

peter Visits Cornelius

Acts 10:1-44

BIBLE BACKGROUND

Meet Cornelius

This passage begins at the home of Cornelius, a Roman centurion in Caesarea, the headquarters for the Roman occupation of that area. As a centurion, Cornelius would have been in charge of a unit of about 100 men, and he was considered a man of noble character.

For a non-Jew to have been considered God-fearing meant that Cornelius followed the Jewish religion to some degree, possibly to the greatest extent he could as a non-Jew. His vision of the angel at about three in the afternoon likely means that he was following Jewish religious practices since that was a regular time of prayer for the Jews. And it is to Cornelius' credit that when an angel of God spoke to him, he didn't hesitate to do what he was told.

God Speaks: A Tale of Two Visions

Peter was following normal Jewish religious practices, among which was the strict adherence to the dietary restrictions spelled out in Leviticus 11. Many of the forbidden animals described there were included in the sheet suspended before Peter in his vision. Being told to kill and eat "unclean" animals shocked Peter.

The challenge to Peter's beliefs didn't end when the sheet disappeared. It was obviously no coincidence that Cornelius' servants appeared just as Peter's vision ended. Peter was thinking through the meaning of his vision when he was summoned to go to the house of a non-Jew. The servants said that an angel had told Cornelius to send for Peter to hear what he had to say.

And God made it clear to Peter that the servants' arrival was connected to what God was trying to teach him. God told him that the men were there, that he had sent them, and that Peter was to go with them.

Peter knew that the vision concerned much more than food.

The Jesus Connection

Peter took a huge risk in following God's leading to reach out to Cornelius and his family. Peter followed God's leading without hesitation because Jesus was the cornerstone of his life.

Peter set an example for us by taking advantage of an opportunity to tell someone unexpected about his faith. We dare not ignore that example; rather, we must be willing to tell anyone who is interested about what God has done for us through Jesus. Pray and ask God to show you how you can share your faith and God's love. You can write your prayer here.

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BIBLE FOCUS (THE BASICS)

So Peter thought Jewish people were God's favorite. Well, he was wrong. God loves everyone equally! In order to let Peter know this, God had shown Peter a vision of animals that Peter knew he had been forbidden to eat. Then God told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat!" Peter was stunned. Why would God tell him to eat something impure and unclean?

Well, God was able to make his point to Peter. Later, when Peter was in the home of a Gentile (something else Peter considered forbidden), he realized that God was telling him that God makes all things (and people) clean and pure. God doesn't show *any* favoritism and wants *everyone* to be able to receive forgiveness of sins.

Key Verse: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:19–20).

Bible Point: Tell everyone about Jesus.



Our Diverse World

Take a piece of paper and a pencil with you in the car. Take a drive through

your city or town and tally how many people you can count who are of a different nationality or skin color than you are. List the different types of people and what country you think they or their grandparents may have come from. When you get back home, sit down together and look at a world map online. Rather than looking at the differences, write the things that you might have in common with people from other countries. These could be things like enjoying hiking, riding a bike, reading, or playing sports. Then pray for ways to show God's love for the people you saw.



THE WORD FOR THE WEEK

MONDAY Isaiah 5:21

Are you wise in your own eyes? How does that affect how you treat other people?

TUESDAY Isaiah 12:4-6

How can you thank God and praise him so that other people will see God is good?

WEDNESDAY Isaiah 6:8

What would it take for you to say "send me!"?

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THURSDAY Acts 1:8

How does the Holy Spirit help us witness?

FRIDAY1 Peter 3:15

How can we be prepared to give an answer?

SATURDAY Revelation 1:5-7

What stands out to you from this vision of heaven?