

Acts 10:23-48

Peter preaches to the Gentiles

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He's a good man

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

- *A man at Caesarea named Cornelius*
 - *A centurion of what was called the Italian cohort*
 - *A devout man*
 - *Feared God with all his household*
 - *Gave many alms...and prayed continually*
- *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!"*
 - *[Cornelius] said, "What is it, Lord?"*
 - *"Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter"*

Animal dream

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.

- *[Peter] fell into a trance*
 - *He saw the sky opened up*
 - *An object like a great sheet coming down*
 - *There were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.*
- *A voice came to him*
 - *“Get up, Peter, kill and eat!”*
 - *“By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.”*
 - *“What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.”*

We were in the neighborhood

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;

- *The men...appeared at the gate*
 - *They were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there*
- *While Peter was reflecting on the vision*
 - *The Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you"*
- *Peter went down to the men*
 - *"Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?"*
 - *"Cornelius...was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you"*
- *So [Peter] invited them in and gave them lodging*
 - *The next day he got up and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.*

Get on your feet!

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


- Cornelius' anticipation
 - *Cornelius was waiting for them*
 - *[He] had called together his relatives and close friends*
 - Was this a big deal to Cornelius?
- Cornelius' greeting
 - *Cornelius met [Peter]*
 - *Fell at his feet and worshiped him*
 - Does this say anything about Cornelius' understanding of the Gospel?
- Peter's Humility
 - *"Stand up; I too am just a man."*¹

¹If only modern day popes followed this example

Big steps for Peter

26 As he talked with him, he entered and found many people assembled.

- Peter entered the house with Cornelius
 - *“You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him”*
- Peter was responding to the command of the Lord
 - *“Yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean”²*
- How big a deal was this for Peter?
 - Mark 14:27-31 – Peter says he will not leave Christ's side
 - John 18:4-11 – Peter defends Jesus in the garden
 - Acts 10:10-16 – Peter refuses to eat
 - Galatians 2:11-21 – Paul opposes Peter

²The Jewish avoidance of the Gentiles was based primarily on the dietary restrictions 

So...what can I do for you?

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.”*

- Peter responded immediately to the call
 - *I came without even raising any objection*
 - This seems to be inline with Peter's impetuosity, but out-of-line with his sanctimony
- Cornelius explains
 - *I was praying in my house*
 - *A man stood before me in shining garments*
 - *He said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.'*
 - *'Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon'*
 - Does he need to tell Peter all these details?
 - How does what follows relate to all this?

Speeding along

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.”*

- Cornelius explains (some more)
 - *I sent for you immediately*
 - *We are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord*
 - What does this say about the desire and sincerity of Cornelius?³
- Many “immediate” actions/responses in this passage
 - 10:7-8 – Cornelius immediately responds to the angels instructions
 - 10:16 – immediately the sheet is taken to the sky
 - 10:23 – Peter immediately went with the men from Joppa
 - 10:25 – Cornelius immediately met Peter
 - 10:44 – the Holy Spirit immediately fell on the Gentiles
 - 10:48 – the Gentiles were immediately baptized

³and is there any application to our evangelistic endeavors? 

Opening the clubhouse doors

34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

- Is this a new truth?
 - From the OT – Deuteronomy 10:17 & 1 Chronicles 19:7⁴
 - From Jesus himself – John 4:21-23 & Acts 1:8
 - Continued on by Paul & Peter & James – Romans 2:11; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; James 2:1; 1 Peter 1:17
- What had happened?
 - vs. 28 – *"You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him"*
 - See John 4:9
 - Was this actually prohibited in the law?

⁴Remember, God sent Jonah to the Gentiles

It's good to be a goyim

34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. (KJV)

- Peter's Biblical response

- *I perceive*

- Understanding is involved
- vs. 17 & 19 – Peter thought deeply on his visions

- *Of truth*

- Key is that this is God's truth
- *God is not one to show partiality*
- *In every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.*⁵

⁵Where is the faith in all this?

What do you know?

36 *“The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all)*

- *The word which He sent to the sons of Israel*
 - The Gospel was initially disseminated through the Jews⁶
- *He is Lord of All*
 - *“Lord of all” was a pagan title for deity, which the Christians adopted as an appropriate title for Jesus Christ.’⁷*
- The You know's
 - *The thing which took place throughout all Judea*
 - *Of Jesus of Nazareth*
 - *How God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power*
 - *How He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil*

⁶specifically, the apostles

⁷Longenecker, by way of Constable

Witness

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.*

- *We are witnesses*⁸
 - *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*
 - **God raised Him up on the third day and granted that He become visible**
- *He ordered us*
 - *Preach to the people*
 - *Solemnly to testify*
- *This is the One*
 - *Who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead*
 - *Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins*

⁸They were literally eye-witnesses—see vs. 41


He's here

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

- Timing of the giving of the Holy Spirit
 - *While Peter was still speaking*
 - *All those who were listening to the message*⁹
 - *Listen [greek=*akouō*] – to understand, comprehend*¹⁰
 - *Peter will explain in Acts 11:17 that they had believed*
 - *They were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God*¹¹
- The amazing response of the Jews
 - *The gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also*
 - *For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God*

⁹Note that there was no altar call or the laying on of an apostle's hands as in Acts 8:17-19

¹⁰Occurs 436 times in 400 verses in the NT


¹¹Constable says the “tongues” were probably Aramaic 

Dunkin' Goyim

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?”*

- Order of events: Listening/believing → Holy Spirit → Baptism
 - Peter reiterates this order in the next chapter
- *Surely no one can refuse the water*
 - Having seen the evidence of the Spirit, the logical next step was baptism a public testimony to the event¹²
 - This is an extraordinary event needed to convince the apostles¹³
- What is the significance of baptism here?
 - Rather, to whom was this baptism significant?
- *And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ*
 - There's that name again!
- *Then they asked him to stay on for a few days*

¹²We have no information about where this baptism took place

¹³What are the extraordinary methods God uses today 

Putting it in context

- This event is roughly 8 years after Pentecost
 - Christ had told the apostles in Acts 1:8 that they would be witnesses in “even to the remotest part of the earth”
- This is 10 years before the council at Jerusalem
 - It took the Jewish people a while to accept this message of inclusion
- God chose Peter to first bring the gospel to the Gentiles, and not Paul
 - What might be the significance of this?
- What is different between this, and the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch?
 - Both were Gentiles, yet only one received the Spirit¹⁴

¹⁴or was it *just* one?