

Jesus Christ's work through the Apostles in Judea and Samaria

Peter's enlightenment and the spread of the Gospel

".... and ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judae'a, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." **Acts 1:8**

Introduction: Our two lessons from Acts chapter 9 were *Living proofs of a man made whole* and the *Legacy of a life lived whole*. How important it surely is to use the resource of our sojourning on this earth for the glory of God. As Peter tarries in Joppa, another phase in God's Gospel presentation to the world is about to begin. First there has to be some work done on the heart of man of God for the Gospel message to continue (**1 Peter 4:17** *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*)Peter will be reminded of a prior learning moment in his life and will have to move forward in his walk with the Lord for the work to continue. Likewise you and I have to continue learning and growing in the things of God to move the Gospel out to the uttermost!

¹"Later Augustus allotted the city to Herod who rebuilt it into a new city in 10 B.C. in honor of Augustus. It became the administrative center of the Roman procurators of the province of Judea, and was the headquarters of the Roman legions. During the first century A.D. most of its inhabitants were Syrian Greeks, but many wealthy Jews lived there. Caesarea became the chief port of Palestine and is mentioned many times in the book of Acts (9:30; 18:22; 21:8). Philip the evangelist minister here and Peter preached to gentiles in the home of the Centurion, Cornelius. Because Caesarea was the residence of the procurator, it was also the place of Paul's trial (Acts 23:23 ff). He was a prisoner there for two years (Acts 27:1)."

I. The Devout Man 1-8

A. Religious But Not Saved (1-3)

1. His Duty 1

- a. Centurion - Roman military officer, commanding 100 men, probably of Italian origin.
- b. Although Cornelius is not the first Gentile to be saved, he and His family do mark the beginning of a turning point in the spread of the Gospel, proselytes were tolerated by Jews, and Uncircumcised Gentiles were not.
- c. Latin Name – Signifying he was a Roman
- d. Not a full proselyte in the truest sense of the term, but adopted some of the Jewish rites, an uncircumcised Gentile according to **Acts 11:3**

¹ <http://www.bible-history.com/geography/ancient-israel/caesarea.html>, Mar 11, 2016

2. His Deeds 2

- a. "gave much alms" - **monetary donations and good deeds do not secure Heaven**
- b. "prayed to God always" - **praying** often does not secure Heaven
- c. "he fasted" - V30 - **fasting does not secure Heaven**
- d. If any of these religious acts could save, God would not have sent the messenger
- e. Alms - **James 1:27, Psalm 41:1**
- f. Prayer - **Romans 12:12, Luke 18:1, 1 Thess 5:17**
- g. **Isaiah 64:6** - *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

3. His Desire 2

- a. "feared God with all his house" - His heart intentions were good, **but that could not save him**
- b. Oftentimes we are put to shame by the unsaved and their devotion to what they believe will get them to Heaven.
- c. "I believe any seeking man will be found of the Lord"- Paul Chappell

4. His Deliverance 3

- a. **Isa 55** - God certainly is plentiful in mercies to those who are open to His truth
- b. *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation **hath appeared to all men.** Titus 2:11*
- c. **For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Romans 10:13**
- d. *For God so **loved the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16*

The bottom line is no amount of "religious activity" can save a man, the Bible is very clear that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)". That simply stated means we have missed the mark.

B. Response to the Light (4-8)

Without these two vital components, the Gospel would not go forth. The message has already been given, so where are the messengers?

1. The Messenger 3,7 - God prepared a messenger

- a. God sent an angel to him.
- b. **Isa 59:1-2** *Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

2. The Message 5-6 - Send for one, Simon, surnamed Peter!

- a. The Gospel message has been entrusted to man in this dispensation.

1. **2 Corinthians 5:20** *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*
2. **1Thessalonians 2:4** *But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.*

The command has been given, the message has been written, all that is left to do is deliver the message. Cornelius with all his good works is a man with his family that would spend an eternity in Hell were it not for a messenger.

- b. Peter - Key to opening the Gentile ministry, unity is of utmost importance. (Why not Philip?)
 1. Peter at Pentecost - establishment of the church **Acts 2:4,14**
 2. Peter at Samaria - welcoming of the Samaritans into the fold **Acts 8:14**
 3. Peter at Caesarea - welcoming of the Gentiles into the fold **Acts 10:44**
 4. **Mat 16:13-19** - It matters what you and I do with Jesus, saved and unsaved alike.
- c. We would do well to follow the leaders appointed over us, as God moves his man. (**Acts 11:1-2**), They contended with Peter.
 1. **Hebrews 13:7** *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

3. The Movement 7-8

- a. Notice that Cornelius, didn't wait for tomorrow, he moved immediately:
 1. **Hebrews 2:3** *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*
 2. **2 Corinthians 6:2** *(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*
- b. **How often since salvation are we sluggish to respond to God's messages?**

II. The Determined Man 9-23

A. Peter's Place 9,10-16,19-20

1. **Peter spent time in prayer** – 6th Hour was 12 O'clock, Jews typically prayed two times a day, morning and evening. **Psalm 55:17, Dan 6:10, 6:13 (dedicated seasons of prayer exceeded that)**
2. **Peter spent time fasting no doubt** – *"he became very hungry, and would have eaten"*

3. **Peter spent time with the Saviour** – The Vision and evidenced by the speaking of the Holy Ghost
4. **Peter still needed growth in his life** – The Subject of the Vision, **2 Peter 3:16-18** -“*Grow in grace*”, **John 3:7** – We all start out as a babe.

B. Peter’s Vision

1. **The Vessel** 11
2. **The Direction of the Vessel** 11
3. **The Contents of the Vessel** 12 – Fourfooted Beasts, Wild Beasts, Creeping Things, Fowls of the Air (Prohibition and Separation of the Old Testament)
4. **The Command with the Vessel** 13 – 15 “*Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.*”, Pretty plain, clear cut instructions. His response however revealed his need to understand more fully God’s plan of Salvation.
5. **The Repetition of the Vessel** 13,15,16 (Gen 41:32, John 21:15-17, Matt 26:34) Completion or fullness.
6. **The Meaning of the Vessel** 15 “*What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.*” God is the standard bearer for all things. Ceremonial Laws of clean and unclean animals was to no longer be a factor. Jews and Gentiles are to be brought under the same salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. **Eph 2:14, Gal 3:28, Gen 9:3**

C. Peter’s Determination 17 Quite simply Peter meditated on “God’s word”

D. Peter’s Decision 18-23 Peter took all things into account, God’s impression upon His heart, the leading of the Holy Ghost, and what was going on around him. Sometimes we need to just make that step of faith God is leading us to, whether we fully understand it or not.

III. The Dedicated Man 23-33

A. Peters’ Dedication

1. They Departed for Caesarea
2. He took other Christians with him (surround yourselves with Godly relationships)
3. **Acts 10:28** “And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.
4. He did not resist – Gainsaying (immediately, no resistance)

B. Cornelius’ Dedication 24, 27, 33

1. **24** - “*he called together his kinsmen and near friends*” – Cornelius wanted everyone to know what God had to say. And those he cared for most, he compelled to come in.
2. **27** - “*and found many that were come together*” – What a testimony it must have been to Peter
3. **33** – “*Immediately I sent to thee*”, “*thou hast well done*”

IV. The Delivered Man 34-38