

Peter's Vision

Read Acts 10:1–11:18.

Jesus told His disciples that they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:8). The message had already begun to move beyond Jerusalem. Now God was preparing Peter for another remarkable step: the Good News would be proclaimed to Gentiles without requiring them first to become proselytes of Judaism.

Peter's vision was not simply a lesson about what to eat. God used a familiar distinction between clean and unclean foods to prepare Peter to enter a Gentile home. The Lord was making clear that no person whom He had cleansed should be treated as unclean. The same Holy Spirit given to Jewish believers would also be poured out on Gentiles who believed in Yeshua.

Talking Points

- Cornelius, a Roman centurion in Caesarea, feared God, prayed continually, and gave generously. An angel instructed him to send for Peter, who was staying in Joppa (Acts 10:1–8).
- While praying, Peter saw a sheet lowered from heaven containing animals. Three times he heard a command to kill and eat. Peter objected, but the voice answered that what God had cleansed must not be called common (Acts 10:9–16).
- When Cornelius's messengers arrived, the Spirit directed Peter to go with them. Peter entered Cornelius's house and explained the meaning of the vision: God had shown him not to call any person common or unclean (Acts 10:17–33).
- Peter proclaimed Yeshua's death, resurrection, and forgiveness through His name. The Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles who heard and believed. Peter baptized them, and later explained to the

Jerusalem believers that God had granted Gentiles repentance leading to life (Acts 10:34–48; 11:1–18).

Background

Israel had been set apart by God as His own people. The distinctions in the Law that shaped Jewish life, included what could be eaten and the boundaries of ritual purity. In Peter's day, entering the home of a Gentile raised significant social and religious concerns for a Jewish man. Peter needed God's instruction before he would cross that boundary.

Cornelius was not an idol-worshipping pagan indifferent to Israel's God. He was a God-fearing Gentile whose prayers and gifts were noticed by God. Nevertheless, he needed to hear the message about Jesus. God brought Peter and Cornelius together through separate revelations, demonstrating that this meeting was His work, not merely a change in Peter's personal preferences.

The central explanation comes from Peter himself: "God has shown me that I should not call any person who is not Jewish unclean" (Acts 10:28). Peter then recognized that God shows no partiality and that forgiveness is proclaimed through Jesus to everyone who believes (Acts 10:34–43).

The descent of the Holy Spirit settled the question for Peter's Jewish companions. God gave these Gentiles the same gift He had given Jewish believers. When the believers in Jerusalem heard Peter's account, they glorified God for granting repentance leading to life to the Gentiles (Acts 11:18).

Bible Conversations

- Why did God prepare both Cornelius and Peter before they met?
What does their obedience teach us about listening to God's Word and responding to His direction?

- Peter interpreted his vision as a lesson about people. How does Acts 10:28 help us keep the meaning of the vision anchored in the passage itself?
- What convinced Peter and the Jerusalem believers that Gentiles were being welcomed by God? How should that shape the way we share the Gospel with people from different backgrounds?