

8/5/07

**God Is Faithful To Save Man**  
**Acts 10:1-48**

Many people often ask, “How will God judge the individuals who have never heard the gospel and how will they hear the gospel if no person is sent?”

\* Paul poses the same question but affirms that it is by the hearing of the Gospel and the sending of preachers. Rom. 10:14-15

Though there are no simple answers to these and many other questions, we do know that the Scriptures reveal sufficient information about God to assure each of us that He is just and absolutely flawless in judgment, never holding man responsible for what he is ignorant of, but He does hold man responsible for his willful ignorance!

\* Knowing these truths about God we can rest in the perfect judgment of God and seek to understand Him and salvation from what is revealed.

So, to understand God’s fervent love for lost man and His willingness to reach him with the Gospel, we want to look at how God revealed Himself to Cornelius with the Gospel. Acts 10

**1.** The preaching of the gospel to the house of Cornelius is one of the most important events on the book of Acts, so much so, that it is recorded

twice, the actual account and the reported account to the elders in Jerusalem, revealing God’s will to make Jew and Gentile one in the body of His church. Acts 10:1-11:18

**2.** God had made Jew and Gentile one by braking down the middle wall of partition. Eph. 2:11-18

**3.** God had already began preparing the Jew as Philip preached to the Samaritans and Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch. Acts 8

**4.** God’s revelation to Cornelius and Peter became the authoritative evidence for excepting the Gentile as part of the church, apart from law in the first church council at Jerusalem. Acts 15

**5.** Jesus had told Peter that to him were given the keys of the kingdom and accordingly he was the spokesman at Pentecost to the Jews and now to the Gentiles through Cornelius.

The preaching of the gospel to the house of Cornelius consists of three natural movements that have the common thread of “visitation”.

**I.** Cornelius was visited by an angel. vs. 1-8

**II.** Peter was visited by the Lord. vs. 9-23

**III.** Cornelius was visited by Peter. vs. 24-48

**I. Cornelius was visited by an angel. vs. 1-8**

**A** The identification of Cornelius. vs. 1-2

**1.** Cornelius resided in the city of Caesarea. vs. 1a

- a. This is Caesarea on the Mediterranean that was built by Herod in honor of Augustus Caesar, a predominantly Gentile.
  - b. Prior it was a Phoenician outpost called Strato's Tower, a second class harbor due to the shallow entrance and open to the strong southern winds.
  - c. Herod altered this by building an incredible man-made sea-port and village, as the provincial capital.
  - d. Herod the Great deepened the harbor, built a breakwater against the southern gales, constructed the imposing city with an amphitheater and temple in honor of Rome and Augustus, brought in fresh water by an aqueduct, all protected by a garrison of soldiers.
  - e. Caesarea was hated, called 'The daughter of Edom', 30 miles from Joppa and 65 northwest of Jerusalem.
2. Cornelius was a soldier by occupation. vs. 1b
- a. He had a common name, 10,000 slaves had been given that name by their liberator Cornelius Sulla in 82 B.C.  
\* His name "kornelios" means "of a horn", of Latin origin.

- b. He was a Centurion over 100 men, 1/6 of a Regiment or cohort "speira", which comprise 600 men and ten cohorts made a legion of 6,000 men.
  - c. He was over an Italian Regiment, not a native but a foreigner from Italy, a non-commission officer who worked his way up the ranks, comparable to a captain or company commander,
    - 1) They were courageous, fighting to the death!
    - 2) All centurions are always presented in a good light! Matt. 8:10-11
3. Cornelius was a religious man. vs. 2
- a. He was a devout man "eusebes", meaning pious, devoted in worship to God. vs. 2a
  - b. He was a God-fearer with all his household, family and servants. vs. 2a
    - 1) He was a "Proselyte of the Gate" of the Jewish faith, except for circumcision. Acts 13:16, 26, 43, 16:14, 17:4, 17, 18:7
    - 2) Some Gentiles saw the bankruptcy of pagan polytheism, turning to the worship of Jewish monotheism.
  - c. He gave alms generously to the people. vs. 2b
    - 1) Generously "eleemosyne" means to have mercy or pity.

- 2) He was a man of compassion, to many poor and needy Jews, being reputable among them. vs. 22e
- d. He prayed to God always. vs. 2c
  - 1) The word “deomai” means to beg for the things asked, the salvation of his family. Acts 11:14
  - 2) The word for prayer “deomai” is used always to God, indication being, he was a sincere seeker.
  - 3) The Jews prayed three times a day, the third, sixth and ninth. Ps. 55:17, Dan. 6:10, Acts 3:1
- B. The revelation to Cornelius. vs. 3-6
  - 1. Cornelius was visited by an angel. vs. 3
    - a. He was praying the ninth hour. vs. 3
      - 1) The ninth hour was 3:00 P.M. the time for sacrifice.
      - 2) This was the very hour that the veil of the Temple had been torn in two to indicate that access had been made to God for all. Lk. 23:42
    - b. He was allowed to see a vision. vs. 3
      - 1) The manner was clearly “phaneros” plainly and openly in a vision “horama”, which is seen while awake, a divine revelation. vs. 3a
        - \* The word appears 12 times in the New Testament, 11 are in Acts.

- 2) The vision was of an angel of the Lord coming to him and calling out his name “Cornelius”. vs. 3b
- 2. Cornelius responded to the angel in reverence. vs. 4
  - a. He observed “atenizo” to look steadfastly, fixing his eyes on him. vs. 4a
    - 1) The same word is used of the apostles as they watched Jesus ascend up into heaven and Peter on the lame man. Acts 1:10, 3:4
    - 2) Ten of the fourteen appearances are found in Acts.
  - b. He feared “emphobos”, frightened or terrified was trembling. vs. 4b
    - 1) This was a seasoned warrior!
    - 2) Two other times. Acts 22:9, 24:25
  - c. He recognized the vision as divine submitting himself by the words, “What is it, lord”. vs. 4c-e
    - \* Cornelius did not worship the angel but knew it was a divine visitation!
  - d. He was told by the angel, “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.” vs. 4f
    - 1) This does not mean God forgot but that He was aware recalling them.
    - 2) This does not mean Cornelius knew God, only that God existed.

- 3) This does not mean that God honored these works for salvation but God saw them a sincere heart.
  - 4) This word memorial “mnemosunon” is found three times in New Testament, the other two are used of the woman who anointed Jesus at Bethany with the costly oil. Matt. 26:13, Mk.14:9
2. Cornelius was given instructions by the angel. vs. 5-6
- a. He was to send to Joppa for Peter. vs. 5
    - 1) The city of Joppa was about 30 miles south of Caesarea. vs. 5a  
\* Joppa was the city from where Jonah fled from the Lord, modern day Jaffa.
    - 2) He was to “send for” middle imperative, indicating Simon, whose surname was Peter would have a message for him. vs. 5b
  - b. He was to obey the message of Peter. vs. 6
    - 1) Peter was at Simon the Tanners house by the sea. vs. 6a-c
      - a) Tanners were held in supreme contempt, due to the nature of their trade with animal skins, making them unclean.

- b) The house had to be 50 cubits outside the city.
  - c) And if they were betrothed, the girl could brake it.
- 4) Peter would tell him what he must do. vs. 6d
- a) Peter had been given the keys of the Kingdom to both Jew and Gentile. Acts 2, 10
  - b) The word must “dei” means necessary or duty.
- C. The submission of Cornelius by obeying. vs. 7-8
- 1. He called his servants and a soldier in prompt obedience. vs. 7
    - a. This he did as soon as the angel departed, vs. 7a
    - b. The two household servants were equally devout to God. vs. 7b, 2
    - c. The devout soldier were of those who waited on him continually. vs. 7c  
\* The word devout “eusebes” is the same as in verse two for Cornelius.
  - 2. He sent them to Joppa. vs. 8
    - a. Cornelius revealed the appearance of the angel, his fear and all the instructions. vs. 8a  
\* The word explained “exegeomai” means to unfold or expound, we our word “exegesis” from it!

b. Cornelius then sent them to Joppa. vs. 8b

\* The word sent “apostello” gives us our word “apostle”!

### Illustration

Noah obeyed the instructions of God and preached for 120 years, though all knew God, they did not glorify Him as God. Rom. 1:21a-b

\* When some un-reached tribes were reached, they told of divine messengers that told them of those who would soon come to proclaim a message.

### Application

1. People always ask what about those who never heard the gospel, Cornelius is a classic example that God will make Himself known to all before death, in His own way and time to hear and respond to the Gospel. Jn. 3:16

\* If God does not allow one person to hear and respond to the gospel, then held them responsible, He could not be Holy, just, good, let alone perfect!

2. God looks at the heart in respond to the measure of light a person possesses, when they reject, it becomes greater darkness. Matt. 13:15

\* “For the **hearts** of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their **hearts** and turn, So that I should heal them.”

3. God gave the Amorites time to repent, about 400 years, they did not and God used Israel to judge them,

\* “But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the **Amorites** is not yet complete.” Gen. 15:16

4. God could of preached the Gospel to Cornelius through the angel but He only used him to direct and guide Cornelius to Peter.

\* Can not God have done this in the past and be doing the same thing today to those in the un-reached peoples groups of the world as He sends out preachers and missionaries? Rom. 10:14-18

*Cornelius was visited by an angel of God!*

## **II. Peter was visited by the Lord. vs. 9-23**

A. The revelation to Peter was described. vs. 9-12

1. The activity of Peter is stated. vs. 9

a. The time was after the angel had appeared to Cornelius, the next day. vs. 9a

b. The process was as those sent by Cornelius were nearing the city of Joppa. vs. 9b

c. The apostle Peter went up to the housetop to pray, the aorist indicated definite prayers. vs. 9c

\* They are flat with outside stairs.

- d. The time was the sixth hour, 12 P.M.  
\* 21 hours had passed and Peter was completely ignorant as to the men on journey to Joppa but God is going to alien him with His will.
- 2. The condition of Peter is declared. vs. 10
  - a. He became very hungry and wanted to eat. vs. 10a
    - 1) The Greek tenses indicate his desire to eat and taste for himself, appearing only this time.
    - 2) Due to smelling the food being prepared.
  - b. He fell into a trance while about to pray. vs. 10b-c  
\* The word trance “ektasis” means ecstasy, literally to stand outside of oneself, used of Paul when Jesus spoke to him in the Temple. Acts 22:17-18
- 3. The vision of Peter is revealed. vs. 11-12
  - a. He saw heaven open and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corner. vs. 11a  
\* The word for great sheet “othone” means a linen sheet. Acts 11:5
  - b. He saw it descending to him and let down to earth. vs. 11b
    - 1) The implication being, the revelation was from God.

- 2) The intended recipient needing the revelation on earth was man, Peter.
  - c. He saw all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds. vs. 12  
\* The Law made a clear difference between clean and unclean animals. Lev. 11, Deut. 14
- B.** The explanation of the vision to Peter was emphasized. vs.13-16
- 1. Peter heard a voice, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” vs. 13
    - a. This was an imperative command, not a suggestion.
    - b. This was personal to Peter.
  - 2. Peter immediately responded by his Jewish upbringing. vs. 14
    - a. He said, “Not so Lord”. vs. 14a-c
      - 1) The word but “de” is a contrasting conjunction, marking the sharp contrast of the command to obey.
      - 2) The very words were and are a contradiction, for a Christian can not use Lord and the word “NO” in the same sentence!
    - b. He gives his explanation, “For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” vs. 14d
      - 1) He was giving testimony to his obedience to the Law.

- 2) Ezekiel did the same Ezk. 4:14
- 3. Peter was given the correction and explanation of his contradiction. vs. 15
  - a. This was the second time God spoke to Peter. vs. 15a
    - \* The voice was the same one from heaven. vs. 13
  - b. The words, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” vs. 15b
    - 1) This was the first step towards the interpretation.
    - 2) The word cleansed “katharizo” is the aorist, God actually made clean, from the physical means to remove all dirt or spot, used for the cleansing of the leper. Matt. 8:2-3
    - 3) The word from the moral and spiritual sense means free from defilement or impurity of sin. Heb. 9:14
    - 4) The Gentiles were considered by the Jews as unclean, “dogs” simply created to kindle the fires of hell.
- 4. Peter was told this three times. vs. 16
  - a. The message was unmistakably from God being three-fold. vs. 16a
    - 1) Peter denied Jesus three times. Lk. 22:61
    - 2) Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him three times. Jn. 21:13-17

- 3) Paul asked three times for God to remove his thorn in the flesh. 2Cor. 12:8
  - b. The object was taken up to heaven again. vs. 16b
    - 1) Affirming the origin of the trance.
    - 2) Affirming the authority of the command.
- C. The confirmation of the vision to Peter was revealed. vs. 17-23
- 1. The apostle Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant. vs. 17a
    - a. The word wondering “diaporeo” means to be perplexed or be entirely at loss. Acts 2:12, 5:24
    - b. The struggle was a real one for Peter.
  - 2. The men at the very same time arrived and inquired if it was the house of Simon as they stood before the gate. vs. 17b-c
    - a. Notice how God works at both ends and brings them together, being the God of order, not confusion!
    - b. The word “behold” marks unexpectedness and surprise.
  - 3) It is a bit comical, they are being respectful to not enter being Gentiles, yet Simon is a tanner.
  - 3. The men then inquired to see if Simon-Peter, was lodging there. vs. 18





**Illustration**

He who provides for this life, but takes no care for eternity, is wise for a moment but a fool forever.

**#5393**

**Application**

1. When we except Christ, we allow the Scriptures to be the sole authority for life and practice.
  - a. Some are bound by legalism of dress, length of hair, make up, to judge salvation.
  - b. Others lean to mysticism and subjectivism based on their feelings and emotions for truth, instead of the word of God.
  - c. Still others mix their former religious practices with the Bible.
    - \* Every believer is called to be a good Berean, to search the Scriptures to see if what they hear is so. Acts 17:11
2. The tragic thing is when a person is not teachable being bound and loyal to their dogmas or doctrines, regardless of what the Bible teaches.
  - a. There are those that teach that you have to be water baptized to be saved, even though God reveals it in His word.
  - b. There are others, who teach that everyone can and should speak in tongues, either as evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit or of being saved.
  - c. Then others teach that if you divorce you can never remarry, when clearly in Scripture the innocent party of adultery can remarry.

- d. Yet others are bound by foods, days and feast days still.
  - \* Mk. 7:14-19, Rom. 14:1-14, Col. 2:20-24
3. The only one that can make the word of God alive and understood is the Holy Spirit, not man.
  - a. But your heart must be open to believe God's revelation above your opinions, His authority and standard, not man's. Jer. 17:9
  - b. The Holy Spirit is the great encourager to come alongside to help us do the work God has prepared for us. Eph. 2:10
4. The vilest of sinners, who trusts the atoning work of Jesus on the cross can be saved and forgiven for all their sins.
  - a. Isaiah says, "Come, let's reason together, though your sins be red as scarlet they will be white as snow, red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Is. 1:18, 1Cor. 6:9-11
  - b. A new creature, all things pass...2Cor. 5:17

***Peter was visited by the Lord!*****III. Cornelius was visited by Peter. vs. 24-48**

- A. The arrival of Peter at Caesarea. vs. 24-33
  1. Peter came as a servant not as a lord. vs. 24-27
    - a. Peter entered Caesarea and Cornelius was waiting with a house was full of people. vs. 24
      - 1) His relatives.

- 2) His close friends.
- b. Peter entered the house of Cornelius and he prostrated himself at the feet of Peter. vs. 25
  - 1) Cornelius gave obeisance to Peter as some supernatural messenger.
  - 2) The word worship “proskuneo” means to kiss the hand, a common Oriental practice, especially the Persians, prostrating to the ground, touching ones forehead on the ground.
- c. Peter refused to except such honor as practice by the pagans. vs. 26
  - 1) The word “but” marks the sharp contrast.
  - 2) The actions of Peter affirmed his refusal to be seen as superior, “Peter lifted him up. vs. 26a”
  - 3) The words of Peter confirmed the refusal to be excepted as a superiority, “Stand up, I myself an also a man” but he also treated Cornelius with dignity, not as an unclean dog. vs. 26b-d
- d. Peter entering noticed all the people who had come together. vs. 27
- 2. Peter came to understand clearly the interpretation of his vision. vs. 28-29
  - a. His preliminary remarks stated the unlawfulness “athemitos”, not only

- illegal but abominable for any Jew to company “kollao” glue oneself to a Gentiles. vs. 28a-b
  - \* Found only two times and it is translated abominable. 1Pet. 4:3
- b. He proclaimed the interpretation of his vision by God, “God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean”. vs. 28c
  - 1) This was the fourth step, the word shown “deiknuo” mean to expose to the eyes.
  - 2) The apostle Peter at this very point understood clearly that salvation is for all, not just the Jews!
- c. He declared his prompt obedience without contradiction. vs. 29a
- d. He asked that they tell him the reason for his coming. vs. 29b.
- 3. Peter was answered by Cornelius. vs. 30-33
  - a. Cornelius retold the angelic visitation. vs. 30-32
    - 1) The time duration has been four days, two day each way.
    - 2) Cornelius said he fasted until the ninth hour, then an angel appeared, a man in bright clothing. vs. 30
    - 3) The word of the angel are much the same. vs. 31-32

- b.** Cornelius revealed his eagerness to hear God's word. vs. 33
- 1) He was a man under authority, he had been obedient to the vision, as well as Peter. "So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come." vs. 33a-b
  - 2) He and all present were ready to hear the gospel, "Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God." vs. 33c-d
  - 3) The aorist "to hear" means affectively and obey.

**B.** The preaching of the gospel by Peter. vs. 34-43

1. Peter declared the meaning of his personal revelation. vs. 34-35
  - a.** Peter declared that God shows no partiality or respect of person. vs. 34
    - 1) The word truth "aletheia" means what is true in any matter under consideration, salvation for Gentiles.
    - 2) The word perceive "katalamkano" means to lay hold with the mind.
    - 3) The context is Jew and Gentile partiality "prosopoleptes", one who discriminates, found only this one time in the New Testament.

- b.** Peter declared God excludes no one. vs. 35
  - 1) No nation is excluded.
  - 2) No man is rejected, whoever fears God and works righteousness is accepted by Him.
  - 3) This does not mean salvation by works but after the attitude of Cornelius, who responded to the measure of light he possessed.
  - 4) If his works were sufficient or synagogue, there would have been no need for Peter to preach Christ.
2. Peter preached a personal relation with Jesus. vs. 36-38
  - a.** The word of God to Israel was preaching peace through Jesus, the emphasis on the content and proclamation of the gospel. vs. 36
    - 1) He is Christ "Cristos" the anointed Messiah reconciling sinner to God.
    - 2) He was and is Lord of all, through salvation, making peace with God, including Gentiles. Rom. 5:1, Gen.. 12:3
  - b.** The word was the one they knew and were familiar with. vs. 37-38
    - 1) It had been proclaimed throughout all of Judea. vs. 37a
      - \* The word for word is "rhema" the spoken word.

- 2) It began from Galilee after the baptism John preached. vs. 37b
  - 3) They were not ignorant to the gospel, they just had not responded to the gospel till this time.
  - 4) The confirmation by God as to the person of Jesus, as the God-Man, was by the anointed of the Holy Spirit, doing good, performing miraculous, God being with Him. vs. 38  
\* Is. 61:1, Lk. 4:14-30
3. Peter proclaimed the attestation to the person of Jesus through the gospel. vs. 39-43
- a. The fact that the apostles were witnesses of all these things and the crucifixion and death of Jesus. vs. 39  
\* Killed by hanging on a tree, implies he became a curse for us. Gal. 3:13
  - b. The fact that Jesus was raised and seen by chosen witnesses who ate and drank with Him after the resurrection. vs. 40-41  
\* “To us” is emphatic, the twelve, 500 at one time and Paul, etc. Lk. 24:25-27, Jn. 21:12, 1Cor. 15:5-8
  - c. The fact that Jesus had ordered the commission of His disciples to preach “kerusso” to herald the Gospel to the people and testify that He was

- ordained by God to judge the living and the dead. vs. 42  
\* Jn.5:22, Heb. 9:27
- h. The fact that Jesus was proclaimed by the prophets, “to Him” is emphatic through His name and belief, one can be forgiven sins, only in Him. vs. 43  
\* Present participle, continuing in faith!
- C. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit by God. vs. 44-48
- 1. The Holy Spirit fell on all who were present, as Peter was speaking. vs. 44  
\* The very same experience that accrued at Pentecost and Samaria. Acts 2, 8
  - 2. The pouring out of the Holy Spirits astonished the Jews. vs. 45-46
    - a. The six Jews were astonished “existemi”, thrown in wonderment.
    - b. They had come with Peter for a witness and defense when they got back to Jerusalem. vs. 45  
\* It was all the work of the Spirit. Acts 11:12, 15-17
    - c. The Jews heard them speak in tongues and magnify God. vs. 46
  - 3. The Holy Spirit's baptism qualified them for water baptism. vs. 47-48
    - a. Peter asks if anyone objects. vs. 47  
\* God did it. Acts 15:8-9

- b. Peter commanded that they be baptized, not circumcised. vs. 48a  
\* The article is present, the water of baptism.
- c. Peter enjoyed the communion that the Holy Spirit had brought about for a few days. vs. 48b

### Illustration

What shall I do, this side of the tomb to be lost?  
The answer is NOTHING! #5393

### Application

1. The worst thing that the church can do is to make the gospel available only to their own nationality, culture or race.
  - a. “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, **Scythian**, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.” Col. 3:11, Gal. 3:28
  - b. For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.” Rom. 10:12
  - c. Paul tells the Ephesians about the dispensation of the grace of God which was the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body,

- and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel.” Eph. 3:2-6
- d. God hates respect of persons. Rom. 2:11, Eph. 6:9, Col. 3:25, Ja. 2:1, 1Pet. 1:17
2. The worst thing preachers can do is water-down the Gospel from the pulpit.
    - a. To not preaching on sin, repentance and the need of transformation, rather than behavioral modification!
    - b. To be politically correct, non-offensive and ecumenical, under the guise of God’s love!
    - c. To be motivational speakers for people tap into their potential and be successful!  
\* God has gone out of His way to provide the superior revelation to come to know God in a personal way through the person of His Son Jesus Christ. Rom. 1:16-17, Heb. 1:1-4
  3. God always confirms what He is doing through His word, the Holy Spirit, to validate and verify that it is His activity not an imitation.
    - a. God rejects no person who responds to the Gospel and there is no sin so vile or life so far gone which God by His grace and Holy Spirit can not cleanse, if they will only respond through repentance, trusting that Jesus can forgive them of their sins. 1Jn. 2:2
    - b. God is the epitome of Holiness and justice as Savior, being all-powerful, all knowing and all present, therefore He can neither learn nor increase in anything. Is. 45:21

- c. God declares that from the evidence of creation, conscience and history, man knows that there is a God, therefore man is without excuse. Rom. 1:20-21, 2:14-15
- d. God sent His Son to die for the entire world because He loved the world and none is excluded, therefore He must equally provide an opportunity to every person to hear or else He would be less than just. Jn. 3:16-17
- e. God will judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ and the Gospel. Rom. 2:16
- f. God has made one way to Himself and will except no other. Jn. 14:6

4. God holds Himself responsible for the unreached people and their salvation not you, but He does hold you responsible for the Gospel you are hearing, right now!

\* What are you going to do about it, are you going to change the subject to the people who have not heard to justify and excuse your responsibility or are you going to repent, believe and, receive eternal life?

*Cornelius was visited by Peter!*

### **Conclusion**

The preaching of the gospel to the house of Cornelius consists of these three natural movements that have the common thread of “visitation”.

- I. Cornelius was visited by an angel!

- II. Peter was visited by the Lord!
- III. Cornelius was visited by Peter!