

With Sister Paulette Morrison
on December 19, 2021

DISCOVERING THE POWER OF THE WORD

A Reading and Listening Session

The Story of Cornelius and Peter
Based on Acts 10



GREATER DELIVERANCE
CHURCH OF GOD MINISTRIES

Introduction

The Book of Acts tells the story of the early church and the spread of the Gospel. Chapter 10 (KJV) recounts a pivotal moment where God breaks down barriers and extends His grace to the Gentiles. On December 19, 2921 in our Reading and listening session, we explore the profound encounter between Cornelius, a devout Roman centurion, and the Apostle Peter, guided by divine visions and the Holy Spirit.

Cornelius's Vision and the Angel's Message

Acts 10:1-3 sets the scene: "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius." Cornelius, a man of prayer and good deeds, received a divine visitation. An angel appeared to him, as described in Acts 10:5: "And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter." This heavenly messenger instructed Cornelius to seek out Peter, signifying the importance of Peter's role in God's plan. Acting swiftly, Cornelius, as depicted in Acts 10:7-8, "And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa." Obedient to the angelic command, he dispatched trusted servants and a devout soldier to Joppa, demonstrating his faith and willingness to follow God's direction.

Peter's Vision and Divine Guidance

Meanwhile, in Joppa, Peter had his own encounter with the divine. Acts 10:10-15 recounts: "And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." This vision challenged Peter's understanding of what was considered clean or unclean,

preparing him to receive the Gentiles. As Peter pondered the meaning of the vision, the Spirit spoke to him, as highlighted in Acts 10:19-22: "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee." The Holy Spirit confirmed that these men were sent by God, urging Peter to accompany them without hesitation.

The Meeting of Peter and Cornelius

Peter, guided by the Spirit, journeyed to Caesarea. Upon arriving, Cornelius met him. Acts 10:28-29 captures Peter's words: "And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?" Peter acknowledged the cultural barriers that separated Jews from Gentiles but recognized God's revelation that such distinctions were no longer valid. Cornelius then recounted his vision, as described in Acts 10:30-31: "And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee." He explained the angel's message, emphasizing the divine origin of the summons and his anticipation of hearing God's word from Peter.

The Outpouring of the Holy Ghost

Peter began to preach to Cornelius and his assembled household. Acts 10:34-35 reveals a crucial truth: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feared him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Peter proclaimed that God's grace extends to all who fear Him and do what is right, regardless of their nationality. Peter continued, speaking of Jesus Christ. According to Acts 10:39: "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree." Peter testified to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Acts 10:43 proclaims: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Peter declared that through faith in Jesus, all who believe receive forgiveness of sins. As Peter spoke, the Holy Spirit descended upon all who were listening, as described in Acts 10:44-45: "While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." This miraculous event demonstrated God's acceptance of the Gentiles and His desire to include them in His

covenant. The believers from among the Jews were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles also.

Topics for Reflection and Discussion

Consider the following themes from the story of Cornelius and Peter:

- **Fear God:** How does the story demonstrate the importance of fearing God and living a devout life?
- **Vision:** What role do visions play in guiding Cornelius and Peter?
- **Holy Angels:** How do holy angels serve as messengers of God's will?
- **Holy Ghost Fell:** What does the outpouring of the Holy Ghost signify in this narrative?
- **The Ninth Hour:** What is the significance of the timing of Cornelius's vision?
- **Rise and Go:** How does this command apply to both Cornelius and Peter's actions?
- **Peter Open His Mouth:** What is the impact of Peter's willingness to preach the Gospel?
- **Arise:** In what ways does the theme of 'arising' relate to the story's message?
- **God is no Respecter of Person:** How does this story challenge prejudices and promote inclusivity?

Conclusion

The story of Cornelius and Peter is a testament to God's boundless love and His desire to reach all people. Through divine encounters, obedience, and the power of the Holy Spirit, barriers were broken down, and the Gospel was extended to the Gentiles. May we learn from this story to embrace inclusivity, follow God's guidance, and share the Good News with all.