

ACTS

of the Holy Spirit

Session #16 – 10:1 - 23

I. God Sends Cornelius' Men (10:1 - 8)

Verse 1

[now] – scene change

At Caesarea (a Roman city – Headquarters of the Roman Governor of the province of Judea)

there was a man named Cornelius, (means “of a horn”)
 a centurion (officer over 100 soldiers)
 in what was known as
 the Italian Regiment. (known to be loyal)

Verse 2

The Holy Spirit lists evidences of a genuine relationship with God:
 He and

- 1) all his family (leader/influenced his family)
- 2) were devout (eusebes = faithful in duty toward God)
- 3) and God-fearing; (phobeo = to respect)
- 4) he gave generously (eleemosyne = alms giving)
 to those in need
- 5) and prayed (deomai = make supplications)
 to God (theos) regularly. (pas = continually)
 [rather than the Roman gods]

This Gentile – Roman – Soldier (three strikes in the minds of a Jew) who was likely taught about the pantheon of Roman gods (Jupiter/Augustus/Mars/Venus etc.) had made a radical decision to fear God (YHWH) instead of these gods.

Verse 3

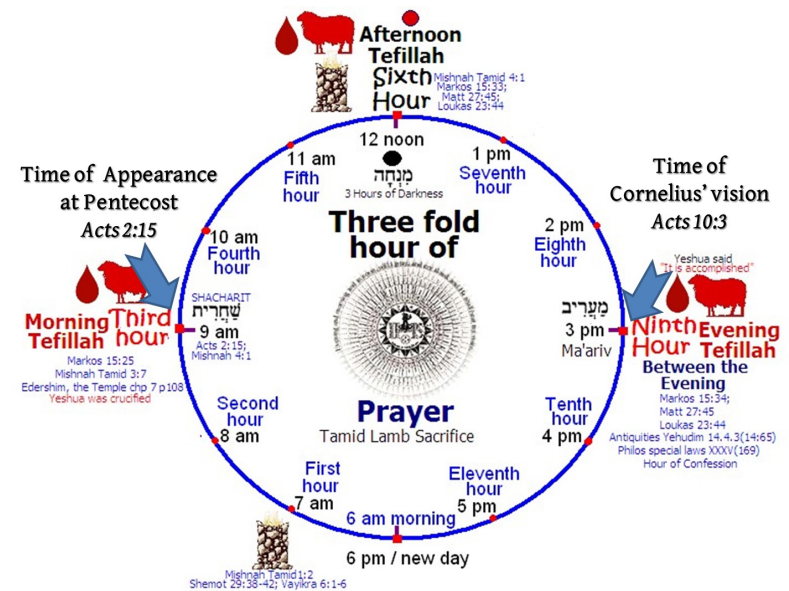
One day

at about three [ninth hour]
 in the afternoon

he had a vision. (horama = dream/sign/trance)
 He distinctly saw (horao) an angel of God,
 who came to him
 and said,

“Cornelius!”

Like with Saul on the road to Damascus, calling someone by name is significant.



Verse 4

Cornelius stared (atenizo = behold earnestly)

at him in fear. (emphobos = active inspired fear)

In Acts 10:30, Cornelius adds – “a man stood beside me in bright clothing”

“What is it, Lord?” he asked.

The angel answered,

“Your prayers (proseuche)

and gifts to the poor (alms giving)

have come up as a memorial offering

(mnemosynon = a remembrance)

before God. (The only other time - Matt. 26:13!)

Verse 5

Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.

Once again – why don't the angels go to Peter themselves? Why does God continue to use human intervention in the process? It's interesting that Peter is staying with a man named "Simon". The angel has to be careful to NOT get the wrong guy involved.

Verse 6

He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

Verse 7

When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants.

The word "devout" points to a man of faith. The influence of Cornelius has led others in his "sphere of influence" to come to faith in Christ.

Verse 8

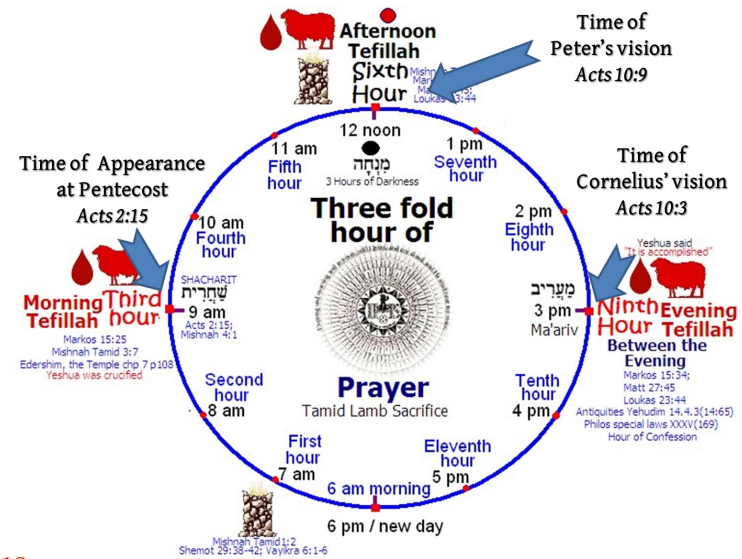
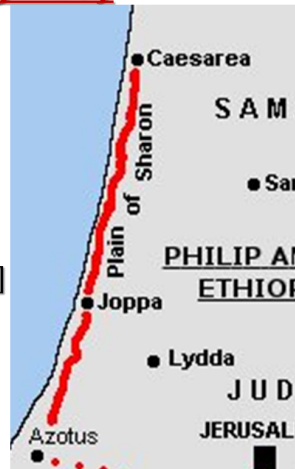
He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

They were sent as a mission from God rather than a command of Cornelius!

II. God's Vision to Peter (10:9 - 16)

Verse 9

About noon [the sixth hour] the following day [21 hours after Cornelius' vision] as they [Cornelius' men] were on their journey and approaching the city, [Joppa] [36 miles from Caesarea to Joppa] Peter went up on the roof to pray. (proseuchomai)



Verse 10

He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. (ekstasis = spiritual experience of transportation of mind or body or both)

He could be at the end of a fast or this could be just the normal distraction that comes when people try to pray.

Verse 11

He saw

- 1) heaven (ouranos = the sky level) opened
- 2) and something like a large sheet (othone = sail) being let down to earth by its four corners. (arche = the beginning – the extremities)

Verse 12

It contained

- 1) all kinds of four-footed animals, (tetrapous = quadruped)
 - 2) as well as reptiles (herpeton = creeping animals)
 - 3) and birds. (peteinon = flying animals)
- These general groups would include both "clean" and "unclean" animals. Therefore, for the orthodox Jew – there would be a problem with some of these animals.

Verse 13

Then a voice told him,

- 1) “Get up, Peter.
- 2) Kill
- 3) and eat.”

Now we have a problem!



Leviticus 11

General Rules:

- 1) **Certain animals may not be eaten at all.** This restriction includes the flesh, organs, eggs and milk of the forbidden animals.
- 2) Of the animals that may be eaten, the birds and mammals **must be killed in accordance with Jewish law.**
- 3) **All blood must be drained** from meat and poultry or broiled out of it before it is eaten.
- 4) **Certain parts** of permitted animals **may not be eaten.**
- 5) Fruits and vegetables are permitted, but must **be inspected for bugs** (which cannot be eaten)
- 6) Meat (the flesh of birds and mammals) **cannot be eaten with dairy.**
- 7) Utensils that have **come into contact** with non-kosher food may not be used with kosher food. This applies only where the contact occurred while the food was hot.
- 8) **Grape products made by non-Jews** may not be eaten.

Verse 15

The voice spoke to him a second time,

“*Do not call anything impure* (koinoo = to treat as common – or unholy – imperative command)

that God has made clean.” (katharizo = God has made those things which are previously unclean, clean in the New Covenant)

[The literal order makes more sense:

What God has cleansed – You must not consider unclean!]

There were two reasons why God limited the food that should be consumed in the Old Testament times: 1) a separation from other nations/gods/peoples and 2) health concerns.

In the New Covenant, the distinction is not circumcision, or food laws, but Christ as the dividing line between pleasing God and displeasing God. We are given a short list in Acts 15:29.

Verse 16

This happened three times,
and immediately the sheet (skeuos = vessel/apparatus)
was taken back to heaven. (ouranos = sky)

Confirmation of the message!

Verse 14

“Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied.

“I have never eaten anything

- 1) *impure* (koinos = common)
- 2) *or unclean.*” (akathartos = not ceremonially clean)

Peter was saved, filled by the Holy Spirit, a devout follower of Christ – but he still has free will to choose or reject the commands of God!

“If you are too precise may the Lord set you on fire, and consume your bonds of red tape! If you have become so improperly proper that you cannot commit a proper impropriety, then pray God to help you be less proper, for there are many who will never be saved by your instrumentality while you study propriety.” (Spurgeon)

III. God’s Confirmation for Peter (10:17 - 20)

Verse 17

[now]

While Peter was wondering (diaporeo = at a loss)
about the meaning of the vision,

[behold!]

the men sent by Cornelius
found out where Simon’s house was
and stopped at the gate.

God’s timing is perfect! Don’t ignore “coincidences”!
The circumstances provide clarity and confirmation.

Verse 18

They called out,
asking if Simon
who was known as Peter
was staying there.

Verse 19

While Peter was still thinking
(dienthymenomai = to wrestle in the mind)
about the vision,
the Spirit said to him,
[behold!]
“[Simon], three men
are looking for you.

God’s timing once again

The process of hearing God:

- 1) Contemplation (wrestling) of the call of God
- 2) Clarity in circumstances
- 3) Confirmation of the Spirit

Verse 20

So [now]

- 1) *get up*
- 2) *and go downstairs.*
- 3) *Do not hesitate*
- 4) *to go with them,*

[without misgivings (medeis diakrino = doubting nothing)]
for I have sent them.” (apostello = those sent by God)

God does not give us INFORMATION without expecting ACTION!

We can’t just say “wow that was a good message from God’s Spirit to me,” and then just go about our normal business.

God may be sending people into your life for HIS purposes.

IV. Peter’s Response to God’s Call (10:21 - 23)

Verse 21

Peter went down and said to the men,
[behold!]
“I’m the one you’re looking for.
Why have you come?”

We don’t get to see Peter’s facial expression here.

I imagine he is shocked to see Roman – Gentiles – with a soldier at the his door.

Suddenly, the vision of God expands to more than just food!

How could he treat these Gentiles as unclean having heard the word of God through His vision and His Spirit.

Verse 22

The men replied,

- 1) “We have come from Cornelius the centurion.
- 2) He is a righteous and God-fearing man,
who is respected
by all the Jewish people.
- 3) A holy angel told him
to ask you to come to his house
- 4) so that he could hear
what you have to say.”

Verse 23

Then Peter

- 1) invited the men into the house
to be his guests.
- 2) The next day Peter started out with them,
and some of the believers from Joppa went along.

Since the days of Jacob, where the division between Jews and Gentiles was established, an orthodox Jew would not associate with Gentiles, not allow them to enter his home, or eat at his table. Peter crossed all of these barriers in this moment of obedience to God.

Centuries ago – another Jew came to Joppa – trying to run away from talking to Gentiles. His name was Jonah. Even then, God was trying to share his love with the whole world. Unlike, Jonah, Peter agrees to go and do what the Lord requires of him.

