

# ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

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## Lesson 9

Acts 9:32 - 11:18

In this lesson, our study in Acts shifts from studying about Saul's conversion to an examination of how the Lord led Peter out of Jerusalem on his first missionary trip. We will also look at one of the most significant passages in Acts - the story of Cornelius. The story begins in the latter half of Chapter 9 and runs through the early portions of Chapter 11. Beginning with Peter's call to visit the home of a tanner, we will look at the growth of the church outside of Jerusalem and see firsthand what life was like some ten years after the resurrection of Christ and the Day of Pentecost.

As I read Acts 9:32 through Acts 11:18 and studied all of the material, I rediscovered a truth that I had originally learned in my hermeneutics class in seminary. That is, that God's word is finite; it is completely contained within the Bible, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation. This makes every word, every verse, every chapter and every book extremely important. It also means that, as a body of text, we can make certain distinctions. For example, there must be much to be learned by studying Genesis, because of the amount of God's word contained with it.

In my preparation of this lesson, I discovered that there are approximately 13 verses around the Day of Pentecost, approximately 31 verses around the conversion of Saul, and approximately 66 verses relating to the conversion of Cornelius and his family. God must be telling us that there are more than a few things that we can learn from reading so much about a single event.

And so, with that as a backdrop, let's consider these passages and see what God would have us to learn about His church, His people, and about God Himself.

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*For our study, read Acts 9:32 - 11:18 and answer the following:*

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1. In Acts 9:32-35, Peter heals Aeneas, a lame man. There must have been many miracles accomplished by Peter in the eight to ten years following the resurrection of Christ. What might be one reason that this particular miracle is placed here by Luke? (See Acts 9:38)
2. Have you ever heard of a "Dorcas Ministry"? See if you can determine why this ministry would relate to Acts 9:36-43?
3. What is so unusual about the fact that Peter stayed with Simon the Tanner? (Acts 9:43)
4. In Acts 10:1-2, we are introduced to Cornelius. How is he described?

5. Was Cornelius "saved"?
6. If Cornelius was not saved, then how did he know God? (Romans 1:20-21)
7. Did you believe God was real before you were saved? Were you searching when Christ came into your life, just as the Centurion was?
8. Similar to what we observed with Saul and Ananias, we see again with Peter and Cornelius. God knows our needs before we ask, and He was already working in Peter's heart to prepare him to meet and witness to Cornelius, even before Cornelius' servants arrived. Look at Peter's vision in verses 9 through 16. What is Peter telling God about what he's being asked to do?
9. Does Peter know that God is sending him to see a Roman soldier, a Centurion, and does he know why God wants him to go there?
10. What does Cornelius do in preparation for Peter's visit?
11. How does Cornelius greet Peter, and why? If we accept that Cornelius is not yet a believer, why would he act in this fashion?
12. Can you recall before you were saved? Did you recognize someone who was holy and treat them differently, even though you were not yet a believer, just as Cornelius did?
13. Acts 10:28 is a profound confession of Peter's and validates what Christ taught people then, and still teaches us today. What does Mark 7:14-23 tell us about clean and unclean, and how we are to discern the difference?
14. Acts 10:34-35 represents a major shift in the beliefs of the early Church, and it is one of the foundational theological principles taught us by Christ. What is it, and why was this so profound at that time, especially for Peter?
15. Why would everyone there have believed Peter? What did he tell them about Christ and the events surrounding Him (in Acts 10:39)?

16. Who else does Peter tell them witnessed these events? (see Acts 10:41)
  
17. In Acts 10:44-48, God does something wonderful, what is it?
  
18. When you consider your salvation experience, can you find many similarities with those of Cornelius and his family? Did the Holy Spirit fill your heart while you listened to or read God's Word?
  
19. After studying the conversion of the Eunuch and Cornelius, is it fair to say that before we are baptized with water, we are first baptized with the Holy Spirit?
  
20. In Acts 11:1-3, what was the response from the "circumcision group" when Peter returned to Jerusalem to tell them of the great things that God had done with this family? Why did they respond this way?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
21. What was Peter's response? (see Acts 11:4-18)

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In these passages, we observed that, through Cornelius, God showed Peter, (and us today) that His Grace is for all who believe and not just the Jews or people with specific backgrounds and upbringing. The Church that Christ is building is not a respecter of persons; it is not built on the clean or unclean food that we eat or other Judaic rules, but only on the resurrected Christ and the blood that he shed for us on the cross.

As we work within our local church body, we need to follow Peter's example of being ready at all times to follow God's leading, even when we don't understand it; and even when God seems to be doing something completely different than what we have ever seen before. Following the leadership of the Holy Spirit and trusting completely in Christ, we can reach out to those around us, minister to the needs of people near and far, and accomplish great things in His kingdom – if we will only depend on Him.

Have a blessed week everyone.

Yours in Christ,

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