



(SLIDE #1) “GREAT EVENTS OF THE BIBLE -- THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD!”

Introduction:

A. Reading About Saul’s Conversion And The Lord’s Mission For Him In Ac. 9, A Reader Might Likely Expect That SAUL Would Be The First Apostle To Take The Gospel To The Gentiles.

1. However, It Is Peter!

2. Ac. 9:32 Shifts Back To Peter.

3. Remember The Lord’s promise to Peter in Mt. 16:16-19: “Simon Peter answered and said, ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’ ¹⁷Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

B. After Healing Aeneas At Lydda, Ac.9:33-35, Peter Came To Joppa Where He Raised Dorcas, Tabitha, From The Dead, Ac. 9:36-43

C. While In Joppa, Peter Stayed At The House Of Simon The Tanner. Ac. 9:43. This Will Be Of Significant Importance In Acts 10!

I. (Slide #2) We Are Introduced To Cornelius -- A Gentile, A Roman Centurion, And A Devout Man Of God! 1-8

A. (Slide #3) Text: “There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, ²a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. ³About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, ‘Cornelius!’ ⁴And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, ‘What is it, lord?’ So he said to him, ‘Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. (Slide #4) ⁵Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. ⁶He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.’

⁷And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. ⁸So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.”

B. (Slide #5) Cornelius, A Gentile, Was A Centurion Of The Italian Regiment.

1. He lived in Caesarea where the Roman militia was stationed.
2. He was a Roman commander over 100 soldiers; they were part of the larger “Italian band” (a group of 600 - 1,000 men).
3. He was a man of respect and responsibility.

C. He Was A Very Devout Gentile. 2

1. “a devout *man* and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.”
 - a. “devout” -- dutiful and dedicated
 - b. He and his family feared God -- this was a man who feared God from within his heart; that fear and faith affected his family as well.
 - c. “gave alms generously to the people” -- he was a very generous man who was continually seeking to help others.
 - d. “prayed to God always” -- he prayed continually.
2. Was Cornelius a LOST MAN?
 - a. Many think he was lost because he was commanded by Peter to be baptized.
 - b. Others believe he, a Gentile, was living faithfully to God under the Patriarchal Law.
 1. Observe these facts:
 - a. God heard his prayers.
 - b. Yet, here was a Gentile who had not been given a privilege to come to Christ or to be in the Kingdom, the Lord’s Church.
 2. The Gentiles were not under the Law of Moses -- it was only for the Jews; the Gentiles continued under the Law that had been there for them before Mt. Sinai -- the Patriarchal Law.
 - c. Cornelius was a Gentile living under the Patriarchal Law.
 1. The Patriarchal Age began at Creation; It continued for everyone until Mt. Sinai when God pulled the Jews out of the Patriarchal Age and gave them the Law of Moses.
 - a. The Gentiles continued under the Patriarchal Age; the Jews were at the same time living under the Mosaic Age.
 - b. The Law of Moses was “nailed to the Cross” for the Jews by Jesus at His Death. Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14
 - c. Jews were invited by John the Baptizer and Jesus to be baptized for the remission of sin in view of the Kingdom that was about to come into existence. MANY did! (Including the Apostles)

- d. Jews who had not come to faith were invited into the Christian Age and the Kingdom at Pentecost. Those who had previously come to faith were then “grandfathered” into the Kingdom. That is the “them” or “their number” of Ac. 2:41.
- 2. However, the Gentiles NEVER WERE under the Law of Moses; they continued under the Patriarchal Law because It had never been annulled for them.
- 3. So many preachers, commentators, and Christian people believe that Cornelius was a LOST man even though he is described by such godly terms in Ac. 10:2.
 - a. He was NOT a LOST man; he was a devout Gentile living under God’s Law that was still in effect for the Gentiles -- the Patriarchal Law.
 - b. This assumption is made that Cornelius was lost because he was commanded to be baptized later in this event.
 - c. He was a Gentile who was devoted to God and God heard his prayers.
 - 1. Verse 4 elaborates: The angel told Cornelius, “Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God.”
 - 2. That alone tells us that he was living acceptably to God and was pleasing in God’s sight.
- 4. HOWEVER, the time has come for the Gospel to now go to the Gentiles.
 - a. This is similar to the situation for the Jews when God called faithful Jews under the Law of Moses to hear the cry of the itinerate preacher, John the Baptist.
 - b. They were baptized in view of and in preparation for the coming Messiah and His Kingdom.
 - c. They did not have to be re-baptized when the Messiah came.
 - d. However, the Gentiles had never been baptized; they needed to obey this command in order to contact the precious Blood of the Savior, Jesus Christ.
- 5. Remember: the Gospel was for the Jew FIRST and then for the Gentile!
 - a. “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.” Rom. 1:16
 - b. That is why the Apostles in the “Limited Commission” (Mt. 10:6) were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.
 - c. That is why the Apostles were commissioned by Jesus “you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Ac. 1:8

D. God Spoke To Cornelius In A Vision! 3-6

1. It was at the 9th hour -- 3 PM. Verse 30 tells us that he was at home praying at that hour.
2. He clearly saw the angel that was calling to him.
3. The angel's command:
 - a. "Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. ⁶He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." 5,6
 - b. He was to send messengers from Caesarea to Joppa, about 30 miles away, to summon Peter to come to the house of Cornelius.
 - c. They would find him as a guest at the house of Simon, a tanner by trade. Perhaps he lived by the Sea to have access to salt water for the tanning.
 - d. Why was Cornelius to call for Peter? "He will tell you what you must do!"

E. Cornelius Sent Messengers To Find Peter. 7-8

1. As soon as the angel told Cornelius to send for Peter, he went into action.
 - a. He sent two household servants and one of his most trusted soldiers to go to Joppa and to find Peter.
 - b. It is evident that Cornelius had absolute faith in God and in His angel and the message of the angel.
 - c. He explained to these three men all that had been revealed to him.
2. He immediately sent the messengers to Joppa.

II. (Slide #6) As The Messengers From Cornelius Neared Joppa, Peter Received A Message From God In A Trance. 9-16

- A. (Slide #7) Text: "⁹The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. ¹⁰Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance ¹¹and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. (Slide #8) ¹³And a voice came to him, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' ¹⁴But Peter said, 'Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.' ¹⁵And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' ¹⁶This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again."

B. (Slide #9) The Time Of Peter's Trance -- The Day After Cornelius Received His Vision.

1. The messengers drew near to Joppa.
2. About noon, Peter was praying on the rooftop of the house.

C. Why This Trance Made Such A Huge Impact Upon Peter -- (What Made It SO Apropos?) -- Peter Was Extremely Hungry! 10

1. He became extremely hungry and was longing to eat. While others were preparing the food, Peter fell into a trance.
 - a. This is a different word than the word for “vision” in verse 3.
 - b. “Vision” is the Greek word “*o{ra{mati*.”
 - c. The word in verse 10 is “*e}kstasi~*” meaning “ecstasy” or “trance.” But, in verse 17, Peter is also said to have received an *o{rama*.”
 - d. What is the difference? In a vision one still would be alert and awake; in a trance one would appear comatose.
2. God used his hunger to teach him a MOST RELEVANT SPIRITUAL TRUTH!
3. **(Slide #10)** In this trance, God got Peter’s attention quickly with a lesson about food! 11-16
 - a. Peter saw a huge sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners. 11
 - b. All kinds of four-footed beasts, creeping animals, and birds were in that sheet. 12
 - c. A voice said to him, “Rise, Peter, kill and eat!” 13
 - d. Every fiber in his body recoiled, “NO WAY, Lord! I, a devout Jew, have never eaten anything profane and unclean.” 14
 1. Imagine how REPULSIVE this must have been to the staunch Jew, Peter!
 2. The Jews had from Sinai been commanded NOT to eat of unclean animals.
 3. The Law of Moses gave that command:
 - a. Lev. 11:1-47
 - b. Dt. 14:3-20
 - e. **(Slide #11)** The voice spoke a second time, “What things God has pronounced clean, you must not treat as profane!” 15
4. Three times Peter saw this sheet and was commanded to “Rise, kill, and eat!”
5. Why three times? This was to CONVINCe Peter of the absolute importance of this message!
6. Imagine Peter’s consternation and frustration when he received this message!!!

III. (Slide #12) Peter Got Immediate Clarification; Thus He Went To The House Of Cornelius. 17-24

A. **(Slide #13)** Text: “Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate. ¹⁸And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. ¹⁹While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Behold, three men are seeking you. ²⁰Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.’ ²¹Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, ‘Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?’ **(Slide #14)** ²²And they said, ‘Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you.’ ²³Then he invited them in and lodged *them*. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him. ²⁴And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends.”

B. (Slide #15) The Messengers From Cornelius Arrived At Simon’s House, Meet And Talk With Peter.

1. As Peter was perplexing about the meaning of this vision that he saw, the men who had been sent by Cornelius arrived at Simon’s house. 17
2. They asked or inquired (the Greek imperfect tense suggests an intense fervency in their continued request) if Simon, surnamed Peter, was lodging there. 18
3. As Peter was carefully pondering the vision he had seen, the Spirit told him, “Three men are seeking you!” Go down and meet them without doubting, for I have sent them.” 19,20
4. Peter went down into the house, met the men, and said to them, “I am the one whom you seek; why have you come here?” 21
 - a. He knew these men were seeking him.
 - b. However, he did not know WHY they had come!!!!
5. They told him that Cornelius, a centurion, a just and God fearing man, and attested by the whole nation of the Jews, had been warned by a holy angel to summon Peter to come to his house so he could hear words from Peter. 22

C. The Three Messengers Stayed At Simon’s House That Night. 23

D. The Next Day Peter Went With These Messengers, He Also Took Some Of His Brethren From Joppa With Him. 24

1. The messengers of Cornelius began the journey home taking Peter.
2. Peter also took six Jewish Christian brothers from Joppa with him. Ac. 11:12
3. They came to the house of Cornelius; he, his relatives, and friends had gathered and were waiting for Peter; they were anxious to hear the message from Heaven for them!

IV. (Slide #16) Cornelius And Peter Conversed About The Events That Brought Them Together. 25-33

A. (Slide #17) Text: “As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him*. ²⁶But Peter lifted him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I myself am also a man.’ ²⁷And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. ²⁸Then he said to them, ‘You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. ²⁹Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?’ (Slide #18) ³⁰So Cornelius said, ‘Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, ³¹and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. ³²Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.’ ³³So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.’”

B. (Slide #19) As Soon As Peter Entered Cornelius’ house, Cornelius Fell At His Feet And Worshiped. 25

1. He was obviously in awe of having this man sent from God to come into his house!
2. He was SO OVERWHELMED by the vision that he had received supernaturally 4 days earlier; he was convinced that it was truth; he viewed Peter as a messenger from God!
3. Peter’s humble response: “Stand up, I also myself am a man.” 26
 - a. Peter had NO desire to be worshiped.
 - b. He was there as an Apostle of Jesus Christ to preach Christ to these Gentiles!

C. After Being Greeted, Peter Went Into The House And Found Many Who Had Come Together. 27

D. Peter Explained To The Gentiles His Struggle As A Jew, His Supernatural Message From God, And Asked Why They Had Summoned Him. 28,29

1. Peter affirmed what the Gentiles knew; “You understand that it is unlawful for a Jewish man to associate with or to approach a foreigner.” (This tells us that Cornelius was NOT a proselyte!)
2. “HOWEVER, God has showed me not to call any person profane or unclean. Therefore I came when summoned. Why do you summon me?”
 - a. He now alludes to the vision he received while in the trance.
 - b. Peter GOT THE MESSAGE of the unclean animals in the sheet-- it was not about clean or unclean animals; it was about God wanting Peter to preach to Gentiles! There are NO clean or unclean PEOPLE!
3. So, being summoned to come to the house of Cornelius, he came immediately without objecting! He then asked why they had called him.

E. Cornelius Explained Why He Had Summoned Peter: 30-33

1. “Four days ago I was praying at this hour, at 3 PM.” 30
2. “A man in bright clothing stood before me and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer was heard and your good deeds were remembered by God.’” 31
3. He told me to “send to Joppa and invite Simon, surnamed Peter; he is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.” 32
4. “At once I sent for you and it was good of you to come. We are all here in the presence of God to hear all the things that the Lord has commanded you.” 33
 - a. They were EAGER to hear God’s Will for them.
 - b. What an awesome privilege for a Gospel preacher!

V. (Slide #20) Peter's Sermon, Heaven's Response; The Gentile's Response. 34-48

A. **(Slide #21)** Text: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. ³⁵But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. ³⁶The word which *God* sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—³⁷that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. **(Slide #22)** ³⁹And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. ⁴⁰Now God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, ⁴¹not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. ⁴²And 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. ⁴³To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.' **(Slide #23)** ⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have*?' ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days."

B. **(Slide #24)** Peter's sermon: 34-43

1. He had perceived that "God is not a respecter of persons; anyone of any nation who fears Him and practices righteousness is acceptable to Him." 34,35
 - a. "Fears Him" -- one who continues to respect His awesome nature and authority and obeys Him!
 - b. "Works righteousness" -- one who continues to treat his fellowman with fairness and justice.
2. "God sent His Word to Israel preaching peace through Jesus Christ; however, Jesus is more than just the Lord of the Jews, He is the LORD OF ALL!" 36
3. He reminded the Gentiles about the life of Jesus throughout Judea. 37,38
 - a. "You have heard about the things that occurred in all Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism of John. You have heard about Jesus of Nazareth; God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power; He went about doing good and curing all those who were oppressed by the devil; He did this because God was with Him."
 - b. He reminds Cornelius and his household of the amazing feats of Jesus which began at His baptism by John and continued throughout His ministry.

- c. These events were not done in secret; they were not done in just a little corner of the country; they were done throughout all Judea, beginning in Galilee!
 - d. He showed His power over demons and the devil!
 - 4. Peter and the other Apostles had been eyewitnesses of all the things He did in Judea and in Jerusalem. 39
 - 5. They were also eyewitnesses of His Crucifixion and His Resurrection! 39-41
 - a. Yes, He WAS Crucified! They killed Him, hanging Him on a tree!
 - b. God raised Him from the dead on the third day!
 - c. Not everyone saw the resurrected Christ; however, God had appointed certain reliable witnesses to see the resurrected Jesus, to eat with Him, and to receive commands from Him.
 - d. Peter was one of those blessed, privileged people!
 - e. About 513 witnesses who had seen the resurrected Jesus Christ were still alive some 20 years later and could personally vouch for His bodily resurrection! I Cor. 15:5-8
 - 6. Jesus also gave them commands. 42,43
 - a. He commanded us to proclaim to the people and to solemnly affirm to the people that this man is the one having been designated by God to be judge of the living and the dead.
 - b. He was the fulfillment of prophets of long ago -- "All the prophets gave witness to Him, that through His name everyone believing in Him would receive remission of sins." 43
- C. **(Slide #25)** The Supernatural Attestation; The Culminating Events Of This Monumental Visit -- Gentiles Baptized By The Holy Spirit; The Gentiles Baptized. 44-48
- 1. While Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all the Gentiles hearing his discourse. 44
 - 2. The faithful Jewish brethren who had accompanied Peter were amazed because the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the Gentiles. They heard them speaking in foreign languages and magnifying God. 45,46
 - a. That sure sounds like Ac. 2:4-21.
 - b. As Peter later explained this event to the Jews in Ac. 11, he said it was identical to what he received at Pentecost! Ac. 11:15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning."
 - c. This was the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" upon the Gentiles!
 - d. This "baptism" was no more for salvation of the Gentiles [House of Cornelius] than it had been for the Jews [the Apostles] on Pentecost!!!
 - e. The baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 was God's supernatural sign that Jews were now invited into the Church; the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 10 was God's supernatural sign that Gentiles were also now invited into the Church!!!

3. Peter then asked his Jewish brethren a provocative question -- “Can anyone forbid these, who received the Holy Spirit also as we did, to be baptized with water?” 47
 - a. He was ABSOLUTELY convinced that the Gentiles had every right in the world to be Christians!
 - b. The culmination of the vision and trance that he had experienced in Joppa, the vision that Cornelius had received in Caesarea, and the present baptism of the Holy Spirit were proof positive events in Peter’s mind -- he had NO DOUBTS WHATSOEVER!!!
4. Therefore Peter commanded that the Gentiles be baptized into Christ; thus they were added to the Church. 48
 - a. He then remained with them for many days.
 - b. This is further proof that Peter was absolutely certain that he was to accept and to fellowship these Gentiles!

VI. (Slide #26) Why Is This One Of The Great Events Of The Bible?

A. (Slide #27) God Is Inviting Gentiles Into The Kingdom!

1. They will no longer live under the Patriarchal System; they never had been under the Law of Christ!
2. All people of all nations, races, and tribes and under the SAME spiritual law!
3. All sinners can now be justified by the Blood of the Divine Son of God, Jesus Christ!
4. God made it ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN of what He was presenting; it could NOT be misunderstood!
 - a. Cornelius was given a vision.
 - b. Peter, starving, received a vision as he was in a trance that he could NOT mistake!
 - c. As Peter preached Jesus, the Holy Spirit provided the Baptism of the Holy Spirit upon these Gentiles of Cornelius’ house validating their invitation into the Kingdom of God!
5. The Message: GENTILES have as much right to salvation in Jesus as Jews had!

B. (►) The Exclusivity And Arrogance Of The Jews Has NO RIGHT To Exist -- ALL People Have The Privilege To Be Saved By The SAME Jesus And To Be Part Of The Same Divine Institution, The Church, And To Have Hope Of The Same Eternal Home -- Heaven!

- C. (►) What Does The Conversion Of Cornelius Means For Us Today?
1. Every person, Jew or Gentile, can have the salvation that is only available in Jesus Christ!
 2. We must not see salvation through an exclusive or arrogant heart that says:
 - a. “This is for Americans” but no one else!
 - b. “This is for us at Washington Avenue but not for those who are living in sin.”
 - c. “This is for white Americans and for no one else”; or “This is for black Americans and for no one else!”
 - d. “This is for those of us born in the USA but not for those of other nations!”
 - e. “This is for those of us who were born in or who live in Evansville but NOT for those who have migrated here from other countries.”
 1. There IS validity to the law of our land and the rule of law!
 2. There IS validity to those who desire to live here to come here legally!
 3. However, some Christians do not want those for other countries to be Christians! That is sinful!
 4. Some Christians see people of a different race, a different country, or a different ethnicity as those who should not really be concerned about, try to assist, to fellowship as brethren, or to learn from (Many American Christians act as if we have a hold on all Bible study, knowledge, and zeal).
 5. If people are here illegally, we should show them the importance of the Gospel and encourage them to obey the laws of the land!
 6. A call to adults and young adults -- I hope you will do better than many of us in my generation have done. Some have tried but there was NO ZEAL to really reach certain ethnicities.
 7. The Church MUST do better!
- D. (►) What A Lesson This Event Teaches Us Individually And Congregationally About The Gospel And Sinners!
1. Remember the Gospel is a WORLD-WIDE Message And Call; The Church is he home for the saved no matter what their ethnicity!
 2. EVERY SINNER NEEDS JESUS AND THE SALVATION HE PROVIDES!
 3. We should care and seek to bring every sinner we can to Jesus!
 4. If you are in sin, “Will You Come?”