

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 5



CORNELIUS' VISION

Scripture Text: Acts 10:1-8

We have followed Peter from Lydda to Joppa on his tour visiting the saints. Today we meet a new brother and learn of an experience he had that leads Peter on to the next point.

This lesson teaches us that in the early church there was neither racial nor social intolerance. It is a good lesson on putting first the work that needs to be done for God, and second, any personal ambition one may entertain.

There is a very striking analogy between radio reception and the spiritual reception that we experience when our receiving set, the human heart, is tuned in perfectly to the Spirit and purposes of God. Peter had more than just a new message; he had a new Gospel to carry, and the Lord wanted him to carry it everywhere. God directed him.

MEMORY VERSE: *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.*

—*John 10:27*

DAILY READINGS:

Mon.—**Ephesians 2:1-13** Delivered from the world.

Tue.—**Isaiah 40:25-31** The everlasting God.

Wed.—**Ezekiel 36:25-33** A new heart.

Thu.—**Ephesians 3:13-21** Strength for the inner man.

Fri.—**John 15:9-27** Continuing in Christ's love.

Devotional Reading: Luke 19:37-44 Need to know our position.

Cornelius Prayed

Acts 10:1-2 Caesarea was the headquarters of the Roman Army in Judaea. A band was three to six hundred soldiers and was divided into six centuries of one hundred soldiers each. Each century was commanded by a centurion (Smith's Bible Dictionary).

Cornelius was a **centurion of . . . the Italian band**, volunteers from Italy. He was a Gentile or non-Jew. He was **devout** to what he knew—he **feared God**, but had never met him personally—**gave much alms to the people**—probably the poor and needy. He **prayed to God alway**. He was in condition to hear God speak. He realized his best was not good enough.

Cornelius Sees a Vision

Acts 10:3-6 He saw in a vision . . . **the ninth hour**—mid-afternoon. He was fasting and praying at the time (see verse 30). He saw . . . **an angel of God . . . Saying . . . Cornelius . . . he was afraid. What is it, Lord?** He was ready to listen. **Thy prayers and thine alms are come . . . before God.** God had heard and seen. His prayer had made an impression on God at the throne of grace. God hears and answers the prayer of sinners when it concerns their salvation, the saving of their souls. This was His answer. **For a memorial**—a remembrance—he was in ready condition to receive something that would be stamped on the memory of both God and Cornelius.

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Standing out in this account of Cornelius is the fact of the rulership of the Holy Spirit. Man was not directing the actions of the individuals. No, it was the Lord, an angel of God or the Spirit Who spoke to them. It is important that we understand what state of spiritual life Cornelius was in at the time of this lesson and the next. He was devout, a just man, but he did not yet have salvation from sin. He desired something in his life that which he needed to fill the void he felt in his soul. That something was freedom from sin through salvation that only Jesus could provide.

What if Cornelius had been careless or self-willed or set on worldly thoughts? He would have missed God's voice. God was drawing him. He hungered and thirsted after righteousness, and God understood what he could not put into words. Jesus promises that such people will be filled (**Matthew 5:6**).

Cornelius Obeys

Acts 10:7-8 Cornelius believed God; he lost no time. **He called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier. He declared all and sent them to Joppa.** He highly trusted them.

Soldiers are not generally known for goodness. Yet, Cornelius had several around him who seemed to share his interest in the things of God. He felt he could trust them with his precious story and with carrying out his command. They showed no negative tendencies toward their mission. **All his house** feared God. This is a great testimony to the good character of Cornelius in regard to the position he held. It would appear he had a good influence upon his household. Possibly one of them had influenced him for God. Whichever, this is a genuine influence for God. We should have a burden for the spreading of the good news of the Gospel to those around us and especially to those of our own family.

It is a precious privilege to be a tool for God to use. We should praise God that He stoops to use humans to do His work of spreading the Gospel and building His church. This draws all concerned into close unity with each other and with Him. Cornelius heard Jesus' voice and obeyed. Jesus saw into his heart and knew him for what he was. This resulted in much good.

JUST A THOUGHT

The religious plane upon which we live is setting the standard for someone else.