



ACTS

Of All the Apostles

You Will Be My Witnesses:

Running the Race

Lesson 22



Peter and Cornelius

Acts 10:1-11:18

Supplemental Scripture

Hebrews 12:1-3
Leviticus 11
John 3:16
Acts 17:24-30
Romans 1:16
1 Corinthians 9:19-22
1 Timothy 2:1-6
2 Peter 3:9
Revelation 5:1-10
Revelation 7:9-13

Memory Verse

Then Peter began to speak. "I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same," he said. Acts 10:34 (NirV)

Lesson Goals

Understand that Cornelius was not a Jew

Understand that the Jews thought God's gift of salvation was only for them

Understand that Cornelius believed and God sent the Holy Spirit to him

NOTE: Familiarize yourself with this story. Study the supplemental Scripture and make notes on, but do NOT read from, these pages. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

How would you like running on a team where you are the only white person, or the only Mexican, or the only Asian etc.? Would you feel funny? Would you quit? Or would you just be glad to be a part of the team and enjoying running with them? Think about your church. Does everyone look like you? That doesn't have to be a bad thing if that is what your community looks like. It would be a bad thing if everyone was like you because you didn't want anyone who was different to come to your church. Let's see what we can learn from Peter and a vision that he had, but we must first see who else had a vision!

There was a man named Cornelius who lived in the town of Caesarea. Caesarea is the town Philip ended up in after the Holy Spirit took him away from the Ethiopian official. The Bible tells us that Cornelius was not Jewish. The Jews were God's chosen people who felt as if God's gift of His Son, Jesus, was only for them and no one else. Cornelius was the commander of the Italian Regiment in the Roman Army. Cornelius worshipped God. His family also worshipped God. Cornelius was faithful to God, he helped the needy, and he prayed regularly. One day, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, Cornelius had a vision. He saw an angel! The angel told him that his prayers and gifts to the poor pleased God. Cornelius was to send some men to the coastal town of Joppa to bring Simon Peter to his house. Remember, Simon Peter was staying with another Simon, one who worked with leather. Simon's house was by the sea. Cornelius did exactly as the angel of God told him to do.

Around noon the next day, as Cornelius' men were nearing Joppa, Peter was hungry and waiting for lunch and went up on the roof of Simon's house to pray. While he was there, Peter also had a vision. In his vision, he saw the sky open up. Something like a sheet was lowered and it was full of different kinds of animals—four-footed animals, reptiles, and birds. A voice told Peter to eat the animals, but Peter said no. Peter knew that the book of Leviticus talks about animals that can and cannot be eaten, but the voice said, "Do not say anything is not pure that God has made 'clean.'" (Acts 10:15 NirV) This happened three times and then the sheet was raised back up into the sky.

At that exact moment, the men sent by Cornelius arrived at Simon's house looking for Simon Peter. Peter was wondering what the vision

Application

How about you? Have you ever been caught up in the thought that God's love is just for people like you? What does John 3:16 say? "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that **whoever** believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (NIV)

What does that word "whoever" mean? It includes everyone, doesn't it? God offers eternal life to **all**. Unfortunately, not everyone will accept His gift, but He offers it to everyone nonetheless.

Have you accepted God's gift of eternal life? 2 Corinthians 6:2 (CEV) states it clearly, "That time has come. This is the day for you to be saved."

And if you know God and walk with Him, do you remember that He hasn't returned yet because He doesn't want **anyone** to die apart from Him. What are you doing to tell others about Jesus?

meant, because he knew the vision must have a deeper meaning. As he was wondering, the Holy Spirit spoke to him. "'Simon,' he said, 'three men are looking for you. Get up and go downstairs. Don't let anything keep you from going with them. I have sent them.'" (Acts 10:19-20 NIV) So Peter went downstairs and spoke to the men. He invited them in.

The next day, Peter and the three men and some of the believers in Joppa headed out for Caesarea. They arrived the day after that and Cornelius was expecting them. He had even called together his friends and relatives. Peter and Cornelius greeted each other and then Peter said, "All of you know that it is against our Jewish law for a Jew to have anything to do someone of another nationality. But God has taught me that I should not call anyone common or unclean. That's why I came when you sent for me." Then Peter wanted to know why Cornelius had sent for him. Cornelius explained his vision to Peter and told him that all of them were ready to hear what God had told him to share.

Peter started speaking. "'I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same,' he said. 'He accepts people from **every** nation. He accepts all who have respect for Him and do what is right.'" (Acts 10:34-35 NIV) Peter shared about the good news of Jesus Christ, about His death, burial, and resurrection. He talked about the prophets who said that forgiveness of sins is for **all** who believe in Jesus. "While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message." (Acts 10:44 NIV) The Jewish believers were amazed that the Holy Spirit had been given to these non-Jewish (Gentile) believers. They even heard the believers speaking languages they had never known and praising God. So, they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and Peter stayed with them for a few more days.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem, some of the Jewish believers disapproved of Peter's trip to Cornelius' house. But Peter explained the vision and the Holy Spirit's instruction to not let anything keep him from going. Peter explained that these non-Jewish believers had received the Holy Spirit just as they had. He told them, "'God gave them the same gift He gave those of us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. So who was I to think I could oppose God?' When they heard this, they didn't object anymore. They praised God. They said, 'So then, God has allowed even those who aren't Jews to turn away from their sins and live.'" (Acts 11:17-18 NIV)

Next Week
Antioch
Acts 11:19-26

Preschool Lesson

There was a man named Cornelius who lived in the town of Caesarea. The Bible tells us that Cornelius was not Jewish. The Jews were God's chosen people who felt as if God's gift of His Son, Jesus, was only for them and no one else. Cornelius was a commander in the Roman Army. Cornelius worshipped God. His family also worshipped God. Cornelius was faithful to God, he helped the needy, and he prayed regularly.

One day, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, Cornelius had a vision. He saw an angel! The angel told him that his prayers and gifts to the poor pleased God. Cornelius was to send some men to the coastal town of Joppa to bring Simon Peter to his house. Simon was staying by the sea. Cornelius obeyed.

Around noon the next day, Peter was hungry and waiting for lunch. While he waited, he went up on the roof to pray. The roofs back then used to be flat, so you could walk around on them. While he was there, Peter also had a vision. In his vision, he saw the sky open up. Something like a sheet came out of the sky and it was full of different kinds of animals. A voice told Peter to eat the animals, but Peter said no. Peter knew that the book of Leviticus talks about animals that can and cannot be eaten, but the voice said, "Do not say anything is not pure that God has made 'clean.'" (Acts 10:15 NIV) This happened three times and then the sheet was raised back up into the sky. Peter wondered what the vision meant.

At that exact moment, the men sent by Cornelius arrived. While Peter was wondering about the vision, the Holy Spirit spoke to him. "'Simon,' he said, 'three men are looking for you. Get up and go downstairs. Don't let anything keep you from going with them. I have sent them.'" (Acts 10:19-20 NIV) So Peter went downstairs and spoke to the men. He invited them in.

The next day, Peter and the three men and some of the believers in Joppa headed out for Caesarea. They arrived the day after that and Cornelius was expecting them. He had even called together his friends and relatives. Peter and Cornelius greeted each other and then Peter said, "All of you know that it is against our Jewish law for a Jew to have anything to do with someone of another nationality. But God has taught me that I should not call anyone common or unclean. That's why I came when you sent for me." Then Peter said, "I realize that God treats everyone the same. He accepts people from every nation." Peter shared about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. "While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message." (Acts 10:44 NIV) The Jewish believers were amazed that the Holy Spirit had been given to these non-Jewish (Gentile) believers.

Activities

Memory Verse Activity - Print each word of the memory verse on small strips of paper. Distribute a strip to your students. Instruct them to order the verse and tape it around a globe. Talk about our responsibility as believers to share the good news of Jesus with others.

Sing “Shine, Jesus Shine,” “We’ve a Story to Tell to the Nations,” and “The Mission.”

Provide a map of ancient Israel. Encourage your students to find the cities of Joppa and Caesarea. Teach your students how to measure the distance between the two points.

There are several references in the story to time (3:00 and noon). Make a clock from a paper plate. Attach the hands with a brad. Print 2 Corinthians 6:2 (CEV) on the paper plate - “That time has come. This is the day for you to be saved.”

Make flags from other nations and post them in your Bible Study area to remind you that God wants **everyone** to be saved.

Bring a sheet with stuffed animals to use during the lesson.

Make swords out of balloons and talk about Cornelius. Encourage your students to invite their family and friends to church the way Cornelius did.

As you continue memorizing Hebrews 12:1-3, talk about the Olympics. Talk about the excitement of competing with the best of the best. Discuss the spiritual significance of that.



Then Peter began to speak.
"I now realize how true it is
that God treats everyone
the same," he said.

Acts 10:34

Word Search

g b c a e e s r a o p y a g s
e b a p t i z e d s a l n r i
t b e p r a j u f g a i o t m
c n s e s u o h s n o m i s o
j o a o a y p e e a a a s p n
s i r a b a p t i n e f a a e
i t e n a r a a c s e s d n l
m a a p e l e o d o o d s d b
o n t t a l m t c n a n e w a
n y e l y m i i n d n e v a s
p r e l a v a u t a d i e l i
e e y n h o l y s p i r i t m
t v d a w d i b a r t f l a a
e e t s e d d r e o c h e i n
r p s y l o h a i c t i b a t

Simon Peter

Cornelius

Roman commander

Caesarea

Joppa

Simon's house

friends

family

Holy Spirit

baptized

every nation

believe

Word Search

g b c a e e s r a o p y a g s
e b a p t i z e d s a l n r i
t b e p r a j u f g a i o t m
c n s e s u o h s n o m i s o
j o a o a y p e e a a a s p n
s i r a b a p t i n e f a a e
i t e n a r a a c s e s d n l
m a a p e l e o d o o d s d b
o n t t a l m t c n a n e w a
n y e l y m i i n d n e v a s
p r e l a v a u t a d i e l i
e e y n h o l y s p i r i t m
t v d a w d i b a r t f l a a
e e t s e d d r e o c h e i n
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