

ACTS 10:9-43

Introduction:

1. As we have seen God working in a Gentile proselyte, Cornelius, we begin to see God work on the other person of this story - Peter. This whole chapter is about bringing Peter into an unexpected experience so that he would help **Paul**, and his ministry, to be endorsed in the Jerusalem council later in Acts 15.
2. *Remember that God, in mercy, uses a transitional period in order to **gradually** help individual believing Jews (Little Flock) to adjust and eventually understand somewhat that God was doing a **new** thing through Paul.
3. Cornelius' servants are sent to Joppa to find Peter with the hopes of bringing him back to Cornelius' house. They are to tell Peter of Cornelius' vision and ask him to **come** with them.

A.

Acts 10:9-14 - On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: Acts 10:10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, Acts 10:11 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: Acts 10:12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. Acts 10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. Acts 10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

1. Simultaneously, God places Peter in a trance-vision about the sheet that contained clean and unclean animals. Peter is told to eat, but being a good Jew who knew Leviticus 11:20-25 as to which animals were clean and unclean, he says **No!** - even though he was told by **God** to eat the unclean animals (permission). Peter, at first, resists God's command because he was under the **Law** which forbade him to do this.
2. Remember, Peter hasn't been told **yet** about the Dispensation of Grace, nor to stop the Temple worship. He has no clue of not being under Law to being under grace. He is a Jew who believes that Jesus was the **Christ** (John 20:30-31).

*Through this experience Peter will learn to accept the unclean meat that will lead to his acceptance of God working and ministering with **Gentiles**.

B.

Acts 10:15-23 - And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. Acts 10:16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven. Acts 10:17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, Acts 10:18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. Acts 10:19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Acts 10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Acts 10:21 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? Acts 10:22 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. Acts 10:23 Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

1. As Peter has doubt and is questioning this vision, Cornelius' three men arrive at the **right** moment! Do you think **if not for** the supernatural vision, the Spirit's voice, and the trance that Peter would have invited the three men at the gate in - and then **go** with them to Caesarea?
2. Peter and the other apostles were not **bigoted**. They knew their commission to the Jewish people. But there was that "middle wall of partition" there and they had a strong conviction in their hearts that the Gentiles were **unclean dogs**. They did not mind Gentiles being saved, as long as the Israel nation would **lead**.

Matthew 10:5-6 - These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: Matt. 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew 15:22-24 - And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. Matt. 15:23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. Matt. 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

3. The 12 had it in their minds to stay away from Gentiles, as they had been told, **until** there was a believing Israel in their land with the King in control. Only then could the Jewish believers evangelize the nations (Gentiles).
 - a. *This event with Peter is a supernatural circumstance that is the beginning of the Little Flock's introduction (besides Saul) to God's **new** program that will be coming on the scene.
 - b. It was good that Peter took some Jewish brethren with him. The Bible tells us that it is by the mouth of two or more witnesses that **truth** is to be established.

- C. 1. Upon Peter's arrival, Cornelius gathered a large group of people along with all of his household. Cornelius revealed some of his pagan background-culture when he **bowed** down at

Acts 10:24-28 - And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. Acts 10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*. Acts 10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. Acts 10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. Acts 10:28 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.

Peter's feet. Peter quickly informs him that he is only a man, also.

Exodus 20:3 - Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

This rules out the **pope!

2. This large crowd is quite a testimony for Cornelius of how he was held in respect and affection by his loved ones for them to be there to hear of God's truth (he had **invited** them).

3. Peter explains to these hearers of how it was religiously unlawful for a **Jew** to keep company with Gentiles. But then he tells them that **God** had showed him that he should no longer call any man common or unclean.

*Peter now understood the vision of the sheet with clean and unclean animals. God was not actually talking about eating food, but He was teaching Peter about the human race. God had shown Peter not to call **any**one common or unclean.

4. Saul has been saved in Acts 9 to begin the Dispensation of Grace. As Les says: "The gate is being opened to the Gentiles and when we get into Chapter 11, it will get a lot **wider**."

D.

Acts 10:29-33 - 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? Acts 10:30 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, Acts 10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Acts 10:32 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. Acts 10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

*Cornelius tells, or recaps, his vision from God that he had experienced. This was why he had so many attending. They were **thirsty**, waiting to hear Peter's words from God. No doubt this was an encouragement for Peter to speak to them. He knows God is in this.

E.

Acts 10:34-35 - Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: Acts 10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

1. Peter begins to share his conclusion on why God worked with them and himself in the way He did. He had, all his life, been taught that Jews-Israel were to be **separate** from other nations (Gentiles).

Exodus 8:22-23 - And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of *flies* shall be there; to the end thou mayest know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the earth. Exo. 8:23 And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.

*Notice later when Paul uses the very **word** Gentiles when speaking to some Jewish people:

Acts 22:18-23 - [And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. Acts 22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: Acts 22:20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. Acts 22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. Acts 22:22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and *then* lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a *fellow* from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. Acts 22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,]

2. Again remember, this is the same Peter, who a few years ago, had been instructed **not** to go to the Gentiles. Also, Peter had no understanding of the **mystery** program that would be ushered in through Paul.

3. Peter had learned that God was [no respecter of persons], Jew or Gentile.

**Isn't it significant that this even should take place just after Saul's conversion and commission to the Gentiles?

4. This passage is not saying Cornelius was already saved. Cornelius was accepted simply in the sense that he was no longer to be considered "unclean". God had responded to him because of his seeking heart. Cornelius believed Israel's God was the true God and diligently sought Him (11:14).

Hebrews 11:6 - But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

**God was pleased with the way Cornelius had responded to the Jewish influence that God had placed into his life, which finally led to his salvation.

F. Acts 10:36-43 - The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) Acts 10:37 That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; Acts 10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. 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: Acts 10:40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; Acts 10:41 Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead. Acts 10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

1. As Peter preaches, notice that it is the same message - same word that God had sent to the children of Israel. It is the kingdom gospel.

*Peter gave nothing new or different to these Gentiles than he did to the Jewish people in Acts 2-5.

Note: There is no mention that Christ died for their sins, that He shed His blood for them, and that He rose from the dead as the means to justify them - save them. Not a word!

2. Note the following verses:

a. Acts 10:36 - The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)

*It is the same word given to the children of Israel.

b. Acts 10:37 - That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

*It is the message that even goes back to John the Baptist.

c. Acts 10:38 - How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

* It is the same message about Christ's earthly life (Romans 15:8).

- d. 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 witnessed it all with the disciples. It is all true of Christ.
- e. Acts 10:40 - Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;
- *God raised Messiah and He was seen by many.
- f. Acts 10:41 - Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. (40 day seminar).
- *Christ **mainly** revealed Himself to the Little Flock (Jews).
- g. Acts 10:42 - And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge of quick and dead.
- *The 12 were chosen to proclaim the kingdom message to **Israel**.
- h. Acts 10:43 - To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins. (He's the Messiah).
- *It is **still** a Jewish message (prophets) and not Paul's mystery message. The point is that Peter clearly gives the same Jewish word/message of Israel to Cornelius and other Gentiles as was preached in Acts 2-3. That is **all** he knew!
3. Remember, everything we know of the gospel of Christ-Grace was still hidden. So how could you preach something, or believe something, that had **not** been revealed to you? You can't, and that is why the message of the D.B.R. alone saves us today. It is **not** Peter's message, nor what Cornelius **believed** in to be saved.