

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

### SESSION 32 | ACTS 10:1-16

#### ACTS 10:1-8 | INTRODUCING CORNELIUS

- Verses 1-2 –
  - Cornelius was not a Jew (see Acts 11:3) nor was he a proselyte to Judaism (yet).
  - He was a **centurion**, a soldier who typically led 40-60 soldiers (despite the name and common lore).
  - Though he was not a Jew, God chose him to be the first one of *the nations* who would be presented the message of the Kingdom.
  - He was chosen, no doubt, because of his devotion to God and his love for the Jewish people (see the promise of Genesis 12:3).
  - Note that the centurion of Tiberius also loved the Jewish nation, and Jesus healed his servant (Lk. 7:1).
- Verses 3-6 –
  - It was the **prayers** and the **alms** that **came up for a memorial before God** and were the impetus for God's selection of Cornelius.
  - The instruction of the vision was simple: *find Simon Peter at Simon the tanners house and learn what thou oughtest to do* (words that do not appear in the modern versions).
- Verses 7-8 –
  - For unstated reasons, Cornelius was not instructed to go to Peter himself (v. 5), so he sent **two of his household servants** as well as a **devout soldier**, presumably one who held the same religious convictions as Cornelius who is also described as **devout** (v. 2).

#### ACTS 10:9-16 | PETER RECEIVES HIS VISION

- Verses 9-10 –
  - The three men began their journey the day of receiving the instructions. On the next day, they continued journeying and **drew nigh unto the city**.
    - The Greek word for **drew nigh** is the same word translated many times as *at hand*, in reference to the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15, etc.).
    - The usage here shows it to be a mundane word that simply means *approaching*.
    - Any interpretation of *at hand* to be "arrived" is wishful thinking and bad exegesis.
  - As the men **drew nigh** Peter was on the roof, praying, at **the sixth hour** (noon) and became **very hungry** and **he fell into a trance** (in Greek, literally, "a trance fell upon him.")
    - The word **trance** is ἔκστασις [ekstasis] from which we get *ecstatic*.
    - The Greek contains the prefix *ek* (out of) and *stasis* (standing). Still today, we sometimes use the phrase "I'm beside myself," a phrase that literally translates this word.
- Verse 11 –
  - While the text here implies that there was not a **vessel descending unto him** in reality, Acts 11:5 confirms that this was a vision, not a "time and space" event.
  - The vision is of a sheet, tied at the four corners, and coming from heaven to earth.

- Verses 12-14 –
  - In the vision, the tied sheet contains presumably all unclean animals, along with a direct command, **Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.**
  - It is important to recognize that this vision takes place approximately eight years *after* the day of Pentecost, and in these years Peter has **never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.**
    - Those who would argue that the “church age” began with Pentecost must explain why the “age of grace” included observance of the Law for eight years.
    - If a student of the Word researches the theologians of the Word to discover when the Law ceased to be in effect, they will learn something different than if he/she researches the Word itself.
- Verse 15 –
  - Peter is strongly reprimanded and instructed not to call **common** the things which **God hath cleansed.**
    - The word translated **common** (here and in the previous verse) is from the root κοινος [koinos], a word from which we also get *koine* Greek (the common Greek) and *koinonia* (fellowship, having things in common).
    - In this usage, the word relates to *common as opposed to separated for God*. The things that were *common* were considered *defiled* (the same word is translated as such 11 of 15 times it is used in the New Testament).
  - When did God cleanse the foods previously declared unclean?
    - Though the word is given in the past tense in English, the Greek (which has no past tense) speaks of a “point in time” whether past, present, or future. It is as possible to translate the aorist tense in the present or future tense as in the past.
    - *“The aorist tense is characterized by its emphasis on punctiliar action; that is, the concept of the verb is considered without regard for past, present, or future time. There is no direct or clear English equivalent for this tense, though it is generally rendered as a simple past tense in most translations.”* Larry Pierce, *Tense Voice Mood* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, n.d.).
  - The timing cannot be concluded from this verse alone. However, it is easy to see that this is the first time in 1500 years that God had allowed the eating of unclean animals.
- Verse 16 –
  - It is unclear whether the instruction of verse 15 was repeated three times, or whether this was the third time God spoke.
  - If it was the third time God spoke, then we are left not knowing what God spoke.
  - It seems more of the “plain sense” that God repeated the instruction of verse 15 three times, thus emphasizing the fullness of this truth.