatred, bitterness, and unforgiveness in their hearts. Mahatma Gandhi shares in his autobiography that in his student days in England he was deeply touched by reading the Gospels and seriously considered becoming a convert to Christianity, which seemed to offer a real solution to the caste system that divided the people of India. One Sunday he attended church services and decided to ask the minister for enlightenment on salvation and other doctrines. But when Gandhi entered the sanctuary, the ushers refused to give him a seat and suggested that he go elsewhere to worship with his own people. He left and never came back. He said, "If Christians have caste differences also I might as well remain a Hindu!" And he did! God changed Peter's heart. We learn that he welcome these men. He invited them in and lodged them....Are we prejudiced in any shape, form, or fashion? R. Kent Hughes prayed this prayer in his book on Acts, "O God, please forgive me for not allowing Your great love to flow through me to others, for refusing to love and win those whom I deem dangerous or dirty or unworthy—those who have hurt me or whom I consider beneath me. I confess that I am the worst of sinners. How could anyone be lower than me? Impossible! May Your grace burst through my walls of pride and prejudice, and may Your love conquer my selfishness and others' sinful rebellion, so that in me and in them Your name will be extolled and exalted. In Jesus' name, Amen." ([Expository Sermons](#))

**Giving Credit** - Sometimes we can fall into the trap of thinking that we're the brains behind the operation. **Illustration** - David N. Dinkins, then the mayor of New York, was riding through the city in his limousine with his wife, Joyce. Looking out the window, they recognized a man doing manual labor on the roadside as "John," a former suitor of Mrs Dinkins'. Seeing him, the mayor smiled a bit smugly at his wife. "You must be so glad," he said, "to be married to the powerful mayor in the limo rather than to poor John shoveling alongside the road." His wife smiled. "If I'd married John, he'd be with me in the mayor's limo."

**Acts 10:24 On the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends.**

KJV 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.

- **called together his relatives** Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2; Zech 3:10; 8:20-23; Mt 9:9,10; Mark 5:19,20; Luke 5:29; John 1:41-49; 4:28,29; 1:1-3
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **CORNELIUS' EXPECTANT AND EVANGELISTIC SPIRIT**

While Cornelius did not know the content of the message, clearly he knew that Peter was known in heaven (as he would have deduced from the angel's message) and that in some way Peter would bring "good news," thus he wanted others to hear. In short, his angelic visit clearly signaled to Cornelius that there was something very special about this coming meeting with Simon Peter.

**Jack Arnold** - This situation was a *glorified evangelistic home Bible class*. What did Cornelius do? He opened his home, he gathered together his relatives and friends; he probably had some refreshments, and he invited Peter to be the teacher and present the gospel. **Evangelistic home Bible classes** are still one of the best means for reaching people for Christ. ([Acts 10:23b-48 He Is Lord of All](#))

**On the following day he entered Caesarea** - On the fourth day (from the day the three envoys had originally departed Caesarea) they reached their destination.

**THOUGHT** - Here is a convicting question - "Peter and his friends took a two-day journey to obey God—How far would you go to obey God?" (Josh McDaniel).

**John Phillips - Caesarea!** The very name evoked thoughts of a far-flung Gentile world, of an imperial Caesar, of a world that was anathema to the Jew, a world with which his exiles and wanderings had made him familiar, a world whose commerce and profits he loved but whose customs and people he loathed. (Exploring Acts)

**Now Cornelius was waiting for them** - The verb **waiting** is [prosdokao](#) which depicts Cornelius' eager, expectant, hope-filled attitude at the imminent arrival of his guest of honor. The imperfect tense pictures Cornelius again and again looking to see if Peter was yet on the horizon. In addition, the fact that Cornelius was **waiting** reflects his faith, his belief that since God had motivated him to call Peter, God would consummate the encounter.

**Waiting** (4328) ([prosdokao](#) from **prós** = idea of direction toward + **dokáo** = look for = direction of one's mind toward something)

means literally to look forward toward, to wait for, to look for, to anticipate. It means to give thought to something that is in the future and the context indicates whether one does this looking/waiting in a hopeful sense, with a longing, with fear (wait with anxiety, live in suspense), or in a neutral state of mind. It describes the attitude saints should have as anticipating, waiting with watchfulness, being in expectation of the Second Coming of Jesus. What you are waiting for will radically impact what you are living for! As Blanchard said "The certainty of the Second Coming of Christ should touch and tincture every part of our daily behavior."

It is notable that **prosdokao** is used in the Septuagint translation of Ps 119:166 which says...

**I hope for** (Lxx = prosdokao) Your salvation, O LORD, And do Your commandments.

Indeed, salvation was the very thing Cornelius was waiting for (cf Acts 11:14)!

Here are some other uses of **prosdokao** to give you a sense of the meaning...

Luke 1:21 The people were **waiting** for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple.

Luke 3:15 Now while the people **were in a state of expectation** and all were wondering in their hearts about John, as to whether he was the Christ,

Luke 7:19 (Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are You the Expected One, or do **we look for** someone else?"

Luke 8:40 And as Jesus returned, the people welcomed Him, for they had all **been waiting for** Him.

Acts 3:5 And he began to give them his attention, **expecting** to receive something from them.

Acts 27:33 Until the day was about to dawn, Paul was encouraging them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have been **constantly watching** and going without eating, having taken nothing.

Acts 28:6 (After the viper had bit Paul) they **were expecting** that he was about to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

The only other uses of **prosdokao** are by Peter in the context of believers **looking for** the certain occurrence of serious events in the future which should motivate sober, sensible, spotless life in the present (cf Titus 2:12, 13+)...

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way ("The day of the Lord" = 2 Pe 3:10), what sort of people ought you to be in **holy conduct and godliness**, **12 looking for** and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are **looking for** new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you **look for** these things, **be diligent** (aorist imperative - Do this now!) to be found by Him **in peace, spotless and blameless**, (2 Peter 3:11-14+)

**Larkin** - Cornelius's expectancy in many ways models the stance of the people of God toward the final salvation (Lk 3:15; 7:19–20; 12:46; compare Ps 119:166). Obediently and magnanimously he too gathers a delegation including relatives and close friends (Josephus Jewish Antiquities 7:350; compare Acts 11:14). ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**And had called together his relatives and close friends** - Cornelius had an evangelistic mindset, desiring that all close to him would also hear the "good news."

**THOUGHT** - Would it be true that all of us who have been blood born and are heaven bound, that we would have a similar Spirit enabled evangelistic mindset like this pagan Roman soldier who, as of yet, had not even been regenerated!

**Close** (316) is the word **anagkaios** (from **anagke** = necessity, compulsion) which primarily describes that which compels or makes something needful or necessary (as meeting a need). That which is indispensable, pressing, what one cannot do without. Here in Acts 10:24 it describes those who are intimate (friends, relatives) and thus the idea is they are necessary, intimate, close.

**Vincent** on close friends - The word **anagkaios** originally means *necessary*; hence of those who are bound by *necessary* or *natural* ties; *blood-relations*. But as *relatives* or *kinsmen* is expressed by *suggeneis* (**ED**: HERE THE WORD IS *philos* = friends), this must be taken in the sense of *intimate friends*, a meaning which it has in later Greek writers.

Word Studies in the New Testament.

**Vine** explains that **anagkaios** "is used, in a secondary sense, of persons connected by bonds of nature or friendship, with the meaning "intimate" and "is found in this sense in the papyri."

**THOUGHT** - Is this not a great picture using a word that normally means "indispensable" to describe one's friends. Do you have any "*indispensable*" friends? More to the point for believers -- Do you have a "Paul" (or



"Pauline") in your life if you are a "Timothy?" Do you have another believer to whom you are accountable and they to you? Why? Because such a pattern of inter-dependence and interrelationship is both **necessary** and **indispensable** to facilitate a walk of holiness. In Proverbs we are reminded that "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." (Pr 17:17) and "Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another." (Pr 27:17).

**Friends** (5384)(**philos**) means loved (loved one), dear, befriended, friendly, kind. **Philos** describes one having special interest in someone else, one who is on intimate terms or in close association with others. This word gives us some insight into the heart of this Roman centurion. **Aristotle** defined a "friend" as "one soul inhabiting two."

### Acts 10:25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him.

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

- **fell at his feet** Acts 14:11-13; Daniel 2:30,46; Mt 8:2; 14:33; Rev 19:10; 22:8,9
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## WRONG WORSHIP

**MacArthur** comments that "Two worlds were about to collide, as seven devout, orthodox Jews were about to meet a houseful of eager Gentiles. A milestone in the history of the church had been reached." (See [Acts Commentary - Page 298](#))

**When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet and worshiped him** - Cornelius apparently did not fully understand that no man was to be worshiped (or even honored in a manner that resembled worship), except of course the God-Man Christ Jesus. Remember also that Cornelius being a Roman had surely been indoctrinated with the teachings of [emperor \(man\) worship](#) established during the reign of Augustus (63 BC – AD 14).

Notice Peter **entered** three times - Acts 10:24 he entered Caesarea, Acts 10:25 he entered (apparently into an area outside Cornelius house) and Acts 10:27 apparently into the actual house which "he **entered** and found many people assembled."

As **Phillips** says "He was overcome by the thought that here, in the flesh, was the answer to his lifelong search after God." (Ibid)

**Met** (4876)(**sunantao** from **sún** = with + **antáō** = to meet) means literally to meet (Jesus when He came down from the transfiguration - Lk 9:37, Lk 22:30), of Melchizedek who met Abraham (Heb 7:1<sup>±</sup>, Heb 7:10<sup>±</sup>) and here of Cornelius meeting Peter (Acts 10:25).

**NET Note** - When Cornelius worshiped Peter, it showed his piety and his respect for Peter, but it was an act based on ignorance, as Peter's remark in v. 26 indicates.

Jesus of course accepted such worship from a leper (Mt 8:2, cf Jn 9:38) and from Peter (Luke 5:8, cf Mt 14:33).

**Horton** writes "Peter did not want anyone to give any human personality pre-eminence in the Church. His response certainly offers no precedent for considering him a pope." (Acts: A Logion Press Commentary)

**Luke** describes a similar event in the ministry of Paul and Barnabas who received a reception from the Lystrans and refused worship Acts 14...

When the crowds saw what Paul had done, they raised their voice, saying in the Lycaonian language, **"The gods have become like men and have come down to us."** And they began calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds (Acts 14:12-13).

**Worshiped** (bowed down) (4352)(**proskuneo** from **pros** = before + **kuneo** = kiss or adore) means to prostrate oneself in homage before another in the full sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy. **Proskuneo** represents the most common Near Eastern act of adoration and reverence and also carries the idea of profound awe and respect. Some believe that the root word kuneo may be related to kuon which is the Greek word for dog and which then could be picturing a dog licking his master's hand. The word **proskuneo** literally means to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage, to prostrate oneself in homage, to do reverence to, to adore and so to worship and show respect. In the ancient Oriental (especially Persia) the mode of salutation between persons of equal rank was to kiss each other on the lips. When the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek. When one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated

himself, and as he was bowing down he would be throwing kisses toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that is intended by the Greek writers in the use of the verb *proskuneo*.

While some commentators feel Cornelius is just demonstrating that he honors Peter, it is notable that every other use of *proskuneo* by Luke clearly conveys the idea of worship (Lk. 4:7; Lk. 4:8; Lk. 24:52; Acts 7:43; Acts 8:27; Acts 24:11). Luke also uses the verb **pipto** (to fall down) which literally means to fall from higher to a lower place, and several times in Scripture depicts an act of devotion as in Mt 2:11; 18:26, 29; Rev 5:14. Therefore, it appears that Cornelius is in fact carrying out an act that has the connotation of worship.

**David Guzik** - In the great St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, there is a huge statue of Peter, where people come and kiss the toe of the statue. This is undue and inappropriate reverence towards any man or angel. We might almost wish that Peter would visit the cathedral named after him and set those people straight! ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**J Vernon McGee** - Simon Peter would never have let you get down to kiss his big toe [as pilgrims to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome do to the statue of Peter there]. He just wouldn't permit it.

**Acts 10:26 But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am just a man."**

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

- **Stand up** Acts 14:14,15; Isaiah 42:8; 48:13; Mt 4:10; 2 Th 2:3,4; Rev 13:8; 19:10; 22:9
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **PETER CORRECTS CORNELIUS' ACT OF WORSHIP**

**But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up** (aorist imperative) **I too am just a man"** - Peter rightly refuses worship. There might be a few pastors out there who should follow suit! (No names - Just saying!) In a similar gesture of pagan adoration the priest of Zeus "wanted to offer sacrifice" (Acts 14:13) to honor Paul and Barnabas who responded by tearing their robes and rushing "out into the crowd, crying out and saying, "Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM." Even John "fell down to worship at the feet of an angel" who commanded him not to worship him but to "Worship God." (Rev 22:8-9). Worship of man by men will not be refused but in fact demanded (Rev 13:16,17<sup>+</sup>) when it culminates in the perverted praise of the Antichrist in the last half of the Tribulation (the Great Tribulation) (Rev 13:4<sup>+</sup>).

While Peter did not say it, he did show the truth of the familiar saying that "The ground is level at the foot of the cross."

One is reminded of Paul's description of those who reject the indisputable [natural revelation](#) of God in Romans 1. Not only do they "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Ro 1:18) but...

"Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God **for an image in the form of corruptible man** and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and **worshiped and served the creature** rather than the Creator (WHO MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM)", who is blessed forever. Amen. (Romans 1:22-25)

**John Stott** comments that "Peter had come to see that it was entirely inappropriate either to worship somebody as if divine (which Cornelius had tried to do to him) or to reject somebody as if unclean (which he would previously have done to Cornelius). Peter refused both to be treated by Cornelius as if he were a god, and to treat Cornelius as if he were a dog." (The Message of Acts)

**William MacDonald** quipped "It would be fitting if all self-appointed "successors" of Peter would imitate his humility by forbidding people to kneel before them!" (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Charles Swindoll** on Peter's response to Cornelius' action - Wasn't that a beautiful response? He didn't say, "Here, my son, kiss the ring of the big fisherman." (ED: [Read an explanation of why kiss a man's ring](#). Compare [What does the Bible say about the pope / papacy?](#)) As fallen creatures, we tend to worship the people we highly respect. If you hold a position of authority or respect, you have a duty to discourage inordinate admiration and any form of over-the-top reverence. Do everything you can to keep people from putting you on a pedestal. It's a precarious position for you and a long fall when you eventually topple. You don't want to block their

vision of God, and you don't want to be responsible for their disillusionment with Him when they finally do see your clay feet. If God uses you significantly in a particular sphere of influence, it is your responsibility to keep the eyes of the people on the Lord. Meanwhile, let them see the cracks in your own life. Let them know that you're one with them, that you struggle with many of the same issues as they do, and that you have no corner on spiritual truth. Be like the kids who built a summertime clubhouse in the backyard and established three rules of conduct: #1: Nobody act big. #2: Nobody act small. #3: Everybody act medium. The gesture undoubtedly embarrassed Peter. Devout Jews scrupulously avoided giving or receiving from anyone the veneration that God alone deserves. They didn't strike coins with anyone's image, and they didn't erect statues or paint portraits or memorialize any human being in any tangible way; they wanted to avoid anything remotely close to man worship. So, when Peter saw Cornelius prostrated before him, he probably shuddered at the challenge of evangelizing Gentiles. With Hebrews and even Samaritans, the gospel was being built upon a relatively solid foundation of biblical and theological knowledge. Not so with non-Jews. Lesson #1: Worship God alone. (Acts: Swindoll's Living Insights)

**Acts 10:27 As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled.**

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

- **and found** Acts 10:24; 14:27; John 4:35; 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Col 4:3
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE "CONVERSION" OF PETER: ENTRANCE INTO A GENTILE RESIDENCE

Peter takes a step of faith, but his faith is based on the word of God, specifically in this case the vision from God and the words of the Spirit of God. Genuine faith is never a leap into the dark but a leap into the light and is based on the truth of the Word of God, not feelings or impressions. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Ro 10:17).

**John Stott** adds that "The principle subject of this chapter is not so much the *conversion* of Cornelius as the *conversion* of Peter."

**As he talked with him** - After commanding Cornelius to arise, Peter continued speaking with him as they went into the home of Cornelius. The word for **talked** (present tense = continually) is the verb **sunomileo** (sun = together + homileo = to speak - gives us English "[homily](#)") which strictly speaking means to be in company with and hence to talk or converse with. Sunomileo is found only here in Scripture (no uses in Lxx).

**He entered and found many people assembled** - Can you imagine what went through Peter's mind as he saw a room full of "untouchables" as his "captive audience!" And not just a few but **many!** Cornelius was a witness before he even knew what he was witnessing about!

**David Guzik** on **entered** - This is one of the shortest, yet most important passages of this section. Peter actually **entered** the house of a Gentile, something that Jewish customs and traditions strictly prohibited. By entering a Gentile's home, Peter showed that his heart and mind had changed, and that he had learned the lesson of the vision of the great sheet. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Steven Ger** - Peter had finally perceived the point of the vision. He realized that in the vision, God had drawn an analogy between the non-kosher animals and the Gentiles. He made the connection, grasping that Gentiles were no longer to be considered off-limits. As far as Peter was concerned, the Holy Spirit had definitively spoken, and there was nothing more to be discussed. Obedience to God's directive was in order. (Acts - Twenty-First Century Commentary)

**A T Robertson** - It was an expectant group of Gentiles eager for Peter's interpretation of the vision of Cornelius. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Assembled** (4905) (**sunerchomai** from **sun** = with, together + **erchomai** = to come) means to get together for a specific purpose (Mk 3:20 1 Cor 11:17-18, 20; 14:26) **Luke** uses **sunerchomai** more than any other NT writer with most of the uses in the book of Acts. One of the uses of sunerchomai in the Septuagint describes a time in the coming Millennium in which Gentiles ("peoples") will seek out the Lord of hosts and also seek **to grasp the garment** of a Jewish man (Read Zech 8:20, 21, 22, 23, where sunerchomai is found in Zech 8:21 - "the inhabitants of one will go to another [Lxx - sunerchomai]"). As an aside the word **grasp** is used for grabbing a snake by the tail (Ex 4:4) or for grabbing a lion by its beard (1 Sa 17:35) and thus means to grasp something that you can't afford to let go of!

All of Luke's uses of **sunerchomai** - Lk. 5:15; Lk. 23:55; Jn. 11:33; Jn. 18:20; Acts 1:6; Acts 1:21; Acts 2:6;

## Outside Our Comfort Zone

Read: Acts 10:1-22

God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore I came. —Acts 10:28-29

Longfellow wrote, "The vine still clings to the moldering wall, but at every gust the dead leaves fall." Like that vine, many churches today cling to the crumbling wall of traditional programs, losing members like dead leaves carried away by the biting winds of our times.

To put it another way: We refuse to leave our comfort zones. We like to stick to the familiar, the predictable, the usual.

In some ways our attitude resembles the way Peter felt before the Lord prodded him into new territory. Peter knew that Christ's strategy was Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and then the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). But Peter simply wasn't comfortable with Gentiles. They were not "his kind of people." Yet, God shook him loose to go to the house of Cornelius and give them the good news about Jesus (Acts 10).

The church, like Peter, is often locked behind the walls of its brick and shake-shingle fortress. We tend to stay where we feel unthreatened, among the people who make us feel accepted and loved. It takes a clear vision of God's compassion for the lost to get us beyond our comfort zone to reach those for whom the Savior gave His life.

Have we gotten too comfortable?

Go to the lost, in the home, in the mart,  
Delay no longer, today make a start;  
Tell them of Jesus who bled for their sin—  
From byways of darkness bring others to Him. —Houghton

The church is a training center, not a country club.

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**Acts 10:28 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.**

KJV 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.

- **How unlawful** Acts 11:2,3; 22:21,22; John 4:9,27; 18:28; Gal 2:12-14
- **but God** Acts 10:15,34; 11:9; 15:8,9; Isaiah 65:5; Luke 18:11; Eph 3:6,7
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BREAKING THE TABOO! "GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS"**

Peter begins by explaining to the Gentile assembly a truth that they knew all too well from their experiences in Palestine, that a Jew would never fellowship with a Gentile, adding that he had been shown by God that these Gentiles were not to be treated as **unholy** or **unclean**. You know many of the Gentiles in the assembly had heard those ugly words from the lips of Jews they had encountered.

**Taboo** also spelled tabu, Tongan tabu, Maori tapu, the prohibition of an action based on the belief that such behaviour is either too sacred and consecrated or too dangerous and accursed for ordinary individuals to undertake. The word **taboo** first appears in English in the journals of Captain James Cook, the British explorer who led three expeditions to the Pacific Ocean and greatly broadened European knowledge about the peoples living on the Pacific islands. In 1777, Cook wrote that the word "**taboo** ...has a

very comprehensive meaning; but, in general, signifies **that a thing is forbidden... When anything is forbidden to be eat, or made use of, they say, that it is taboo.**" Although taboos are often associated with the Polynesian cultures of the South Pacific, they have proved to be present in virtually all societies past and present.

Generally, the prohibition that is inherent in a **taboo** includes the idea that its breach or defiance will be followed by some kind of trouble to the offender. In this case Peter ran the risk not of being in trouble with God but with the his Jewish brethren who held fast to their traditions! In the present context the **Mishnah** stated that it was **taboo** for Jews to associate with Gentiles and to visit them in their homes. Peter was now in direct, overt disobedience to the Jewish writings and the traditions that had long been ingrained into his mind. As we all know old habits are hard to break, even for those of us who have been born again and are new creatures in Christ (2 Cor 5:17+).

**Jack Arnold** - What happened in Acts chapter ten is sometimes referred to as the Gentile Pentecost since the exact things happened to these Gentiles when they believed in Christ and were made part of the Church as when the Jews in Acts chapter two believed in Christ and were made part of the Church....Remember it had been at least eight years since the Apostles and the first Christians were given the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Eight years after our Lord told His disciples that they were to be witnesses to the remotest parts of the earth, the Lord set up circumstances for Cornelius, a devout and benevolent Gentile, to come into contact with Peter so Peter could give Cornelius and his household and friends the gospel. ([Acts 10:23b-48 He Is Lord of All](#))

Peter was not saying this was an Old Testament (Mosaic) prohibition, because there was none. He was saying it was **'unlawful'** according to the Jewish traditions which made it virtually impossible to associate with a Gentile without becoming ritually unclean in the eyes of other Jews! It was a cultural barrier that could only be penetrated and broken down by God as we see in Acts 10-11.

**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** - As noted above the **Mishnah** made it **"unlawful"** but this was not out of a reverential fear of God (for God never said such a thing), but because they feared "the party of the circumcision." (See Gal 2:11-14+), so that even Cephas (Peter) fell back into this trap of tradition several years later! There is a lesson here - deeply ingrained prejudice dies a difficult, slow death!

Recall how the hypocritical Jewish religious leaders would not enter into Pilate's residence in John 18:28 "Then they (JEWISH LEADERS) led Jesus from Caiaphas into the Praetorium, and it was early; and **they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium so that they would not be defiled**, but might eat the Passover." They were obeying the extra-Biblical **Mishnah** (the written oral traditions) not the Word of God. The Mishnah said the "dwelling places of Gentiles (in the Land of Israel) are unclean." For more on these extra-Biblical writings see Wikipedia's article on [Abodah Zarah](#).

**J Vernon McGee** - Peter stepped into the house. What a step that was! It was the first time that Peter had ever been in a gentile house. He still is really a little baffled at God's command to go there. He violates the first rule of homiletics when he begins his message with an apology. What he says is not a friendly thing to say. In fact, it is an insult. In essence, he said, "If you really want to know how I felt about this, well, I just didn't want to come. I've never been in the home of a Gentile before. Never before have I gone into a place that is unclean!" But he does go on to add, "Even though I have never before been in an unclean home, God has told me not to call any man unclean. We are all sinners and we are all savable." How would you feel, especially if you are a lady who is a housekeeper, if some visitor came into your home and his first words were, "I am coming into your home, which I consider dirty"? You wouldn't exactly respond with a warm, friendly feeling, would you? Yet this is the substance of what Simon Peter said. Because God had showed him that there was neither clean nor unclean, he continues his message. (See [Thru the Bible Vol. 40: Church History Acts 1-14](#))

**G Campbell Morgan** comments that Peter "told them how contrary it was to law and tradition and custom for a Jew to enter the house of a Gentile and eat; and in that statement we see his lingering prejudice. He still described himself as a Jew, as an apostle of Jesus Christ; but he had not come to the full consciousness of what Christianity really meant, or he would never have said such a thing." ([Acts of the Apostles](#))

**Unlawful** (111)([athemitos](#) from **a** = negative + **themis** = statute, an adjective from **themis**= law) is literally contrary to statute, and thus illegal or unlawful. It describes that which is forbidden. **Vincent** says [athemitos](#) is "More literally, unlawful, emphasizing the idolatries as violations of divine law."

**Vincent** adds "The Jews professed to ground this prohibition on the law of Moses; but there is no direct command in the Mosaic law forbidding Jews to associate with those of other nations. But Peter's statement is general, referring to the general practice of the Jews to separate themselves in common life from uncircumcised persons. Juvenal says that the Jews were taught by Moses "not to show the way except to one who practises the same rites, and to guide the circumcised alone to the well which they seek" (Sat., xiv., 104, 105). Tacitus also says of the Jews that "among themselves they are inflexibly faithful, and ready with charitable aid, but hate all others as enemies. They keep separate from all strangers in eating, sleeping, and matrimonial connections" ("Histories," v., 5).

**A T Robertson** - there is no O.T. regulation forbidding such social contact with Gentiles, though the rabbis had added it and had made it binding by custom. There is nothing more binding on the average person than social custom. On coming from the market an orthodox Jew was expected to immerse to avoid defilement (Edersheim, *Jewish Social Life*, pp. 26-28; Taylor's *Sayings of the Jewish Fathers*, pp. 15, 26, 137, second edition). See also Acts 11:3; Galatians 2:12. It is that middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile (Ephes. 2:14) which Jesus broke down. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Associate** (join) (2853)([kollao](#) from **kolla** = glue) means literally to glue, cement, join or fasten together and thus to unite (someone with or to someone or some thing). **Kollao** is used to describe **joining** oneself to a harlot in a sexual union in (1Co 6:16).

All of Luke's uses of **kollao** - Lk. 10:11; Lk. 15:15; Acts 5:13; Acts 8:29; Acts 9:26; Acts 10:28; Acts 17:34

**And yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean** - This is an interesting statement because God had not specifically told Peter not to **call any man unholy or unclean**. Peter was shown a vision of **unclean** animals who were declared clean, and he reasoned out the application to men in the various providential circumstances that followed the vision. Here is the point - God gives us instruction today by His Word, prayer, circumstances, but He never does so by bypassing our minds. We need to think!

**Shown** (1166)([deiknuo](#)) means to show and has the sense of (1) to draw attention to, to point out, to show, to make known, to exhibit something (by visual, auditory or linguistic means -- all of which are apropos to God's showing Peter this truth) so that it can be apprehended by the senses. The idea of [deiknuo](#) is also to show so as to prove something is true or to make clear by evidence or reasoning.

**A T Robertson** - Now Peter takes back both the adjectives used in his protest to the Lord (Acts 10:14) "common and unclean." It is a long journey that Peter has made. He here refers to "no one" (*mēdena*), not to "things," but that is great progress. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Unholy** (2839)(see discussion of [koinos](#) above Acts 10:14)

**Unclean** (169)(see discussion of [akathartos](#) above Acts 10:14)

Later Peter alludes to this historic event at the Jerusalem Council, Luke recording...

"After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8"And God, who knows the heart, testified to them (GENTILES) giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; and **He made no distinction between us and them**, cleansing their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:7-9+).

**Rich Cathers** on **unclean** people - This would be a hard thing for someone raised in Judaism. All of his life, Peter has been taught that Gentiles were unclean. You don't spend time with Gentiles. You don't associate with Gentiles. For us, it's a little more subtle, but it's still there. When some of us were kids, it was the "hippies" that most people considered "unclean". And a lot of hippies were actually pretty dirty. It took Chuck Smith's wife Kay to help Chuck realize that God loved the hippies too. [The Jesus Movement](#) began when the "nice" people in church began to love the "unclean". Though Jesus spent very little time with Gentiles, He did cross a few lines now and again. (Mt 9:10-13). Today, there are other sorts of people that we might call "unclean". Some people still struggle with racial prejudice. Others have a problem with those in the homosexual community. Some of us don't want to spend time with people who are of a different political party than we are. What does this principle mean that Peter shares? If God doesn't want us to call any person "common or unclean", how does that affect us? Does that mean that we tolerate or even endorse behavior that is unbiblical? I think this is where we learn how to love the sinner but hate the sin. But be careful that your hate for the sin doesn't cross a line where you never spend any time with "sinners". ([Rich Cathers](#))

**Acts 10:29 "That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. So I ask for what reason you have sent for me."**

KJV 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?

NET Acts 10:29 Therefore when you sent for me, I came without any objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?"

- **when I was sent for** Acts 10:19,20; Ps 119:60; 1 Peter 3:15

- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PETER CONTINUES HIS EXPLANATION FOR BREAKING JEWISH TRADITIONS

**That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for-** That is, he came because God showed him the vision and told him to come to the Gentiles. This makes it clear that Peter knew that the vision about. He now knew that the "unclean" food was pointing to Gentiles who Jews considered unclean. And yet Peter has one more "hurdle" to jump, and the answer to his question below will open his eyes fully to the reason for his coming to Cornelius' house.

**THOUGHT** - A servant of God must be willing and available to the Lord Jesus whenever He desires to use us, wherever He needs us and for whatever He needs us. Of course, the omnipotent Lord Jesus does not truly "need" us but He graciously condescends to use us and give us the holy privilege of serving Him. **Jack Andrews** adds that "God's servants are the best stewards when they are doing what the Lord Jesus wants us doing, where the Lord Jesus wants us doing it, and when the Lord Jesus wants us doing it." ([Expository Sermons](#))

**Without objection** (369)(**anantirrhotos** from **a** = without+ **anti** = against + **ero** - to speak) means without disputing, without raising any question, without objection, without hesitation. **KJV** says **without gainsaying** where the verb [gainsay](#) means to take exception to (so here NOT to take exception to). The root word is used in Acts 19:36 where it describes "**undeniable** (literally facts that are not to be spoken against or contradicted, facts that are indisputable) facts."

**Robertson** says the word means "Without answering back. That is true after the Holy Spirit expressly told Peter to go with the messengers of Cornelius (Acts 10:19-23). Peter's objections were made to the Lord in the vision which he did not understand. But that vision prepared him for this great step which he had now taken. **He had stepped over the line of Jewish custom.**" ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**So I ask for what reason you have sent for me** - NET = "Now may I ask why you sent for me?" Peter is still not sure for what or why he had been sent. He knew there had to be more than just the breaking of Jewish traditions.

**Acts 10:30 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,**

KJV 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,

- **Four days ago** Acts 10:7-9,23,24
- **I was** Acts 10:3; Ezra 9:4,5; Neh 9:1-3; Daniel 9:20,21
- **behold** Acts 1:10; Mt 28:3; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:4
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## CORNELIUS RECOUNTS HIS VISION DURING PRAYER

**Cornelius said, "Four days ago to this hour-** So the time Peter arrived at Cornelius' home was about the time he had been praying 4 days prior.

Day 1 - Cornelius' Vision - at ninth hour the time of afternoon prayer and 3 men sent (Acts 10:3, 7, 8 )

Day 2 - Peter's vision - 3 envoys arrive (Acts 10:9, 17)

Day 3 - Peter leaves with men (Acts 10:23) - they spent the night en route

Day 4 - Peter arrives at Cornelius in the afternoon, for Cornelius states "Four days ago to this hour." (Acts 10:30)

**I was praying in my house during the ninth hour-** (see [notes](#) on Acts 10:3) Recall that the ninth hour was 3 PM, the time of afternoon prayer.

**Praying** ( [4336](#))([proseuchomai](#) from **pros** = toward, facing, before [i.e., [Coram Deo](#) before the face of God] + **euchomai** = speak

out, express a wish, pray or vow = in secular Greek = term for invoking a deity) in the NT is always used of prayer addressed to God (to Him as the object of faith and the One who will answer one's prayer), speaking consciously (with or without vocalization) to Him, with a definite aim. Luke uses the same verb [proseuchomai](#) describing Peter's praying on the housetop in Acts 10:9<sup>±</sup>.

God answered Cornelius' prayers even though he is an unbeliever which is fascinating and runs counter to what some teach about prayer.

**THOUGHT - Does God answer the prayers of sinners and/or unbelievers?** Gotquestions says "John 9:31 declares, "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does his will." It has also been said that "the only prayer that God hears from a sinner is the prayer for salvation." As a result, some believe that God does not hear and/or will never answer the prayers of an unbeliever. In context, though, John 9:31 is saying that God does not perform miracles through an unbeliever. 1 John 5:14-15 tells us that God answers prayers based on whether they are asked according to His will. This principle, perhaps, applies to unbelievers. If an unbeliever asks a prayer of God that is according to His will, nothing prevents God from answering such a prayer—according to His will. Some Scriptures describe God hearing and answering the prayers of unbelievers. In most of these cases, prayer was involved. In one or two, God responded to the cry of the heart (it is not stated whether that cry was directed toward God). In some of these cases, the prayer seems to be combined with repentance. But in other cases, the prayer was simply for an earthly need or blessing, and God responded either out of compassion or in response to the genuine seeking or the faith of the person. Here are some passages dealing with prayer by an unbeliever: (1) The people of Nineveh prayed that Nineveh might be spared (Jonah 3:5-10). God answered this prayer and did not destroy the city of Nineveh as He had threatened. (2) Hagar asked God to protect her son Ishmael (Genesis 21:14-19). God not only protected Ishmael, God blessed him exceedingly. (3) In 1 Kings 21:17-29, especially 1 Ki 21:27-29, Ahab fasts and mourns over Elijah's prophecy concerning his posterity. God responds by not bringing about the calamity in Ahab's time. (4) The Gentile woman from the Tyre and Sidon area prayed that Jesus would deliver her daughter from a demon (Mark 7:24-30). Jesus cast the demon out of the woman's daughter. (5) Cornelius, the Roman centurion in Acts 10, had the apostle Peter sent to him in response to Cornelius being a righteous man. Acts 10:2 tells us that Cornelius "prayed to God regularly." ([Read on >](#))

**Behold** ([idou](#)) - Not found in Acts 10:3, but added here by Cornelius to call attention to the suddenness of the onset of the vision.

**A man stood before me in shining garments** - In Acts 10:3<sup>±</sup> Luke describes this as a "**vision an angel of God**," but here he does not use the word **vision**, but does add that this angel was (1) a **man** and (2) that he was attired in **shining garments**.

**Shining** ([2986](#)) (**lampros** from **lampo** = to shine) is an adjective which means bright, radiant (radiating light), like the heavenly bodies (Rev 22:16), like clear, sparkling water (Rev 22:1), like resplendent, elegant clothing (Lk 23:11) and like lavish, elegant things used for luxurious living (Rev 18:14).

**Lampros** means clear or transparent, being free of anything that prevents one from perceiving the object that is lampros. Herod's soldiers treated Jesus with contempt, mocking him by dressing Him in a **gorgeous** robe (Lk 23:11, cf "fine clothes" James 2:2,3). In Rev 15:6 John describes "the seven angels who had the seven plagues came out of the temple, clothed in linen, clean and **bright**, and girded around their chests with golden sashes." In Revelation 18:14 John describes "all things that were luxurious and **splendid** have passed away from" Babylon. In Revelation 19:8 we see the "antithesis" in a sense of Rev 18:14, for here he describes the church who "was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, **bright** and clean." In Rev 22:1 John sees heaven and "a river of the water of life, **clear** as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb." In Revelation 22:16 John records "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the **bright** morning star."

**Lampros** - 9x in 9v - bright(3), clear(1), fine(2), gorgeous(1), shining(1), splendid(1). Not found in the non-apocryphal Septuagint. Lk. 23:11; Acts 10:30; Jas. 2:2; Jas. 2:3; Rev. 15:6; Rev. 18:14; Rev. 19:8; Rev. 22:1; Rev. 22:16

**Acts 10:31 and he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.**

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

- **your prayer** Isaiah 38:5; Daniel 9:23; 10:12; Luke 1:13
- **your alms have been remembered** Acts 10:4; Lev 2:2,9; 5:12; Php 4:18; Heb 6:10; Rev 5:8; 8:3,4
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



**And he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God-** See comments on Acts 10:3+ which says "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God."

**Don Richardson** has chronicled a number of stories of individuals and groups from all over the world, men and women who were seeking God. While his book is not Scripture, it is historically accurate and serves to show the truth of Solomon's words that God **"has put eternity into man's heart,"** (Ecc 3:11ESV). With that background below is an excerpt from Richardson's classic work entitled "[Eternity in their Hearts - Startling Evidence of Belief in the One True God in Hundreds of Cultures Throughout the World](#)". Richardson begins by asking the question...

**Has the God who prepared the Gospel for all peoples also prepared all peoples for the Gospel?** If He has, then the current assumption, held by millions of believers and nonbelievers alike, that pagan people cannot understand and generally do not want to receive the Christian Gospel, and that it is therefore unfair (and almost more work than it is worth) to try to get them to accept it, must be a false assumption. In the rest of this book, I will prove that this assumption is false. God has indeed prepared the Gentile world to receive the Gospel. Significant numbers of non-Christians, therefore, have proved themselves many times more willing to receive the Gospel than we Christians historically have been to share it with them.

In John 6:44 Jesus declared that "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent **Me** draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day." The verb draws is [helkuo](#) which conveys the idea of an irresistible force and was used in ancient Greek literature of a desperately hungry man being drawn to food and of demonic forces being drawn to animals when they were not able to possess men. Clearly the Father was drawing Cornelius.

**Constable** - Modern missionaries have told stories of similar seekers after God. After they penetrated some remote tribe and preached the gospel, the natives explained how they had previously worshiped the God the missionary preached and had prayed for more light. Romans 3:11 means that no one seeks God unless God draws him or her to Himself, which is what God did with Cornelius.

**John Phillips** explains that Cornelius was not saved by good works - "A person's works are never accepted by God as the basis of his salvation, but they are accepted as an evidence of his faith. The prayers and alms of Cornelius could not have secured him salvation; the blood of Christ alone could do that. But they were accepted as a token of his faith, and as evidence that when he had more light he would instantly respond to it."

**Acts 10:32 'Therefore send 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.'**

KJV 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.

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## **SIMON STAYING WITH SIMON**

**Therefore send 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.'** - Here is the parallel passage from Acts 10:5-6 (see [notes there](#)) "Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; (10:6) he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea."

**Staying** (lodging)([3579](#)) see preceding note on [xenizo](#)

**Acts 10:33 "So I sent for 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."**

KJV 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.

- **we are all here present before God** Acts 17:11,12; 28:28; Dt 5:25-29; 2 Chr 30:12; Pr 1:5; 9:9,10; 18:15; 25:12; Mt

18:4; 19:30; Mark 10:15; 1 Cor 3:18; Gal 4:14; 1 Th 2:13; James 1:19,21; 1 Peter 2:1,2

- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**So I sent for you immediately** - cp Acts 10:7-8. God's sovereign hand in salvation is beautifully illustrated in the events of Acts 10, for not only does He prepare the heart of Cornelius, but He prepares the heart of Peter the messenger, the one who would deliver the message of the Gospel.

**THOUGHT** - There is an important principle seen in God's sovereignty in salvation. If there is a person seeking God, God will in some manner find a way to have a messenger sent to that person so that they might hear the Gospel of salvation. [Natural \(general\) revelation](#) is available to all men and if they respond appropriately (in a way that honors God, and not in worship of the creation - see Ro 1:18-24), God will make certain that they receive [special revelation](#) without which no one can be saved (cf Acts 4:12).

**And you have been kind** ([kalos](#) - done well) **enough to come** - "it was good of you to come" (Acts 10:33NLT)

**A T Robertson** - "And thou didst well in coming." A regular formula for expressing thanks as in Phil. 4:14; 3 John 1:6; 2 Peter 1:19. The participle completes the idea of [kalos poieo](#) neatly. Cornelius commends Peter for his courage in breaking away from Jewish custom and takes no offence at the implied superiority of the Jews over the Gentiles. Cornelius and his circle of kinsmen and close friends are prepared soil for a new era in the history of Christianity. The Samaritans were now nominal Jews and the Ethiopian eunuch was a single case, but here Peter the chief apostle, not Philip the preaching deacon (evangelist), was involved. It was a crisis (decisive moment, crucial time). Cornelius reveals an open mind for the message of God through Peter. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Vincent** says "You have done a courteous and handsome thing in coming. (Cpe 3 Jn 5, 6)"

**Kind** (2570) ([kalos](#)) describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special or superior benefit. **Kalos** is good with emphasis on that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable, admirable.

**Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord**- Cornelius acknowledges what is happening is before God and at the command (a military term) of the Lord which is amazing for one not yet born again. Cornelius a military man is ready to take orders from the Lord (so to speak).

**Commanded** (ordered, appointed) (4367) ([prostasso](#) from **prós** = to + **tássō** = to arrange) means to set in order toward, in regard to a person or thing, to order towards or to someone, to command, prescribe to. How apropos that Cornelius the Centurion used a term that described a military order. Jesus used this verb in Lk 5:14 and Peter will use it again in Acts 10:48 when he **ordered** the new Gentile believers to be (water) baptized.

**William MacDonald** - Such an open and teachable spirit is sure to be rewarded with divine instruction. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - When you attend church on Sundays, do you go with an expectant heart prepared to hear from God? Do you ask God to search you and show you any sin that might cause "static" and diminish or even prevent your hearing of the pastor's message (cf Ps 139:23-24)? Have you ever asked God before a service to speak to you through what was about to be preached? "Our blessing is greatly increased when we prepare ourselves to hear the word of God." (Guzik [Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**James Montgomery Boice** asks ""**When you go to church, do you want to receive a good message? If so, the best way is to come with a prepared heart.** I know that the preacher must be prepared too. But when God prepares the messenger as well as those who are to hear him, then tremendous things happen as they did in Caesarea in the household of Cornelius.."

**Presence** (before, in sight of) (1799) ([enopion](#) from **en** = in + **ops** = the eye/see [cp optanomai = see, perceive with eyes, look at, implying not only the mere act of seeing but actual perception of what one sees]) means literally in sight, in front of, in the presence of. Before the face and thus the idea of face to face! Of doing something in someone's presence.

**Stott** - It was a remarkable acknowledgement that they were in God's presence, that the apostle Peter was to be the bearer of God's word to them, and that they were all ready and open to listen to it. No preacher today could ask for a more attentive audience.

**Acts 10:34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality,**

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

NET Acts 10:34 Then Peter started speaking: "I now truly understand that God does not show favoritism in dealing with people, (Act 10:34 NET)

- **Opening his mouth** Acts 8:35; Mt 5:2; Eph 6:19,20
- **I most certainly understand** Dt 10:17; 16:19; 2 Chr 19:7; Job 34:19; Ps 82:1,2; Mt 22:16; Lk 20:21; Ro 2:11; Gal 2:6; Eph 6:9; Col 3:11,25; Jas 2:4,9; 1 Pe 1:17
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD IS NO "RESPECTER" OF PERSONS

**Opening his mouth** - This phrase marks the solemnity of the occasion and in the NT often introduces something very important, as in Mathew's description of Jesus beginning to preach the peerless Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:2, cf Mt 13:35). This phrase is used of Philip preaching Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:35, cf Acts 18:14).

**NET Note on opening his mouth** - a Semitic idiom for beginning to speak in a somewhat formal manner.

**Opening** (455) (**anoigo** from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open, to open up, to open again, to give access to. To open one's eyes causing them to see (Acts 26:18). Luke's first use is to describe the priest Zacharias "And at once (after acknowledging in writing that his son's name would be "John") his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God." (Lk 1:64) Luke used this same verb earlier in this chapter to describe when Peter envisioned that "the sky **opened** up." (Acts 10:11)

**Luke's uses of anoigo** -

Lk. 1:64; Lk. 3:21; Lk. 4:17; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 12:36; Lk. 13:25; Acts 5:19; Acts 5:23; Acts 8:32; Acts 8:35; Acts 9:8; Acts 9:40; Acts 10:11; Acts 10:34; Acts 12:10; Acts 12:14; Acts 12:16; Acts 14:27; Acts 16:26; Acts 16:27; Acts 18:14; Acts 26:18;

**I most certainly understand now that** - "I now truly understand." (NET) In modern **vernacular** Peter might say "Okay, now I get it!" Peter is saying that now he seizes, grasps, apprehends, comprehends, something he either did not know or had imperfectly understood. Heretofore he did not understand that the Church was to include men and women from every nation. Perhaps some of Jesus' clear words now began to make sense to him such as when He said "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd." (Jn 10:16). And again in John 12:32 Jesus had clearly stated "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw **ALL MEN** (JEWS AND GENTILES) to Myself."

**Most certainly** - More literally this reads "of a truth." (see Robertson's note below)

As **MacArthur** says "With one stroke, Peter cuts to the heart of the issue and rivets their attention on him." (See [Acts Commentary](#))

**Understand** (comprehend - present tense) (2638) (**katalambano** from **katá** = adds intensity [or surprise as in 1 Th 5:4] to the meaning of the verb + **lambáno** = take) literally means to take eagerly, grasp with force, lay hold of, seize with hostile intent (this literal meaning vividly depicted by the demon who seizes the son and dashed him to the ground in Mark 9:18). **Katalambano** was used in the sense of laying hold of so as to gain control of. Here in Acts 10:34 **katalambano** is used figuratively in the **middle voice** which means to "seize" or lay hold of with one's mind and thus to comprehend (Ep 3:18). Luke uses **katalambano** in a similar sense to describe the reaction of the opponents of the apostles, the religious Jewish leaders, "Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and **understood** (**katalambano**) that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus." (Acts 4:13+).

**G Campbell Morgan** on **katalambano** - Peter said: "I perceive," and the word is one that indicates the coming to a clear comprehension. It is the very word Paul used about his conversion when Christ apprehended him (Php 3:12). Here it is used in the realm of the mind. It indicates the sudden grasping of ideas. He had come to a new view, to a larger understanding, fresh light had broken in upon him." ([Commentary](#))

**Robertson** on **katalambano** in this passage - To lay hold with the mind. It had been a difficult thing for Peter to grasp, but now **of a truth**" (ep' alētheias) the light has cleared away the fog. It was not until Peter had crossed the threshold of the house of Cornelius in the new environment and standpoint that he sees this new and great truth. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

Luke's 3 uses of **katalambano** - Acts 4:13; Acts 10:34; Acts 25:25.

**Katalambano** is translated in the NAS as - attained(1), caught(2), comprehend(2), found(1), laid hold(2), lay hold(1), overtake(2), seizes(1), understand(1), understood(1), win(1).

**Paul** later spoke of this same truth asking "Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.:" (Romans 3:29-30).

**God is not one to show [partiality](#) - Favoritism** is the practice of giving unfair preferential treatment to one person or group at the expense of another. Favoritism is not exactly identical to prejudice, but they are "kissing cousins." Remember that the definition of [prejudice](#) is defined as a partiality that prevents objective consideration of an issue or situation. It is an opinion formed beforehand, especially an unfavorable one based on inadequate facts. **Prejudice** is a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience and usually results in unjust behavior from one's preconceived and unfounded opinions.

**THOUGHT** - Neither **favoritism** nor **prejudice** is NOT a divine attribute! And it should not be something that characterizes God's children ("like Father, like son")! Do you have any prejudice you need to confess and repent?

**James Montgomery Boice** - God showed favor to us, we reason. Aren't we the kind of people to whom God might show favor? When our minds begin to work like that it is only a very short step from favor to favoritism. What we must never forget is that God has shown favor to us precisely because he does not show favoritism. That is the only way you and I ever became Christians. If God had shown favoritism, we would not have been saved. Therefore, we must never show favoritism in our presentation of the message. The gospel is for all who will come to Jesus.

Peter should have known this truth about God's impartiality from the OT but had to be "re-educated" because of all the oral tradition he had received which served to effectively obscure this truth about God. Thus Moses recorded (followed by some other passages on divine impartiality)...

Deuteronomy 10:17 "For (term of explanation of Dt 10:15,16 - yes, He had shown them favor but they were still to "circumcise" their hearts ~ an idiomatic way of saying by faith be saved) the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God **Who does not show partiality** (The Lxx says something like "who does not admire one's face") nor take a bribe.

**THOUGHT** - While God's truth is always true and will stand forever, men's teachings can still obscure and hide and pervert His Word of truth, which is what had occurred with the Jews and their non-scriptural **partiality toward the Gentiles**. The point is that the wise man or woman will always go first to tested (Pr 30:5), pure milk of the Word (1 Pe 2:2) for wisdom, and only then go to the wisdom of men (including commentaries by yours truly)! Unless you have a straight ruler, how can you discern if someone draws a crooked line? Thus only by personal observation of the text can one rightly interpret the Word of Truth and then be able to use it to assess the accuracy and integrity of men's teachings. In sum, to be like the Bereans (who assessed the teachings of Paul!), we must examine ([anakrino](#) in present tense) the Scriptures daily! (Acts 17:11+).

2 Chronicles 19:7 "Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or **partiality** or the taking of a bribe."

Job 34:19 **Who shows no partiality** to princes Nor regards the rich above the poor, For they all are the work of His hands?

Luke 20:21+ They (The scribes and the chief priests trying to trap Jesus) questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You speak and teach correctly, and **You are not partial to any**, but teach the way of God in truth. (Good working definition of not partial = teaching way of God in truth).

Romans 2:11+ For (term of explanation - Paul explains the just judgment and reward described in Ro 2:9, 10) **there is no partiality with God**.

1 Peter 1:17+ If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work (unbelievers and believers), **conduct** (aorist imperative = conveys a sense of urgency - Just do it! Do it now!) yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth;

**Partiality** ([4381](#)) (**prosopolemptes** from **prósopon** = face + **lambáno** = receive) literally means "face taking", "receive face", the accepting of one's person. The idea is looking to see who someone is before deciding how to treat them. Stated another way, the idea is judging by appearance and on that basis giving special favor and respect. It pertains to judging purely on a superficial level, without consideration of a person's true merits, abilities, or character. The Oriental custom of greeting was to bow one's face to the

ground. If the one greeted accepted the person, he was allowed to lift his head again. The accepting of the appearance of a person was a Hebraic term for "partiality". The idea behind **prosopolemptes** is that one judges on the basis of externals or pre-conceived notions, and shows **partiality** or **prejudice**. (WE NEVER DO THAT DO WE?) It meant to make unjust distinctions between people by treating one person better than another, or the case of the Jews treating the Gentiles worse not better! Praise God that He is impartial

**Robertson** adds "The idea is to pay regard to one's looks or circumstances rather than to his intrinsic character. The Jews had come to feel that they were the favorites of God and actually sons of the kingdom of heaven because they were descendants of Abraham. John the Baptist rebuked them for this fallacy (cf Mt 3:8-10)." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Paul Apple** asks "Did God show favoritism to the Jews in OT times? **Yes**, in the sense of the privileges that applied to the Jewish nation **No**, in terms of allowing Gentiles to enter the kingdom as well."

There's a wideness in God's mercy,  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in his justice,  
Which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of man's mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.  
—Frederick W. Faber

**Boice** comments - Notice what Peter said when he arrived: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right" (vv. 34–35). **I wonder if we really believe that.** We would all probably say, "Oh, yes, yes, that is true. After all, we are Gentiles, and God has accepted us. And, yes, there are also Jews, and God accepts them." But I wonder if we really believe that God does not show favoritism. (GULP!)

**David Guzik** - According to William Barclay ([Acts 10 Commentary](#)), 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. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

If a Jew married a Gentile, the Jewish community would have a funeral for the Jew and consider them dead. It was thought that to even enter the house of a Gentile made a Jew unclean before God. Ancient Jewish writings tell us of a Gentile woman who came to a rabbi. She confessed that she was a sinner and asked to be admitted to the Jewish faith. "Rabbi," she said, "bring me near." The Rabbi refused and simply shut the door in her face.

But the Gentiles could give as bad as they got from the Jews. Gentiles despised Jews as weird traditionalists, and believed that they were evil plotters who worshipped pigs. After all, they thought, Jews refused to eat pork, so they must worship pigs!

All of this changed with the spread of the gospel. Christianity was the first religion to disregard racial, cultural and national limitations.

When the Jews showed this kind of partiality they were not being faithful to God's heart as revealed in the Old Testament. The idea that God shows no partiality is also stated in Deuteronomy 10:17 and 2 Chronicles 19:7: For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe (Deuteronomy 10:17). ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

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**ILLUSTRATION** - The Recommendation - There's a wonderful story about a Chicago bank that once asked for a letter of recommendation on a young Bostonian being considered for employment. The Boston investment house could not say enough about the young man. His father, they wrote, was a Cabot; his mother was a Lowell. Further back was a happy blend of Saltonstalls, Peabodys, and other of Boston's first families. His recommendation was given without hesitation.

Several days later, the Chicago bank sent a note saying the information supplied was altogether inadequate. It read: "We are not contemplating using the young man for breeding purposes. Just for work."

Neither is God a respecter of persons but accepts those from every family, nation, and race who fear Him and work for His kingdom

(Acts 10:34-35). (Kathleen Peterson)

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Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman doctor in America, started her practice in New York in 1851. Not only was she unable to find patients -- no one would even rent her a room once she mentioned that she was a doctor. After weeks of trudging the streets, she finally rented rooms from a landlady who asked no questions about what Elizabeth planned to do with them.

Quaker women, who had always been receptive to the goal of equal rights, became Elizabeth's first patients. But no hospital would allow her on its staff. Finally, with financial help from her Quaker fiends, Elizabeth opened her own clinic in one of New York's worst slums. The clinic opened in March, 1853. Elizabeth hung a sign out announcing that all patients would be treated free. Yet, for the first few weeks, no one showed up. Then one day a woman in such agony that she didn't care who treated her, staggered up the steps and collapsed in Elizabeth's arms.

When the woman was treated and recovered, she told all her friends about the wonderful woman doctor in downtown New York. The dispensary was soon doing well. It eventually expanded, moved, and is now a branch of the New York Infirmary on East Fifteenth Street. - Bits & Pieces, August 22, 1991.

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**THE POWER OF BELIEF IN A "FALACIOUS TEACHING"** - For centuries people believed that Aristotle was right when he said that the heavier an object, the faster it would fall to earth. Aristotle was regarded as the greatest thinker of all time, and surely he would not be wrong.

Anyone, of course, could have taken two objects, one heavy and one light, and dropped them from a great height to see whether or not the heavier object landed first. But no one did until nearly 2,000 years after Aristotle's death. In 1589 Galileo summoned learned professors to the base of the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Then he went to the top and pushed off a ten- pound and a one-pound weight. Both landed at the same instant. The power of belief was so strong, however, that the professors denied their eyesight. They continued to say Aristotle was right. - Bits & Pieces, January 9, 1992, pp. 22-23

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**BROKEN BARRIERS** - That is typical of the work of Christ. A missionary tells how he once officiated at a communion service in Africa. Beside him as an elder sat an old chief of the Ngoni called Manly-heart. The old chief could remember the days when the young warriors of the Ngoni had left behind them a trail of burned and devastated towns and had come home with their spears red with blood and with the women of their enemies as booty. And what were the tribes which in those days they had ravaged? They were the Senga and the Tumbuka. And who were sitting at that communion service now? Ngoni, Senga and Tumbuka were sitting side by side, their hatred forgotten in the love of Jesus Christ. In the first days, it was characteristic of Christianity that it broke the barriers down; and it can still do that when given the chance. (William Barclay)

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There's a wonderful story about a Chicago bank that once asked for a letter of recommendation on a young Bostonian being considered for employment. The Boston investment house could not say enough about the young man. His father, they wrote, was a Cabot; his mother was a Lowell. Further back was a happy blend of Saltonstalls, Peabodys, and other of Boston's first families. His recommendation was given without hesitation. Several days later, the Chicago bank sent a note saying the information supplied was altogether inadequate. It read: "We are not contemplating using the young man for breeding purposes. Just for work." Neither is God a respecter of persons but accepts those from every family, nation, and race who fear Him and work for His kingdom (Acts 10:34-35). Kathleen Peterson.

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**General Robert E. Lee** was a devout follower of Jesus Christ. It is said that soon after the end of the American Civil War, he visited a church in Washington, D.C. During the communion service he knelt beside a black man. An onlooker said to him later, "How could you do that?" Lee replied, "My friend, all ground is level beneath the cross."

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A man named La Piere sent out letters to the managers of 256 hotels and restaurants across the southern half of the U.S. He told them that he was planning to tour the south with two Chinese companions and he wanted to know ahead of time whether they would be served. Ninety-two percent of the businesses replied that they did not serve Chinese and that La Piere could save himself considerable embarrassment by not showing up with such undesirables. He wasn't surprised. Racial prejudice was a part of southern life in the 1930s, and this was long before a ban was placed on discrimination in interstate commerce. La Piere ignored the managers' advice, however. Accompanied by a Chinese man and his wife, he visited every one of the establishments that said they'd refuse service. Surprise! Ninety-nine percent of the places admitted the oriental couple, and almost all did so without a hassle...La Piere's study points up something that's a consistent finding in the field of persuasion--that a person may say he feels one thing, and then turn right around and do something completely different. - Em Griffin, *The Mindchangers*, Tyndale House, 1976, p. 179.

Two apples up in a tree were looking down on the world. The first apple said, "Look at all those people fighting, robbing, rioting -- no one seems willing to get along with his fellow man. Someday we apples will be the only ones left. Then we'll rule the world."

Replied the second apple, "Which of us -- the reds or the greens?" Gene Brown in Danbury, Con., News-Times.

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The following story appeared in the newsletter Our America;

"Dodie Gadiant, a schoolteacher for thirteen years, decided to travel across America and see the sights she had taught about. Traveling alone in a truck with camper in tow, she launched out. One afternoon rounding a curve on I-5 near Sacramento in rush-hour traffic, a water pump blew on her truck. She was tired, exasperated, scared, and alone. In spite of the traffic jam she caused, no one seemed interested in helping.

"Leaning up against the trailer, she prayed, 'Please God, send me an angel . . . preferably one with mechanical experience.'

Within four minutes, a huge Harley drove up, ridden by an enormous man sporting long, black hair, a beard and tattooed arms. With an incredible air of confidence, he jumped off and, without even glancing at Dodie, went to work on the truck. Within another few minutes, he flagged down a larger truck, attached a tow chain to the frame of the disabled Chevy, and whisked the whole 56-foot rig off the freeway onto a side street, where he calmly continued to work on the water pump.

"The intimidated schoolteacher was too dumbfounded to talk. Especially when she read the paralyzing words on the back of his leather jacket: 'Hell's Angels -- California'. As he finished the task, she finally got up the courage to say, 'Thanks so much,' and carry on a brief conversation. Noticing her surprise at the whole ordeal, he looked her straight in the eye and mumbled, 'Don't judge a book by its cover. You may not know who you're talking to.' With that, he smiled, closed the hood of the truck, and straddled his Harley. With a wave, he was gone as fast as he had appeared."

Given half a chance, people often crawl out of the boxes into which we've relegated them." - Larry D. Wright.

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### **Our Welcoming God** By Winn Collie

Read: Acts 10:34–38

God does not show favoritism. Acts 10:34

Our church meets in an old elementary school, one that closed in 1958 rather than obey a US court order to integrate (the act of having African-American students attend schools previously attended by only Caucasian students). The following year, the school reopened and Elva, now a member of our church, was one of those black students who were thrust into a white world. "I was taken out of my safe community, with teachers who were part of our life," Elva recalls, "and placed in a scary environment in a class with only one other black student." Elva suffered because she was different, but she became a woman of courage, faith, and forgiveness. Her witness is profound because of how much evil she endured at the hands of some members of a society that denied the truth that every human being, regardless of race or heritage, is loved by God. Some members of the early church struggled with this same truth, believing that certain people were, by birth, loved by God while others were rejected. After receiving a divine vision, however, Peter stunned everyone who would listen with this astounding revelation: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right" (Acts 10:34–35).

God opens His arms wide to extend love to everyone. May we do the same in His power. Consider your neighborhood, your family, and your social sphere. Where do you find a temptation to exclude others? Why?

We're tempted to push others away,  
but God's arms are open wide.

**Acts 10:35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.**

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

- **in every nation** Acts 15:9; Isaiah 56:3-8; Ro 2:13,25-29; 3:22,29,30; 10:12,13; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; Eph 2:13-18; 3:6-8; Php 3:3; Col 1:6,23-27; 3:11
- **the man who fears Him** Acts 10:2; 9:31; Job 28:28; Ps 19:9; 85:9; 111:10; Pr 1:7; 2:5; 3:7; 16:6; Eccl 12:13; 2 Cor 7:1; Eph 5:21; 1 John 2:29

- **is welcome to Him** Genesis 4:5-7; Hosea 8:13; Luke 1:28; Eph 1:6; Heb 11:4-6
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PETER EXPLAINS DIVINE IMPARTIALITY

**But** (alla) is a strong adversative or term of contrast. What is Peter contrasting? God does not show partiality but on the contrary He is open to those who fear Him. He is going to explain what no partiality means.

**In every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him-** The expression in every nation stands first in the sentence for emphasis. Clearly Peter is not teaching a works based salvation. In Acts 10:43 Peter explains "**everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.**" By using the word nation, Peter is saying God is willing to receive anyone from any nation, not just from the nation of Israel. God welcomes everyone who desires a relationship with Him.

**Steven Cole** - whenever a man is seeking after God, it is because God is working to draw that man to Himself (Rom. 3:10; John 6:44, 65). Cornelius has not yet come across the line of salvation, but his fear of God and his good deeds show that God is drawing him toward that point. Before Peter's sermon is over, he crosses the line and gets saved. God works differently with different people. He saves some right out of the cesspool of sin. They are wallowing in it, not seeking after God, when He dramatically enters their lives and rescues them. At that moment, they turn from their sins to follow Christ. But with others, like Cornelius, God puts the hunger in their hearts to know Him. They begin to seek Him and they try to please Him with their lives. But they're still sinners and they do not get saved until they hear the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ. [Lesson 26: Salvation for All Who Believe \(Acts 10:34-48\)](#)

**Everett Harrison** explains **fears...does right...welcome to Him** - "The meaning is not that such persons are thereby saved (cf. Acts 11:14) but rather that they are suitable candidates for salvation. Such preparation betokens a spiritual earnestness that will result in faith as the gospel is heard and received (Interpreting Acts: The Expanding Church)

Some have taught this verse teaches universalism, that all will be saved, but that is absurd because in this same context Peter explains they need to believe in Jesus (Acts 10:43). Acts 11:14 said they needed to hear Peter's gospel message in order to be saved. [Is universalism / universal salvation biblical?](#)

**Every nation** - This statement clearly opens the door of salvation for Gentile nations, not just the nation of Israel. Samuel Stone put Peter's words beautifully in the hymn The Church's One Foundation

The Church's one foundation  
 Is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
 She is His new creation  
 By water and the Word:  
 From heav'n He came and sought her  
 To be His holy Bride;  
 With His own blood He bought her,  
 And for her life He died.

**Elect from every nation,**  
 Yet one o'er all the earth,  
 Her charter of salvation,  
 One Lord, one faith, one birth;  
 One holy Name she blesses,  
 Partakes one holy food,  
 And to one hope she presses,  
 With every grace endued.

**Guzik** - We often think God sees color; He only sees the heart. God does not see economic status; He only sees the heart. He doesn't see nationality or ethnic group; He only sees the heart. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Nation** (1484)(**ethnos**; English = **ethnic**) in general refers to a multitude of persons associated with one another, living together, united in kinship, culture or traditions. **Ethnos** is summed up by the words nation, Gentiles (especially when ethnos is plural, it is singular in Acts 10:35), people (much like "people groups" in our modern missionary vernacular). Of the 151 uses of ethnos in the NT, 93 are translated "Gentiles." Larkin adds ethnos "refers not simply to nation-states but also to any racial, ethnic or cultural grouping by which humans distinguish themselves." ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))



**Fears** (present tense = as their habitual attitude)(5399)(**phobeo** from **phobos** = fear source of our English "phobia") can mean to be afraid in the sense of frightened or to fear in the sense of having an attitude of reverence, awe or respect, the latter being the sense in Peter's speech.

**John MacArthur** says the "most common use of **phobeo** in the New Testament represents reverential awe, not cringing fright. It expresses the feeling of a person who is in the presence of someone infinitely superior...In the synoptic Gospels and Acts the term is never used to speak of anything other than the feeling in a person's heart when he is confronted with divine power, and it is declared to be a part of the Christian's attitude as he seeks to faithfully serve the Lord (Acts 9:31). Reverential awe of God is a part of the truly repentant life (2 Cor. 7:10–11), the chaste life (1 Pet. 3:2), the holy life (2 Cor. 7:1), and the godly life (Phil. 2:12). Mutual ministry, love, and respect, as well as powerful evangelism and proper church discipline, are all grounded in reverential awe of the Lord (see 2 Cor. 5:11; Eph. 5:21; 1 Tim. 5:20). It is the substance out of which all right Christian worship, behavior, and service must come. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 55](#))

Puritan **Charles Bridges** defines **fear of God** - It is that affectionate reverence by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father's law. His wrath is so bitter, and His love so sweet; that hence springs an earnest desire to please Him, and—because of the danger of coming short from his own weakness and temptations—a holy watchfulness and fear, "that he might not sin against Him.

**Does** (present tense = as their habitual behavior or practice) (2038)(**ergazomai** from **ergon** = work) means to engage in an activity involving considerable expenditure of effort. To work effectively. The NT uses **ergazomai** in a literal (to do manual labor) and figurative (especially spiritual) sense. **Wuest** writes that **ergazomai** "emphasizes the process of an action, carrying with this the ideas of continuity and repetition. It means "to labor, to be active, to perform," with the idea of continued exertion being included."

**Right** (1343) (**dikaosune**) is rightness of character before God and rightness of actions before men. Cornelius was "righteous" in the sense of his general way of life, but he still lacked the perfect righteousness provided only by the Gospel, only by believing (**sola fide**) in Christ Who is our righteousness (1 Cor 1:30) and thereby being declared perfectly positionally righteous or **fully justified** before a Holy God. Cornelius reminds us of Jesus' promise in Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied." Cornelius would soon be satisfied!

While **dikaosune** is a major word in the theology of Paul, Luke only has a few uses Lk. 1:75; Acts 10:35; Acts 13:10; Acts 17:31; Acts 24:25.

As noted above, neither **fearing God** or **doing what is righteous** saves a person, because as Isaiah 64:6 says "all our **righteous deeds** are like a filthy garment." Only belief in the Gospel saves a person. But in this context of God not showing partiality and of being willing to "put out the welcome mat" (so to speak), the man or woman (wherever they may be in the world, whether deep in the jungles of Africa or on the mountain tops of the Himilayan mountains) who manifests these tendencies (as did Cornelius) the one to whom God will send His messenger with the saving Gospel. Neither their fear nor their works merited God's grace, but characterize a seeking heart in a lost person and God in His sovereignty does respond to the seeking heart by sending the saving Gospel.

## **GOD PUTS OUT THE WELCOME MAT!**

**Welcome to Him** - Note carefully the distinction - **Welcome** but NOT yet saved. They are (as it were) on the "doorstep" of salvation, not yet having entered through the Door, Christ Jesus (Jn 10:9)! But Peter will give these Gentile hearers the "key" to the Door in his presentation of the Gospel (Acts 10:36-43).

**THOUGHT - A MODEL GOSPEL PRESENTATION** - Notice that Peter's presentation of the Gospel is a model for all of us when we share Christ with others. (1) He emphasizes Jesus was God (Acts 10:36 "Lord of all), (2) that He became a Man who the apostles witnessed (Acts 10:37, read their witness in the Gospels), (3) that He had power, including power over the devil (Acts 10:38), (4) that He hung on a cross (literally a "tree") and died (Acts 10:39), (5) that God raised Him from the dead on the third day (fulfilling prophecy), this event again witnessed by the apostles (who saw Him eat indicating He was not a phantom but a physical Person) and others (Acts 10:40, 41 - note he mentions the resurrection twice!), (6) that they were to tell others of Him because every man will have to stand before Him as the Judge (thus we see the "bad news" that accentuates the "good news") and (7) finally that personally believing in Jesus results in forgiveness of one's sins! (Acts 10:36-43). To summarize - Jesus the Son of God came to earth, lived as a Man that He might die on a Cross, after which He was raised by God from the dead on the third day, and He will judge all men, which should motivate all to believe in Him to receive forgiveness of sins. That is the Gospel of Jesus Christ which we are to

proclaim. Let us be faithful to proclaim it fully and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Paul declared a parallel truth in different words when he said "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.." (Galatians 3:28+)

**Robertson** on **welcome** (KJV - accepted) - That is to say, a Gentile would not have to become a Jew in order to become a Christian. Evidently Peter had not before perceived this fact. On the great Day of Pentecost when he spoke of the promise "to all those afar off" (Acts 2:39) Peter understood that they must first become Jews and then Christians. The new idea that now makes a revolution in Peter's outlook is precisely this that Christ can and will save Gentiles like this Cornelius group without their becoming Jews at all. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Welcome** (acceptable) (1184)(**dektos** from **dechomai** - to accept or receive favorably) means accepted, acceptable, welcome (admitted), pleasing in view of its being acceptable (giving pleasure, agreeable, gratifying). **Dektos** describes one of whom there is or has been a favorable decision of the will. It conveys the picture of a "open" reception, much like when one puts the "**welcome mat**" on their front door step, something Jesus did not experience even in His own hometown! (Lk 4:24+ - He was not "dektos" - not welcome) Thankfully, here in Acts 10:34 Peter comes to a full understanding that God puts out the "welcome mat" for all who fear and obey Him whether they are Jew or Gentile.

In Proverbs 15:8 in the Septuagint **delight** is translated with **dektos** - "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, But the prayer of the upright is His **delight** (Heb - [ratson/rason](#))." Are my (your) prayers His delight?

It is interesting that the Septuagint uses **dektos** to describe **sacrifice** in Lev 1:3-4+ as one that met with divine approval (cf uses in Lxx of Lev 19:5). In Exodus 28:38 **dektos** describes the High Priest as being **acceptable** to the LORD, Moses recording "It shall be on Aaron's forehead (Engraved with "**Holy to the LORD**" - see Ex 28:36-37), and Aaron shall take away the iniquity of the holy things which the sons of Israel consecrate, with regard to all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be **accepted** (Hebrew - [ratson/rason](#); Lxx = [Dektos](#)) before the LORD."

**Paul Apple** - God does not restrict the Gospel based on any type of favoritism or prejudice; Access to God is open to all on an equal footing (ON LEVEL GROUND AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS) – Jew has no advantage over the Gentile; all believers are baptized into one body of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 12:13). Who are we to show partiality? (cf James 2:1, 9) **Our society is all about making distinctions**: Black vs white; Men vs women; Skilled vs unskilled; Rich vs poor; Young vs old; Professional vs blue collar; Healthy vs handicapped; Educated vs uneducated. We are not to try to anticipate who is a good prospect for receiving the Gospel and who is not – don't fall into the trap of **spiritual profiling**; understand that with God there is no partiality – proclaim the message of saving grace to everyone. Are you able to identify any prejudices in your thinking or in that of your church community? Do you know people who think they are unsavable – destined to be excluded from God's kingdom? Should churches be established just to minister to a specific ethnic and cultural group to the exclusion of others? Is your hospitality limited to just certain types of people?

**David Guzik** comments that Acts 10:34ff "is the foundation for Peter's understanding that the gospel should now go forth to Gentiles. This statement goes completely against the prevailing Jewish thought at that time that God certainly did show partiality, towards the Jews and against the Gentiles. In essence, many Jews of Peter's day thought that God loved the Jews while hating the Gentiles. According to **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. If a Jew married a Gentile, the Jewish community would have a funeral for the Jew and consider them dead. It was thought that to even enter the house of a Gentile made a Jew unclean before God. Ancient Jewish writings tell us of a Gentile woman who came to a rabbi. She confessed that she was a sinner and asked to be admitted to the Jewish faith. "Rabbi," she said, "bring me near." The Rabbi refused and simply shut the door in her face. But the Gentiles could give as bad as they got from the Jews. Gentiles despised Jews as weird traditionalists, and believed that they were evil plotters who worshipped pigs. After all, they thought, Jews refused to eat pork, so they must worship pigs! All of this changed with the spread of the gospel. Christianity was the first religion to disregard racial, cultural and national limitations. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**G Campbell Morgan** notes that Peter's words teach us that "There is no race superiority, there are no inferior races. But even beyond that, more astonishing, and more unbelievable, it is true that the Christian preacher or teacher must call no man common or unclean. He has no right to look with contempt upon any man because he does not share his religious doctrine or creed. To change the word "unclean," and render the passage more literally: "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or uncleaned." The remarkable thing about the word "common" is that it is the root, Koinos, from which we derive our rich word koinonia, fellowship. "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common." Here is a strange and apparent contradiction. There is no finer explanation of the word than that of its use in the beginning of this book: "having all things in common." That means

the ending of all degrees, the breaking down of all castes, the coming to a realization of the unity of life. That is the true idea of the word. But Peter said: "God hath showed me that I should not call any man common." In that statement we have an instance of the false use of the word. The Gentile is common clay: we are a spiritual aristocracy! So the Hebrew had said for generations; and so says the Christian Church altogether too often at the present hour. The man outside is common, not within the sacred circle, shut off from privileges. Peter said God had taught him that he should call no man common, outside the circle. How is that false conception of the meaning of the word "common" to be corrected? By a discovery of the fact that all men in the sight of God, for some wonderful reason occupy the same position. ([Commentary](#))

**Larkin** - In a day of religious pluralism, when compassionate Christians seek to guard against prejudicial bias and see the good in all religions, Peter's speech clearly teaches us that though God does not play favorites with nations, he does make distinctions in matters of religion. Only those who worship him, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent can know eternal life (Jn 17:3). ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

### Acts 10:36 "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)--

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

- **The word** Acts 2:38,39; 3:25,26; 11:19; 13:46; Mt 10:6; Luke 24:47
- **preaching peace through Jesus Christ** Ps 72:1-3,7; 85:9,10; Isaiah 9:6; 32:15-17; 55:12; 57:19; Luke 2:10-14; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Eph 2:13-18; Col 1:20; Heb 7:2,3; 13:20
- **He is Lord of all** Acts 2:36; 5:31; Ps 2:6-8; 24:7-10; 45:6,11; 110:1,2; Isa 7:14; 45:21-25; Jer 23:5,6; Da 7:13,14; Hos 1:7; Mic 5:2; Mal 3:1; Mt 11:27; 22:44-46; Mt 28:18; Jn 3:35,36; 5:23-29; Ro 10:11-13; 14:9; 1 Cor 15:27,47; Eph 1:20-23; 4:5-12; Php 2:11; Col 1:15-18; Heb 1:2,6-12; 1 Pe 3:22; Rev 1:5,18; 17:14; 19:16
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE GOSPEL TO THE JEW AND TO ALL THE WORLD

It is notable that Peter's message to the Gentiles is very similar to the message to the Jews (except he does not mention the OT prophecies (e.g., Acts 2:16-21, 25-31, 34-35+, etc) which would not have been as relevant to the Gentiles who had no knowledge of the OT.

**Ray Stedman** writes that Peter immediately "moves to the coming of Christ, to the incarnation, to the fact that Jesus, who, he emphasizes, is the Lord of all, came to us, nevertheless, as a man. Notice how Peter puts it in human terms. Jesus came as a man through whom God worked in love and power. He did not come primarily to display his deity, to show us how God behaves; he came to show us how man behaves as God intended him to be -- indwelt by God. (ED: DO NOT READ OVER THIS TOO QUICKLY! JESUS' COMING AS A MAN GAVE FALLEN MEN AN EXAMPLE BY WHICH WE COULD LIVE A FRUITFUL, GOD GLORIFYING LIFE, ONE THAT IS ONLY POSSIBLE AS WE, LIKE JESUS DID, LEARN TO DAILY, CONTINUALLY RELY ON THE SUPERNATURAL ENABLEMENT OF THE SPIRIT WHO GIVES US NOT ONLY THE DESIRE TO LIVE LIKE JESUS BUT THE POWER TO LIVE LIKE JESUS. ARE YOU FINDING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS DIFFICULT TO LIVE? PERHAPS YOU ARE TRYING TO LIVE IT WHOLLY RELYING ON YOUR STRENGTH! WHICH WE ARE NEVER TOLD TO "LET GO, LET GOD," WE ARE INSTRUCTED TO SO TO SPEAK "LET GOD AND LET'S GO!" HIS PROVISION. OUR RESPONSIBILITY. THIS IS THE TRULY BALANCED CHRISTIAN LIFE THAT STEDMAN SUMMARIZES HERE FOR US) That is what it takes to be a man. You will never be a human being as God intended you to be until you are indwelt by God (ED: AND LEARN TO RELY ON THE INDWELLING SPIRIT). That is the essential ingredient of humanity that makes man, man. Jesus came to demonstrate that fact. He is God, reaching out to man in man's weakness, failure, and sinfulness to restore him and to re-inhabit man who had lost the Spirit of God. Notice also that Peter preaches the Lordship of Jesus. He does not call him the **Savior**; he calls him the **Lord**. It is as **Lord** that Jesus is to be received into the heart; then he becomes **Savior**. ([Acts 10:23-11:18 Life For All](#))

**The word which He sent to the sons of Israel** - **Word** is preceded by the definitive article, so it "THE" specific word. In context **the word** refers to the good news, the Gospel of salvation in Christ. Indeed **the word** came to the Jew first, but the light is beginning to dawn in Peter's Jewish mind that this **word** was to the Jew but not only for the Jew. As Paul would later write "I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first** and also to the Greek." (Ro 1:16+). And do not miss the fact that God took the initiative in sending the gospel. He did not send to Israel first (or to any ethnic group for that matter) because they were good, but because He is merciful and as Peter writes "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as

some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." (2 Pe 3:9) Paul adds that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Ti 2:4)

**Word** (3056)(**logos**) from **légō** = to speak with words; English = logic, logical) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words. Although **Lógos** is most often translated **word** which Webster defines as "something that is said, a statement, an utterance", the Greek understanding of **lógos** is somewhat more complex. See discussion of "The Logos" (Jesus Christ) in [John 1:14-Commentary](#)

**Luke** has already recorded that **the word** was first given to the Jew...

Peter said to them (JEWS FOR ALL LANDS THEY HAD BEEN DISPERSED GATHERED IN JERUSALEM FOR PENTECOST), "**Repent**, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For **the promise is for you** (ISRAEL) and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself." (Acts 2:38,39+)

**Comment** - Note the phrase "**and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself**" which would indicate that Peter under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit had some understanding that Gospel for not just for the Jews but also for the Gentiles. This "germ thought" comes to full bloom here in Acts 10! In making this statement in Jerusalem at Pentecost at the birth of the Church (estimated to be as at least 5 years earlier and possibly longer - [see ESV Timeline](#)), Peter likely understood that any prospective Gentile converts had to come to Christ through the narrow door of Judaism. In Acts 10 God flings the Gospel door wide open and throws out His welcome mat to all mankind, all sons of Adam (Ro 5:12+), all those dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+). Hallelujah!

"It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, 'AND IN YOUR SEED ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH SHALL BE BLESSED.' For you (ISRAEL) first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways." (Acts 3:25,26+)

**Comment** - Again notice the phrase "**all the families of the earth shall be blessed**," indicating that Peter had some understanding of the non-exclusivity of the glorious Gospel!

**Preaching** (the gospel of) **peace through Jesus Christ** - The peace men have needed since the Garden of Eden is not peace with one another (of course that is greatly needed in America today!) but peace with God. This peace is available only in "the Prince of peace" (Isaiah 9:6+) for in Him "Lovingkindness and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." (Ps 85:10)

In the announcement of Jesus' birth, **the Gloria in Excelsis Deo**, the angels declared "Glory to God in the highest, And on **earth peace among men** with whom He is pleased." (Lk 2:14+) This is not saying peace on the earth among all men, but describes God's peace to men, a peace only attained by men who place their faith in Christ, as Paul writes "having been justified by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Ro 5:1+) Know God, know peace. No God, no peace! The KJV gives the wrong impression here (Lk 2:14KJV). The angels did not say, "on earth peace, **good will toward** men." What they actually said was, "peace to men **of good will**," or "peace among men with whom He is pleased." The ESV Study note adds this peace refers to "The peace of salvation that God gives through his Son."

**Preaching** (the gospel, good news)(2097)(**euaggelizo/euangelizo** from **eu** = good, well + **aggéllō** = proclaim, tell; English = evangelize) means to announce good news concerning something. **Euaggelizo** was often used in the [Septuagint](#) for preaching a glad or joyful message (cf. 1Sam. 31:9; 2 Sa 1:20; 4:10). **Euaggelizo/euangelizo** in its original sense could be used to refer to a declaration of any kind of good news, but in the NT it (with 2 exceptions) refers especially to the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God and of salvation obtained through Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Most of NT uses of **euaggelizo** are translated "preach" or "preach the gospel," whichever fits more smoothly into the context.

Preaching peace implies there is hostility between fallen men and the Holy God. Paul writes "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet **sinners**, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if **while we were enemies** we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Ro 5:8-10)

**Robertson** says **preaching peace** is more literally "Gospelizing peace through Jesus Christ. There is no other way to have real peace between individuals and God, between races and nations, than by Jesus Christ. Almost this very language occurs in Eph 2:17 where Paul states that Jesus on the cross "**preached** (gospelized = [euaggelizo/euangelizo](#)) **peace to you who are afar off and peace to you who are near.**" Peter here sees what Paul will see later with great clearness. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Kistemaker on preached peace** - Jesus proclaimed the biblical concept of peace, which is not merely an absence of hostility. Peace is a comprehensive concept that refers to the restoration of man's relationship with God (see Isa. 52:7; Rom. 5:1). Peace is evident when man enters the presence of God and receives his favor and grace. Peace means that God blesses man, shields him from danger and harm, and makes him whole again. (Baker NTC).

Paul described this peace explaining " that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation," (2 Cor 5:19) and that "Through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, **having made peace through the blood of His cross**; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven." (Col. 1:20)

**Bock:** This is the concept of shalom from the OT (Pss. 29:11; 72:7; 85:8-10; Prov. 3:17; Isa. 48:18; 54:10; Ezek. 34:25-29), a well-being of relationship between the person and God, which now seems to express itself in peace between people as well (Eph. 2:11-22). The idea of preaching peace recalls OT ideas (Isa. 52:7; Nah. 1:15). (See [Acts \(Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament\)](#))

**Piper:** We have peace with God only when his anger at us because of our sins is put away, and replaced by peace. [Exalting Jesus so the Spirit Falls](#))

**Peace** (1515)([eirene](#) from verb [eiro](#) = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again.

**Luke's** uses of [eirene](#) - Lk. 1:79 (Jesus' visited earth "To guide our feet into the way of peace."); Lk. 2:14; Lk. 2:29; Lk. 7:50; Lk. 8:48; Lk. 10:5; Lk. 10:6; Lk. 11:21; Lk. 12:51; Lk. 14:32; Lk. 19:38; Lk. 19:42; Lk. 24:36; Acts 7:26; Acts 9:31; Acts 10:36; Acts 12:20; Acts 15:33; Acts 16:36; Acts 24:2

**Paul Apple** - No Peace if Jesus is not Lord – the flesh wages war against the Spirit; the kingdom of God is at enmity with the kingdom of Satan; you cannot be a friend of the world and a friend of God – you must be submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ to experience the precious peace He came to offer

**He is Lord of all** - Here is the phrase that shows the sun of the Son has shined in Peter's heart who now sees Jesus as **Lord of all!** This emphasizes both Jesus' deity, since the Lord is God, and His absolute authority. It also alludes to the universal scope of salvation blessings available in Him. Peter later emphasizes Jesus' authority declaring that Jesus "has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead." (Acts 10:42). **Of all** opens the door of salvation not only to those who are near (Jews) but to those who are far off (Gentiles). Now we know that "all the people" (Lk 2:10) includes the Gentiles. God had declared this truth even in the Old Testament...

Creating the praise of the lips. **Peace, peace to him who is far and to him who is near;**" Says the LORD, "and I will heal him." (Isaiah 57:19)

In Romans 10:12+ Paul writes

"For (term of explanation - explaining ""WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." Ro 10:11) there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

**Robertson on He is Lord of all** - A triumphant parenthesis that Peter throws in as the reason for his new truth. Jesus Christ is Lord of all, both Jews and Gentiles. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Larkin** - When the shattering good news "Jesus Christ is Lord of all people" is heard and heeded, the church is liberated from its cultural parochialism, set free to witness "across the tracks" and across the world. ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Swindoll** - The title "**Lord of all**" (Acts 10:36) was significant to everyone in the room, but for different reasons. Romans sometimes conferred deity upon their emperors, whom they saw as rulers of the world even beyond their borders. Pagan worshipers used the title in reference to their mythical gods. And Peter gained a new appreciation for the title "Lord of all"—not just the Lord of the Jews—as a result of his recent experience. (see [Insights on Acts](#))

**Guzik** - This is a powerful phrase, showing the deity of Jesus. Peter could never say this if Jesus were not (and is not) God. [Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Lord** (master, owner)(2962)([kurios](#) from [kuros](#) = might or power, related to [kuroo](#) = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign (used this way of Roman emperors - Acts 25:26) and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. [Kurios](#) is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28)

There is much argument in recent years about whether to believe in Jesus is to believe that He is not only Savior but Lord. This seems a bit ridiculous given the first words of Peter in his proclamation of the Gospel "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:36). In a word, Jesus is Lord and to believe in Him is to receive Him as your Lord. For more on this topic see [What is lordship salvation?](#)

How lovely on the mountains  
Are the feet of him who brings good news,  
Who announces peace  
And brings good news of happiness,  
Who announces salvation,  
(Isaiah 52:7)

**Acts 10:37 you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.**

KJV 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;

- **You yourselves know** Acts 2:22; 26:26; 28:22
- **which took place throughout all Judea** Luke 4:14; 23:5
- **after the baptism which John proclaimed** Acts 1:22; 13:24,25; Mt 3:1-3; Mt 4:12-17; Mark 1:1-5,14,15; John 4:1-3
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PETER BEGINS THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

The message to the Gentiles begins with a reminder of Jesus' life and ministry with which the Gentiles would have been familiar.

**You yourselves know** - Second time Peter uses this phrase (Acts 10:28). The Greek word for **know** ([eido](#)) means this is something that Cornelius and his relatives and friends knew beyond a shadow of a doubt. There was no 24 hour news or internet or email or texting, but the news of Jesus' ministry was so earth shaking that it spread throughout the land of Palestine.

**The thing which took place throughout all Judea** - As discussed below Peter is referring to Jesus' ministry for 3 years in Judea.

**Starting from Galilee** - So in his "sermon" Peter skips over the virgin birth and goes directly to the beginning of Jesus' 3 year ministry. See [map of Jesus' Ministry in Galilee](#).

**Robertson on starting from Galilee** - There is in it nothing about the birth and childhood of Jesus nor about the intervening ministry supplied by John's Gospel for the period (a year) between the baptism and the Galilean Ministry. Peter here presents an objective statement of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus with proof from the Scriptures that he is the Messiah. It is a skilful presentation. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Kistemaker** suggests that "Peter mentions John the Baptist to mark the distinction between the Old Testament era and the beginning of New Testament times."

**After the baptism which John proclaimed** - As Luke had earlier recorded in his Gospel "And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins; as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT. '" (Luke 3:3-4)

**John MacArthur** explains John's **baptism** noting that "while there were various ceremonial washings in Judaism (cf. Heb. 6:2), there was no baptism of Jews. But while there was no baptism of Jews in Judaism, the Jews did baptize Gentile converts to Judaism. **Thus, those who "were being baptized by [John] in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins" (Mt. 3:6), were publicly acknowledging that they were no better than the Gentiles.** Their sins had separated them from the true and living God (cf. Isa 59:2) and cut them off from covenant blessings. **For Jewish people to place themselves on the same level as the despised Gentiles was astonishing, and demonstrates the power of John's preaching.** Unfortunately, few being baptized by John were truly repentant. The nation would later reject Jesus when He failed to meet

their expectations of a political Messiah, who would deliver them from the Romans. Others were superficial from the start....But those few (Mt 7:13–14) who acknowledged their sinful condition and alienation from God and turned to Him in repentant faith were saved. (See [Luke Commentary - Page 209](#))

**Gotquestions** answers the question [What was the meaning and importance of the baptism of John the Baptist?](#)-

Though today the word baptism generally evokes thoughts of identifying with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, baptism did not begin with Christians. For years before Christ, the Jews had used baptism in ritual cleansing ceremonies of Gentile proselytes. John the Baptist took baptism and applied it to the Jews themselves—it wasn't just the Gentiles who needed cleansing. Many believed John's message and were baptized by him (Matthew 3:5–6). The baptisms John performed had a specific purpose. In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist mentions the purpose of his baptisms: "I baptize you with water for repentance." Paul affirms this in Acts 19:4: "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." John's baptism had to do with repentance—it was a symbolic representation of changing one's mind and going a new direction. "Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River" (Matthew 3:6). Being baptized by John demonstrated a recognition of one's sin, a desire for spiritual cleansing, and a commitment to follow God's law in anticipation of the Messiah's arrival. There were some, like the Pharisees, who came to the Jordan to observe John's ministry but who had no desire to step into the water themselves. John rebuked them sternly: "When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance'" (Matthew 3:7–8). Even the religious leaders needed to repent of their sin, although they saw no need of it. ([Read more>](#))

**Proclaimed** ([2784](#)) ([kerusso](#) or [kerysso](#) from [kerux/keryx](#) = a herald - one who acts as the medium of the authority of one who proclamation he makes; [kerugma](#) = the thing preached or the message) means to proclaim (publicly) or to herald or act as a public crier - the town official who would make a proclamation in a public gathering.

**Paul Apple** makes an interesting observation - this passage bracketed by the baptism administered by John and then the baptism of the household of Cornelius

**Acts 10:38 "[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.**

KJV 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.

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

- **God anointed** Acts 2:22; 4:27; Ps 2:2,6; Ps 45:7; Isaiah 11:2; 42:1; 61:1-3; Mt 12:28; Luke 3:22; 4:18; John 3:34; John 6:27; 10:36-38; Heb 1:9
- **how He went about doing good** 2 Chr 17:9; Mt 4:23-25; 9:35; 12:15; 15:21-31; Mark 1:38,39; 3:7-11; Mark 6:6,54-56; Luke 7:10-17,21-23; 9:56; 1 Peter 5:8
- **healing** Mark 5:13-15; 7:29,30; Luke 4:33-36; 9:42; Heb 2:14,15; 1 John 3:8
- **for God was with Him** John 3:2; 10:32,38; 16:32
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **JESUS OF NAZARETH ANOINTED WITH THE SPIRIT AND POWER**

Supernatural ministry requires supernatural power and God provided that power to the God-Man through the working of the Holy Spirit. Beloved, this pattern for supernatural ministry has not changed! We all have at least one spiritual gift and are all in some way involved in ministry (service) to the Lord Jesus, so it follows that we need to continually "**be strengthened** (present imperative) by the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (even as Paul commanded Timothy in 2 Ti 2:1+) which He "dispenses" through the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9+), the Spirit of grace (Hebrew 10:29+). It is futile to attempt ministry for Jesus without the Spirit of Jesus (Acts 16:7+)! Is it any wonder that so many men and women in Christian ministry become tired, frustrated, often even "throwing in the towel?" The Church began with the coming of the Spirit. The Church continues ONLY in reliance on the power of the Spirit. This is

sound Biblical doctrine, a critical truth which has sadly been lost or obscured in many churches and ministries.

#### Related Resources:

- [A Spirit Filled Church](#)
- [Our Anointing - The Holy Spirit](#)
- [Acts 1:8 Commentary](#)
- [Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells](#)
- [Ephesians 5:18 Commentary](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- [Galatians 5:16 Commentary](#)
- [The Holy Spirit-2](#)
- [Praying in the Spirit](#)

**You know of** - This verb is not in the Greek but is implied and so it is added by the NAS translators to make the sentence smoother. And so in the Greek text the designation **Jesus of Nazareth** is first for emphasis, as all the remaining discourse by Peter is about Him. Peter asserts that his audience is familiar with the Name.

**Jesus of Nazareth** - This designation of Jesus is used 7x/7v (Matt. 26:71; Mk. 1:24; Lk. 4:34; Lk. 18:37; Jn. 1:45; Acts 10:38; Acts 26:9) The related name **Jesus the Nazarene** - 8x in 8v - Mk. 10:47; Mk. 14:67; Mk. 16:6; Lk. 24:19; Jn. 18:5; Jn. 18:7; Jn. 19:19; Acts 2:22; Acts 22:8. It is interesting that Peter mentions Nazareth for it had a negative connotation during this period (cf Jn 1:46, 7:52).

**Robertson on Jesus of Nazareth** - Jesus the one from Nazareth, the article before the city identifying Him clearly. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**C H Spurgeon on anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power** - "This was the spring of Jesus's life's power—his anointing from the Holy Spirit."

**THOUGHT** - BELOVED THIS IS THE "SPRING" OF OUR LIFE'S POWER! **OUR ANOINTING BY THE SPIRIT.**

In his first letter John explained to the believers that "you have an **anointing** ([chrisma](#)) from the Holy One, and you all know." (1 John 2:20+) "As for you, the **anointing** ([chrisma](#)) which you received from Him (THE HOLY SPIRIT **EVERY** BELIEVER RECEIVES AT THE TIME OF CONVERSION cf Ro 8:9, 1 Cor 12:13, Eph 1:13, 2 Cor 1:21, 22) abides (present tense - continually) in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His **anointing** ([chrisma](#)) teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him. (1 John 2:27+)

**How God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power** - Matthew records that " Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan coming to John, to be baptized by him." (Mt 3:13, Lk 3:21+) Matthew goes on to describe Jesus' being **anointed** by the Spirit for the work of ministry writing "After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him." (Mt, Lk 3:22+)

**Anointed** ([5548](#))([chrio](#); see [Messiah - Anointed One](#)) means literally to daub, smear, anoint with oil or ointment, to rub oneself with oil. The figurative use means to consecrate or set apart for sacred work and so here Peter describes God's Spirit setting apart Jesus for His holy work of ministering for 3 years in Palestine. **Chrio** also conveys the sense of assigning a person to a task, which is especially relevant to us as followers of Christ. In 2 Cor 1:21 Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth that "He who establishes us (PAUL INCLUDES HIMSELF AS RECIPIENT OF THIS ANOINTING) with you in Christ and **anointed** ([chrio](#) - aorist active = past tense) us is God."

The designation **Christ** is the Greek word [Christos](#) which is derived from [chrio](#) meaning anointed, thus the Christ being the "Anointed One," and this is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew noun [Mashiach/Masiyah](#) (from [masah/maschah](#) = to anoint) of Whom Psalm 2 clearly foretold The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD (GOD THE FATHER) and against His **Anointed** (GOD THE SON)([Mashiach](#)) (Ps 2:2, cf Da 9:25+ "Messiah [[Mashiach](#)] the Prince")

**And how He went about doing good - Doing good** ([euergeteo](#) = [only here, cf Ps 13:6] conferring benefits, showing kindness, rendering "exceptional service" - BDAG; to be a benefactor) is in the present tense, so Jesus sets a "high bar" for us to [emulate](#). How did Jesus continually do **good**? You might think since He was God, He relied on His divine power to do good. But Peter (and see verses below from Luke) indicates Jesus did good relying on the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This is amazing emptying (Php 2:7+)! He laid aside His divine prerogatives when He took on flesh so that He might give us a Human example, a perfect



example to follow. And we are repeatedly exhorted to follow Jesus' example (see 1 Cor 11:1+, 1 Jn 2:6+, 1 Pe 2:21+). To be sure, Jesus did avail Himself of supernatural power we do not have, as for example when He walked on water or told the storm to be still. But in choosing to rely on the Holy Spirit's filling and empowerment, He left us an example that is practical and possible to follow! Are you imitating Jesus, walking like He walked, walking in His steps?

As an aside it is interesting that the Greek word for **doing good** ([euergeteo](#)) was the root of the Greek noun **euergeton** (cf Lk 22:25+ where "Benefactors" = euergetes) which was used as a royal title of Hellenistic kings (they were esteemed as "do gooders!") That is apropos for here Peter says it is the King of kings (Rev 19:16+) Who is the One Who does good, but the good He did in the first century will ripple throughout time and eternity, unlike the **doing good** of these earthly kings!

**Henry Morris** - The modern world tends to ridicule "do-gooders," but if Jesus is our example, we also should go about doing good ("For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps" = 1 Peter 2:21+ **ED: AND WE MUST BE DOING IT AS HE DID IT =BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT!**).

**Kistemaker** - God anointed Jesus with the Spirit and with power to enable him to fulfill the messianic prophecy (Isa. 61:1; see also Luke 4:18). That is, God equipped Jesus for the special task of preaching and healing. The term power points to the work Jesus was able to do through the indwelling Spirit (BELOVED, MARK THIS POINT, FOR HE IS THE SAME HOLY SPIRIT WHO ENABLES OUR WORK OF MINISTRY, WHATEVER IT MIGHT BE! DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?). Jesus withstood Satan, cast out demons, healed the crippled and the sick, cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, and proclaimed the gospel (compare Matt. 11:4-5).

The writer of Hebrews explains what true sacrifices look like exhorting us "do not neglect **doing good** and **sharing**, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." (Hebrews 13:16+).

Paul encouraged us "Let us (PAUL INCLUDES HIMSELF) not lose heart in **doing good** (WHICH CLEARLY IS A SLOUGH OF DESPOND INTO WHICH WE CAN ALL FALL!), for (TERM OF EXPLANATION - WHY WE SHOULD NOT GROW WEARY!) in due time we will reap (EITHER IN THIS LIFE BUT CERTAINLY IN THE NEXT!) if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity (WHILE WE ARE STILL BREATHING ON EARTH), **let us do good to all people**, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith." (Gal 6:9-10+)

**John Piper** - Jesus is stronger than the devil. Jesus rescues people who are oppressed and harassed and tormented and tempted by the devil. Peter lifts up this truth. He wants Cornelius and his family—and us—to know this and believe it and experience it. When the Holy Spirit comes, he comes to make Jesus real as a deliverer from satanic oppression. ([Exalting Jesus So the Spirit Falls](#))

**Paul Apple** points out that "We do not think much about the power of the devil and how he presently is oppressing people."

**And healing all who were oppressed by the devil** - Jesus healed **all**, not some, and so He continually manifested to everyone that His power was greater than the Devil's power. Peter recognizes the devil as a reality, not an imagined being. (cf Lk 13:16+; Lk 11:14-23+)

**Robertson** - Luke does not exclude other diseases (cf. Luke 13:11, 16+), but he lays special emphasis on demoniacal possession (cf. Mark 1:23). ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**NET Note** says "Note how healing is tied to the cosmic battle present in creation. Christ's power overcomes the devil and his forces, which seek to destroy humanity."

**Healing** (curing) ([2390](#))([iaomai](#)) means to cure, to heal, to restore. **iaomai** is used literally of deliverance from physical diseases and afflictions and so to make whole, restore to bodily health or heal. Figuratively, **iaomai** speaks of deliverance from sin and its evil consequences and thus to restore (to spiritual good health), make whole, renew (Mt 13:15). **iaomai** refers primarily to physical healing in the NT (although clearly there is overlap because some of these instances involved demonic oppression - Lk 9:42), and less commonly to spiritual healing or healing (saving) from "moral illnesses" and the consequences of sin. When used in this sense **iaomai** has much the same meaning as [sozo](#), to save, make whole, restore to spiritual health. Here are uses of **iaomai** that have a spiritual meaning = Mt 13:15, John 12:40, Acts 28:27 - preceding quotes from Isa 6:10, 1Pe 2:24+ = quote from Isa 53:5+.

All **Luke's** uses of **iaomai** - Lk. 5:17; Lk. 6:18; Lk. 6:19; Lk. 7:7; Lk. 8:47; Lk. 9:2; Lk. 9:11; Lk. 9:42; Lk. 14:4; Lk. 17:15; Lk. 22:51; Jn. 4:47; Acts 9:34; Acts 10:38; Acts 28:8; Acts 28:27

**Oppressed** ([2616](#))(**katadunasteuo** from **katá** = down, against + **dunasteúo** = to rule or **dunastes** = a ruler or potentate) means to exercise dominion against. In two NT uses it conveys the sense of tyrannize, oppress harshly. The only other NT use is by James 2:6 "But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who **oppress** you and personally drag you into court?"

**Katadunasteuo** - 28x in the Septuagint - Exod. 1:13 (Egyptians **compelled** the sons of Israel); Exod. 21:16;

Deut. 24:7; 1 Sam. 12:3; 1 Sam. 12:4; 2 Sam. 8:11 (the nations which he **had subdued**); 2 Chr. 21:17; Neh. 5:5; Jer. 7:6 (you do not **oppress** the alien, the orphan, or the widow,); Jer. 22:3; Jer. 50:33; Ezek. 18:7; Ezek. 18:12; Ezek. 18:16; Ezek. 22:7; Ezek. 22:29; Ezek. 45:8 (My princes shall no longer **oppress** My people); Ezek. 46:18; Hos. 5:11; Hos. 12:7; Amos 4:1; Amos 8:4; Mic. 2:2; Hab. 1:4; Zech. 7:10 (**do not oppress** the widow or the orphan, the stranger or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.); Mal. 3:5; Acts 10:38; Jas. 2:6

**Devil** (1228)(**diabolos** from **diá** = through, between + **ballo** = to cast, throw) means a **false accuser, slanderer** (one who utters false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation), **backbiting** (malicious comment about one not present), one given to malicious gossip or a **calumniator** (one who utters maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about, this term imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to the assertions).

**Luke's** uses of **diabolos** - Lk. 4:2; Lk. 4:3; Lk. 4:6; Lk. 4:13; Lk. 8:12; Acts 10:38; Acts 13:10

God was with Him speaks of Jesus' enablement for ministry. Do you have the sense that God is with you and enabling your ministry? Are you relying on your natural power or the supernatural power of the Spirit Who is with you continually.

**For God was with Him** - God was with Jesus (enabling the external manifestations of His power - cp Jn 10:30, 38; 14:9-10) and He is with believers today! This is a great truth for all believers to lay hold of - In Acts 7:9 God was with Joseph and in Hebrews 13:5 the non-lying God promises "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU." God is with us when we minister, when we sleep, whenever and wherever we are! Is this not a comforting truth! Matthew reminds us that "HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US." (Mt 1:23 quoting Isaiah 7:14+) Indeed, Jesus is with us and in us (Col 1:28) as is God the Father and as is God the Spirit.

Yes the Father was **with** Jesus but so was His Spirit and Luke clearly indicates that Jesus' ministry as the perfect Man (which serves as an example to all men), was enabled or empowered by the Holy Spirit, the same Holy Spirit to Whom all believers have access and Who enables all of us for supernatural ministry! Are you ministering in your power or His power? It makes all the difference in this world and the world to come (for apart from Him you can do nothing of eternal value!).

Lk 4:1+ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness

Lk 4:14+ And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all

**THOUGHT** - NOTE: IF JESUS RELIED ON THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO TEACH SO MUST WE DEAR TEACHER OR PREACHER! ONE WONDERS IF THIS IS THE REASON SO MANY PREACHERS ARE BURNING OUT? JUST A THOUGHT. CERTAINLY THE ETERNAL SPIRIT OF GRACE DOES NOT BURN OUT!

Lk 4:18+ **"THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,**

**Ray Stedman** - The next great feature of the good news is that when Jesus Christ arrived, **He destroyed the effects of evil everywhere he went**. He did this openly, before witnesses, where everyone could see. He came to a world that was lost and despairing, without hope. Everywhere he went he set people free and brought again to human hearts the hope that there is a way out of the desperate bondage of fallen humanity. I do not know of a time in history since those days when our Lord was first here in the flesh, that the world has been so gripped by obvious bondage to evil forces as it is today. Men and women everywhere are hopeless, sunk deep in despair, and they need to see again this marvelous demonstration that Jesus Christ can set people free.

I will never forget the experience of a young man who came into our congregation a few years ago. I have related this story before, but it well illustrates this point. He was not accustomed to attending church -- he had not been raised in a church at all -- but his heart was hungry. He came here not knowing what we would be like. His idea of Christians was that they were a sort of super-snobbish people who self-righteously felt they were better than others. I happened to be speaking on First Corinthians 6, and I read these verses:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11a RSV)

For some reason that morning I stopped there (**ED**: THIS IS SURELY A BEAUTIFUL EXAMPLE OF THE SPIRIT'S URGING PASTOR STEDMAN TO STOP AND APPLY WHAT HE HAD JUST READ) and said, "How many in this congregation belong in this

category? How many have ever been guilty of some of the things that are listed in these verses?" And I read them again. All over the congregation hands began to rise. This young man took a look around, saw this forest of hands, and said to himself, "These are my kind of people!" Such were some of you, set free. That is what Christ does. "He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" as a demonstration of what God is accomplishing in the work of redemption. ([Acts 10:23-11:18 Life For All](#))

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**David Guzik** summarizes - Peter's sermon was a wonderful (if brief and perhaps condensed by Luke) explanation of the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth:

- Jesus was baptized in identification with humanity
  - Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power
  - Jesus went about doing good and healing, delivering those oppressed by the devil
  - Jesus did this with the power of God, for God was with Him
  - Jesus did these things in the presence of eyewitnesses
  - Jesus was crucified
  - Jesus was raised from the dead, resurrected in view of many witnesses
  - Jesus commanded His followers to preach the message of who He is and what He did
  - Jesus is ordained by God to be Judge of the entire world
  - Jesus is the one foretold by the prophets ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))
- 

**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - Few words, but yet an exquisite miniature of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are not many touches, but they are the strokes of a master's pencil. Of the Saviour and only of the Saviour is it true in the fullest, broadest, and most unqualified sense. "**He went about doing good.**" From this description it is evident that he did good personally. The evangelists constantly tell us that he touched the leper with his own finger, that he anointed the eyes of the blind, and that in cases where he was asked to speak the word only at a distance, he did not usually comply, but went himself to the sick bed, and there personally wrought the cure. **A lesson to us, if we would do good, to do it ourselves** Give alms with your own hand; a kind look, or word, will enhance the value of the gift. Speak to a friend about his soul; your loving appeal will have more influence than a whole library of tracts. Our Lord's mode of **doing good** sets forth his incessant activity! He did not only the good which came close to hand, but he "went about" on his errands of mercy. Throughout the whole land of Judea there was scarcely a village or a hamlet which was not gladdened by the sight of him. How this reproves the creeping, loitering manner, in which many professors serve the Lord. Let us gird up the loins of our mind, and be not weary in well doing. Does not the text imply that Jesus Christ went out of his way to do good? "He went about doing good." He was never deterred by danger or difficulty. He sought out the objects of his gracious intentions. So must we. If old plans will not answer, we must try new ones, for fresh experiments sometimes achieve more than regular methods. Christ's perseverance, and the unity of his purpose, are also hinted at, and the practical application of the subject may be summed up in the words, "He hath left us an example that we should follow in his steps."

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## Doing Good

Read: Luke 6:27-36

Jesus of Nazareth . . . went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. —Acts 10:38

Someone once said, "The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway." I like that; it's a great reminder. In the book of Acts, Luke summarized Jesus' earthly ministry by saying that He "went about doing good" (10:38).

What does the Bible mean when it tells us to "do good"? Jesus did good by teaching, healing, feeding, and comforting people. Using Jesus as the perfect example, His followers are called to meet the needs of others, including those who hate them: "Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you" (Matt. 5:44; see also Luke 6:27-35). They are to serve their enemies without expecting anything in return.

Moreover, as opportunity arises, His followers are to do good especially to fellow believers (Gal. 6:10). They are not to let persecution, selfishness, and busyness cause them to forget to do good and to share what they have with others (Heb. 13:16).

To be like our Savior and His early followers, we should ask ourselves each day: "What good thing can I do today in Jesus' name?" When we do good, we will be offering a sacrifice that pleases God (Heb. 13:16) and that draws people to Him (Matt. 5:16).

From the example of Jesus, Who went about doing good, We are to honor our Savior By helping wherever He would. —Hess

Imitate Jesus—go about doing good.

## No Body But Ours

Read: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. —Ephesians 5:30

**In Acts 10:38, Peter described our Lord as “Jesus of Nazareth, . . . who went about doing good.” Those acts of service and kindness were expressed through His earthly body. Since ascending to heaven, Christ no longer has a body on earth except ours. In other words, He has no hands, legs, or feet on earth except for the members of His body, the church. So we must never underestimate the importance of being the body of Christ on earth, not only spiritually but also physically.**

There's a story of a little child who was put to bed in a dark room. She was fearful of being left alone, so her mother brought her a doll. This didn't satisfy her and she begged her mother to stay. The mother reminded her that she had the doll and God, and needn't be afraid. Soon the child began crying. When the mother returned to her side, she sobbed, “Oh, Mommy, I want someone with skin on!”

We're all like that child at times. In our loneliness and suffering, Christ doesn't condemn us for wanting “someone with skin on” to be with us and to care for us.

Therefore He sends us out to be His body to one another and to the world, and to go about doing good. Remember this: Right now Jesus has no body on earth but ours!

The love of Christ has freed us,  
Has lifted us from shame;  
Now we His path should follow,  
And reach out in His name.  
—DCE

God works through us to meet the needs of those around us.

By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Acts 10:39 "We are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross.**

KJV 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:

NLT Acts 10:39 "And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross,

- **We are witnesses of all the things He did** Acts 10:41; 1:8,22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:30-32; 13:31; Luke 1:2; 24:48; John 15:27
- **They also put Him to death** Acts 2:23,24; 3:14,15; 4:10; 5:30; 7:52; 13:27-29; Gal 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE APOSTOLIC WITNESS

**We are witnesses** - Who are "we?" Apparently the 6 other Jewish believers who had come with Peter. In witnessing to the Gentiles, Peter and the other Jews were in essence fulfilling Jesus' charge to be His "witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8+) The phrase **remotest part of the earth** would refer to Gentiles, not just here in Caesarea but globally.

**Robertson** thinks the **we** includes the Gentiles who were listening to Peter, but I think that is unlikely as the Gentiles certainly were not first hand witnesses of **all the things** in Jesus' ministry. The New Living Translation paraphrases it "**we apostles** are witnesses." While I agree with this paraphrase, it makes the point that EVERY Bible translation is more than just a translation, but invariably includes elements of interpretative bias (even the most "literal" versions). This is why it is best to examine the original languages

(Hebrew, Greek) but the next best thing is to compare different Bible versions. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Witnesses** (3144)(**martus/martys**) basically describes one who remembers something and testifies concerning what they remember. **Martus** has a two fold meaning of (1) describing one who has seen and/or experienced something or someone and (2) one who testifies to what he or she saw.

**Of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem-** While the Gentiles had heard (second hand) about the ministry of Jesus, Peter says we witnessed all of these things first hand. We were there with Him for three years. So what you Gentiles heard about Jesus is absolutely true.

**Kistemaker** - His reference to Jesus' death by crucifixion is brief; Peter is not interested in casting any blame on the Roman military for executing Jesus. In earlier speeches, he blamed the Jews, not the Romans, for this crime (Acts 2:23; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30).

**They also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross** (xulon = literally a tree) - Peter refers to Dt. 21:23 as Paul does in Galatians 3:13, the curse pronounced on every one who "hangs upon a tree." **Hanging on a tree** was an idiom for crucifixion. To whom does **"they"** refer? The nearest antecedent is Jews, so here Peter is saying it was the Jews who put Jesus to death. Obviously, the Romans did also, because the Jews had not legal right to crucify, and that right was held only by the Romans, and in this case Pontius Pilate.

**Darroll Bock** on **put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross** an allusion to Deut. 21:22-23 and the cursed death that Jesus experienced from the Jewish point of view (Acts 5:30 and Gal. 3:13 are other uses of this phrase). (See [Acts Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament](#))

**Stedman** - Even the Romans recognized that. Cicero, the Roman orator, said, "The cross is so terrible that it should not be mentioned in polite company." ([Acts 10:23-11:18 Life For All](#))

**Put to death** (337) (**anaireo** from **ana** = up + **haireo** = to take) literally means to take up or lift up (from the ground), as when Pharaoh's daughter **"took** him (Moses) **away** and nurtured him as her own son." (Acts 7:21). Most of the uses of **anaireo** are used in an active sense to take away, to do away with, to kill or murder or put to death (Mt 2:16; Acts 5:36; 7:28; 9:23, 24, 29; 16:27; 23:15, 21, 27; 25:3). **A n a i r e o** speaks of public execution (Luke 23:32; Acts 2:23; 10:39; 12:2; 13:28; 22:20; 26:10).

All of **Luke's** uses of **anaireo** - Lk. 22:2; Lk. 23:32; Acts 2:23; Acts 5:33; Acts 5:36; Acts 7:21; Acts 7:28; Acts 9:23; Acts 9:24; Acts 9:29; Acts 10:39; Acts 12:2; Acts 13:28; Acts 16:27; Acts 22:20; Acts 23:15; Acts 23:21; Acts 23:27; Acts 25:3; Acts 26:10

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## The Tree Of Love

Read: Matthew 27:27-35

[Jesus] bore our sins in His own body on the tree. —1 Peter 2:24

The corkscrew willow tree stood vigil over our backyard for more than 20 years. It shaded all four of our children as they played in the yard, and it provided shelter for the neighborhood squirrels. But when springtime came and the tree didn't awaken from its winter slumber, it was time to bring it down.

Every day for a week I worked on that tree—first to fell it and then to chop two decades of growth into manageable pieces. It gave me a lot of time to think about trees.

I thought about the first tree—the one on which hung the forbidden fruit that Adam and Eve just couldn't resist (Gen. 3:6). God used that tree to test their loyalty and trust. Then there's the tree in Psalm 1 that reminds us of the fruitfulness of godly living. And in Proverbs 3:18, wisdom is personified as a tree of life.

But it is a transplanted tree that is most important—the crude cross of Calvary that was hewn from a sturdy tree. There our Savior hung between heaven and earth to bear every sin of every generation on His shoulders. It stands above all trees as a symbol of love, sacrifice, and salvation.

At Calvary, God's only Son suffered a horrible death on a cross. That's the tree of life for us.

Father, on this day between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, we're grateful for the cross and for Your Son who gave His life so that we might have life. Thank You.

The cross of Christ reveals man's sin at its worst and God's love at its best.

## The Tree

Read: Matthew 27:27-35

[Jesus] bore our sins in His own body on the tree. —1 Peter 2:24

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The cross of Christ reveals man's sin at its worst and God's love at its best.

By Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## A Tree Of Healing

Read: Exodus 15:22-27

When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet. —Exodus 15:25

While waiting in the church parking lot, I switched on the car radio and heard the distinctive voice of Bible teacher J. Vernon McGee. "When the experiences of life are bitter," he asked, "what can make them sweet?" Just then I glanced in the rearview mirror and saw a boy walking with his mother toward the church. He held her arm as they moved slowly, every step an effort because of his cerebral palsy. They had come to worship God.

So, what can sweeten the painful experiences of life? McGee's answer: "Only the cross of Christ." He cited the healing of the bitter waters of Marah in Exodus 15, which he saw as a prophetic picture of Christ's sacrifice for our sin. Moses "cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet" (v.25).

The New Testament uses "the tree" as a metaphor to describe the cross on which our Savior died. In 1 Peter 2:24, for example, we read that Christ "Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

Today, as we embrace all that the cross means, we can find healing of heart and the transforming power of God's love that sweetens the bitterest waters of life.

Christ takes each sin, each pain, each loss,  
And by the power of His cross  
Transforms our brokenness and shame,  
So that we may glorify His name. —DJD

The cross of Christ can sweeten the most bitter experience of life.

By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## Forgotten Tree

Read: Acts 10:34-43

We are witnesses of all things which He did . . . , whom they killed by hanging on a tree. —Acts 10:39

In Acts 10:39, the cross of Calvary is called a tree. It's also referred to this way in Acts 5:30, Acts 13:29, Galatians 3:13, and 1 Peter 2:24.

At this season when much attention is paid to the Christmas tree covered with tinsel, ornaments, and colored lights, the rugged cross of Calvary might well be called the forgotten tree of Christmas. Many people completely overlook the purpose for which Jesus came to earth. The true significance of His birth can be lost in the trappings, gift-giving, and party-going associated with the celebration of this holiday.

We must keep clearly in mind the real meaning of Christmas. Luke tells us that "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10). The Babe of Bethlehem was born to die. He came to give His life as a sacrifice for sin by hanging on a tree—not a tinsel-covered thing of beauty, but an ugly, cruel instrument of execution.

As we remember our Savior's birth in Bethlehem's stable, let's be deeply conscious that it is vitally related to Golgotha's hill where He was crucified, and where He shed His blood for the sins of the world.

Don't let Calvary's cross be the forgotten tree of Christmas. It's the most important one! By Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread](#), [Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

This joyous season of the year  
Should prompt us to recall  
That Jesus' death on Calvary  
Provides new life for all.  
—Sper

The mission of the cross is hidden in the message of the cradle.

## Acts 10:40 "God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible,

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

- Acts 13:30,31; 17:31; Mt 28:1,2; Ro 1:4; 4:24,25; 6:4-11; 8:11; 14:9; 1 Cor 15:3,4,12-20; 2 Cor 4:14; Heb 13:20; 1 Peter 1:21
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE VISIBLE RESURRECTION OF JESUS FROM THE DEAD

**God raised Him up on the third day** - Jesus had repeatedly prophesied He would "be killed and be raised up on the third day." (Mt 16:21, Mt 17:22-23, Mt 20:19, Lk 9:22) In 1 Cor 15:4 Paul adds "that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day **according to the Scriptures.**" Thus Paul emphasizes that these events occurred just as they had been foretold - [See the Hebrew Scriptures that prophesy the death and resurrection of the Messiah.](#)

**Raised up** (1453) (**egeiro**) means to rise (stand up) from a sitting or lying position (Mt 8:26, 9:5), to awaken from sleep (Mt 8:25), figuratively to "awaken" from death (rise up). Figuratively as in Ro 4:24, **egeiro** describes the bringing back of Jesus from the dead and thus raising Him or causing Him to rise. The OT predicted His resurrection (Ps 16:8-11; Isa 53:10-12+) The idea of wake up from death is conveyed by **egeiro** because sleep was used as metaphor of death for believers ([there is no such thing as "soul sleep"](#)).

**Luke's** uses of **egeiro** - Lk. 1:69; Lk. 3:8; Lk. 5:23; Lk. 5:24; Lk. 6:8; Lk. 7:14; Lk. 7:16; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 8:54; Lk. 9:7; Lk. 9:22; Lk. 11:8; Lk. 11:31; Lk. 13:25; Lk. 20:37; Lk. 21:10; Lk. 24:6; Lk. 24:34; Acts 3:7; Acts 3:15; Acts 4:10; Acts 5:30; Acts 9:8; Acts 10:26; Acts 10:40; Acts 12:7; Acts 13:22; Acts 13:30; Acts 13:37; Acts 26:8

**And granted that He become visible** - Paul is more specific adding that after His resurrection Jesus "appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me (PAUL) also. (1 Cor 15:5-8+) These individuals would serve as a powerful witnesses of the veracity of the Gospel, and the fact that Jesus is alive, the central critical teaching of the Gospel.

As **Henry Morris** says (commenting on the >500) - The remarkable parade of eye-witnesses of the resurrected Christ, (most of whom were still living when Paul wrote and could have denied the story if it were not true) is part of the overwhelming body of evidence ("many infallible proofs"--Acts 1:3) that makes this the greatest event in history since the creation and the most certain fact of biblical history. Jesus Christ has, indeed, conquered death itself, thereby demonstrating that He was the Creator of life and the only possible Savior from sin and death. (Defender's Study Bible)

**Visible** (1717)(emphanes from from **en** = in, into + **phaínō** = to show) apparent, manifest, known and is used to describe the open display of Christ after His Resurrection. The only other use is in Ro 10:20 quoted from Isa. 65:1) - "And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I WAS FOUND BY THOSE WHO DID NOT SEEK ME, I BECAME **MANIFEST** TO THOSE WHO DID NOT ASK FOR ME." In Ro 10:20 ephanes speaks figuratively of God's self-revelation inwardly communicated clearly evident and well-known.

**Emphanes** - 4x in the Septuagint - Ex. 2:14; Isa. 2:2 (English of the Lxx = For in the last days the mountain of the Lord shall be glorious); Isa. 65:1; Mic. 4:1

**Related Resources:**

- [Why is the truth of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ so important?](#)
- [Why is the resurrection of Jesus Christ important?](#)
- [When will the Resurrection take place?](#)
- [Why should I believe in Christ's resurrection?](#)
- [Is the resurrection of Jesus Christ true?](#)
- [What is more important, the death of Christ or His resurrection?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" \(John 11:25\)?](#)
- [Where was Jesus for the three days between His death and resurrection?](#)
- [Where was Jesus between His death and resurrection?](#)
- [Did Jesus go to hell between His death and resurrection?](#)
- [Why didn't the disciples always recognize Jesus after His resurrection?](#)
- [After His resurrection, why did Jesus tell Mary not to touch Him, but later tell Thomas to touch Him?](#)
- [How will our resurrection body be different from our current body?](#)
- [How many people were raised from the dead in the Bible?](#)
- [What is the significance of the folded napkin in Christ's tomb after the resurrection?](#)
- [Why does it matter that Jesus rose from the dead?](#)

**Summary of Predictions, Reminders, and Proofs of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke** (from ESV Study Bible)

- Luke 9:22 "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected... and be killed, and on the third day be raised."
- Luke 9:44 "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."
- Luke 12:50 "I have a baptism to be baptized with."
- Luke 13:32 "I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course."
- Luke 13:33 "for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem."
- Luke 17:25 "But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."
- Luke 18:32 "he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon."
- Luke 18:33 "after flogging him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise."
- Luke 24:6-7 "Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise."
- Luke 24:25-26 "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"
- Luke 24:46 "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead."

**Summary of Jesus' Nine Prophecies of His Passion**

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>
First passion announcement	Mt 16:21–23	Mk 8:31–33	Lk 9:22+
Second passion announcement	Mt 17:22–23	Mk 9:30–32	Lk 9:43–45+
Third passion announcement	Mt 20:17–19	Mk 10:32–34	Lk 18:31–34+



**Acts 10:41 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.**

KJV 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.

- **Not** Acts 10:39; Acts 1:2,3,22; 13:31; John 14:17,22; 20:1-21
- **witnesses** John 15:16
- **that is to us** Luke 24:30,41-43; John 21:13
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **APOSTOLIC WITNESS OF JESUS' RESURRECTION**

**Not to all the people** - That is, not to unbelievers, but only to believers (and presumably not even to all the believers but only some). Why did He not appear to unbelievers? Surely that would have caused them to believe in Him. While that sounds logical and would be good common sense, it is sadly not the case.

**C H Spurgeon** explains it this way - "When God's whole creation having been ransacked by the hand of science, has only testified to the [truth of revelation](#) – when the whole history of buried cities and departed nations has but preached out the truth that the Bible was true – when every strip of land in the far-off East has been an exposition and a confirmation of the prophecies of Scripture; **if men are yet unconvinced, do ye suppose that one dead man rising from the tomb would convince them?** If the Holy Scripture be not in the hands of God enough to bring you to the faith of Christ, then, though an angel from heaven, then, though the saints from glory, then, though God himself should descend on earth to preach to you, you would go on unwed and unblest."

Recall Jesus' account of Lazarus and the rich man both of whom who died, the former being carried away to heaven and the latter to hell...

And he (THE RICH MAN IN HELL) said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house— 28 for I have five brothers—in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' 29 "But Abraham \*said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' 30" But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' 31 "But he said to him, '**if they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.**'" (Lk 16:27-31)

**Comment** - Notice that the rich man not only remembered but even expressed concern for his relatives lest they come to the same horrible fate! Beloved, here is the point - Those who go to Hell will not have their memory wiped clean nor will they be granted a new consciousness!

**David Guzik** - Now the rich man cared about others not going to torment. He lived his life utterly unconcerned of this, either for himself or for others. If he himself could go to his brothers, he would; but he seemed to understand that this was also impossible, so much so that he did not even ask for it. The mention of the five brothers is the first indication that the rich man thought about anyone except himself. Unfortunately, his concern for others came when it was too late to do any good. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**But to witnesses** - Jesus appeared to them during the forty-day period between his resurrection and ascension.

**Witnesses** (3144)([martus/martys](#)) basically describes one who remembers something and testifies concerning what they remember. Notice that **martus** has a two fold meaning of (1) describing one who has seen and/or experienced something or someone and (2) one who testifies to what he or she saw.

**Who were chosen beforehand by God** - The witnesses were previously chosen by God. Jesus made a similar statement in John 15:16 addressing the future apostles "You did not choose Me but **I chose** ([eklego](#)) **you**, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you."

**Were chosen** (4401)([procheirotoneo](#) from **pro** = before + **cheir** = hand + **teinō** = to stretch out, reach, extend) means to choose in advance, appoint beforehand, select previously.

**Vincent** - The simple verb **cheirotoneo**, to appoint, occurs Acts 14:23 ("appointed elders"); 2 Corinthians 8:19; and originally means to stretch out the hand for the purpose of giving a vote. Hence to elect by show of hands, and generally to appoint. Plato uses the

word of the election of leaders of choruses ("Laws," 765). In later ecclesiastical usage it signified ordain, as bishops or deacons.

**That is, to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead**- The fact that they ate and drank with Jesus after His resurrection is another way of saying that it was a real resurrection in a real body. Only bodies can eat and drink. In other words that the resurrection was not merely a spiritual resurrection, but a physical one. He bears witness to the resurrection's historical authenticity. Man's one insurmountable obstacle and enemy, DEATH, had been defeated by Jesus Christ as Paul would later write...

"O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but **thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.** (1 Cor 15:55-57)

Peter and the other 11 apostles. Luke records

While they (THE 11 APOSTLES) still could not believe it (THAT JESUS HAD BEEN RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD AND WAS WITH THEM) because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and **He took it and ate it before them.** (Luke 24:41-43+)

Peter could have told them that Jesus broke bread with the two men from Emmaus (Luke 24:30), and had breakfast with seven disciples on the beach of the lake of Galilee (John 21:13).

**Larkin** adds that "To be a witness of one who eats and drinks with you is to experience him with all your senses (Lk 24:30, 39-43; Acts 1:3-4; compare Jn 20:19-23, 27; 21:12)." ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

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**Steven Cole** - Peter's sermon offers several applications for us.

**First**, people need to understand the basic facts about the life and ministry of Jesus before they can make an intelligent decision to repent and believe in Him. If they have never read the Gospels, they may need to start there to gain enough information to respond to Christ.

**Second**, we need to stay focused on the person and work of Christ when we talk to people about spiritual things. It's easy to get distracted and talk about evolution or predestination or some moral or social issue. Keep bringing the conversation back to who Jesus is and what He did on the cross. Jesus is the issue!

**Third**, we have not adequately proclaimed the gospel if we leave out the lordship of Jesus and the solemn fact of the coming judgment. Peter lets his audience know that Jesus is Lord whether they acknowledge Him as such or not, and that He is the coming Judge of everyone. Unless people realize that they have been in rebellion against the rightful Lord of the universe and that they will stand before Him as guilty someday, they have no reason to repent and flee to the cross for forgiveness. If we skim over the bad news in an attempt not to offend someone, they might "try" Jesus to see if He makes them happier. But if He "doesn't work," they will turn to something else. They won't have what it takes to endure hardship or persecution. [Lesson 26: Salvation for All Who Believe \(Acts 10:34-48\)](#)

**Acts 10:42 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.**

KJV 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.

- **He ordered us to preach to the people** Acts 1:8; Acts 4:19,20; 5:20,29-32; Mt 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:47,48; John 21:21,22
- **that this is the One** Acts 17:31; Mt 25:31-46; John 5:22-29; Ro 14:9,10; 2 Cor 5:10; 2 Ti 4:1,8; 1 Peter 4:5; Rev 1:7; 20:11-15; 22:12
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**HERE COMES  
THE JUDGE!**

**Spurgeon** comments that "The apostle was not long in his address before he came to the doctrine of the judgment of all men by Jesus Christ. He says that he was commanded to preach it, and therefore he did preach it."

**Steven Cole** - The point for us is that if God has saved us from our sins, then He has appointed us as witnesses to others of the salvation that is available through Jesus Christ. God's method is not to proclaim the gospel through the angels or to shout it from heaven. His method is to use His people to tell others. [Lesson 26: Salvation for All Who Believe \(Acts 10:34-48\)](#)

#### **THOUGHT - ARE YOU PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL IN YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE?**

**And He ordered us to preach to the people**(cf Mt. 28:19; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:47) - Like a Commanding General, Jesus issued orders to preach the Gospel (Acts 1:8, Mt 28:19,20, Mk 16:15, 16), that Jesus was not dead but alive and that His victory over death was available to every person who seeks Him. In fact when the Jewish religious leaders gave "strict orders not to continue teaching in this name (NOTE HOW THEY EVEN REFUSE TO PRONOUNCE THE NAME "JESUS!")" (Acts 5:28) "Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29+)

**Ordered** (3853)([paraggello](#) from **para** = beside, alongside, near by, at the side of +**aggelos** = messenger, **angelo/aggello** = to announce) means to hand on or pass on an announcement from one to another who is at one's side, such as to what must be done, usually with the idea of a command or charge. **Paraggello** often was used in the context of a military command and demanded that the subordinate obey the order from the superior (2Ti 4:1-[note](#)) and required unhesitating and unqualified obedience. (cp Lk 5:14, 8:29, Lk 9:21KJV, Acts 1:4, 4:18; 5:28KJV; Acts 15:5KJV; 1Th 4:11). It is like a mandate (an authoritative command) or a call to obedience from one in authority.

**MacArthur** writes that in all the uses of **paraggello** "the idea of binding a person to make the proper response to an instruction. The soldier was bound to obey the orders of his superiors; a person involved in a legal matter was bound by the court's orders; a person of integrity was bound by moral principles; a patient was bound to follow his doctor's instruction if he wanted to get well; and a successful writer or speaker was bound by the standards of his craft. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 185](#))

**Preach** (proclaim) (2784)([kerusso](#) from **kerux/keryx** = a herald - one who acts as the medium of the authority of one who proclamation he makes; **kerugma** = the thing preached or the message) means to proclaim (publicly) or to act as a public crier even as a town official who would make a proclamation in a public gathering. **Kerusso** was used of the official whose duty it was to proclaim loudly and extensively the coming of an earthly king, even as the **Gospel** is to clearly announce the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16+)

**And solemnly to testify** - Jesus gave the apostles a second command, and it was to warn that God has appointed a judgment day and had appointed Jesus to serve as Judge in that day. In his address before the Athenian philosophers, Paul makes the same assertion that God " has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:31+)

**And solemnly to testify** (1263)([diamarturomai](#) from **diá** = intensifies meaning conveying idea of "thoroughly" + **marturomai** = witness, bear witness) means to bear witness, to exhort earnestly and with authority in matters of extraordinary importance (here the integrity of the message proclaimed). It carries the idea of giving a forceful order or directive. Paul obeyed Jesus' instruction right up to the end of Acts and presumably the end of his life, Luke recording

When they had set a day for Paul, they (JEWS) came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by **solemnly testifying** about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. (Acts 28:23).

**Diamarturomai** - 15x in the NT - Lk. 16:28; Acts 2:40; Acts 8:25; Acts 10:42; Acts 18:5; Acts 20:21; Acts 20:23; Acts 20:24; Acts 23:11; Acts 28:23; 1 Th 4:6; 1 Ti 5:21; 2 Ti 2:14; 2 Ti 4:1; Heb. 2:6

**That this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead**- (See John 5:21-29; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Th. 1:7-10; 2 Ti 4:8; Rev. 19:11ff.) Jesus will be to every person who has ever lived either their Savior or their Sentencer! Jesus is the dividing line of every man's eternal destiny either one of forgiveness (Acts 10:43) or judgment (Acts 10:42).

**The living and the death** could refer to either those who have received new life in Christ (spiritually living) or who have refused Christ (spiritual dead). Alternatively, the living could refer to all who are alive at Jesus' return and the dead to all who have died.

**G Campbell Morgan** - He is "the Judge of quick and dead," not merely the Judge Who is to sit upon a throne in some dim and distant time as the Judge of the dead; but the Judge today, the Criterion of conduct, the One before Whose bar men are for ever standing (cf Jn 3:18-20). ([Acts of the Apostles](#))

**Kistemaker** - No person is able to escape judgment, for everyone must appear before God. Peter uses the idiomatic expression the living and the dead to indicate that everyone is included when Christ judges the people. Here, then, Peter warns the members of his audience to seek forgiveness of sin through faith in Jesus Christ, so that when they appear before the God-appointed judge they may be acquitted.

Paul alludes to this appointment in his solemn warning his disciple Timothy to preach the Word in 2 Timothy

**I solemnly charge** (*diamarturomai*) you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, **Who is to judge the living and the dead**, and by His appearing and His kingdom: 2 **preach** (aorist imperative - speaks of urgency!) the word; **be ready** (aorist imperative) in season and out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort** (All these verbs are commands in aorist imperative), with great patience and instruction. (2 Ti 4:1-2).

**Has been appointed** (3724) (*horizo* from *horos* = limit; English "horizon" - "the apparent line that divides the earth and the sky" which leads to the thought that Jesus is the "line" that divides all time into BC/AD!) means strictly speaking "to limit" and then figuratively "to fix," "to appoint." **Horizo** is in the perfect tense which speaks of this appointment as abiding!

All NT uses of **horizo** - Lk. 22:22; Acts 2:23+ (**predetermined** plan); Acts 10:42; Acts 11:29; Acts 17:26 (**having determined** their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,'); Acts 17:31; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 4:7

**Horizo** is used in a parallel passage in Acts 17:31

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man (JESUS - JUDGE OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD) Whom He **has appointed**, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:30, 31+)

The word "**Judge**" comes from a Greek word that gives us our English word "**crisis**" As **Ray Stedman** said Jesus Christ "is the paramount figure in the universe, **the ultimate crisis of all men**. He is no low-caloried option in life for you to take or leave as you like; He is the ultimate person. There is not one of us here this morning who ultimately is not going to confront Jesus Christ. **He stands at the end of every path down which men go**, and he waits there as the One ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead. **Therefore the most important question you will ever face in life is, "What do you do with Jesus of Nazareth?" What have you done with him?"** ([Acts 10:23-11:18 Life For All](#))

**Judge** (2923) (*krites* from *krino* = to judge) is one who decides, the one who makes decisions based on examination and evaluation. **Krites** is used of human beings (Mt 5:25; Lk 12:14, 58; 18:2; Ac 24:10). **Krites** is used of God (Heb 12:23; Jas 4:12; 2 Ti 4:8; Acts 10:42; Jas 5:9) **Krites** was a leader of the people in the period of the Judges (Acts 13:20).

**BDAG** - (1) one who has the right to render a decision in legal matters (2) one who rules in a special sense in the accounts of Israel's theocratic period-

**Krites** -

Matt. 5:25; Matt. 12:27; Lk. 11:19; Lk. 12:14; Lk. 12:58; Lk. 18:2; Lk. 18:6; Acts 10:42; Acts 13:20; Acts 18:15; Acts 24:10; 2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 12:23; Jas. 2:4; Jas. 4:11; Jas. 4:12; Jas. 5:9

**Krites** in the Septuagint -

Deut. 1:15; Deut. 1:16; Deut. 16:18; Deut. 17:9; Deut. 17:12; Deut. 19:17; Deut. 19:18; Deut. 21:2; Deut. 25:2; Deut. 29:10; Deut. 31:28; Jdg. 2:16; Jdg. 2:17; Jdg. 2:18; Jdg. 2:19; Ruth 1:1; 1 Sam. 24:15; 2 Sam. 7:11; 2 Sam. 15:4; 2 Ki. 23:22; 1 Chr. 17:10; 1 Chr. 23:4; 1 Chr. 28:1; 2 Chr. 1:2; 2 Chr. 19:5; 2 Chr. 19:6; 2 Chr. 26:11; 2 Chr. 34:13; Ezr. 7:25; Ezr. 10:14; Job 9:24; Job 12:17; Job 13:8; Ps. 7:11; Ps. 50:6; Ps. 68:5; Ps. 75:7; Ps. 141:6; Ps. 148:11; Isa. 1:26; Isa. 30:18; Isa. 33:21; Isa. 63:7; Dan. 9:12; Hos. 7:7; Amos 2:3; Mic. 7:3; Hab. 1:3; Zeph. 3:3

Isaiah 1:26 (Isa 1:25 describes the Time of Jacob's Trouble) "Then (IN THE MILLENNIUM) I will restore your **judges** as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning; After that you will be called the city of righteousness, A faithful city."

**Larkin** comments that "The theme of final judgment occurs consistently in speeches to Gentiles (Acts 17:31; 24:25). It seems to be a way to talk about repentance in terms relevant and motivating to them. Indeed, Peter moves easily in this one sentence from a particularist view, he commanded us to preach to the people (the Jews), to a universal view, he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead (all humankind). To this universal Judge all must answer. Peter immediately turns to the good news that through the name of this universal Lord (Acts 2:38; 4:12) all are presented with the unique opportunity to receive the forgiveness of sins. He grounds this expression of salvation blessings, forgiveness of sins (Lk 24:47; Acts 2:38; 5:31; 13:38; 26:18; compare Lk 1:77; 4:18), in the witness of all the Old Testament prophets (Is 33:24; 53:4-6, 11-12/Lk 22:37; Jer 31:34; Dan 9:24; compare Lk 24:25-27, 44-47). And he moves again from the particular, the Jewish prophets' witness, to the universal, the promise that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness." Peter's preaching on the impartial God and the universal Lord and Savior now shows

how Christ's Great Commission lies at the heart of a "go" theology (Lk 24:47; Acts 1:8). **Such a centrifugal momentum must drive the church today.**" (Amen!) ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

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**Spurgeon** - "He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify." These two verses are an extract from a remarkable sermon, a sermon Peter preached in the house of Cornelius. What did Peter preach? There were six heads in his sermon, though he spoke only of one subject, that is, Christ.

(1) The apostle spoke first of the Lord's person: "He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). Peter is clear on the sovereign Godhead of Jesus. Having spoken of his person,

(2) Peter then spoke of his life—"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" (v. 38). This was the spring of Jesus's life's power—his anointing from the Holy Spirit. Peter set out the tenor of Jesus's life in the next sentence: "He went about doing good and healing."

(3) Then Peter moved on to his third point, which was the Savior's death—"they killed him by hanging him on a tree" (v. 39). Peter does not take away the offense of the cross or put it in smooth language.

(4) Then Peter passed on to the Lord's resurrection, for that is an essential part of the gospel: "God raised up this man on the third day and caused him to be seen" (Acts 10:40). It was no fiction. He was openly shown on many occasions to those best able to recognize him (Acts 10:41).

(5) Then Peter came to the judgment—which he felt it necessary to preach, declaring that Jesus Christ who died and rose again is now designated the judge of all mankind (Acts 10:42).

(6) And lastly, Peter preached salvation by the Lord Jesus most fully and graciously when he said, "Through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins" (v. 43). This was what Peter was driving at, and when he had reached this point, enough truth of God had been taught to save a soul—and God, the Holy Spirit, at once used it.

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### **The Carpenter Judge**

Read: Acts 17:22-31

It is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. —Acts 10:42

Jesus Christ is the Inescapable One. We must either receive Him in this life as our loving Savior or stand before Him in the life to come as our eternal Judge.

There's a story in the Gray and Adams Commentary about a doctor who "made it his chief concern in matters of religion to degrade the character and dignity of Christ." He viewed the Savior with so much contempt that he always spoke of Him in a demeaning way by calling Him "the carpenter's son."

In time the physician became terminally ill. During the weeks before his death, he became very agitated. He remarked to the person who was attending him, "I'm a dying man, and what affects me most of all is that I must be judged by the carpenter's son!"

That doctor faced the terrible future that awaits all who reject Christ. Yet, even in his last conscious moments, if he had trusted Him as his Savior he could have found peace and received eternal salvation.

How have you been treating Christ? Remember, "the carpenter's son" is the Son of God, the "Word made flesh." Trust Him today! You will receive the blessing of salvation—not the sentence of condemnation (Jn. 3:17).

What will you do with Jesus?

Neutral you cannot be;

Someday your heart will be asking,

"What will He do with me?" —Simpson

Everyone must choose—Christ or condemnation!

By Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Acts 10:43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His Name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."**

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

- **Of Him** Acts 26:22; Isaiah 53:11; Jeremiah 31:34; Daniel 9:24; Micah 7:18; Zech 13:1; Mal 4:2; Luke 24:25-27,44-46; John 1:45; 5:39,40; 1 Peter 1:11; Rev 19:10
- **through His Name** Acts 3:16; 4:10-12; John 20:31; Ro 5:1; 6:23; Heb 13:20
- **whosoever** Acts 13:38,39; 15:9; 26:18; Mark 16:16; John 3:14-17; 5:24; Ro 8:1,34; 10:11; Gal 3:22; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **SALVATION IS OPEN TO WHOSOEVER BELIEVES!**

**Of Him** - Of Jesus. Peter is careful to repeatedly emphasize in his Gospel presentation the **Name** of Jesus for as he had declared earlier "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other **Name** under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12).

**All the prophets** ([prophetes](#)) **bear witness** - Peter alludes to the fact that Jesus the Savior was not a new truth but one which had been clearly taught in the Old Testament not by just one or two prophets, but **all the prophets!** (See [Messianic Prophecy](#)). Many prophets could be quoted but Isaiah's prophecy is especially on point...

As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities. (Isaiah 53:11+)

**Malachi** adds that...

"But for you who fear My name, the **Sun of righteousness** will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.(Malachi 4:2+)

Peter understood the meaning of the saying "Can I have a witness?" because **bear witness** is the third time Peter speaks of witnesses in this section, thus emphasizing the historical authenticity of the God-Man Jesus Christ - Acts 10:39, 41, 43.

**Ray Stedman** paraphrases Peter "You Romans may not appreciate this fully, but everything that Jesus did was predicted by the **prophets**. Long before He ever came, what He would be like and what He would do was written down. Every prophet bore witness to this one fact: The only way you could ever find forgiveness of sins is by believing in Him." That is the great, final, glorious thrust of the gospel. The good news is that men have been given a way to be forgiven of their sins. That is the basic need of every human heart. Each of us suffers from the terrible consciousness of guilt. We are guilty people; and we know it. That is what makes us so restless. That is why oftentimes we cannot stand to be alone with ourselves, because we are afraid of that sense of guilt which oppresses us. So the prime need of our lives is to be forgiven, to have nothing in the past to worry about, to have nothing that makes us uncertain of the future and, especially, nothing which makes us unwilling to appear before God. Through Jesus Christ sins are forgiven." Have you reflected upon that, Christian friends? Have you recently stopped and thanked God that your sins are forgiven? Have you ever? Not just the ones you committed before you became a Christian; all your sins. All the future ones as well as those of the past are forgiven already in Jesus Christ. God therefore has no quarrel with you, he loves you, he accepts you. Whatever you do he will continue to love you and accept you. But no one can take that truth and use it as a license to sin, to go out and do as you like. To do so would indicate that you have never been regenerated, have never understood why God bore your sins. But if you have been born again you know that this is the greatest and most unending blessing of your life -- to wake up every morning and remember that you stand as a beloved child in God's presence. He loves you and accepts you. You are his, and for that reason he will be with you all day long, in every circumstance of your experience. (**ED**: IF THAT DOESN'T STIR UP AN "**AMEN**" OR A "**HALLELUJAH**" IN YOUR SOUL, THEN NOTHING WILL!) ([Acts 10:23-11:18 Life For All](#))

**Bear witness** ([3140](#)) ([martureo](#) from **mártus** = witness = one who has information or knowledge of something and can bring to light or confirm something. English = **martyr**) in its most basic sense refers to a legal witness. Thus the verb **martureo** means to be a witness, to testify, to give evidence, to give testimony, to bear record, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. The words testified related to fact, not opinion, as in a courtroom setting.

Note that **bear witness** is in the present tense indicating the **prophets** (even though they were dead) continued (and to this very day continue) to **bear witness** through "the living and active Word which is sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12+)

**THOUGHT** - Are you familiar enough with at least some of over 300 Old Testament [Messianic Prophecies](#) so that you might be able to "bear witness" of their testimony of the Jewish prophets? This is especially important if God gives you the privilege of witnessing to Jewish people. [Listen to some of the testimonies from Jewish](#)

[men and women](#), a number of which allude to how the Holy Spirit used Old Testament prophecies to bring about their miraculous new birth in their Messiah.

**Kistemaker on all the prophets** - Peter bases his announcement of Christ's cleansing work on the Old Testament Scriptures. He refrains from giving chapter and verse but asserts that "all the prophets bear witness to [Christ]" and have spoken about his forgiving love. He tells Cornelius that the knowledge the centurion has gathered from the Scriptures in the synagogue worship services is true. The prophets indeed testify to the person and work of the Christ, who had fulfilled the messianic promises.

**That through His Name** - Jesus' very **Name** means Savior or "Jehovah saves." (cf Mt 1:21) As Peter said "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12+) Jesus is "the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but **through** His Name." (Jn 14:6)

**Kistemaker** - The word **Name** means more than a title, for it includes the complete revelation of Jesus Christ, especially with reference to his life, works, and words.

**Robertson on through His Name** - not as a title or magic formula (Acts 18:13), but the power of Christ himself represented by his name. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**John** in giving the purpose of His gospel account writes...

but these have been written (for contrast see Jn 20:30) so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life **in His Name**. (John 20:31)

**John Piper on through His Name** - The Name of Jesus is the focus of faith and repentance. In order to believe on Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, you must believe on his name. That is, you must have heard of him and know who he is as a particular man who did a particular saving work and rose from the dead. ([There is Salvation in No One Else](#))

**Vincent on His Name** - As in the Lord's prayer: not simply the *title*, but all that is embraced and expressed by the name: Christ's "entire perfection, as the object revealed to the believer for his apprehension, confession, and worship" (Meyer).

#### **Related Resource:**

- Name of the LORD is a Strong Tower: Summary

**Everyone** - Jews or Gentiles. The only requirement? Faith.

**Who believes in Him** - Who trusts in Jesus. Who places their faith in Jesus. Be careful here! If you asked people in America if they believe in Jesus, many would say "Yes." As Steven Cole says "**Believing in the name of Jesus** does not refer to a general, vague sort of belief. Rather, it is specific and personal. To believe in Jesus means that I believe He is the Lord who gave Himself on the cross for my sins. I believe the promise of God, that whoever believes on Him receives eternal life as God's gift, not based on any human merit, but only on God's free grace. To believe in Jesus means that I no longer rely on anything in myself to commend myself to God. Rather, I trust only in what Jesus did on the cross as my hope for forgiveness of sins and eternal life." [Lesson 26: Salvation for All Who Believe \(Acts 10:34-48\)](#)

**A T Robertson** - The prophets bear witness to Jesus Christ to this effect. It is God's plan and no race distinctions are drawn. Peter had already said the same thing at Pentecost (Acts 2:38), but now he sees himself that Gentiles do not have to become Jews, but have only to believe in Jesus as Messiah and Judge as foretold by the prophets. It was glorious news to Cornelius and his group. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Larkin** - Salvation blessings come to those who **hear, receive, believe** and **hold fast** to the Word, the gospel message (Lk 8:15; Acts 2:22; 3:22-23; 4:4; 15:7; 13:44; 19:5; 26:29; 28:26-28. **ED: REGARDING "HOLD FAST" READ 1 Cor 15:2+, Hebrews 3:6+, Col 1:22, 23+, cf 2 Pe 1:10-12+, see also [Perseverance of the Saints](#)**). ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Believes** (4100) ([pisteuo](#) from [pistis](#); [pistos](#); related studies [the faith](#), the [obedience of faith](#)) means to consider to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of. It is critical to state that not just a profession of "I believe" results in forgiveness of sins. There are NT passages that clearly teach there is a type of faith or belief that **DOES NOT** result in salvation. For more discussion of this critically important topic see "**A Disturbing Passage: Two Types of Faith.**"

The [present tense](#) of [pisteuo](#) marks the believing as an abiding characteristic or a trait. A genuine faith is a continuing faith! Can it ebb and flow? Sure, but it continues to believe even when at "low tide" so to speak.

The respected Greek lexicon author **W E Vine** defines **belief** as consisting of

(1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Th 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")

(2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [pisteuo] in His name") and

(3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender. (See [a similar description below](#))

See Spurgeon's sermon - [Believing on Jesus, And Its Counterfeits](#)

**Sola fide**—the doctrine of justification by faith alone apart from works—is simply recognizing what is taught over and over in Scripture—that at some point in time God declares ungodly sinners righteous by imputing Christ's righteousness to them (Romans 4:5, 5:8, 5:19). This happens apart from any works and before the individual actually begins to become righteous. This is an important distinction between Catholic theology that teaches righteous works are meritorious towards salvation and Protestant theology that affirms the biblical teaching that righteous works are the result and evidence of a born-again person who has been justified by God and regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit. How important is sola fide? It is so important to the Gospel message and a biblical understanding of salvation that Martin Luther described it as being "the article with and by which the church stands." Those who reject sola fide reject the only Gospel that can save them and by necessity embrace a false gospel. That is why Paul so adamantly denounces those who taught law-keeping or other works of righteousness in Galatians 1:9 and other passages. Yet today this important biblical doctrine is once again under attack. Too often sola fide is relegated to secondary importance instead of being recognized as an essential doctrine of Christianity, which it certainly is. "Consider Abraham: 'He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.' So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.' Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Galatians 3:6-11).

**Receives forgiveness of sins** - Paul equates redemption with forgiveness of sins in Colossians 1:14+.

**Forgiveness of sins** - this phrase occurs 9x in 9v

Matthew 26:28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for **forgiveness of sins**.

Mark 1:4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the **forgiveness of sins**.

Luke 3:3 And he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the **forgiveness of sins**;

Luke 24:47 and that repentance for **forgiveness of sins** would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Acts 5:31 "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and **forgiveness of sins**.

Acts 10:43 "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives **forgiveness of sins**."

Acts 13:38 "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him **forgiveness of sins** is proclaimed to you,

Acts 26:18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive **forgiveness of sins** and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.'

Colossians 1:14+ in whom we have redemption, the **forgiveness of sins**.

**John MacArthur** writes that the phrase "**who believes in Him**" indicates the means of receiving saving grace—by faith in Christ alone (Acts 9:42; 11:17; 13:39; 14:23; 15:9; 16:31; 19:4; cf. John 3:14-17; 6:69; Rom. 10:11; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:8-9). **Receives forgiveness of sins** indicates the marvelous, unspeakable privilege conferred by saving grace (Acts 2:38; 13:38-39; cf. Matt. 26:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14). (See [Acts Commentary](#))



**Kistemaker on Receives forgiveness of sins** - The converse is also true; that is, everyone who refuses to believe in Jesus will face him as judge on the judgment day. Then he will hear his sentence of condemnation for his refusal to accept the offer of salvation.

**John Stott** - Not long before she died in 1988, in a moment of surprising candor on television, Marghanita Laski, one of our best-known secular novelists, said: "What I envy most about you Christians is your forgiveness; I have nobody to forgive me." ([The Living Church - Volume 222 - Page 4](#))

Peter was heeding Jesus' words "that repentance for **forgiveness of sins** would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Lk 24:47+)

**Forgiveness** (859)(**aphesis** from **aphiemi** = action which causes separation and is in turn derived from **apo** = from + **hiemi** = put in motion, send) literally means to send away or to put apart, a letting go, a leaving behind, a removal. **Aphesis** refers to a **remission** as when one remits (pardons, cancels) a debt, or releases then from an obligation. To release from captivity. **Remission** (see [definition of English word](#)) of sins means once and for all taking them away, removing the guilt, punishment and power of sin. And so to release one's sins, is not just release from the ("legal" or forensic) charge and the just penalty of sin but also release from the power and dominion of sin (and in Heaven the release from the presence of sin and the pleasure of sin). And so we see that Wuest translates Col 1:14+ as "the putting away of our sins" (Wuest) **Aphesis** is followed by sin ([hamartia](#)) 11/17 uses in the NT (Mt 26:28, Mk 1:4, Lk 1:77, 3:3, 24:47, Acts 2:38, 5:31, 10:43, 13:38, 26:18, Col 1:14),

**Guzik** has an interesting comment reminding us that "The **first Gentile Jesus dealt with** in His public ministry was a **Roman centurion from Capernaum**. (Mt 8:5-9) When Jesus healed that centurion's servant, He declared that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. 11 "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; 12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 And Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed that very moment. (Matthew 8:10-13). ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

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**POSB** note on **believe** (pisteuo)...

**Believe**— Commit: the word "commit" (Pisteuo) is the same word "believe" (cp. John 2:23). This gives an excellent picture of saving faith, of what genuine faith is—of the kind of faith that really saves a person.

**1. Saving faith is not head knowledge, not just a mental conviction and intellectual assent.** It is not just believing the fact that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. It is not just believing history, that Jesus Christ lived upon earth as the Savior just as George Washington lived upon earth as the President of America. It is not just believing the words and claims of Jesus in the same way that a person would believe the words of George Washington.

**2. Saving faith is believing in Jesus, who and what He is, that He is the Savior and Lord of life.** It is a man giving and turning his life over to Jesus. It is a man casting himself upon Jesus as Savior and Lord.

**3. Saving faith is commitment**—the commitment of a man's total being and life to Jesus Christ. It is a man's commitment of all he is and has to Jesus. It gives Jesus everything; therefore, it involves all of a man's affairs. The man trusts Jesus to take care of his past (sins), his present (welfare), and his future (destiny). He entrusts his whole life, being and possessions into Jesus' hands. He lays himself upon Jesus' keeping, confiding in Him about his daily necessities and acknowledging Him in all the ways of life. He follows Jesus in every area and in every detail of life, seeking His instructions and leaving his welfare up to Him. It is simply commitment of a man's whole being, all he is and has, to Jesus. (John 4:50; Hebrews 5:5-10.)

There are three steps involved in faith, steps that are clearly seen in this passage. (Romans 10:16-17.)

**1. There is the step of seeing (John 2:23) or hearing (Romans 10:16).** A man must be willing to listen to the message of Christ, the revelation of truth.

**2. There is the step of mental assent.** A man must agree that the message is true, that the facts of the case are thus and so. But this is not enough. Mere agreement does not lead to action. Many a person knows that something is true, but he does not change his behavior to match his knowledge. For example, a man knows that eating too much harms his body, but he may continue to eat too much. He agrees to the truth and knows

the truth, but he does nothing about it. A person may believe and know that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world and yet do nothing about it, never make a decision to follow Christ. This man still does not have faith, not the kind of faith that the Bible talks about.

**3. There is the step of commitment.** When the New Testament speaks of faith, it speaks of commitment, a personal commitment to the truth. A man hears the truth and agrees that it is true and does something about it. He commits and yields his life to the truth. The truth becomes a part of his very being, a part of his behavior and life. (Borrow [Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible](#)).

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**Steven Cole** - Dr. A. C. Gaebelein, a Bible teacher who lived early in the 20th century, was holding evangelistic meetings at a YMCA. As you know, the Y used to be distinctly Christian in focus. One day the director of the Y showed Gaebelein a card that he was in the habit of handing out. It read, "I promise faithfully henceforth to lead a religious and Christian life." There was a place to sign one's name. The man said, "How do you like that? Isn't that a pretty good way of putting it?"

Dr. Gaebelein replied, "How on earth can a dead man live any kind of a life? What is the use of putting a card like that into the hands of a dead sinner and having him sign it and say, 'I promise faithfully henceforth to lead a religious and Christian life'? You cannot live a life for God until you receive a life from God." (Told by H. A. Ironside, In the Heavens [Loizeaux Brothers], p. 102.)

Salvation does not come to anyone through his or her efforts to live the Christian life. Even good, religious people need the forgiveness that Jesus offers. He will be either your Judge or your Savior. He offers salvation to everyone who will believe in Him. [Lesson 26: Salvation for All Who Believe \(Acts 10:34-48\)](#)

**Acts 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.**

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

- **the Holy Spirit** Acts 2:2-4; 4:31; 8:15-17; 11:15; 19:6
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **THE HOLY SPIRIT INTERRUPTS PETER'S SERMON!**

**While Peter was still speaking these words** - Unable to finish his sermon, Peter is interrupted by God!

**Swindoll** quipped "Like many preachers, Peter never actually finished his sermon."

**The Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message** - First note that Holy Spirit falling indicates that the Gentiles had believed the Gospel (which was clearly explained in the preceding verses and was sufficient for salvation). It is as if they moment they heard those glorious grace-filled words **forgiveness of sins**, they believed in Jesus! Then the Holy Spirit came on them indicating they were baptized by the Spirit.

Notice that the salvation experience of these Gentiles was a inner transaction, involving the Spirit of God and Gospel of God, resulting in an immediate transformation in their hearts. They were not told to "pray a prayer," not told to "ask Jesus into their hearts," not told to raise their hands if they received Jesus, not told to walk an aisle if they have made a commitment of faith.

**Spurgeon** exclaimed "'Oh that the Spirit of God would in the same manner interrupt us!"

**Vincent** - The only example of the bestowment of the Spirit before baptism

**Ray Stedman** - The Holy Spirit interrupted Peter. He is always doing this in the book of Acts. He did it on the Day of Pentecost. He would not let Peter finish his message. I have often wondered what Peter intended to say at the end of these messages, had the Holy Spirit not cut him off. But, at any rate, he hardly ever got to finish a message because, before he could, the Spirit acted. What he did here is very significant. Peter had just given these people something to believe. He told them, "The prophets bear witness that every one who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins." As soon as these men heard that they believed. Immediately upon believing they received the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus said they would. He had said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink... 'Out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water,'" John 7:37-38). "This spake he of the Spirit, whom they that believe on him should receive;" John 7:39). As soon as they heard, they believed, and when they believed, they received. The Holy Spirit refused to wait until the altar call. ([Life for All | Acts 10:23 - 11:18](#))

**Guzik** makes the point that "These were likely not the first Gentiles to trust in Jesus and be born again. Gentiles had probably received salvation in the eight years since Pentecost (Acts 2). But those Gentiles were saved as they embraced Judaism as well as Christianity. Gentiles may have received salvation before this, but they were saved as Jews, not as Gentiles. v. All before this, a Gentile could certainly trust in Jesus as Messiah and receive the forgiveness of sins that Jesus won for them at the cross. Yet in doing so, he would first have to become a Jew – and then continue on in the Jewish ritual law. They would wear certain coverings for their head in church, they would eat only kosher foods, they would make pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the feasts, and they would observe dozens of ceremonial laws and rituals. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

They were listening but it was not like so many today who hear sermon after sermon and it is in one ear and out the other! No, they were listening with an intent to heed what they heard and when they heard that forgiveness of sins was given to all who believed in His (Jesus') Name, they believed, placing their faith in that great Name and securing salvation that very moment.

**Robertson on Holy Spirit fell upon** - to fall upon, to recline, to come upon. Used of the Holy Spirit in Acts 8:16; Acts 10:44; Acts 11:15. It appears that Peter was interrupted in his sermon by this remarkable event. The Jews had received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4), the Samaritans (Acts 8:17), and now Gentiles. But on this occasion it was before baptism, as was apparently true in Paul's case (Acts 9:17-18). In Acts 8:16; Acts 19:5 the hands of the apostles were also placed after baptism on those who received the Holy Spirit. Here it was unexpected by Peter and by Cornelius and was indubitable proof of the conversion of these Gentiles who had accepted Peter's message and had believed on Jesus Christ as Saviour. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

Acts 8:16 For He (HOLY SPIRIT) had not yet **fallen upon** any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 11:15 "And as I began to speak, **the Holy Spirit fell upon them** just as He did upon us at the beginning.

**John MacArthur** explains that "It is true that the Spirit's coming was delayed for the Samaritans. Although they were saved through Philip's preaching, they had to wait until the arrival of Peter and John. As noted in the discussion of Acts 8:14-19+ however, that was to emphasize the unity of Samaritans and Jews in the church. **No such delay was needed here, since the apostle Peter was already present. Acts 8 does not establish the norm for receiving the Spirit if believers were always to be saved and then later to receive the Spirit, why did Cornelius and the others receive the Spirit the moment they were saved?** The view of some that they were already saved and merely received the Spirit here runs afoul of 11:14. Further, if they were already saved and this were simply the occasion of their receiving the Spirit, why did Peter preach the gospel? Why did he not instead give them teaching on how to receive the Spirit? The Spirit's coming required no petition, no confession, no water baptism, and no laying on of hands. He came as they listened and believed. That is clear from Peter's inspired testimony in Acts 11:17 that God had given them the Holy Spirit, "after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ." (See [Acts Commentary - Page 304](#))

**Steven Cole** - Since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in the believer at the moment of salvation (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 3:2). This is not something that we feel experientially, but rather a fact that God's Word declares. As a believer learns to walk in the Spirit, over time the deeds of the flesh will diminish and the fruit of the Spirit will increase (Gal. 5:16-23), thus making the Spirit's presence evident. [Lesson 26: Salvation for All Who Believe \(Acts 10:34-48\)](#)

**Listening** is in the present tense (Peter had their continual attention riveted on his **message**) and they not only heard, but the heeded, which is the only profitable "listening." The hearts of these Gentile hearers was "good soil" just as Jesus had described in Luke 8 (note repetition of hear/heard and believe)...

"Those beside the road are those **who have heard**; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they **will not believe** and be saved. 13 "Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they **hear**, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; **they believe** for a while (NOT SAVING BELIEF - IT DID NOT "HOLD FAST!"), and in time of temptation fall away. 14 "The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones **who have heard**, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity (INDICATING THEY DID NOT BELIEVE). 15 "But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones **who have heard** the word in an honest and good heart, and **hold it fast**, and bear fruit with perseverance. (FAITH ALONE SAVES BUT THE FAITH TRULY SAVES IS NOT ALONE!) (Luke 8:12-15+)

**The message** - The Gospel spoken by Peter.

**Larkin** comments that "In our day Western society is increasingly turning its back on its rational, cognitive heritage in favor of high-impact, "high-touch" experience. Some Christians engaged in crosscultural mission hail this mindlessness as a liberation that permits us to frame a truly contextual gospel free of Western rationalism. Yet at the very beginning of crosscultural mission, Peter neither depended on power encounter nor denigrated the cognitive. In fact, the Word and the Spirit were interdependent. **And so must it ever be.** ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

## Related Resources:

- [What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?](#)
- [When / How do we receive the Holy Spirit?](#)
- [Is there a second blessing subsequent to salvation?](#)

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**Barton - NO "WINDY" WITNESSES!** Peter's brief and powerful sermon contains a concise statement of the gospel: Jesus' perfect life of servanthood, his death on the cross, his resurrection—personally witnessed and experienced by Peter—his fulfillment of the Scriptures, and the necessity of personal faith in him. A sermon or witness for Christ does not need to be long to be effective. It should be Spirit-led and should center simply on Christ as the way, the truth, and the life.

**WORDS OF POWER** Peter's words—heartfelt, accurate, urgent—would have been powerless without the Holy Spirit, who was working in the lives of these assembled Gentiles. This is a good reminder that successful preaching or witnessing does not depend on flashy rhetoric, biblical expertise, or heart-tugging stories. Those can be helpful, but it is the Spirit who does the real convicting and convincing. It is his power that changes minds, hearts, and wills. We are merely tools. Use your gifts, but trust in the power of the Spirit. (See [Acts - Page 182](#))

**Acts 10:45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.**

KJV 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.

- **All the circumcised believers** Acts 10:23; 11:3,15-18; Gal 3:13,14
- **the Gentiles also** Gal 2:15; Eph 2:11; 3:5-8; Col 2:13,14
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE "GENTILE PENTECOST" WITNESSED BY JEWISH BELIEVERS

**All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed**- Acts 11:12 says Peter brought six brethren and here we they are called **Circumcised believers** indicating they were Jews who had placed their faith in Jesus Christ. Surely part of the astonishment of these Jewish believers was due to the fact that (1) the experience of these Gentile believers was essentially the same (minus sound like wind and like flames of fire on their heads) as had been experienced by the Jews on Pentecost and (2) that obviously the Church was not to be exclusively Jewish. Keep in mind this is several years after Pentecost and the church was almost entirely Jewish up to this point. The events in Caesarea obviously signaled a significant change in the minds of these Jewish believers.

**Swindoll** - God sent a clear message to all who witnessed the event: Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Nothing other than complete, authentic belief is required. Knowledge of the Law is good, but not necessary. Circumcision is good, but not required. Biblical and theological knowledge is good, but not essential. Only trusting in Christ brings forgiveness of sins.

**Vincent** on **circumcised believers** - From this point Luke distinguishes Christians into two classes—those of the circumcision and those of the uncircumcision; calling the former, *Jews*, and the latter *Gentiles* or *Greeks*.

**Robertson** says "They stood out of themselves." ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Larkin** on the Spirit falling on the Gentiles - This challenges the Jews' basic assumption that a holy and pure God would not pour out his Holy Spirit on profane, common and unclean Gentiles, unless they became holy and ritually pure through becoming Jews. No wonder that Jewish Christians with a commitment to circumcision showed the same "astonishment" at this phenomenon as the Pentecost crowd did (Acts 2:7, 12; compare Acts 8:13; 9:21). ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Amazed** (1839) (**existemi** from **ek** = out + **hístemi** = to stand) literally means to stand out from or to stand outside oneself (and thus to be beside oneself). To put out of position, to displace or to change. To remove from its place. For example Aristotle writes "you won't budge (existemi) me from my position on these matters." Richards adds that existemi "suggests astonishment mixed with anxiety, stimulated by extraordinary events that cannot be explained." It can describe one who is so astonished almost to the point

of failing to comprehend what one has experienced. **Existemi** can also mean to be out of one's senses, to be beside oneself.

**Because** (hoti) - Term of explanation - Luke explains why the Jewish believers were so amazed.

**The gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.**

**Poured out** (1632)(**ekcheo** from **ek** = out + **chéo** = pour) means literally to flow out, to gush forth or to pour out . The inherent idea is to cause something to be emitted in quantity.

Holy Spirit poured out or forth - Acts 2:17-18, 2:33, Acts 10:45. The love of God poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:6)

Acts 2:17-18; ' AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST DAYS,' God says, 'THAT I WILL **POUR FORTH** OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHESEY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; 18 EVEN ON MY BONDSLAVES, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS **POUR FORTH** OF MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

Acts 2:33 "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has **poured forth** this which you both see and hear.

Larkin - Luke's description of the Spirit's coming lets us know that the Gentiles' salvation is divinely worked, complete and authentic. It is all of God, for Peter has not even finished his speech. He has not given an invitation. God, the knower of all hearts, has chosen to cleanse their hearts by faith (Acts 15:8–9). He demonstrates that these Gentiles have indeed been given "repentance unto life" (11:18) by pouring out the gift of his Spirit on them, as he did on Jewish believers at Pentecost (Acts 2:4, 17, 33; compare Acts 2:38; 8:20; 11:17). That the Spirit came on them (literally, "falling on," Acts 8:16; 11:15) points not only to arrival but also to suddenness and intensity (Turner 1981:49). By combining this description with the imagery of "pouring out on," inundating with as with an overwhelming tidal wave (Acts 10:45), Luke highlights the completeness of the salvation experienced. Its authenticity is manifested by the Gentiles' speaking in tongues. ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Acts 10:46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,**

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

- **speaking** Acts 2:4,11; 19:6; 1 Cor 14:20-25
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**For** (gar) - Another term of explanation - Luke explains how the Jewish believers knew the Gentiles had received **the gift of the Holy Spirit**.

**MacArthur** comments that Acts 10:44-46 "does not teach that **speaking in tongues** is normally to be expected with the coming of the Spirit. The Spirit granted it on this occasion as visible proof that He indwelt these Gentiles. He knew that the Jewish brethren with Peter would be hard to convince, so He granted the same manifestation experienced by Jewish Christians at Pentecost. It should be noted that here, as throughout Acts, speaking in tongues is a **group**, not an **individual**, phenomenon." (See [Acts Commentary](#))

**They were hearing them speaking with tongues** - They heard them speaking but Peter does not explain whether they spoke in known languages or not, but the fact that they what they were saying is described as praising and exalting God strongly suggests these were known languages, languages that the Gentiles themselves did not otherwise speak. **Hearing** is imperfect tense indicating they heard them speaking in tongues again and again. The kept on hearing them.

So while I favor tongues being actual languages and not ecstatic utterances, admittedly it is difficult to be dogmatic in one's interpretation.

**Larkin on tongues** - As the NIV marginal note indicates, there is some uncertainty about what the word tongues refers to and hence how it is to be translated. The literal translation tongues here would refer to Spirit-inspired ecstatic utterances of "heavenly languages" that require an equally inspired interpreter (1 Cor 14; compare Acts 19:6; Longenecker 1981:394; Haenchen 1971:354). The marginal reading other languages (note that other is not present in the Greek text) points to human languages (Acts 2:4–8). If we opt for the "ecstatic utterances" interpretation, we have to explain the claims that the experience paralleled that of Acts 2 (Acts 10:47; 11:15, 17). Williams says they need to be similar though not identical to satisfy the claims of the text (1985:184). If we opt for the "foreign languages" explanation, we must account for the lack of the term other and how such an outburst of foreign languages

could have been convincing to the Jewish believers. It would have been convincing if these Gentiles spoke in languages including Hebrew and Aramaic, which the Joppa believers could follow. ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Robertson** on **speaking with tongues** - This sudden manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power on uncircumcised Gentiles was probably necessary to convince Peter and the six brethren of the circumcision that God had opened the door wide to Gentiles. It was proof that a Gentile Pentecost had come and Peter used it effectively in his defence in Jerusalem (Acts 11:15). ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

And **exalting** God (magnifying - cp Acts 2:11+) ([3170](#))([megaluno](#) from **megas** - great) to make or declare great. In the literal sense it means to physically enlarge (as the tassels of one's garment - Mt 23:5) It can mean to show great mercy to someone or to do him great kindness as later in Lk 1:58. Most commonly in the NT it means to magnify or praise (Luke 1:46; Acts 5:13; 10:46; 19:17; 2 Cor. 10:15; Phil. 1:20; Sept.: 2 Sam. 7:26; Ps. 34:3; 69:31).The [present tense](#) indicates this was their continual response! The idea is to cause God to be held in great esteem.

**Larkin** - The experience of salvation always evokes praise to the Giver of salvation. So here, as at Pentecost (Acts 2:11) and in Ephesus, the last evangelized area of Paul's missionary journeys (Acts 9:17), the newly converted or newly filled-with-the-Spirit magnify God. ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Then Peter answered** - What else could he do? He witnessed the same sign that he and the other Jews had experienced at Pentecost.

**G Campbell Morgan** - They heard these men with loosened tongues giving utterance to the fact of the new life which had come to them. Observe that these men received the gift of the Holy Spirit before baptism in water, without the laying on of apostolic hands. Some had received the Spirit because the apostles laid their hands on them. Some had received the gift of the Spirit after water baptism. Here was another irregularity, and the value of this story of the Acts of the Apostles is that it is for evermore revealing the fact that "The wind bloweth where it will." (John 3:8KJV) The Spirit interrupted the apostle in his discourse, falling upon the listening men and women when they had heard enough of the message to believe into the Christ. So the Spirit fell; and they of the circumcision were amazed as they heard them magnify God. ([Commentary](#))

**Acts 10:47 "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?"**

KJV 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 8:12,36; 11:15-17; 15:8,9; Genesis 17:24-26; Ro 4:11; 10:12
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BAPTISM FOLLOWS SALVATION

**Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized** - He asks a rhetorical question that expects a negative answer. The Ethiopian eunuch's question was similar "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36).

As **Larkin** says "Only at the risk of resisting God would someone dare to hinder the full incorporation into the church via baptism of Gentiles who have the Spirit's baptism (compare Lk 18:16; Acts 5:39; 8:36; 28:31)." ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Ray Stedman** - Peter got the point. He said, "Can any one forbid water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" i.e., by the same accompanying sign. That is why these first Gentile believers spoke in tongues. It was not because that is always essential to the giving of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures do not say that. It was in order to indicate to these Jews that the Gentiles were on exactly the same basis and footing.

**Robertson** - The negative *mēti* expects the answer *No*. The evidence was indisputable that these Gentiles were converted and so were entitled to be baptized. See the similar idiom in Luke 6:39. Note the article with "water." Here the baptism of the Holy Spirit had preceded the baptism of water (Acts 1:5; Acts 11:16). "The greater had been bestowed; could the lesser be withheld?" (Knowing). ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Refuse** (hinder, forbid, prevent) ([2967](#))([koluo](#) from **kólos** = docked, lopped, clipped, **kolazo** = curtail) means to cut off, to cut short,

to weaken and generally to hinder, to prevent, to check, to restrain or to forbid by word or act. The idea is to cause something not to happen. **Koluo** can describe the keeping back of something from someone.

**To be baptized** - Note that at regeneration they were spiritually baptized (1 Cor 12:13, cp Ro 8:9+), but now they are to be baptized in water.

**Baptized** (907) (**baptizo** from **bapto** = cover wholly with a fluid; stain or dip as with dye; used of the smith tempering the red-hot steel, used of dyeing the hair; of a ship that "dipped" = sank) has a literal and a figurative meaning in the NT. The literal meaning is to submerge, to dip or immerse as in water. A study of the 77 NT uses reveals that most of the uses of **baptizo** in the Gospels and Acts are associated with literal water baptism.

The Greeks used **baptizo** to describe the dyeing of a garment, in which the whole material was plunged in and taken out from the element used. **Baptizo** was used of the act of sinking ships. **Baptizo** also meant to bathe of a boat which had been wrecked by being submerged and then stranded on the shore.

Figuratively, **baptizo** pictures the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with something else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition. In this sense **baptizo** means to be identified with.

**James Montgomery Boice** helps understand this figurative meaning of **baptizo** writing that "The clearest example that shows the meaning of **baptizo** is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable should first be '**dipped**' (**bapto**) into boiling water and then '**baptised**' (**baptizo**) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of **baptizing** the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to **our union** and **identification** with Christ than to our water baptism... mere intellectual assent is not enough. **There must be a union with Him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle**" (Bolding added)

**Who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did** - Peter's point is that the manner in which the Gentiles in Cornelius' house received salvation and the evidence of it by the falling of the Spirit was the same manner as the Jews on the day of Pentecost. Jews and Gentiles were on equal footing in every way regarding salvation in Jesus Christ.

**Stedman** - The **gift of tongues** that is given here is the biblical one. All four of the biblical marks of the true gift of tongues are present here as they were on the Day of Pentecost: First, these were languages spoken somewhere on earth. Peter says, "It is exactly the same as we received on the Day of Pentecost" and the tongues that day were languages spoken on earth. Second, they were not addressed to men, they were praise to God. It says that they began to speak in tongues, extolling God. That is what tongues are for. They are not for delivering messages to people who are present in a meeting, and they are not for preaching the gospel; they are for praising God. Third, this was a public demonstration. Tongues are never privately exercised in the New Testament. They are not a private gift. They are one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which, as Paul says, are given for the common good and are not to be exercised privately. If you ever hear anyone saying that they speak in tongues privately then they are not speaking in the biblical gift of tongues. It is intended to be public. The fourth mark confirms that. The biblical gift of tongues is a sign to unbelievers and not to believers. Paul says that. On this occasion they were a sign to these unbelieving Jews who came with the Apostle Peter. You say, "Wait a minute! I thought they were believers." Yes, they were. They were unbelieving believers, i.e., they were believers in Jesus Christ, but they did not believe that the gospel was to go out to the Gentiles. In order to convince them God gave the gift of tongues, which is a sign to unbelievers. It was a sign to them that God had accepted the Gentiles on the same basis as the Jews

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Is baptism necessary for salvation?](#)
- [What is the proper mode of baptism?](#)
- [What is the symbolism of water baptism?](#)
- [What does it mean that there is only one baptism \(Ephesians 4:5\)?](#)
- [Does the Bible teach believer's baptism/credobaptism?](#)
- [Does 1 Peter 3:21 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)
- [What is the biblical understanding of baptism?](#)
- [Does John 3:5 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)
- [What is the importance of Christian baptism?](#)
- [Does Galatians 3:27 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)
- [Does Mark 16:16 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)

- [Does Acts 22:16 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about infant baptism / paedobaptism?](#)
- [Does Acts 2:38 teach that baptism is necessary for salvation?](#)

#### Other Related Resources:

- [What is the gift of speaking in tongues?](#)
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- [What does it mean that tongues will cease?](#)
- [Is there a biblical spiritual gifts list?](#)
- [Is speaking in tongues evidence for having the Holy Spirit?](#)
- [What is glossolalia?](#)
- [Is cessationism biblical? What is a cessationist?](#)

**Acts 10:48** And he ordered them to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

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

- **he ordered them** John 4:2; 1 Cor 1:13-17; Gal 3:27
- **in the Name of Jesus Chris** Acts 2:38; 8:16
- **Then they asked him** Acts 16:15; John 4:40
- Acts 10 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### And he ordered them to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ.

**THOUGHT** - While Peter did not say that baptism would save these Gentiles, nevertheless he ordered to be baptized. This begs the question - Have you been saved? Have you been baptized? Or have you refused to be baptized? Obviously, if you have not been baptized, you are still saved, but you are being disobedient to the Word of God and that is sin.

**Ordered** (same verb in Acts 10:33)([4367](#))([prostasso](#) from **prós** = to + **tássō** = to arrange) means to set in order toward, in regard to a person or thing, to order towards or to someone, to command, prescribe to,) means to be formally ordered with official authorization. To arrange in a prescribed manner. To appoint, to assign, to prescribe, to fix.

**Stedman** - Notice that the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not do away with the baptism of water. One is a symbol of the other. These men were baptized with water because they had been baptized with the Spirit.

**NET Note** - The Greek construction (passive infinitive with accusative subject) could be translated either "**he ordered them to be baptized**" or "**he ordered that they be baptized,**" but the implication in English in either case is that Peter was giving orders to the Gentiles in Cornelius' house, telling them to get baptized. It is much more likely in the context that Peter was ordering those Jewish Christians who accompanied him to baptize the new Gentile converts. They would doubtless have still had misgivings even after witnessing the outpouring of the Spirit and hearing the tongues. It took Peter's apostolic authority ("**ordered**") to convince them to perform the baptisms.

**MacArthur** agrees that Peter ordered the Gentiles to be baptized "by the Jewish Christians who accompanied him. He thus involved the Jews in this momentous reality, knowing they would then be even more willing to support it. Peter could anticipate the reaction when he reported back to Jerusalem, and wanted all the support he could muster." (See [Acts Commentary](#))

**Robertson** - Peter himself abstained from baptizing on this occasion (cf. Paul in 1 Cor. 1:14). Evidently it was done by the six Jewish brethren. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))

**Robertson** on **in the name of Jesus Christ** - The essential name in Christian baptism as in Acts 2:38; Acts 19:5. But these passages give the authority for the act, not the formula that was employed . "Golden days" (Bengel) were these for the whole group. ([Acts 10 Commentary](#))



**Kistemaker on the name of Jesus Christ** - The name Jesus Christ signifies the full revelation of everything Jesus did and said. Further, it denotes all that the Scriptures disclose about the coming, the office, and the function of the Messiah. Accordingly, when in apostolic times a believer was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, he declared that as a baptismal candidate he completely identified with this name.

**Then they asked him to stay on for a few days** - These new Gentile believer now desired fellowship with their Jewish brethren. We see a similar request by the Gentile Lydia after she was saved (Acts 16:14+), Luke recording

And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. (Acts 16:15)

These Gentiles were newborn babes and did not yet know the Word of God, so they wisely ask Peter to stay, and it was Peter who later wrote (possibly based on experiences like this)...

Like newborn babies, **long for** (NOT A SUGGESTION BUT A COMMAND - aorist imperative. Just do it is the idea!) the pure milk (NO ADDITIVES!) of the word, so that (STRATEGIC TERM OF PURPOSE OR RESULT) by it you may grow in respect to salvation (NOT GROW TO BE "SMARTER SINNERS" BUT MORE LIKE CHRIST - cf 2 Peter 3:18+), 3 if (FIRST CLASS CONDITIONAL = "SINCE") you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.(1 Peter 2:2-3+)

**Barton** - HUNGERING FOR GROWTH- Cornelius wanted Peter to stay with him for several days. As a new believer, he realized his need for teaching and fellowship. Are you as eager to learn more about Christ? Do you look for ways to grow deeper and stronger in your spiritual walk? Recognize your need to be with more mature Christians, and strive to learn from them. (See [Acts - Page 185](#))

**William Larkin** summarizes the message of Acts 10 - The ground is indeed level at the foot of the cross. What a comfort to all the racially and culturally despised in our day, who thirst for the dignity that comes from spiritual equality in the "Christ identity." What a challenge to the church to live out, through acceptance across racial, class, ethnic and gender lines, our profession that we serve an impartial God who has sent us a universal Lord and Savior. ([The Mission Is Inaugurated Through Peter Acts 9:32-11:18](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** - Peter tarried in Caesarea and helped to ground these new believers in the truth of the Word. Perhaps Philip assisted him. This entire experience is an illustration of the commission of Matthew 28:19–20. Peter went where God sent him and made disciples ("teach") of the Gentiles. Then he baptized them and taught them the Word. That same commission applies to the church today. Are we fulfilling it as we should? ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** sums up Acts 10 - This epochal chapter has witnessed the inclusion of Gentiles as equals in the church. The last barrier has fallen. Peter later described this great experience in Acts 15:7-8: "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us." The way was thus opened for the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman world through the tireless missionary efforts of the early church. (See [Acts Commentary](#))