

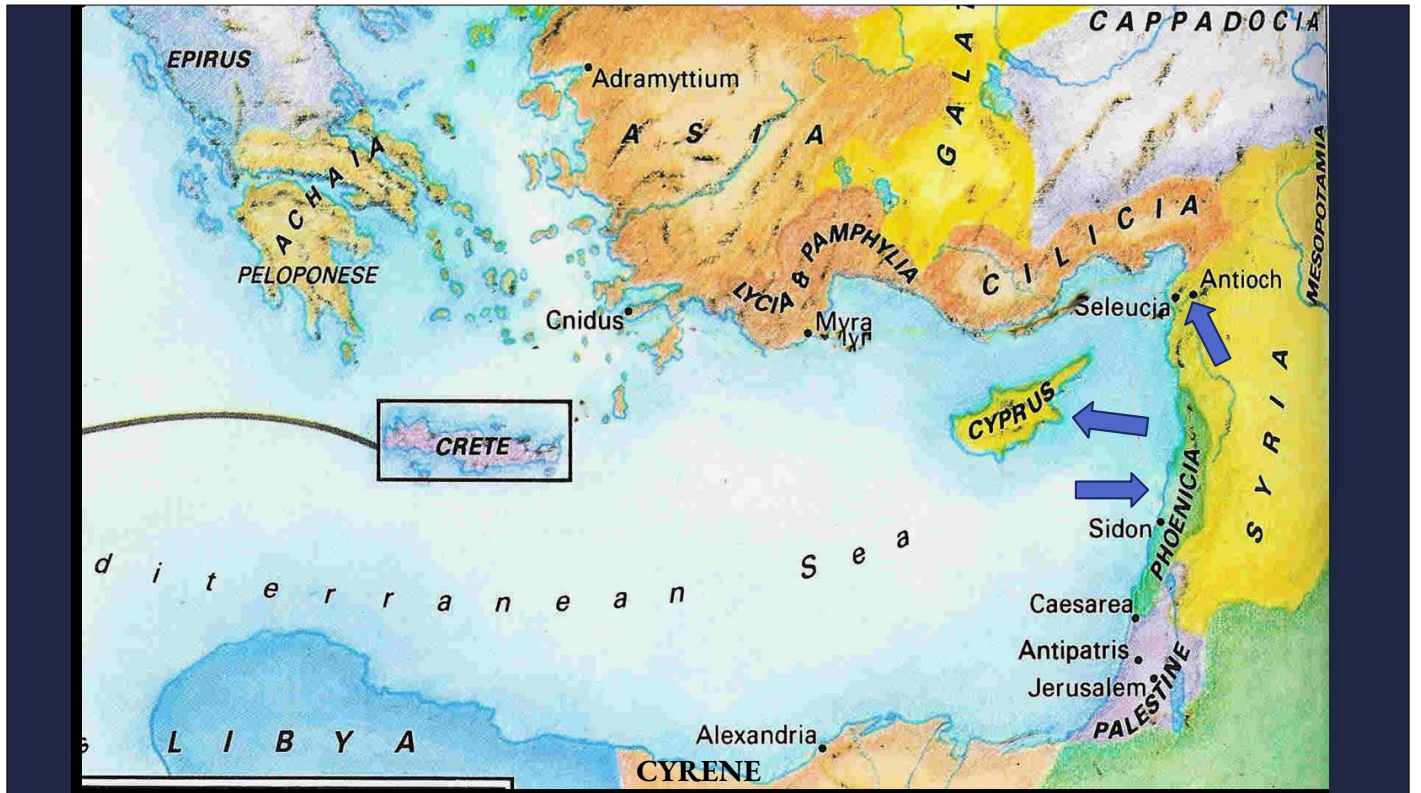


the book of acts
WEEK SIX

ACTS · WEEK 6

Peter & Cornelius

Acts 10:1–48 · Acts 11:19–30



An Account Told Three Times

Reference	Passage	Purpose
Acts 10:1–48	The Account of Conversion	Full narrative of the event
Acts 11:1–18	Peter Retells Events	Vindication to Jerusalem church
Acts 15:7–9	Peter at Jerusalem Council	Proof Gentiles saved like Jews

Of particular interest: Cornelius converted without circumcision — 7+ years after gospel preached only to Jews.

Who Was Cornelius?

First Gentile Convert

At the time the church was mostly Jews — today it is mostly Gentiles. His conversion proves Gentiles can be saved just as Jews.

Military Man — Roman Centurion

A non-commissioned officer commanding 100 men. A regiment (band) = 600 men, 10% of a Roman legion of 6,000.

Five centurions mentioned in the NT:

Cornelius + Matt 8:5–13; Luke 23:46–47; Acts 22:24–26; Acts 27:1

His Character

Moral man:

Described as devout (pious), one who feared God, gave alms generously, and prayed continually — presumably to the God of the Jews.

Devout — (v. 2):

Devoted to religious service; actively practicing his faith.

Feared God — (v. 2):

A recognized category of Gentile sympathizers to Judaism.

Prayed — (v. 2):

A man of consistent, disciplined prayer.

Was Cornelius Saved?

He Desired to Know More

Admitted he needed to learn (v. 33)
Wanted to know what God said (v. 33)

The Verdict

Not saved (11:14)
Had not repented unto life (11:18)
Even though: Moral & Religious!

Being moral and religious is not the same as being saved.

A. The Angel Appears to Cornelius

The 9th hour (~3:00 PM) — the hour of prayer:

Cornelius was praying when the vision came. (See also Ps 55:17; Dan 6:10)

Prayers heard:

His alms and prayer rose as a memorial before God — cf. Rev 8:4.

Sent for Peter:

The angel directed Cornelius to send for Peter in Joppa, who would tell him what to do (vv. 5–6).

Key observation:

When the angel left, Cornelius had still not confessed faith in Christ.

Peter's Vision on the Rooftop

Noon on a rooftop:

Peter, hungry, fell into a trance (ecstasy) — similar states in 2 Cor 12:2 and Rev 1:10.

Heaven opened:

A great sheet descended holding clean and unclean animals — troubling because not all were Kosher (Lev 11). (cf. Acts 7:55–56)

The message — repeated three times:

An important turning point: the Law's food distinctions pointed toward something greater.

Peter's Vision

He had either not understood or not remembered Jesus' teaching in which He had declared all foods clean (Mark 7:14–19, Rom. 14:14). Peter's 'No, Lord,' is, of course, an inconsistent contradiction. Nevertheless Peter's response was very consistent with his impulsive personality and former conduct. He had said, 'No,' to the Lord before (Matt. 16:22; John 13:8).

— Constable

The Holy Spirit Orchestrates the Meeting

Peter's continual wondering (imperfect tense):

He kept doubting and pondering the white-sheet vision — not a one-time reaction.

Notice how the Holy Spirit leads (v. 19):

The timing, the men at the gate, the call to go with them — all coordinated by the Spirit.

How unexpected for Peter:

Gentile men, from another town, summoned him to a Roman centurion's home — he had never been in this situation before.

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. — 1 Pet 3:15

The Meeting at Caesarea

Cornelius welcomed Peter (vv. 24-27):

Waiting with family and friends assembled — he had gathered everyone anticipating this moment.

Attempted to worship Peter (vv. 25-26):

Peter immediately corrected him: I am only a man.

Peter explains his presence (vv. 28-29):

God has shown me I should not call any person common or unclean.

Cornelius's account (vv. 30-33):

He recounted his vision and declared: We are all present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.

Peter's Sermon — No Partiality

Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. — Acts 10:34-35

God accepts those who:

Fear God

Work Righteousness

B. The Gospel of Christ

Claim	Significance
Anointed with power (v. 38)	Miracles attested His identity
Killed — crucified (v. 39)	Death on the cross
Raised from the dead (vv. 40-41)	Witnessed by chosen witnesses
Judge of living & dead (v. 42)	Appointed by God
Fulfillment of prophecy (v. 43)	Offers forgiveness of sins to all who believe

C. What Cornelius Was to Do

Cornelius obeyed — Acts 15:7-9 confirms it.

1

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Hear

10:6; 11:14

2

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Believe

10:43

3

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Repent

11:15

4

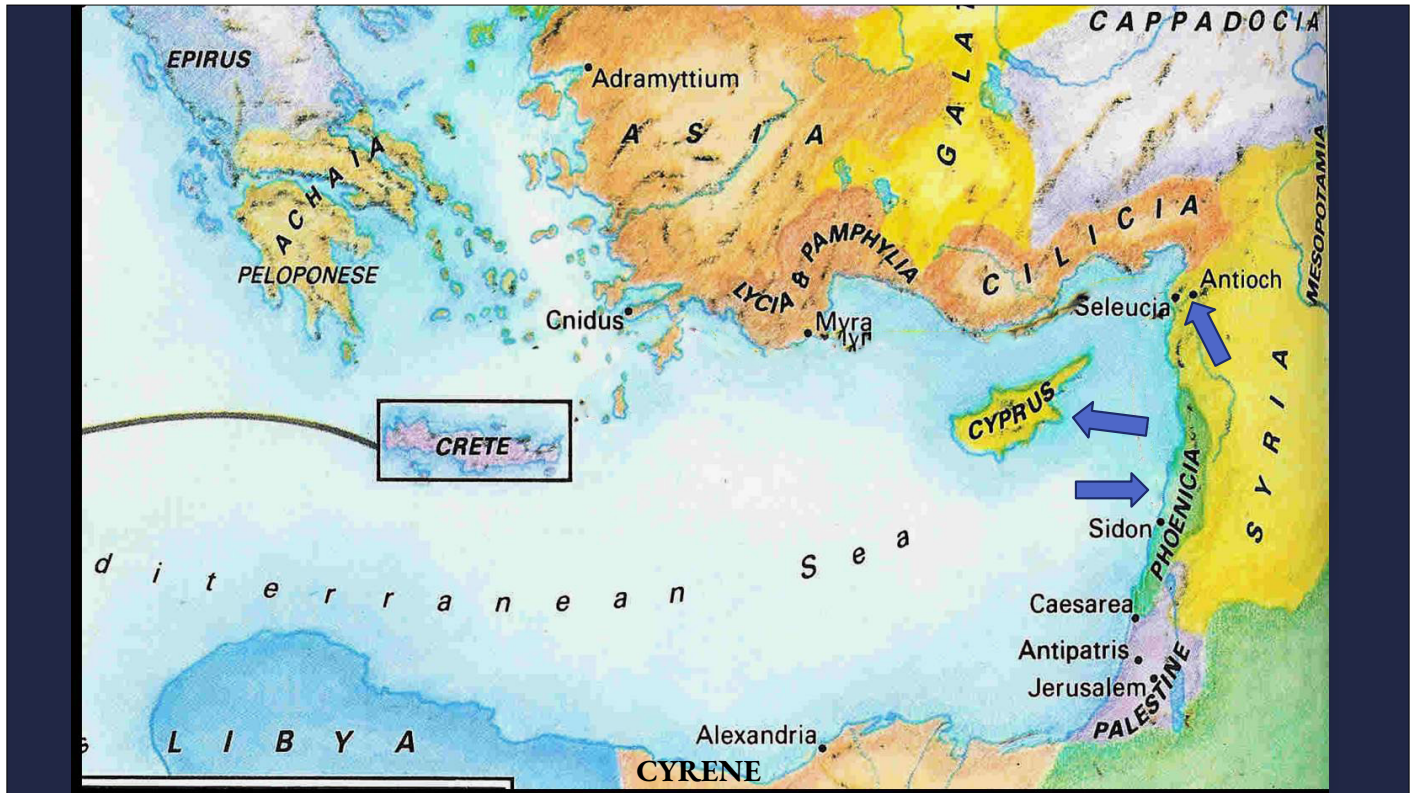
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Be Baptized

10:48

The 'Christian' Church at Antioch

The first place disciples were called Christians



ACTS 11:19-30 · The Church at Antioch

Three Marks of the Antioch Church

1. Initiated by Unnamed Believers

God used ordinary believers sharing the gospel to form an extraordinary church.

God appoints the proclaiming of the gospel as the power for salvation.

2. Sustained by Spirit-filled Teachers

The church was nurtured by men not concerned with power or self-promotion, but the spiritual welfare of the saints.

Teaching was committed to as a vital means of growth.

3. Authenticated by Sincere Generosity

Evidence of God's grace: non-coerced giving for the needs of the saints.

This generosity extended beyond the local church to the larger body of Christ.

The disciples were first called

Christians

in Antioch.

Known by others simply as those belonging to Christ.