

Acts 10.1 – 11.18

New Man for a New Year

Country in SE Asia – Large Muslim pop – Long History of Christian Missions
Limited Success w/ Smaller Hindu pop, Animists – Very few Muslims Xtians

NEW STRATEGY – M workers CHANGE LIFESTYLE and CUSTOMS

Dress: No more Neckties – Diet: No Ham Sandwiches – Pace: No Watches
No longer CALL SELVES ‘Christians’ > LOADED Word = Colonialism, Rule
SAME Gospel, Bible, Jesus > Same CONTENTS in Different CONTAINER
Today more than 100,000 former Muslims now Followers of Jesus there

THREE Major Events ACTS > 1. Pentecost 2. Paul 3. Passage Today
REPETITION: Paul’s Conversion – 3 Tellings / Cornelius’ Vision – 4 X’s

TEXT > Critical Piece in FULFILLMENT of God’s PLAN for WORLD

1. Plan of God for Man 2. Perversion of Man 3. Peace through Jesus

1. Plan of God for Man – One World, One People

a. Creation

God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule..."
God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the
earth and subdue it..." Genesis 1.26,28

CREATED by God >> DIGNITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AUTHORITY
‘MAN’ CORPORATE Word = Mankind, ALL HUMANITY > TEAM Effort

NOT ONLY Men, Rich, White, Jews, Americans >> EQUALITY in Creation

10.34,35 God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who
fear him and do what is right.

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of
man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly
beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the
works of your hands; you put everything under his feet Psalm 8.3-6

b. Covenant God CHOSE ONE Man > to REACH ALL PEOPLE

The LORD had said to Abram... "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you... and *all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.*"

Genesis 12.1-3

ABE's Descendants to be CONDUIT of Blessing NOT CONTAINER for Them
BLESSING > Wide as SKIES, Far as ENDS OF EARTH

And now the LORD says... "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you *a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.*"

Isaiah 49.5-6

God's choice of Israel was an act of grace, not partiality, and it called for a response of obedient service, not careless complacency. F.F. Bruce

LIKE US – Think we're BLESSED because we're GOOD and DESERVING
Did NOT LOVE Gentiles --- Did NOT EVEN LIKE Them – ex. Israel Today!

To be an Israelite was to be in covenant with God; to be a non-Israelite was to be among God's enemies... the borders of Israel were the borders of God's kingdom; the boundaries of Jacob's family were the boundaries of God's people.

Dennis Johnson

FEW Exceptions – Rahab, Ruth, Naaman – VERY FEW Exceptions

Judaism NOT 'SEEKER FRIENDLY' Religion: Circumcision, Dietary Laws, Temple Going and Sacrifices, Annual Calendar of Rites and Rituals, Sabbath

Gentiles felt NO ATTRACTION to God of Israel because of People of Israel

Our Christmas Dinner > GREAT Food > People – Honest, Open, Questions
IF Jesus came as PRINCE of PEACE > Why so many WARS in His NAME?

c. Church – SAME Global MESSAGE of God > NOW Different Messengers

Jesus did NOT Use word CHURCH Often in Gospels > 3 Times all in MATT

Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
 Matthew 16.16-20

RC > Proof Text for PAPACY > Peter is ROCK, Chief Apostle, Vicar of Christ
 FIRST BISHOP of Rome > Today's Pope sits on PETER'S THRONE of Christ

But...ROCK is JESUS > Peter is Pebble! > NOT Founder of Church of Rome
 KEY is CONFESSION of Jesus, the Rock > The Christ, Son of the Living God

KEYS? Peter OPENED Way to NATIONS with PREACHING of Gospel
 JERUSALEM – Peter stood with 11 and Preached
 SAMARIA – Came with John to Support and Endorse Ministry of Philip
 GENTILES – Led team of SEVEN to home of Roman Centurion Cornelius

2000 Yr History of Ch: FEW Bright Moments, MANY Missed Opportunities
 LAST Century – COMMUNIST Advance – 70 Yrs won 1/3 of EARTH
 CENTURY Before – BRITISH Expansion – Sun Never Set on British Empire

TODAY – More People HEARD of COCA-COLA than JESUS CHRIST!

2. Perversion of Man – One World, For Me

MISSED PLAN of God > NOT CLOSE to HEART of GOD....TOO BUSY???

a. Preoccupation 10 Yrs PASSED Since Pentecost > Growing Jewish Church

AMAZING Church Growth in JERUSALEM – Peter in CENTER of It
 Name PETER Occurs 70 times in first TWELVE Chapters of ACTS

COULD have Written LOTS of EXCITING PRAYERS Letters –

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. Acts 2.41

Many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand. Acts 4.4

More and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. Acts 5.14

High Priest in Sanhedrin: "You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching..." Acts 5.28

The word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith. Acts 6.7

BUSY > Preaching, Persecution, Prison, Problems w/ Hellenistic Babushka's

IT'S ALL GOOD > Valiant, Faithful, Obedient >> What about GENTILES?
Jesus KINGDOM is BROADER than the CITY LIMITS of JERUSALEM

A great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and *all except the apostles were scattered* throughout Judea and Samaria. Acts 8.1

Commentators DIVIDED – STAYING Good or Bad? Much to Do?
FOCUS Persecution agnst HELLENISTS Then – Troops w/ NO Commanders?

ONLY Now > Peter OUT of BUNKER in Jerus > Gospel Advance Next Level
We are BUSY, IMPORTANT Things > Are they MOST ESSENTIAL Things?

Today in KZ > Established Church in Almaty > Much of KZ UNTOUCHED

b. Privilege? – MAYBE this GOOD NEWS is Really Only for Us

Once OUT of Jerusalem > PETER New PERSPECTIVES on People, Ministry
STAYING in 'Unclean' House of TANNER > SIESTA before SHASHLIK

THINKING of FOOD > DREAMS about FOOD...Not HIS KIND of Food
Probably LYING Under Cloth Canopy > Billowy SHEET >> SEES SHEET

REAL VISION > Peter Kind of SLOW > Gets it on THIRD TELLING

SLEEPY RESPONSE **'NO LORD!'** Words DON'T BELONG TOGETHER!
Perhaps thought was TEST > 'Would you EAT this Unclean Stuff?'

11.4-10 Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened: "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.' "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

God has MESSAGE FOR JEWISH BELIEVERS >> to their Leader PETER
RADICAL SHIFT in God's LAWS and FOREIGN POLICY > Globalization

HEALTH and DIETARY Laws > IMPORTANT for HEALTH & HOLINESS

I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves about on the ground. I am the LORD who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy. Leviticus 11.44-45

Call to ALL CARNIVORES > You & ROAD KILL Welcome to House of God
Shark Fin Soup – Ham Sandwiches – Fried Flying Ants >> All You Can EAT!

For the *kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking*, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Romans 14.17-18

Acts of Risen Jesus > thru Apostolic CHURCH > here again Apostle PETER
NOT Most ACADEMIC or ARTICULATE Apostle >> Most ACCESSIBLE

Many of US see OURSELVES in Peter > Struggles, Denials, Restoration
Ch 9 - FACING Obstacles > INCREASINGLY Bigger: Disease, Death

Ch 10 Obstacle >> Discrimination > DENY UNITY of Man, and Plan of God

Increasingly GREATER Miracles – Healing of Disease, Raising from Death,
Breaking of Discrimination > NEW HEARTS, TRANSFORM SOCIETY

CITY of JOPPA, Several Centuries Earlier: Key Role in God's Plan for Nations
MAN God CALLED to Take GOOD NEWS to Dangerous City of NINEVEH
JOPPA – JONAH boarded SHIP and went FAR AWAY from God & Nineveh

PETER Sees Vision UNCLEAN ANIMALS > UNDERSTANDS re. PEOPLE

10.19-25 *While Peter was still thinking about the vision*, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the **centurion**. He is a **righteous and God-fearing man...** 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. The following day he arrived in Caesarea... As **Peter entered the house....**

48 kms.

PETER defiled Self: Hospitality, Travel, Be Guest of GENTILE – 6 Witnesses!

UNDERSTOOD VISION of SHEET Filled w/ DIRTY, UNCLEAN THINGS
Peter SAW HIMSELF IN the Sheet! >> THE SHEET is the CHURCH!!

c. Prejudice GENTILES felt UNWELCOME to exclusive JEWISH PARTY

CORNELIUS Attracted to GOD of Israel, but NOT People & Customs of Israel
GOD-FEARERS Welcome to SIT in BACK of Synagogue – NOT MEMBERS!

Gentiles WELCOME to Come > But ONLY by BECOMING JEWS First
JEWS Never INVITED Gentiles to COME > GOD invites them HIMSELF!

10.3-5 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!" 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. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.

THREE in Afternoon – TIME of Prayer in TEMPLE – REAL EVENT!

SPIRIT of God brings to Pass His ALREADY WRITTEN INVITATIONS....

Many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the LORD Almighty and to entreat him." This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten men from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'" Zechariah 8.22-23

Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." Micah 4.2

This is what the LORD says...They will bow down before you and plead with you, saying, 'Surely God is with you, and there is no other; there is no other god.'" Isaiah 45.14

I will shake all nations, and the desired of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty. Haggai 2.7

John Stott – Helpful COMPARISON of Conversions of Saul and Cornelius:

In race Saul was a Jew, Cornelius, a Gentile; in culture Saul was a scholar, Cornelius was a soldier; in religion Saul was a bigot, Cornelius a seeker. Yet both were converted by the gracious initiative of God; both received forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit; and both were baptized and welcomed into the Christian family on equal terms. John Stott

NOW in CHRIST > ALL Come – JUST as they ARE!

3. Peace through Jesus – New World, New People

a. Limits of Religion > Cornelius was a VERY GOOD Man

10.2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

LOVED God and LOVED Man > Model of Both PIETY and CHARITY

GOD Saw HIS OUTSTANDING VIRTUE 10.4 Angel: "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God."

EVEN Tough SOLDIERS Influenced by his OPEN, OBVIOUS Religion

10.7 Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants.

UNUSUAL HUMILITY > Roman Officer honors a GALILEAN FISHERMAN

10.25,26 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

Peter repudiated both extreme and opposite attitudes which human beings have sometimes adopted towards one another...it was entirely inappropriate either to worship somebody as if divine...or to reject somebody as if unclean. Peter refused both to be treated by Cornelius as if he were a god, and to treat Cornelius as if he were a dog.

John Stott

WIDELY RESPECTED, People WANT what HE HAS > PATIENTLY WAIT

10.27 Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.

ONLY TWO Religions in World: 1. MAN is Savior 2. GOD is SAVIOR

1. MAKE Ourselves RIGHT with GOD 2. JESUS makes us RIGHT with GOD

11.13,14 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He will bring you a message through which *you and all your household will be saved.*'

BEFORE Peter brought JESUS > GOOD Cornelius was NOT SAVED

GOOD Cornelius NOT ABSOLUTELY PERFECT, SINLESS, SPOTLESS

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."
Galatians 3.10-14

EITHER we have Kept Law OR Broken It > NOT 'Sort of Righteous'
DOOR Either OPEN or CLOSED, WINDOW Either BROKEN or WHOLE

ONE who BREAKS Law Cannot SAVE SELVES from Law's PENALTY
GOSPEL: SINLESS Savior PAID PENALTY of BROKEN LAW on TREE

Why SO ARROGANT to Tell OTHER RELIGIONS Only JESUS SAVES??

If Cornelius' honest pagan convictions had been sufficient, why did he seek the synagogue? If the synagogue had been enough, why was Peter here?

R.C.H. Lenski

FAITH is a GIFT - 11.17 God gave them the same *gift* as he gave us, who *believed* in the Lord Jesus Christ

REPENTANCE is a GIFT - 11.18 they... *praised God*, saying, "So then, God has *granted* even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

SALVATION is FROM God that is Why we PRAISE GOD > HE is SAVIOR

b. Relevance of the Gospel Peter preaches GOOD NEWS to Good Cornelius

1) Prophets – GOD-FEARERS attended SYNAGOGUE Worship / Teaching

Was FAMILIAR with Teaching and Promises of HEBREW SCRIPTURES

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

OUR AUTHORITY is Bible > KNOW It and TEACH It
 Many we SHARE With DO NOT KNOW OR BELIEVE Bible

PAUL'S SERMONS > In Synagogue PROVED from Scriptures Jesus is Christ
 LYSTRA and ATHENS – Gentile Audiences, NO MENTION of SCRIPTURE

PETER'S GOAL for Audience: MEET JESUS REVEALED in Scripture
 When KNOW Jesus and HAVE SPIRIT – GAIN KEY to Understand BIBLE

ANGEL Could have PREACHED to Cornelius > PRIVILEGE of Peter and US!

NO PREACHER had MORE ATTENTIVE, READY AUDIENCE!

10.33,44 “Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.” Then Peter began to speak... While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

MAY God make us SO READY, ATTENTIVE, OBEDIENT, EMPOWERED!

2) Person – Only Sermon in Acts: PETER > EARTHLY MINISTRY of Jesus

vs. 37-39 You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached - 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. We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

ONLY Sermon of Peter in Acts to NON-JEWS > OUTSIDE of JERUSALEM
 NEED to EXPLAIN Basics of Gospel > Probably NOT Seen or Heard Jesus

Describes PERSON of Jesus > BEFORE the GRAVE AND BEYOND Grave

vs. 39-41 They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 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.

DETAIL from Luke's Gospel > RISEN Jesus ATE and DRANK with Disciples

GENTILE Thinking > BODILY Resurrection was CRAZY, IMPOSSIBLE
Death > ESCAPE BODY > Body is PRISON for SPIRIT > GOAL: RELEASE

JEWISH Thinking > Angels CANNOT Eat & Drink, No Digestive Tracts

MAKES Gospel CLEAR and CONTRADICTS False IDEAS of the DAY

3) Power – LIVING Jesus – FILLED Church with POWER of His Spirit

If SENT Card to JESUS CHRIST, PO Box 777, Nazareth: UNDELIVERABLE
Jesus was NAME – Jesus son of Joseph / CHRIST was Title = MESSIAH

Jesus FIRST SERMON in HOMETOWN SYNAGOGUE of Nazareth > TEXT
"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good
news to the poor..." Luke 4.18

MUCH Anticipated Promise, 700 Years Earlier > Prophet Isaiah saw Messiah
Israel's King – FILLED with SPIRIT – Servant of the Lord – Glory of God

Jesus – They'd KNOWN all his 30 years > AUDACITY: Today it's Fulfilled!
CLAIMED to be CHRIST, CONGREGATION tried to Throw Him over CLIFF

MYSTERY of INCARNATION > REAL MAN AND FULLY GOD
v. 38 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.

MINISTRY Not HIS OWN Divine Power > SERVANT Not SOVEREIGN
REAL Man >> TRUE EXAMPLE >> Filled with Spirit like WE CAN BE!

Same POWER but NOT SAME PERFECTION > Live in His Risen Power!

Evangelism must lead with the gospel, not with a call to cultural conformity or
moral reformation. Repentance is not adopting the evangelist's clothing style,
speech patterns, or taste in music. It is seeing the horror of one's sin and

receiving the forgiving grace of Christ, embracing the Savior in faith for washing from sin's guilt and liberation from its tyrannical control.

Dennis Johnson

GOD'S Focus and OUR FOCUS Should Be > The HEART...Heart of Problem

c. Result of the Gospel: Peace

10.34-36 Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. 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."

CHURCH has SPOTTY RECORD > Many Victories > Much HYPOCRISY
Racism – Nationalism – Tribalism – Casteism – Snobbery – Sexism – Elitism

ISLAM – growing in Several Places including WEST – because Converts
Think ISLAMIC BROTHERHOOD is more ATTRACTIVE than CHURCH

Let us REPENT and CELEBRATE a NEW MAN for the NEW YEAR...
Now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.
Ephesians 2.13-17

ICF should SHOW HIS PEACE to Almaty, Kazakhstan to WORLD
UNDERSTANDING – ACCEPTANCE – ENJOYMENT One Another in Him

Lord of All > TITLE from PAGAN Deities > BAPTIZED AND USED in NT
CONCISE CLAIM > All Belongs to JESUS > All People, All World, All Time

God takes people as they are. They do not have to become something else before they can come to Jesus...What matters is not whether people fit in with us. What matters is that they have been accepted by God. James Boice

11.2,3 When Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them

NO COMPLAINT > BAPTIZED UNCIRCUMCISED GENTILES > ATE!!!
FOOD > Holiest SACRAMENT // TABLE > Place of Deepest FELLOWSHIP

Different CULTURES / CUISINES > Greatest Praise 'they like OUR Food!'
COOK watches with APPREHENSION for LOOK of DELIGHT or DISGUST

SHARE their FOOD > Share at DEEPEST CULTURAL LEVEL
Peter - How DARE you LET GENTILES into OUR INTIMATE CIRCLE!!

ICF > Fellowship – Sit NEAR Strangers? Shake Hands? Know Name? EAT?

JEWS in Jerusalem GRUDGINGLY Acknowledge Entrance of GENTILES
NO RECORD of them Trying to PROMOTE It or ADVANCE It

NO MISSION to the GENTILES ever launched from JERUSALEM
CONTENT to Fellowship with THEIR KIND OF PEOPLE > KOSHER People

Rest of Acts > JERUSALEM Church No Prominent Place in God's PURPOSE
Center: ANTIOCH – Jews and Gentiles formed ONE Cosmopolitan CHURCH

The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. Acts 11.26

ANTIOCH > No History, No Traditions, No Political Rights, No Facilities
NO HESITATION when SPIRIT of God says GO, to the NATIONS!

PAUL Exhorted the EPHESIAN Church > Jews & Gentiles ONE in JESUS
GOD made PEACE FOR Them and BETWEEN Them > Now KEEP IT!

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
There is one body and one Spirit- just as you were called to one hope when you
were called - one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who
is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4.3-6

May we be PEACE KEEPERS and PEACE MAKERS for Jesus to the World!
REJOICING in the NEW MANKIND – New Family – thru this NEW YEAR

Acts 10:1-11:18

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!" 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."

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.

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

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

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

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.

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."

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

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."

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?" 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."

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.

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."

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.

Acts 11

11:1 The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him 3 and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."

4 Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened: 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. 6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air. 7 Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

8 "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

9 "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' 10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

11 "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?"

18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."