

Why Was Peter Told To Go?

You will remember the story. We find it in Acts chapter 10.

Peter saw a vision – probably at the time he was in some sort of trance. This great sheet was brought down from heaven and in the sheet were all manner of unclean animals. To a Jew, he was forbidden to eat an unclean animal. “Arise Peter, kill and eat came the command.”

To the Jew any animal that did not chew its cud like the pig or camels or rabbits, and birds like vultures, ostriches, hawks or sea gulls were all forbidden unclean and should not be eaten.

In any case, this sheet contained many of these unclean animals and Peter was instructed in this vision to rise up and eat these things.

Peter’s response was “not so Lord, never have I eaten these things. Nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.

This voice then cried out “what God has cleansed, you must not call common.”

This happened 3 times to Peter. Then the sheet returned to heaven leaving Peter alone.

This was an obvious challenge to Peter as he was pondering what had happened to him.

At the same moment comes a knock on the door to Peter’s house and there appeared 3 men. They explained who they were and the reason for their visit and asked Peter to come with them to their master’s house – the house of Cornelius.

The Spirit of God then told Peter to go with these men. Peter took 6 men with him and left with these three.

The day before, this guy called Cornelius had an encounter with an angel who had appeared to him telling him to go find this guy called Simon Peter and ask him to come to his home to explain what he must do.

Cornelius was a gentile – According to scripture, he was a “good man.” He had a good reputation with the Jews, he prayed continually and gave alms to those in need. He was a generous man – feared God and a commander of other soldiers.

How many folks do you know that are really “good people”? They pay their bills, they talk with God they are honest God fearing folks that don’t cheat others and do right by folks all around them. Plus they are generous folks.

Most of these folks are in church at least a couple of times a year, many more often than that.

Notice however, that that was not sufficient for the Lord.

Cornelius needed more than what He had. He lacked something. Being a good fellow was not enough. Caring for those around you is not enough. Giving to the poor and having a generous spirit is not enough. Praying to God and having a good reputation is not enough.

Cornelius needed more than he had, and did not even know it.

In any case, God sent an angel to Cornelius, telling him to go find this guy Peter. Bring him to your house and hear what he has to say and he will tell you what you have to do.

Sure enough, Cornelius did as he was told and sent for Peter.

God had prepared the heart of Peter beforehand that he was to go to a gentile’s home (unclean animal to the Jew) and that Peter should just do as he was told.

When Peter went to Cornelius's home, they were waiting for him. Cornelius had sent for Peter, and now here he was. Cornelius had surrounded himself with his family and some friends to hear what Peter had to say.

As Peter gives testimony about the Lord Jesus and how it was prophesized that He would come and that through Jesus He would judge the living and the dead and that through Jesus was the "remission" (removal) of sins from those who believe in Him, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who had heard the word and as they were filled with God they began to speak in tongues and magnify God.

Peter and those he had brought along were amazed that God had been poured out on the Gentiles also as He had previously with the Jews.

If you will allow me a personal testimony here – years ago while in the Air Force, a second lieutenant came from the chapel and as I solicited him he asked me a question – "tell me airman, are you a Christian? My response was: "Well I go with a girl who sings in the choir at the first Christian Church" – at which he made no further comment.

He could have led me to Jesus Christ on the spot had he so desired. I had no idea what he was asking me.

I wonder how many "good people" like Cornelius that live their lives as he did, yet are still gentiles and not part of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Only you know your heart toward Jesus. You may be sitting in the Methodist church, or the Greek Orthodox Church or the Presbyterian or Lutheran Church and have a knowledge of Jesus Christ, but have never experienced a real relationship with Him.

It is really simple beloved. The prayer need only be: Wow, it is obvious that I am a sinner and need a Savior – I believe you are the Son of God and invite you into my life to take over my life. Fill me with your presence as you did the house of Cornelius and it is in His Name I offer this prayer. Amen"

If you ever get a real vision of His love and care for you, the future plans He has for you and just how important you are to Him as well as what He has done in order to get a relationship with you, you would probably surrender to Him and give Him your all.

Peter went as he was commanded. We too are given the same command. "Go ye into all of the earth and preach the good news of Jesus Christ."