

AC 10:1 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ² He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³ One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

AC 10:4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

AC 10:7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸ He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

AC 10:9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

AC 10:14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

AC 10:15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

AC 10:16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

AC 10:17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸ They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

AC 10:19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

AC 10:21 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

AC 10:22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. ²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

AC 10:27 Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸ He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. ²⁹ So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

AC 10:30 Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me ³¹ and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³² Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³ So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

AC 10:34 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵ but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached-- ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

AC 10:39 "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹ He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living

and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

AC 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Cornelius isn't about Cornflakes!

1. God communicates to people – God breaks into people's lives. (1-8)

Now this doesn't happen often. Not like this. Not often have I heard that God has used angels to communicate. But look what the angel says. Go find Peter. Why? Because Peter could explain Jesus to him. Cool hey, God uses people to explain to people. It's still the same today. God uses people just like us to communicate to others.

AC 10:7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸ He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Notice though the urgency of Cornelius.

But here is something amazing.

2. God explodes our preconceived ideas about what He wants. (9-20)

Angels, then trances, but not only that. God tells Peter to change his theology. Change the way he thinks about God and ministry. Good Jews lived by a set bunch of food regulations. These are set out in the book of Leviticus about chapter 11. What they could eat and what was not on. What foods they could eat together even. Even laws about eating with other people eating the wrong thing.

¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

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But here God is saying to Peter, skip that, people knowing about Him – Jesus – is more important.

Sometimes the things we think are christian are our concepts not biblical.

Last week my dad talked about the 50's. I was speaking with someone about the 50's and they remembered that the concept in the 50's of a christian was "Someone who didn't smoke, drink alcohol, didn't wear make up, didn't go to the pictures, someone who didn't swear, didn't play sport on Sunday, wore a suit to church if male and a hat if female" Is that what a christian is.? What about now, what are the standards we place on someone being a christian? Someone who dresses a certain way, listens to certain music, lifts their hands when the music plays in church, goes to youth group or bible study, or maybe buys their reading material from Koorong. All these things are good, but knowing Jesus personally is what makes a christian, not the add ons.

3. God uses us but don't get a big head about it, your only a man or only a woman.(22-26)

It would be easy to put Peter on a pedestal. And that is what Cornelius did. But Pete was right in what he did. We need to be of the same mind. V26

26 But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

Do the job God sets us, but recognise we work for God in what we do. Don't get a big head, don't assume you have the answers, don't get caught up in the ego thing. Its easy to do. I know, it would be easy for me to say look at what I did, I baptized Chrissy. I did it, God is in control of it. My actions do nothing, God's blessing does.

4. God's message – the same for all – The gospel – the good news – the message of how Jesus can fix us up (33-43) Here is something cool. God's message is for us, it is the same for everyone. No discrimination, no distinct, yet totally personal. It is great news, The word in the greek = good news, = gospel.

AC 10:34 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism³⁵ but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.³⁶ You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

The first christians thought that it was a Jewish thing – but it isn't it if for everyone. Which is a good thing because there probably isnt many Jews in this room, yet Jesus died for us. See what that means is that the message is appropriate to us. The message about Jesus has implications for us, we need to take notice. When this message is spoken God does something.

5. God's Holy Spirit does the work in us – prompts us to get baptized, become members of a church, talk to people about Jesus, live a christian lifestyle – Give credit where it is due – the Holy Spirit does it. (44-48) Pete did the speaking – The Holy Spirit did His thing and came upon them.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days

Even people that they thought it could not affect. Now here is a lesson for us. The Holy Spirit does His thing in people that are outside our concepts of being christian. In other words – God works in people’s lives that we don’t expect. Right now, the Holy Spirit is working in our lives in ways that others don’t expect. In ways we don’t expect. And we have no right to try and stop it happening. Notice the progression. Holy Spirit works – then Baptism. Some would assume it happens the other way around. I don’t think so. When we begin a relationship with Jesus Christ, He gives us the Holy Spirit.

We can later on understand it more fully, or even experience the presence in different ways, but when we belong to Jesus – we have the Holy Spirit as part of our life. That is the start of the journey. Baptism was next for these people, Chrissy has followed this process by getting baptised. I again ask the question – what is next for you???