

A Remarkable Event

The Book of Acts was written by the same person who wrote the Gospel of Luke. The Book of Acts never claims to be a complete history of the first century Church. We can be confident that the Book of Acts was written in the same manner as the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 1:3, 4

The words “from the very first” are translated from the Greek word *anōthen*, meaning from above. So, Luke, writing with perfect understanding from above, also wrote the Book of Acts. It is not a complete history of every event that happened. It is the record that God wanted written and so, every event that is recorded is significant. I would like to read with you the account of one of those events, one that I find remarkable. And that is what I am calling this teaching, “A Remarkable Event.”

Acts 10:1,2

A centurion was an officer in the Roman army that had 100 soldiers under his command. This man, Cornelius, would have been a welcome addition to almost any church. He was devout, his entire household revered God, he was generous, he prayed to God regularly. He would have been a nice member for almost any church – but apparently, as we shall see, there was something more that was needed.

Acts 10:3 – 6

About three o'clock in the afternoon, he saw an angel coming into the room where he was in the house. One thing we are going to learn about God in this record is that He is not nearly as religious as some

people can be. The giving of information and instructions is completely the prerogative of God. He can and does communicate with anyone that He wants to. But since Cornelius is a gentile and does not have spirit (yet), God must do something that Cornelius can receive by his five senses. In this case, God sends an angel, who (as we later find out) appears as a man in bright clothing.

And it is worth noting that the angel told Cornelius to send for Peter. God did not give the ministry of reconciliation to the angels. He gave it to believers, the Church. (II Corinthians 5:18, 19).

Acts 10:7, 8

Cornelius received the information and instructions from God by way of the angel and immediately acted. He carried it out just as the angel had said.

Acts 10:9, 10

When we use the English word “trance”, generally it refers to an unconscious or semi-conscious state of mind. But the Greek word that is in the text here is used elsewhere in the Gospels and the New Testament. The people that this word refers to were fully aware of what was happening and were amazed or astonished. Peter was not in some semi-conscious state of mind. He was fully aware of what he was seeing and was amazed by it.

Acts 10:10 – 17

I think each of us would have been amazed at seeing something like this. Peter knew what he had seen but he did not know what this meant. God did not have to send an angel to Peter. He could communicate with Peter directly because Peter had the new birth spirit.

Acts 10:17 – 20

Another thing that we see in this record is God's sense of timing. He gave this revelation to Peter just before the men coming from Cornelius got there. Peter was considering what this vision meant when the three men arrived, and God told him to go with them "doubting nothing for I have sent them."

Acts 10:21 – 27

It is worth noting that throughout this record, both Cornelius and Peter acted immediately when they had received information and instructions from God. We won't look these verses up, but in Matthew 7:24 – 28, Jesus compares people that hear his words and do them with people that hear his words and do not do them. The first group is likened to those who build their house on a rock; the second group are called foolish and build upon the sand.

Acts 10:27 – 34

Now, having followed God's instructions to him, Peter is beginning to understand the vision that was given to him. Up until this event, only Jews and proselytes to Judaism had been born again. Nobody had taken the step to go to the Gentiles until this event. Peter is doing something that he never would have done on his own. But God was able to get Peter out of his "comfort zone" and do something that his religious thinking would never have allowed. Some time ago in our fellowship here we read John 21 and it is worth turning there for just a minute.

John 21:18

With God working in him, Peter was willing to do something he never would have done on his own. In fact, when the Church leaders heard about this event, they called him to account.

Acts 11:1 – 3, 4

We will see what God does to overcome this type of attitude. He is not nearly as religious as these people.

Acts 10:34 – 43

Peter opened his mouth and began to tell them about Jesus Christ. Remember Acts 1:8 that we just heard about at the Weekend in The Word. Peter is utilizing the gift of holy spirit and is a witness to Jesus Christ and his accomplishments. And look what happens.

Acts 10:44 -46

Peter did not lay hands on anybody. Nobody had to get circumcised. Even though Peter will bring it up in another verse, nobody had to get baptized. They did not need to become proselytes to Judaism first. They did not need to tarry or to wait.

Acts 10:47, 48

When Peter was telling the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem about this whole incident, he explained what he did.

Acts 11:15 – 17

John 14:26

Acts 11:18

The gift of holy spirit, manifested by speaking in tongues, ended the discussion. That was the one thing that they could not deny. With this event, outreach to the Gentiles began to occur (though there were some religious people who resisted this). But the growth of the Church would be exponentially expanded now. The Lord is adding to the Church those that are being saved. So, this really is a remarkable event.