

## **Acts 10:1-28 The Beginning of the Ends of the Earth Peter & Cornelius**

*10 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. <sup>2</sup> He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. <sup>3</sup> One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, ‘Cornelius!’*

*<sup>4</sup> Cornelius stared at him in fear. ‘What is it, Lord?’ he asked.*

*The angel answered, ‘Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. <sup>5</sup> Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup> He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.’*

*<sup>7</sup> When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. <sup>8</sup> He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa. <sup>9</sup> About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. <sup>10</sup> He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. <sup>11</sup> He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. <sup>12</sup> It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. <sup>13</sup> Then a voice told him, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’*

*<sup>14</sup> ‘Surely not, Lord!’ Peter replied. ‘I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.’*

*<sup>15</sup> The voice spoke to him a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’*

*<sup>16</sup> This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.*

*<sup>17</sup> While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon’s house was and stopped at the gate. <sup>18</sup> They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.*

*<sup>19</sup> While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Simon, three men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup> So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.’*

*<sup>21</sup> Peter went down and said to the men, ‘I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?’*

*<sup>22</sup> The men replied, ‘We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.’ <sup>23</sup> Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.*

*The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. <sup>24</sup> The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. <sup>25</sup> As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. <sup>26</sup> But Peter made him get up. ‘Stand up,’ he said, ‘I am only a man myself.’*

*<sup>27</sup> While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. <sup>28</sup> He said to them: ‘You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.’*



### **28 Verses That Changes the Church**

This is the turning point of the Church

If this did not happen, arguably the church could have died.

You and I would never hear of or know about the love of God, the work of Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Paul's request at the Jerusalem council to reach the gentiles would have been turned away.

God broke Peter's ideas about who the gospel is for.

Beyond the Jews.

The invitation and knowledge of the gospel is for everyone.

How people respond, Jew or Gentile, is up to them.

Remember, every Christian to this point is a Jew.

Christianity was seen as an offshoot of Judaism.

The Jesus sect of Judaism.

Jesus did tell his disciples that they would be his witness in Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

But How?



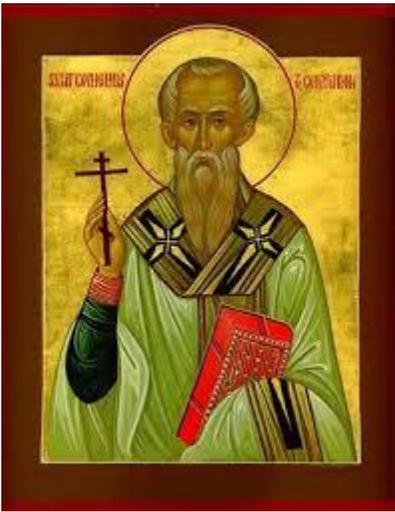
### **Seeing Angels (v.1-8)**

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Who was Cornelius?

Devout, generous & prayerful.

An Italian, a Roman Centurion, following the way of Judaism.

He did not know Christ but he knew of God.

How do good people come to know Jesus?

The desire for God.

The work of the Holy Spirit.

Seeing angels in the middle east.

but not just there- throughout history.

Those who seek God, who are spiritually awakened by the Spirit.

The soil is ready.

He saw Angels.

You see, when God needs something important done, he sends angels, messengers.

What you do with the message is your responsibility.

There are 3 things to Seeing Angels.



Listen!

If you get a message from God, whether a clear command or direction from Scripture

Or a miraculous vision, dream or appearance

Believe!

You are meant to believe and trust that what you hear is from God.

Put it to the test of Scripture and to your pastors.

The Holy Spirit is not Schitzoid - saying one thing to one person and another to another.

God's character is consistent!

Act!

You must act on the message or there are consequences.

If you are to deliver a message to someone, deliver it!

You can always check with the pastor and in fact you should.

If you are to change a certain course of your life, change it!

The result is always going to be a blessing.

The result of not acting will be the missing of the blessing.

That is what Cornelius did.

But he wasn't the only one.

### **Question:**

Have you ever seen an Angel?

Have you ever heard the voice of God?

Have you doubted that you did?

Have you ever done what you were invited to?

### **Paradigm Shift (9-20)**

<sup>9</sup> About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. <sup>10</sup> He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. <sup>11</sup> He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. <sup>12</sup> It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. <sup>13</sup> Then a voice told him, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

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Peter experienced a deep transformation.

Religion & Values are enculturated.

shifting is very difficult.

but it shouldn't be easy.

It needs to be wrestled with.

There are a few things in Peter that helped him transform:



### Listening vs. Assuming

Peter started probably as he often did - with prayer.

But prayer isn't what we have often made it.

Jabbering on and on at God.

Real prayer is as much if not more about listening than it is about merely speaking.

People keep telling me they don't hear from God.

The reason is that they either don't pray or don't know how to pray.

Practically every person who ever really prays in Scripture hears from God!

God never ignores anyone who seeks him.

But we ignore God who is speaking to us always!

Peter listened - he prayed.

### Openness vs. Defensiveness

Okay, Peter was defensive.

The vision freaked him out.

Eat stuff that you have never eaten?

Break with your enculturated beliefs?

Never!

So it happens 3 times.

Remember, Jesus had to ask Peter whether he loved him 3 times too!

Eventually, Peter had to give in.

For us, it is about doing our homework.

The Bible is not a walk in the park.

Reading is not easy.

Going to church services, spending time praying, attending home group isn't convenient.

Attending courses or workshops has a cost.

But this is what helps us to remain open and learning.

Humility is vital to spiritual growth.

Go to Regent, go to Carey, go to BSF.

Talk to your pastors! Ask Questions!

### Action vs. Complacency

Cornelius acted on seeing angels.

Peter will act on the vision God gave him.

Both of these men will break with tradition, with their cultures

They will build a bridge and foundation from which the rest of the church will eventually follow.

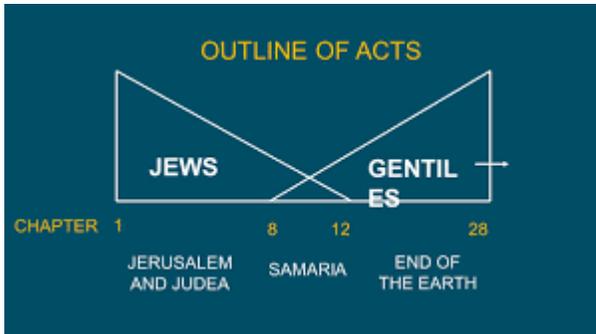
True Transformation requires action.

### **Pause for Q&A**

Food as the Measure of Fellowship & Culture



## The Beginning of the Ends of the Earth (21-28)



From this point on the entire book of Acts Changes.

This is the pivotal chapter and narrative.

The mission now spreads from Jerusalem to will end in Rome.

And from the Book of Acts, the entire world will come to know the name of Jesus.

You and I are here today because of this.



## The Story of Frank.

Taiwanese, 10 years older than me (he was 30, I was 20)

We couldn't be more different and still Chinese.

He was interested in a girl who went to church.

I was teaching Adult Sunday School in university.

He was asking a lot of questions so I invited him to talk to me after service.

He did and we talked for about 3 hours in the church basement.

He shared how when in Taiwan he survived a car accident and had the sense it was God.

He wanted to know who this God was.

He wanted to become a Christian.

We went through the prayer:

I'm Sorry,

Please forgive me and come into my life,

Thank you for paying for my sins and being my saviour.

I told him to read the gospels and that he could call me when he had a question.

He called me practically every night.  
And we went to the same church and fellowship together.  
Sadly, after graduating from university the same year  
we went our separate ways and lost touch.

Last night, I actually looked him up.  
I tried Facebook first but no luck.  
Then I went to Google which led me eventually to Linked In.  
There I found a Frank from Taiwan who attended the University of Waterloo.  
What I then learned was this...

12 years later he went to Tyndale seminary for a Master of Divinity.  
He went into the pastorate and today he is a pastor in Toronto in a Mandarin Church.  
He is reaching a people I will never be able to reach.  
People from the other ends of this earth.

You see, God changes the world one person at a time.  
If we listen, believe and act.  
If we are willing to be transformed.  
We will not only be blessed, but we will become a blessing to many.  
Beyond what we can even know.

You see, we are the children of Cornelius.