

# GOOD NEWS

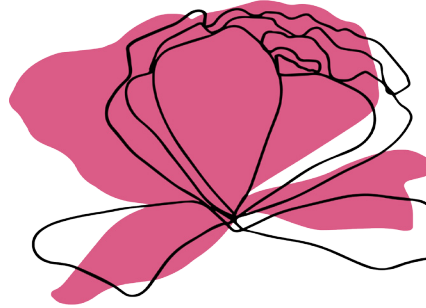
NO 7

WINTER/SPRING 2022

## GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY

“Then Peter opened his mouth and said: ‘In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality.’”

ACTS 10:34



“And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.”

Acts 10:42

ACTS 10:1-48

*“But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”*  
*Acts 10:35*

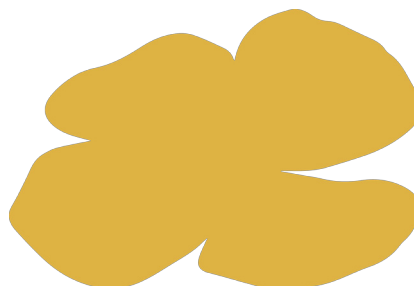
## Cornelius

### IN OTHER NEWS

#### TODAY'S WEATHER



EXCESSIVE HEAT WATCH  
Heat wave is expected throughout much of Caesarea. Travel to be impacted.



#### CENTURION MARCH

Decorated war hero from Italian Regiment sends men from Caesarea to Joppa to summon the Apostle Peter. What are his marching orders?

# GOOD NEWS

NO 7

GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY

ACTS 10:1-48

I had an experience recently when God was speaking to me. He doesn't speak to me audibly (at least not so far) and it's not in a vision like we're going to read about today. But He speaks to me, nonetheless. It's hard to explain. But when it happens I just know. I am always careful to look for confirmation because I don't want to be fooled by my own thinking. And confirm it He does.

I usually know it's Him because it's a thought that is foreign to what I would normally think. It's a thought that challenges me out of my comfort zone or causes me to be curious as to what it could mean. A couple months back, I had one of these moments when I was doing a Bible study lesson. I felt that God was speaking to me about some of my struggle with my weight through verses out of Numbers where it talks about how the children of Israel reacted to the manna He provided them in the desert. The author of the study I was reading had challenged me to think about it in a new way and I felt that the Lord was encouraging me to press deeper. The very next day, our pastor referenced the exact verses out of Numbers that I had been studying. This stuck out to me because we were studying Nehemiah, not Numbers. And yet, here was the same topic. And then, the following day, I saw a post by one of the online pastors I sometimes listen to. The title intrigued me and I clicked on it to listen to the sermon. And there again were the verses in Numbers. The sermon was on the exact topic God had shown me in my study book.

In our study this week, we will see God speak to a Roman officer, Cornelius, and in a separate instance, He will speak to the apostle Peter. He prepared the Roman to hear from Peter (who was at that point a stranger to him) and he prepared Peter to go and preach the gospel to a Gentile. The message to each man was different, but it served to make a connection that sparked the beginning of the Gospel

going out to Gentiles and to the rest of the world. This event broke down the religious barrier of what it meant to be saved and who the Good News was for.

There are many verses in this passage so if you don't want to write them all out, I encourage you to read them out loud. Often, when we read out loud it slows our brains down enough to notice things that you wouldn't notice when just reading to yourself. I suggest reading all of Acts 10 out loud. And then reread each section to answer the questions.

Let's break this chapter down in sections. Reread verses 1-8.

1. Cornelius is described as devout. Define the word **devout**.
2. What actions does Cornelius do that fit in with the definition of someone who is devout? (Acts 10:2)
3. When the angel appears to Cornelius, and he is afraid, what does the angel first tell him?
4. What is the mission that the angel gives Cornelius?

# GOOD GOD NEWS

NO 7

GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY

ACTS 10:1-48

5. What is Cornelius' response to what the angel said?

**Reread verses 9-23.**

6. What was Peter doing when the vision came to him?

7. What was the message in the vision? (verse 15)

8. What is the Biblical definition of **unclean**?

9. What does Peter do when the three strangers show up?

10. How is Cornelius described by these men?

11. Why might Peter be reluctant to listen to these men and go to Cornelius?

**Reread verses 24-29.**

12. Did Cornelius have any doubt that Peter would come?

13. Why did Cornelius fall down and worship Peter?

14. What did Peter say to explain the reason he came?

15. Why was it unusual for Peter to go inside Cornelius' house and visit?

**Reread verses 30-48.**

16. In verse 34 Peter states that God shows no partiality. What is the dictionary definition of **partiality**?

17. How does Peter define partiality in relationship to God in verse 35?

18. Why were the people with Peter amazed when the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the Word? (verses 44-48)

## THE SETTING

In the time period when Acts was written, Israel was occupied by the Romans. The Jews were permitted to practice their religion and it helped the Romans keep the Jewish people from revolting against them.

This passage takes place following Jesus' death and resurrection. The gospel, or Good News, was being preached by the disciples and other believers to other Jews to let them know that Jesus was the Messiah and the prophecies had been fulfilled. The belief at that time was that if you wanted to be saved,

# GOOD NEWS

NO 7

GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY

ACTS 10:1-48

you not only had to believe in Jesus but you also had to become a Jew. Anyone who was not a Jew was known as a Gentile. Gentiles were considered by Jews to be lesser than a Jew. For a Gentile to become a Jew, a male would need to be circumcised and would have to follow the Law given by God to Moses.

Acts 2 tells us how the Holy Spirit came and descended on the Jewish believers who had gathered after Christ's ascension into heaven. This had been promised by Jesus when He told the disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit to them when He left. He specifically told them (Luke 24:49) to wait in Jerusalem after He ascended to heaven, "...until you are endued (or 'clothed', ESV) with power from on high."

They knew a bit about what this meant because Jesus had spoken to them on multiple occasions about the Holy Spirit. In John 14:26 He said He would send a Comforter to teach them and to remind them of the things He had said. In the same chapter, verses 16-17, He calls the Holy Spirit the Helper and tells them that He stays with them forever and is known as the Spirit of truth who dwells in them. In John 15:26 He tells them that this Helper will testify of Jesus.

So, in Acts 10 when this same Holy Spirit that had been promised to the Jews then descended on Cornelius and those with him, it was a pivotal moment. These men did not get circumcised first. They did not commit to follow the Jewish Law or go to synagogue or anything like that. They believed in the Good News that was preached to them by Peter—the Good News that Jesus was the Lord of all and anyone that believed in Him would receive forgiveness of sins. When Peter baptized the Gentile believers on that day, he was publicly acknowledging that God brought them into relationship with Christ apart from any relationship with Judaism.

By way of two visions to two very different men, God showed that the Gospel was meant for all. Genesis chapters 12, 15, and 17 all speak about how God would bless all nations through Israel. In Matthew 28:18-20, known as The Great Commission, Jesus commanded the disciples to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

An interesting thing I noticed in this story was how both Cornelius and Peter were open to obeying the Lord promptly even when He only told them the next step. They weren't given the full plan. Cornelius was told to send for Peter. Peter was told to go with the men who showed up at his door. I know for me it is often challenging to move forward into the unknown. Sometimes I wait for more information before taking action when the Lord is asking me to trust Him and take the next step.

19. Is there an area in your life that God is asking you to take the next step?

20. "God Shows No Partiality" is the theme of our lesson this week. What do you think of when you hear the terms **partiality**, **favoritism**, or **bias**?

# GOOD NEWS

NO 7

GOD SHOWS NO PARTIALITY

ACTS 10:1-48

The concept the Jews of that day held was that salvation was for the Jews. Because of this, they thought that they were superior to others. In their daily prayers, they thanked God that they were not a Gentile, a woman, or a slave. They considered Gentiles unclean and would perform a cleansing ritual if they came in contact with a Gentile. In the time period of Acts 10, favoritism and partiality were the very beliefs that could stop the Good News from spreading to the world.

Maybe your biases aren't as prominent and obvious as they were for the Jews. I encourage you to pray and ask God if there are any areas in your life where you have judgments about others that could hinder you from being a witness of His Good News.

21. Are there any areas where you have such strong opinions that may seem judgmental to others? Think about those that believe differently than you do—politically, religiously, sexual orientation, work ethics, patriotism, or any number of hot button topics.

22. Are your feelings so strong that you are unintentionally hindering the work God could do through you in the lives of others?

23. Are you open to hearing God speak on these matters? You may be quick to answer “yes,” but I encourage you to spend some time in prayer on this. Peter grew up in a culture where the beliefs about what was clean and unclean were taken as fact. The Jewish scholars took what was given in the Law and created more laws and rules surrounding what was proper. But as Peter learned in his time of prayer, God shows no partiality. Ask God to show you where in your life you may be demonstrating partiality.

*Father, I ask that you lead us ever closer to how You want us to love others. Show us the barriers that get in the way of relationships with those around us.*

# WORD SEARCH

## CORNELIUS

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B A A C O S F V I H I U A D I E D N D L Y R B H  
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N K J S N E C F R F P S D R P P D Z O G R Q N E  
L V S G C J R S G D R A P D P O C D X Z D D T C  
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S L S P J B A R A S A P I F K M X I O S K J G X  
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S H C Q V F R X V I R I Q L Y O X O O B G V K L  
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R A U M S C C B L E V V O R O Y R C K U Y G E A  
V A E E B F D O R N C F S V L N O I R U T N E C  
A H A H Y A K M C R J H Q H Y U Y L C I A C W K  
N C M M V C G E W O Z F M P Q P J H D H F P R K  
T U Y N O I S I V C B O J O B Y B R O F Z R T V  
S T U H W N K Q W O T O L U B D U E R F B A T Q  
Y U X W S M Y C C H Q F G K G P B Q B L X Y K V  
N B B N L T O A Q Y S Q U D J T F B M B K E E M  
K M G B L X R G U Z P F W Z K N N T K Z Y R M J  
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SEA

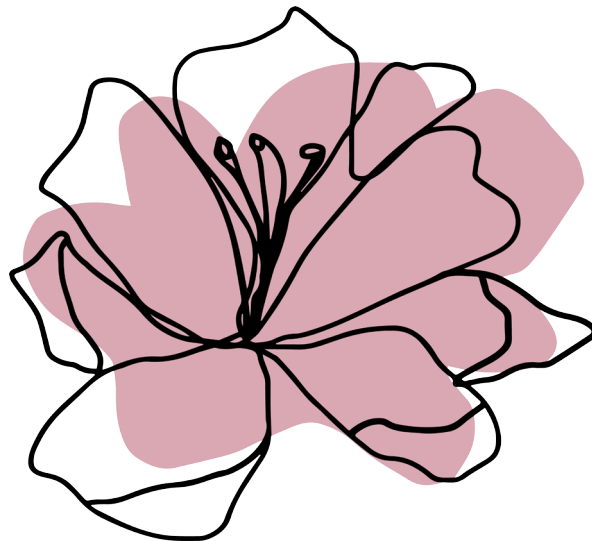
HOLY

SERVANTS

ANGEL

SIMON

VISION



AFRAID

PRAYERS

CESAREA

CENTURION

JOPPA

COENELIUS

# GOOD NEWS

NO 2

WINTER/SPRING 2022

## MY EVANGELISM JOURNAL

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.”

Hebrews 10:24-25  
NLT

### THE RETURN OF THE LORD IS DRAWING NEAR!

We spent our Fall semester writing letters to answer a “Dear Abigail” column, to help us understand how to share the GOOD NEWS! Now we are putting into action what we have practiced.

Answer the following questions each week and share in your group time that you may encourage one another!

1. Pray and ask the Lord to put someone on your heart that needs to know about the GOOD NEWS! (It may be a stranger that will cross your path.) Write their name here.

2. *Each* morning, pray that God will open your eyes to opportunities. Write any opportunities you had this week.

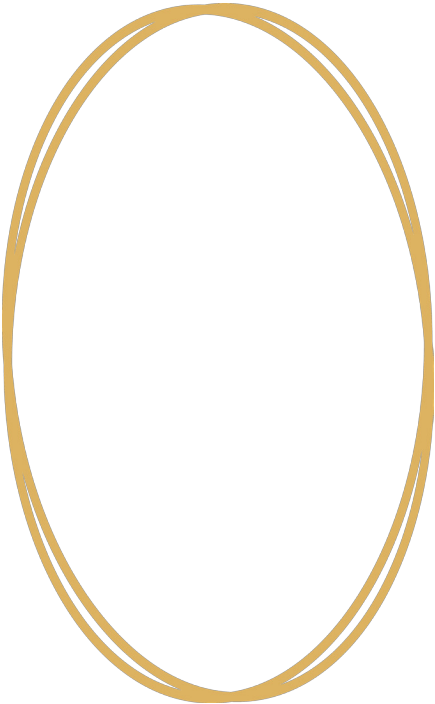
3. What have you learned about yourself this week as you shared the GOOD NEWS? Was it easier than you thought? More difficult? Did you miss an opportunity?

4. *Praise* the Lord for what He taught you about evangelism this week. Would you have changed your approach? *Continue* to pray for those you shared with, and *trust* the Holy Spirit to continue the work. *Confess* if you felt afraid or weak or if you avoided sharing altogether and then *start afresh* next week. He is FAITHFUL!

# GOOD NEWS

WINTER/SPRING 2022

## LESSON 7 NOTES



WRITE YOUR BIGGEST  
TAKEAWAY HERE

A series of horizontal lines provided for students to take notes during the lesson.

Additional horizontal lines at the bottom of the page for extra notes or reflections.