

CORNELIUS SENDS A DELEGATION; PETER'S VISION; SUMMONED TO CAESAREA -- ACTS 10:1-23

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

Monday 7:00pm, H 105 (1st floor, High School--foot of stairs, behind the gym, by the vending machine area), Tuesday 7:00am, Family, Room, CCCM – Phil Twente, cell #714 425 9221; email – ptwente@gmail.com For past studies, audio plus notes, go to: <http://www.missioncalvary.com/> Click on “Bible Studies” on the left column. References include commentaries by numerous pastor/teachers.

Act 10:1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment,

Act 10:2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

Act 10:3 About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

Act 10:4 And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.

Act 10:5 Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter.

Act 10:6 He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do."

Act 10:7 And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually.

Act 10:8 So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Act 10:9 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.

Act 10:10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance

v. 2 “a devout man and one who feared God” - He is a devout man, which simply means. He was a proselyte, one who fears God along with all of his family. He is constantly giving alms to the Jewish people. He prayed to God continuously, who has become a true believer in Judaism.

v. 3 “the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision” At the ninth hour (3:00 pm) Simon saw this vision, which happens to be the time of the evening sacrifice each day.

v. 4 “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.” Cornelius’ **opportunity for further understanding** came because he was seeking God’s will. Because he prayed to God continually, God gave him further revelation. Notice how the angel specifically instructs him on just where Peter is and gives him implicit instructions of how he might come to a fuller, richer, revelation and understanding of God. This is an example of God answering the prayer of an unbelieving Christian. - Cf. Jonah 1:14

v. 5 “send for Simon whose surname is Peter.” - The request for Peter – Gal. 2:8 - Peter to the Jews; - Paul’s to the Gentiles. Why did God use Peter to open up the door of the gospel to the Gentiles? While we have a specific ministry, we must remember salvation is for all peoples!

v. 10 “he became very hungry” – He was really hungry! - desiring to eat; fell into a trance;

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INTRODUCTION:

The man Cornelius, whom God wanted Peter to reach would not have been Peter’s choice. Not only was he not thrilled about going to the Gentiles, but he certainly was not thrilled about going to a Roman soldier. The occupation of this man was a severe threat to Israel. Jews did not like the Romans, and they were occupying the Land. This man Cornelius was from the Italian cohort, a special division. He was a centurion, which means he has 100 men under his authority and he is in Caesarea, which is a totally a Roman town.

But God, I believe was preparing Peter’s heart. Prior to Peter’s encounter with Cornelius, it says in Acts 9:43, it says that Peter stays with a man named Simon who was a tanner. A tanner is one who is killing animals and exposed to dead bodies and is considered to be unclean according to Old Testament regulations. So it is interesting that Peter who is Kosher in every way would stay in Simon the tanner’s home.

We know that Peter did not get complete victory over this incident because later Peter is going to get into a very serious problem with the apostle Paul who confronted him because he is going to fellowship with Gentiles and eat with them. When the Jewish brothers came to Galatia, Peter is going to get lead away and he will compromise and forsake the Gentiles and stay with his Jewish brothers. Acts 15:1-5; Gal. 2

Even Barnabas according to Galatians 2 was also lead away in this problem. It is kind of interesting that this kosher problem is bigger in the New Testament, than any of us Gentiles fully appreciate. It is not easy for someone who is totally kosher in every way to be told to take the gospel to somebody who is unclean. And the Gentiles were considered unclean by the Jews.

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Act 10:11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth.

Act 10:12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.

Act 10:13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

Act 10:14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

Act 10:15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

Act 10:16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Act 10:17 Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate.

Act 10:18 And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

INTERPRETATION

v. 11 "an object like a great sheet" - a vision of an object like great sheet, clean and unclean animals in the same sheet. - fulfilling the idea of Jews and Gentiles in the same group.

v. 12 "all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. - "The creatures that were involved – cf. Lev. 11; Dt. 14:3-21 Kosher - clean, versus unclean! Completely drained of blood-jugular cut, hung upside down and drained. **All the animals that are clean are all vegetarians.** The **unclean animals are carnivorous.** v. 8 also mentions swine; fish must have fins and scales – but not shellfish; crickets, locusts; birds – stay away from those that eat dead animals. Why? You would then be eating animals that have eaten blood!

Dt. 14:21c "for you are a holy people to the LORD your God"!

v. 13 "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." – a command from the LORD

v. 14 "Not so, Lord! In the Greek it is really a little bit stronger than, **Not so! I'll have none of it, literally!** So that's sort of interesting. I'll have none of it, Lord. The Lord had given him a commandment. Rise Peter, kill and eat. I'll have none of it, Lord! See, **that really isn't consistent, is it?** If He is our Lord, we can't say "Not so, Lord!" Can we? It's an inconsistency we have when we argue with the Lord or when we are fighting against what the Lord is saying to us.

v. 15 "What God has cleansed you must not call common." - 2nd time, a command from God – What God has cleansed you must not call common or unholy! – The **Gentiles are implied here.** So the **cleansing is referring to cleansing the Gentiles. They are going to be cleansed!** God is preparing Peter. Do you believe that following this vision, Peter would have thereafter have eaten ham? No Peter is going to remain being very Kosher.

v. 17 "the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry"- The message communicated by three men who came to his house

APPLICATION

A few things about this man, CORNELIUS:

- He has become a **convert to Judaism**
- His **obedience is described** - Acts 10:2
- He is a devout man, which simply means. He was a proselyte, one who fears God along with all of his family.
- He is constantly giving alms to the Jewish people.
- He prayed to God continuously, who has become a true believer in Judaism.
- Acts 10:3 says, that at the ninth hour (3:00 pm) Simon saw this vision, which happens to be the time of the evening sacrifice each day.
- Interesting about his obedience to God.
- There are two kinds of proselytes – proselyte of righteousness and proselyte at the gates.
- The **proselytes of righteousness** are those who got circumcised and submitted to the entire law of God. They literally became Jewish in every way.
- The **proselytes of the gates** remained uncircumcised and they held to the seven precepts of Noah. They had to get rid of seven things in their lives:
 1. Blasphemy
 2. Idolatry
 3. Murder
 4. Incest
 5. Stealing
 6. Disobedience to authority
 7. **Eating flesh with blood in it**

Should we stay away from pork?

God caused the nation of Israel to be different from everybody else. One way was their diet! God loves everybody but He has a special plan for Israel – The Messiah is to come through them.
 Lev. 20:25-26 "You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, and you shall not make yourselves abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. [26] And you shall be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy, and have separated you from the peoples (Gentiles), that you should be Mine. - – set them apart; separated them apart. One of the ways was by their diet

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

Act 10:20 *Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."*

Act 10:21 *Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"*

Act 10:22 *And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you."*

Act 10:23 *Then he invited them in and lodged them.*

INTERPRETATION

v. 19 "While Peter thought about the vision" - while reflecting, thinking about the vision...Notice how the Holy Spirit is working here on both ends!

v. 20 "go down and go with them, **doubting nothing; for I have sent them.**" - It was commanded by the Lord – the Holy Spirit said to Peter. How am I going to these men's home? The Lord is saying you have to trust Me.

v. 21 "For what reason have you come?" what's the reason why you came? How did God get across that message of the vision? In order for Peter to get the message, God in His divine plan communicated to Cornelius; then to the three men; then these three men asked Peter to come.

v. 23 "invited them in and lodged them". So he invited them in and gave them lodging - What?? A kosher Jew invited Gentiles in and gave them lodging- unheard of! Now, prejudices are beginning to break down. It was an unthinkable thing to invite a Gentile in to your home. Every place that he would sit down would be considered unclean. If you would sit down where he had sat in a chair, then you would be unclean. They felt that this ceremonial uncleanness could be transmitted by touching or by touching something that a Gentile had touched. So to invite them in to spend the night was the beginning of the breakdown of the prejudice.

APPLICATION

Why should someone follow this diet requiring cleanness, abstaining from "unclean" food?

1. Abstain because they're Jewish
2. Because of the sanctity of life - *Gen 9:4 "But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."* The worst thing a Jew can do is to eat flesh with blood in it. That was the one thing that a proselyte had to do! Has the decision in Acts 15 prohibiting eating blood ever been rescinded?
3. Love for others – *Romans 14:13-21* If a Jew considers port to be unclean, then it is unclean to them! *1 Cor. 8:13.*
4. Evangelism
5. Health-hygiene

Conclusion:

- **What we eat does not give us favor with God!**
1Cor. 8:8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.
- **What we eat physically cannot prevent our death.**
Heb. 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,
1Ti 4:1-5 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, [2] speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, [3] forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. [4] For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; [5] for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.
- **Everlasting life comes only through Jesus – He is the bread of life!**
Joh 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.
Joh 6:48-51 I am the bread of life. [49] Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead.[50] This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. [51] I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

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10,000 Reasons (Bless The Lord) – Matt Redman

Verse 1:

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning/ It's time to sing Your song again/ Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me/ Let me be singing when the evening comes/

Chorus:

Bless the Lord, O my soul/ O my soul/ Worship His holy name/ Sing like never before/ O my soul/ I'll worship Your holy name

Verse 2:

You're rich in love, and You're slow to anger/ Your name is great, and Your heart is kind/ For all Your goodness I will keep on singing/ Then thousand reasons for my heart to find

Verse 3:

And on that day when my strength is failing/ The end draws near and my time has come/ Still my soul will sing Your praise unending/ Ten thousand years and then forevermore

Jesus, I'll worship Your holy name/ Lord, I'll worship Your holy name/ Sing like never before/ O my soul/ I'll worship Your holy name/ Jesus, I'll worship Your holy name/ I'll worship Your holy name

Questions:

1. Verse 3 says "about the ninth hour" – Do you see any significance or importance in this?
2. Does God hear the prayers of unbelievers? (v. 4)
3. Why did God use Peter to open up the door of the gospel to the Gentiles?
4. Do you think all the animals in the sheet were unclean? (v. 12) Why or why not?
5. What do all of the clean animals have in common? The unclean animals?
6. Who do you think are represented by the unclean animals in Peter's vision?
7. v. 15 "What God has cleansed you must not call common (unholy)." What is being referred to here as being cleansed? Do you believe that following this vision, Peter would have thereafter have eaten ham? Do you think that is the purpose of this verse?
8. Can you think of several things that are mentioned/ commanded by the Lord, in today's study that would be totally offensive to a Kosher Jew? Vs. 13, 20, 23
9. Should we stay away from pork?