

>>>>>> Acts - Lesson 19 <<<<<<<

- 1) Last time, we dealt with Peter’s vision and Cornelius’ encounter with the angel.
- 2) Now we begin with Peter continuing his thoughts about the vision and the events that come next.

Acts 10:17–23 (NIV)

- 3) So, the men that Cornelius sent have now arrived in Jappa and are at Simon the Tanner’s house.
 - a) A point to remember here is that, though the Spirit did not actually tell Peter, these men were also likely Gentiles – Cornelius chose:
“Two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants.”
- 4) Peter is now going to understand the true meaning of the vision – these three Gentiles are now at the door and he has been told – go with them without hesitation.
 - a) That doesn’t appear too much of a stretch right?
 - b) Oh, wait a minute, where is he going? To Caesarea to meet with even more Gentiles and to share with them.
- 5) Ok, we get a little more information and maybe this is going to be all right.
 - a) Cornelius is a God-fearing man, respected by the Jewish people.
- 6) Then, surprise, Peter does a “one up” on the Spirit – he invites these three men into the house to be his guests.
- 7) I think he’s got it – the vision now makes sense, albeit disconcerting.

Acts 10:23b-24 (NIV)

- 8) After these men from Caesarea had stayed the night with Peter at Simon the Tanner’s house, they depart for Cornelius’ home.
- 9) Peter has probably been made more pliable by his experience with the Samaritan Pentecost that we discussed some time back.
 - a) He has also preached in “many” Samaritan towns on his way back to Jerusalem.
 - b) He is staying in a house where his desire to keep the Law would have previously even prevented him from entering.
 - c) Now, he invites these men to stay over night.
- 10) Again I think he gets it and I think he also knows what is about to happen in Caesarea.
 - a) All he has been told is that Cornelius wants “to hear what he has to say.”
- 11) We can possibly get a clue that he knows what is coming in the fact that he takes 6 believers with him to Cornelius’ house.
 - a) We are told this in chapter 11 verse 12.

- b) If what he suspects is going to happen actually happens it would be wise to have believing and trusted witnesses with him to verify the situation.

12) Bruce Barton makes another comment here that highlights another important point:

The eagerness and expectation of Cornelius was obvious, for he **called together his relatives and close friends**, probably many, considering Cornelius's reputation for kindness and piety.

Bruce Barton et al., *Life Application New Testament Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2001), 508.

13) Continuing, we see what happens when they all arrive ...

Acts 10:25-29 (NIV)

14) Peter begins here with what I see as a note of caution.

15) He could have easily assumed that what Cornelius wanted was to come to Jesus and begin his Christian life.

- a) After all, he has been described as a “God fearing man and one well respected” so, such an assumption might indeed be warranted.
- b) However, we nor Peter really know what if anything Cornelius expects.
- c) He is simply following the instructions of the angel in his vision of a day or so before.
- d) We know that he wanted to hear what Peter had to say but really not much beyond that.
- e) When Peter begins to speak to him, we will see that Cornelius does know about Jesus and the things that have taken place in that regard.

16) Looking at Peter's perspective and ours for that matter, N.T. Wright makes a point here which I think is valid:

This is the point at which we have to be extremely careful. It would be all too easy, following precisely our own late-Western, postmodern prejudices, to imagine that the whole episode to do with Cornelius was simply about getting rid of all distinctions and being ‘tolerant’ of everyone. That would be a bad mistake. If what Peter had discovered was that God simply accepts everyone the way they are, what was the fuss for Cornelius to be devout and god-fearing? Why bother sending for Peter to come and tell him about Jesus?

Tom Wright, *Acts for Everyone, Part 1: Chapters 1-12* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2008), 164.

17) Wright goes on to point out that God does accept us but, NOT as we are. Instead, he invites us as we are.

Agree / Disagree?

- a) That invitation must be accepted and, it always involves the complete transforming act consisting of repentance, forgiveness, baptism, and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

ACTS – Notes – 2023/24

18) That is, bottom line, exactly why Peter is here in Cornelius' house – to complete that very invitation and the transforming which takes place.

19) Now, we are going to connect all the dots for Cornelius, Peter, and all those present ...

Acts 10:25-24 (NIV)

20) Clearly, Cornelius understood what God wanted to bring Peter there.

21) He did not know the exact words or even the message that Peter was to bring.

22) However he knew from what God had told him that this was important and he was anxious for himself, his family, and his friends to hear it.

23) We begin next looking at what Peter says to the gathering – vs. 34-43 then, finally, at the spectacular and to somewhat surprising results ...

Acts 10:34-38 (NIV)

24) So, what do we see here?

25) First, we can without doubt see that Peter gets what God was showing him in the vision.

26) And I think we can also know that even though he pointed out to Cornelius and the rest of those present that by Jewish Law he should not be there – that has ended in God's view.

a) I am equally sure that the believers that came with him were not as convinced at that moment as he was.

b) This I think becomes clear when we see the final outcome of this visit.

27) I think it is worth noting here the massive number of assumptions that Peter makes (vs36-38) about the knowledge that Cornelius has regarding the life and times of Jesus.

a) In this case, I believe that the Holy Spirit would **not have** led him to these assumptions were they not true.

b) Without that knowledge, Cornelius and his family would probably have been terribly confused with what would occur next.

28) Then, in vs 39 through 43, Peter puts the ribbon on the package.

a) Where he leaves Cornelius in vs 38 is without the conclusion that is so vital.

b) He then fills in the glorious conclusion of Jesus' story and confirms beyond doubt that he is a living witness to that conclusion.

29) Now, we get to the exciting part ...

Acts 10:44-48 (NIV)

30) WOW! What an amazing outcome!

31) I cannot imagine that there was anyone in that gathering including Peter that was not surprised when the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius and his family.

a) Peter is in the middle of speaking.

- b) God and the Holy Spirit interrupt him saying (at least in my opinion) they get it! It is time to show everyone what this is truly all about!

32) O.k. let's take a breath and look at a contrast.

- a) First – let's go back to the very beginning ...

Acts 2:38 (NASB 2020)

³⁸ Peter *said* to them, “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.

33) Next, recall from a couple of weeks back, the Samaritan conversion with Philip ...

Acts 8:14–16 (NASB 2020)

¹⁴ Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they would receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ (For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

34) Finally, let's flip this thing one more time ...

35) Peter is still speaking and NO ONE has been baptized – YET – here comes the Holy Spirit.

36) WOW – surprise!

37) This is such a beautiful statement of how God works in the moment – in every situation to bring the message that is so necessary for everyone involved to hear!

38) Those who came with Peter (and well they did) were astonished but they see the proof of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit for themselves.

39) And of course, Peter, in his normal “never let any grass grow” attitude wants to baptize them immediately.

- a) No questions, or concerns, simply – let's complete this and make these people our brothers and sisters.

40) Salvation has now come to the Gentiles for real – or has it?

Acts 11:1–3 (NIV)

and ate with them.”

41) I think the first thing we need to note here is we are still dealing with issues of the “Law.”

- a) Circumcised vs. non-circumcised.
- b) Gentile vs. Jew.

c) Clean vs. unclean.

42) When we start dealing with this issue here, we need to gain a couple of perspectives.

43) FIRST

- a) As far as I was able to tell, Jesus himself was circumcised at 8 days old but, He never mentions it in all of the gospels.
- b) One comment I read makes it abundantly clear that as a whole, the New Testament has a specific idea regarding it – it states:

In fact, the New Testament is clearly hostile to those who encourage circumcision and opposes rather than encourages the procedure.

44) SECOND perspective

- a) Jesus had told the apostles and first disciples that they were to go into all the world and that they must do it before His return.

Matthew 28:19–20 (NASB 2020)

¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Mark 13:10 (NASB 2020)

¹⁰ And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

Luke 24:47 (NASB 2020)

⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

- b) Do you think there could be any doubt as to what he meant?
- c) Yet here we are – 10 years later and what do we have (documented at any rate).
 - i) The Ethiopian Eunuch. No mention of any reaction to that conversion.
 - ii) Some Samaritans – not really Gentiles – just a different type of Jews so to speak.