

The Book of Acts Study Notes

CHAPTER 10 Part 1

The Vision of Cornelius

- ❖ Caesarea was the headquarters of Roman governor of Judea
- ❖ Cornelius: Roman centurion of the Italian band (regiment)
 - They were considered most loyal of Roman troops
 - Loyal to Roman government but also devout and feared God
 - Devout: eusebēs: pious and dutiful; (same used of Ananias in Acts 22:12)
 - Respected by the Jews – Acts 10:22
 - Feared God with all his house – instructed his family to reverence God
 - Gave much alms to the people – charitable deeds – James 1:27; Psa. 41:1
 - Prayed to God always – communicated with God – Luke 18:1; Psa. 119:2; Pro. 2:2-5
- ❖ Vs. 3: His vision was not the result of spiritual laziness but of spending time in prayer and fasting – Acts 10:30
 - At the 9th hour which was a customary hour of prayer for Jews (3pm)
 - He saw clearly in the vision
- ❖ Vs. 4: Prayers and Alms as a memorial
 - Memorial: though he was not Jewish and did not offer sacrifices accordingly, God was pleased with his prayers and alms – compare Isa. 1:11-15 with 1 Sam. 15:22 and Rom. 12:1
- ❖ Vs. 5-8: The Instructions and The Obedience
 - Send for Peter
 - Your answer is with Peter
 - ➔ **Often, our answers from God are connected to our obedience and interaction with others.**
 - Who has God sent to help you that you didn't want to hear from?**
 - Ask Naaman in 2 Kings 5

Simon is with Simon

- ❖ Vs. 6: Simon Peter is staying with Simon the tanner
 - Tanners considered unclean to Jews because they dealt with dead animals – Lev. 11:26-28
- ❖ Contrast with Peter's statement in Acts 10:14

God's Is Preparing A People for A Great Work

- ❖ God is using people of varying backgrounds simultaneously to accomplish His Will
- ❖ As the group is coming to meet Peter, God prepares Peter
 - Peter has been present at major exchanges of the Gospel and the Holy Ghost
 - Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:1-13
 - To Samaritans – Acts 8:14-17
 - To Gentiles – Acts 10:34-48

Peter's Vision (Acts 10:9-23)

- ❖ Hungry on the housetop at noon – VS. 9-10
 - God is dealing with his appetite for more than physical food but for sharing the Gospel with others...
 - ➔ **The question we must ask ourselves is how hungry are we for the work of real ministry?**
- ❖ Vs. 11: Sees heaven opened – Eze. 1:1, Mat. 3:16; Acts 7:56
 - Note that the heavens open yet his mind is still closed to some things
 - God replacing Peter's thinking with higher way of thinking
 - ➔ Kingdom thinking is not earthly in origin – Isa. 55:8-9; Mat. 6:10
- ❖ Vs. 12: All manner of beasts...: contrast with Deut. 14:3-20
- ❖ Divine instructions contrary to what you have always known and done – vs. 13
- ❖ Peter's resistance to revelation – vs. 14
 - Peter acknowledges whom he is speaking to – the Lord
 - Has always been religious yet not always in relationship with God
 - How many times have told God not so?
- ❖ God's response and principle, we need to remember today – verse 15
 - What God has cleansed don't call it common (defiled, unclean)
 - Not only animals but more importantly people – vs. 28; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-20

Unfolding Vision in Unsure Flesh

- ❖ God allowed this dialogue 3 times before the sheet appeared – vs. 16
- ❖ Vs. 17 – Peter was unsure of the vision's meaning until it began unfolding
 - ➔ Sometimes God's prepares us by breaking up our thinking before He manifests His purpose
 - Peter doubted: *diaporeō*: to be entirely at loss, perplexed (Thayer's Greek Definitions)
 - Note the men were at the gate while Peter was trying to understand what God was doing Acts 12:12-17
- ❖ Vs. 19-23 – God provides the next move in spite of not fully understanding the vision
 - Vs. 20: Go and don't doubt
 - Different word for doubt: *diakrinō*: 1) to separate, make a distinction, discriminate, to prefer 2) to learn by discrimination, to try, decide 3) to withdraw from one, desert 4) to separate one's self in a hostile spirit, to oppose, strive with dispute, contend 5) to be at variance with one's self, hesitate, doubt (Thayer's Greek Definitions)
 - Peter told to go and don't discriminate or hesitate because they are being used of God
 - ➔ Are we receptive to those God sends into our lives for the work of ministry no matter their age, race or other distinguishable differences?
James 2:1-5; Acts 10:34-35;
 - Note Peter still asks their purpose but receives them and goes with them

Peter Meets Cornelius (vs. 24-33)

- ❖ Who is Cornelius?
- ❖ What does Cornelius represent?

- ❖ Vs. 24: Cornelius brings his relatives and close friends
 - ➔ **Are we bringing our family and friends to hear the Gospel?**

- ❖ Vs. 25-26: I am a man also
 - Cornelius was willing to prostrate himself to Peter because of his relationship with Christ
 - Peter was willing to recognize Cornelius as a man when the Gentiles were often seen as less than a man

- ❖ Vs. 27-29: Peter now understands the gravity of the moment and what God is using him to do
 - He knows tradition makes it unlawful – John 4:9; 18:28; Acts 11:3; Gal. 2:12
 - But God – Acts 10:14, 35; 15:8-9
 - He came without gainsaying

- ❖ Vs. 30-33 – God used Cornelius devotion, fast and obedience just as he used Peter’s obedience to take the Gospel to the Gentiles

Peter Preaches to the Gentiles Intro

- ❖ KEY PRINCIPLE (VS. 34): GOD IS NOT A RESPECTOR OF PERSONS
 - He is not for sale – Deut. 10:17, 2 Chr. 19:7

Questions to Ponder

- ❖ Who are you most loyal to: God or man?

- ❖ Just as God used Peter to shift and expand ministry, how does He want to use you?

- ❖ Are you obedient enough to God to minister to whom He chooses?

- ❖ As we end this lesson, pray this week for God to reveal to you any known or unknown biases you may hold that are preventing you from being effective for Jesus.