

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

# THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

# OF THE APOSTLES

*An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely*

## ACTS 5:31-32

*"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."*

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

## Lesson #45

### COMMENTARY ON: 10:1-8

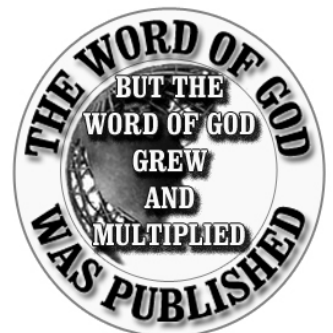
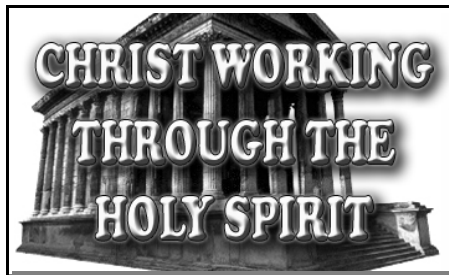
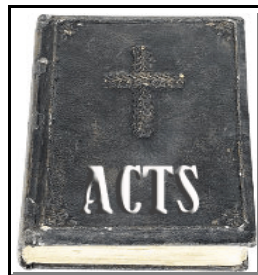
#### CORNELIUS HEARS FROM THE LORD

Our attention is drawn to a Gentile who was a military man, head of a group of soldiers called "The Italian Regiment."<sup>NKJV</sup> In that capacity, he had continued to maintain a godly disposition, fearing God, giving alms liberally, and praying to God always. The Lord saw his devotion, and sent an angel to instruct him. In this event, the stage is being set for one of the great epochs of Divine history. The river of the water of life will break out of Jewish boundaries, and begin to flow to the Gentiles. As with the Jews, the first to hear the Gospel will be devout people, who have been earnest in living up to what they already knew about the Lord. This entire episode was without any original planning or initiative on the part of men. Neither was it the result of a prayer for direction. Rather, it was what occurred when the Lord took note of the activities of a man – a man who was devout and gave much alms to "the people" – the Jewish people, who were the chosen nation. Just as He did with Saul of Tarsus, the Lord will send him to a man who knows the truth and can effectively declare it.

## ACTS 17:26-27

*"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."*

" . . . and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

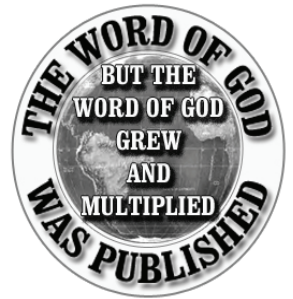


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



## The Book of Acts

### Lesson Number 45



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ALT = Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED = Amplified Bible (1965), ASV = American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA = Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV = English Revised Version (1885), ESV = English Stand Version (2001), GNB = Good News (1966), GWN = God'S Word (1995), IE = International English, ISV = International Standard Version (1967), JPS = Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV = King James Version (1611), L.ITV = Literal Translation of the Bible ((1976), LIVING = Living Bible (1971), MKJV = Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY = Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD = Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB = New American Bible (2002), NASB = New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU = New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB = New International Bible, NIV = New International Version (1984), NJB = New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV = New King James Version (1979), NLT =New Living Translation (1996), NRSV = New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS = J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT = BISHOP'S New Testament (1595), RSV = Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK = JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster = The Webster Bible (1833),WEYMOUTH = Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS = William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE = Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE = Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862).

----- Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

**LEXICON LEGEND:** FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

**DISCLAIMER:** The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

# CORNELIUS HEARS FROM THE LORD

<sup>10:1</sup> There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, <sup>2</sup> A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. <sup>3</sup> He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. <sup>4</sup> And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. <sup>5</sup> And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: <sup>6</sup> He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do. <sup>7</sup> And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; <sup>8</sup> And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa." (Acts 10:1-8)

## INTRODUCTION

Our attention is drawn to a Gentile who was a military man, head of a group of soldiers called "The Italian Regiment." <sup>NKJV</sup> Here we note the propensity of the Lord to deal with specific people, noting their manner of life. It is possible to have a view of Divine dealings that is too general, accenting the provisions made for everyone, but overlooking the specific and discretionary dispensing of those provisions. God was not only the one who initiated the

provision of salvation, He is also the One who originate the experience of it.

Even though Cornelius was a military man with considerable responsibility, this did not interfere with his life before God. While, in the capacity of a Roman Centurion, Cornelius had continued to maintain a godly disposition, fearing God, giving alms liberally, and praying to God always. The Lord saw his devotion, and sent an angel

to instruct him. He excelled in praying and giving, both of which require time, thought, and action.

In the event reported in our text, the stage is being set for one of the great epochs of Divine history. The river of the water of life will break out of Jewish boundaries, and begin to flow to the Gentiles. This was something promised to Abraham, announced by the prophets, and declared on the day of Pentecost. Yet,

*In fulfillment of the words of the prophets, God will now lift up His hand to the Gentiles, who were "not a people"— by Given O. Blakely*

## CONTENTS

- A CERTAIN MAN CALLED CORNELIUS (10:1-2)
- HE SAW A VISION (10:3)
- HE WAS AFRAID (10:4a)
- HIS PRAYERS WERE HEARD, AND HIS ALMS WERE NOTED (10:4b)
- DIRECTION FROM HEAVEN (10:5-6)
- THE RESPONSE OF CORNELIUS (10:7-8)
- CONCLUSION

the time had not yet come for the fulfillment of those words. Now, however, the hour has arrived, and the Divine initiative is launched.

As with the Jews, the first to hear the Gospel will be devout people, who have been earnest in living up to what they already knew about the Lord (Acts 2:5). As I have mentioned in prior lessons, this is a facet of Divine working that is scarcely known. In fact, such an approach is often insinuated to be unacceptable. It is commonly perceived that the morally degenerate and spiritually ignorant are the ones that require the immediate attention. However, this is not how God carried out His purpose, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to support such a supposition.

This entire episode was without any original planning or initiative on the part of men. It was not the outcome of a plan or strategy that had been developed by men. Even the church did not come up with this approach. Neither, indeed, was it the result of a prayer for direction on what to do and how to preach and teach. Rather, it was what occurred when the Lord took note of the activities of a man – a man who was devout and gave much alms to “the people” – the Jewish people, who were the chosen nation.

Just as He did with Saul of Tarsus, the Lord will send Cornelius to a man who knows the truth and can effectively declare it. Paul refers to this Divine manner when he wrote, “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, *even as*

*the Lord gave to every man?”* (1 Cor 3:5). By saying the Lord “gives” these ministers, he means that they are sent out by Him, as affirmed in Romans 10:15: “*And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*” Their feet are beautiful, not only because of the message they bring, but because of the One who sent them.

I have repeatedly drawn your attention to the fact that the book of Acts is a record of the Lord governing the Kingdom and building His church. The following references point out this undeniable activity.

- ⇨ “. . . the Lord added to the church . . .” (Acts 2:47).
- ⇨ “. . . there shall come the presence of the Lord . . .” (Acts 3:19).
- ⇨ “The angel of the Lord opened the prison doors by night . . .” (5:19).
- ⇨ “And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip . . .” (Acts 8:26).
- ⇨ “. . . the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip . . .” (Acts 8:39)
- ⇨ “And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice . . . I am Jesus whom thou persecutes . . .” (Acts 9:5).
- ⇨ “. . . and to him said the Lord in a vision . . .” (Acts 9:10).
- ⇨ “And the Lord said unto him . . .” (Acts 9:11)
- ⇨ “But the Lord said unto him . . .” (Acts 9:15).
- ⇨ “. . . an angel of God coming in to him . . .” (Acts 10:3).

- ⇨ “And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed . . .” (Acts 10:7).
- ⇨ “Cornelius . . . was warned from God by an holy angel . . .” (Acts 10:22).
- ⇨ “And the hand of the Lord was with them . . .” (Acts 11:21).
- ⇨ “. . . the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison . . . forthwith the angel departed from him . . . the Lord hath sent His angel . . .” (12:7,10,11).
- ⇨ “And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him . . .” (Herod) (Acts 12:23).
- ⇨ “. . . the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13:2).
- ⇨ “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night . . .” (Acts 16:9).
- ⇨ “. . . assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us . . .” (Acts 16:10).
- ⇨ “. . . whose heart the Lord opened . . .” (Acts 16:14).
- ⇨ “Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision . . .” (Acts 18:9).
- ⇨ “And the night following the Lord stood by him . . .” (Acts 23:11).
- ⇨ “. . . I have appeared unto thee for this purpose . . . I will appear unto thee . . .” (Acts 26:16).
- ⇨ “For there stood by me this night the angel of God . . .” (Acts 27:23).

The preaching and testimonies

**I have repeatedly drawn your attention to the fact that the book of Acts is a record of the Lord governing the Kingdom and building His church.**

**However, conversion itself is what initiates accord between God and man, and faith is the means through which it is sustained. Once men commence to really live by faith (Heb 10:38) and walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:25), cleansing themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1), an environment will be created that will serve to dispel erroneous views and restore power to the church.**

recorded in Acts also contain numerous references to angels working in the past (7:30,35,38; 11:13), and the Lord speaking (2:34; 3:22; 7:31,33,37; 9:17,27; 11:16; 12:17; 13:47; 15:17; 20:35; 22:10).

All of this confirms the activity of all of heaven in the Kingdom and work of the Lord: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and angels. This provides some insight into the phrase, *“the heavens do rule”* (Dan 4:26). A rule requires involvement with the domain and personalities over whom the rule is maintained. Thus it is written that the *“most High ruleth IN the kingdom of men”* (Dan 4:17,25). All of these personalities are represented as being involved in the work itself, revealing, directing, judging, and ruling. This view of the Kingdom is essential to a proper understanding of things pertaining to life and godliness. The Scriptures, which are absolutely essential, are not to be

considered an end of themselves. They are *“given by inspiration of God”* (2 Tim 3:16), but are the means to certain ordained objectives.

- ⇨ They *“testify”* of Jesus Christ (John 5:19), which testimony is *“the spirit of prophecy”* (Rev 19:10).
- ⇨ They are given in order *“That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (2 Tim 3:17).
- ⇨ Through them the purpose of God, kept secret from the foundation of the world, is *“made manifest”* (Rom 16:26).
- ⇨ They contain records of God’s dealings with men, and were written *“that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”* (Rom 15:4).

However, the Scriptures do not obtain their power independently of Divine involvement – and that involvement is realized through faith. The word of God is appropriately referred to as *“the sword of the Spirit”* (Eph 6:17), who is active in the dissemination and exposition of it. It is the involvement of Deity that causes the appointed results to take place in the people.

The point here is that the book of Acts not only contains the report of the working of the Lord, but of a people who were genuinely converted and were trusting in Him. **Corrupt teaching, and consequent departures from the faith, were the exception, not the rule.** The clash between the record and the contemporary experience of the church is so significant that men have concocted special theological views to account for the absence of Divine involvement. They have also developed schemes that they say will restore that involvement. **However, conversion itself is what initiates accord between God and man, and faith is the means through which it is sustained.** Once men commence to really live by faith (Heb 10:38) and walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:25), cleansing themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1), an environment will be created that will serve to dispel erroneous views and restore power to the church. We are reading of a people who have been joined to the Lord, and are one spirit with Him (1 Cor 6:17).

## A CERTAIN MAN CALLED CORNELIUS

*“<sup>10:1</sup> There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, <sup>2</sup>A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.”*

We are again exposed to a heavenly initiative. Here was an outreach that was not planned or initiated by men. **We will also see in this account the kind of men for whom God is seeking** – and it will be in perfect accord with what has been revealed in Scripture

concerning that matter. Permit me to remind you of some of the Divine initiatives we have confronted thus far in the book of Acts.

- ⇨ Jesus poured forth the Spirit upon His disciples, giving them both insight and power to declare that insight in words (2:1-14).
- ⇨ The angel of the Lord told the apostles to go to the Temple and speak all the words of this life (5:20).

⇨ Philip is told to go down to the desert road leading to Gaza, and then join himself to a chariot on that road (8:26,29).

⇨ Jesus appears to Saul of Tarsus, then sends Ananias to tell him what he must do (Acts 9:3-16).

Now one of the great epochs of Scripture will take place, and it will be strictly initiated, orchestrated, and carried to its fruition by the Lord. This is another picture of Jesus governing the

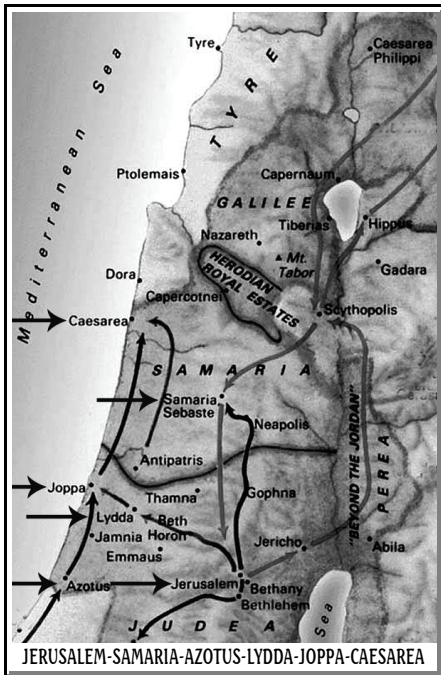
Kingdom and building His church.

**A CERTAIN MAN**

*“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius . . .”*

When men go forth to minister the Word, they speak to men in general, for that is what they have been commissioned to do. **However, there are individuals that God will not allow to wait until His people become aware of them, or see the necessity of delivering the Word to them.** These are people who have been duly noted in heaven, even if men have not particularly considered them. I do understand that all men may not be in this category. However, I am equally persuaded that there are more such people than are ordinarily perceived. It is God who noted this “certain man,” and will now call him to Himself, using the means that He has ordained – a message and a messenger.

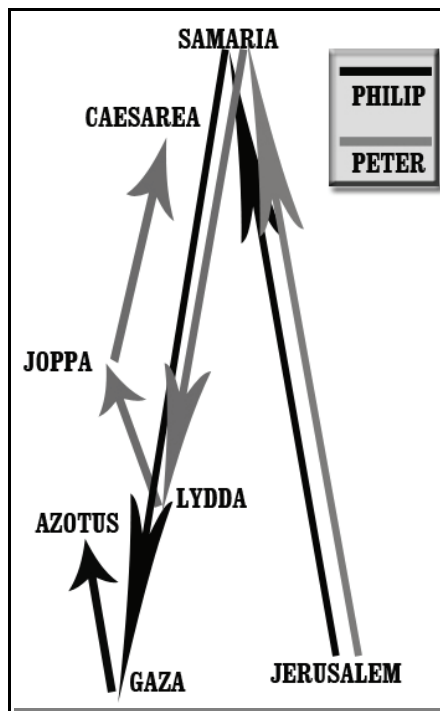
Caesarea



Caesarea was about thirty miles from Joppa, and was in the region of Samaria, the middle section of Canaan. Although this was in the promised land, this area was largely without the knowledge of God. Jesus spent very little time there, and there is no record of Him, doing any miracles there. Yet now, since He was enthroned, an extensive ministry

is taking place there. First, Philip carried the Gospel to the city of Samaria (8:5). Then Peter and John preached throughout the region (8:14,25). Then Peter strengthens the disciples in Lydda, preaches in the region, and all of Lydda and Saron turn to the Lord (9:35). Then he ministers in Joppa, and throughout the whole city many believed in the Lord (9:42).

The manner in which the Word is being spread in this area follows no pattern according to man’s wisdom. First, Philip went North to Samaria. Then the Spirit moved him South to the desert to road leading to Gaza, and then to the southern region of Samaria, near the border of Judea, to Azotus. Then Peter goes from Jerusalem to Samaria, then moves South to Lydda, then West to Joppa, then North again to Caesarea. Philip went to Samaria and spoke to a city. Peter and John went to the people in Samaria, than passed through the regions between there and Jerusalem.



However, there were also **individuals** were also involved. We see, then, that the working of the Lord concerns both groups of people and individuals.

Thus we see Divine direction to:

- ⇒ **CITIES** (Jerusalem–Acts 1:8), Samaria–8:14, Azotus–8:40).
- ⇒ **REGIONS** (Judea, Samaria–1:8, a desert road near Gaza–8:26).
- ⇒ **THE WHOLE EARTH** (uttermost part of the earth–1:8).
- ⇒ **INDIVIDUALS** (an unnamed lame man in Jerusalem–3:1, the Ethiopian eunuch near Gaza– 8:29, “a certain man named Aeneas” in Lydda– 9:33, “a certain disciple named Tabitha” in Joppa–9:36, and now “a certain man named Cornelius in Caesarea”– 10:1. There were also specific people who were ungodly in their manners: “a certain man in Jerusalem named Ananias and his wife Sapphira” –5:1), and “a certain man called Simon” in Samaria–9:9).
- ⇒ **CHURCHES** (In Judea, Galilee, and Samaria–9:31).

This same diversity will be seen throughout the book of Acts, and the epistles as well.

There is no way that mere men could have planned these incidents, their nature, and the way they were carried out. **They all involved the hearts of men as well as their spiritual status.** The fulfillment of them required the King of kings and Lord of lords. Not only were there natural circumstances to be overcome, and distracting people like Simon the sorcerer, but there were also principalities and powers in higher realms who had governed this region (largely Samaria), for a long time. **If we were able to see behind the scenes, we would behold a significant intrusion being made into the kingdom of darkness.**

Now, our attention is focused on a particular man – a Gentile. His name is Cornelius – a Roman name, meaning “of a horn.” It is assumed by historians that he belonged to the Cornelii, “a noble and distinguished family in Rome.” He is reckoned by Julian the Apostate as one of the few distinguished people who embraced Christianity. <sup>MCLINTOKANDSTRONG'S</sup> If this is true, it is another confirmation of a Divine manner declared by Paul: “For ye see your calling, brethren, how

that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty” (1 Cor 1:16-27). **However, even then, when such people are called, it is not owing to their worldly distinction.** The church has no need for such people, even though salvation is offered to them. **However, when such are blessed to be called, they do not bring their worldly prestige into the church.** What they are in this world does not contribute a thing to what they are in Christ Jesus. This is why it is wrong to give lofty religious titles to people because they have attained to worldly status. This includes those with academic credentials, who can fall under the category of “wise men,” should their wisdom extend beyond books. As will be noted in the case of Cornelius, he was noted in heaven for his moral and spiritual demeanor.

**A CENTURION**

“...a centurion of the band called the Italian band...”



The Roman army was made up of many legion, each one consisting of 6,000 troops. Each Legion consisted of ten cohorts, or regiments. Each cohort, or regiment, consisted of three bands, and each band consisted of two groups of one hundred troops each. Cornelius was the head over one of these groups, for the title “Centurion” means the *captain of one hundred men*. Thus we are introduced to a man from a noble family,

who occupied a significant place in the army of Rome. This government was the fourth government of Daniel’s vision, and was described as a kingdom that was “strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise” (Dan 2:40). It was also likened to a beast that was unique from other governments, “exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet” (Dan 7:19). It was prophesied that it would be “diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces” (Dan 7:23).

By the time of our text, Rome had accomplished all of those things, and had been ruling the world for many years. **It was the kingdom during which the God of heaven set up His Kingdom** which will, as it is affirmed, “break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever” (Dan 2:44). Now, we find a man who is integral to this kingdom, and to its military branch that fulfilled the prophesy of a ruthless and powerful kingdom, crushing all other worldly empires. Speaking as a man, it is not likely that one would find a godly person in such surroundings. **However, like Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord in an unlikely place, so will Cornelius also experience that marvelous grace.**

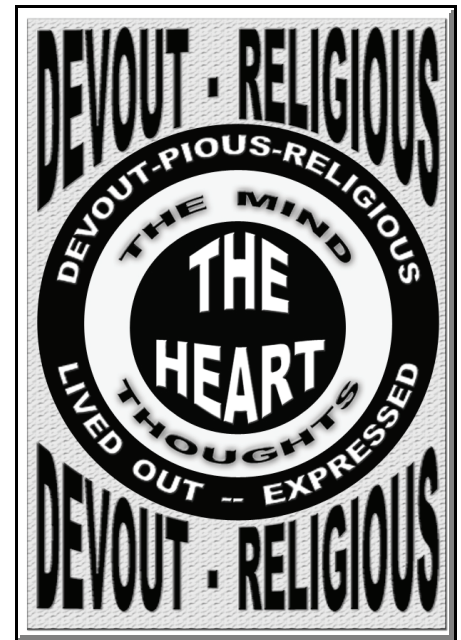
Keep in mind that this man would never have been reached for Christ if the Lord Himself had not launched the initiative, just as He did with the Ethiopian eunuch and Saul of Tarsus.

**A DEVOUT MAN**

“... A devout man...” Other versions read, “serious-minded man,”<sup>BBE</sup> “pious,”<sup>DARBY</sup> “religious man,”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “righteous,”<sup>MRD</sup> “godly man,”<sup>LIVING</sup> “good man,”<sup>IE</sup> “very religious man,”<sup>CEV</sup> and “deeply religious man.”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

Most all of the standard (non-interpretive and literal) versions of Scripture read “devout.” This word is translated from the Greek word εὐσεβής (yoo-seb-ace), which has the following lexical meaning: “pious, dutiful toward God,”<sup>THAYER</sup> “of a manner of life lived reverently and respectfully toward God,”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> “godly, religious,”

UBS “of a manner of life lived reverently and respectfully toward God,” LOUW-NIDA “righteous in act,” LIDDELL-SCOTT and “reverent.” GINGRICH



The word “devout” has to do with **the outward life** – with the expression of what is in the heart. It parallels the English word “religious,” which is also used in Scripture (Acts 13:43; James 1:26, Acts 17:22 <sup>NKJV/NASB/NIV</sup>). The noun form of that word (“religion”) is also used in Scripture (Acts 26:5; Gal 1:13-14; James 1:26-27). The word itself does not express emptiness or hypocrisy, although that is often a suitable description for a mere form of religion that is only in outward manners, and not within the heart and mind. **However, no person is truly godly who is not outwardly so – devout, or religious.**

Often people say they want nothing to do with “religion,” but this is an unthoughtful statement, and is by no means proper. James tells us that religion is vain if it is in any way inconsistent with the truth, or is self-centered (James 1:26-27). While it is possible to emulate a Christian profession through various outward forms, **it is not possible to possess faith without it impacting one’s behavior.**

The point being made about Cornelius is that he was outwardly pious, living in a manner that was consistent with a profession of being a worshiper of

God. Those who live sloppy and inconsistent lives do err when they ask us not to judge them according to their appearance, claiming that they really do love the Lord, yet simply do not reflect so outwardly. That would be similar to God not acting like God, or Jesus not conducting Himself as Lord, or the Holy Spirit not being holy. A consistent conflict between one's profession and manner of life constitutes one a hypocrite. Cornelius was not such a man, but was devout, pious, and reverent in his manner of life.

**HE FEARED GOD WITH ALL OF THIS HOUSE**

“... and one that feared God with all his house . . .” Other versions read, “God-fearing,”<sup>NIV</sup> “fearing God,”<sup>BBE</sup> “God-fearer,”<sup>CJB</sup> “respected God,”<sup>GWN</sup> “deeply reverent,”<sup>LIVING</sup> “worshiped God,”<sup>IE</sup> “revered God,”<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> “venerated God and treated Him with reverential obedience,”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “reverenced God.”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

Those who live unto the Lord are frequently said to “fear God” (Gen 42:18; Ex 1:17,21; 18:21; Neh 8:2; Job 1:1; Psa 66:16; Acts 13:15' Col 3:22). This is also an expression that is tied to one's manner of life, as is confirmed in the texts I have cited. **The idea is that the fear of God moves the individual to shape his life to please the Lord.** Such a person, as Zacharias and Elizabeth, walks in all the “commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Lk 1:6). Whatever may be said about not being afraid of God, or not being controlled by fear, the truth of the matter is that those who know the Lord are afraid of the consequences of displeasing Him, not obeying Him, or in any way living as though He did not exist. In this day of India rubber theology that has no spiritual firmness, this kind of approach to life is virtually unknown.

The expression “with all his house” applies to both being devout and fearing God. It also includes servants, and is not confined to the family of Cornelius. **The outward manner of the lives of all within his house were upright.** While one's relationship to God is certainly not wholly dependent upon outward conduct, **it does involve it.** In the Spirit's citation of men and women who lived by faith (Hebrews 11), there is a

consistent parallel between their faith and what they did. Those who attempt to draw a fine line between faith and conduct have neither spoken wisely or correctly.

**HE GAVE MUCH ALMS**

“... which gave much alms to the people . . .” Other versions read, “gave alms generously to the people,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “gave many alms to the Jewish people,”<sup>NASB</sup> “he gave generously to those in need,”<sup>NIV</sup> “gave much money to the poor,”<sup>BBE</sup> “gave generously to help the Jewish poor,”<sup>CJB</sup> “did many charitable deeds for the Jewish people,”<sup>CSB</sup> “gave generously to Jewish causes,”<sup>NJB</sup> “gave generously to charity,”<sup>LIVING</sup> and “was also liberal in his charities to the people.”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup>

The words “the people” are translated from the Greek expression τῷ λαῷ, which employs the definite article “the,” as opposed to a reference to people in general. As used here, the word translated “people” means “people, tribe, nation, all those who are of the same stock and language”<sup>THAYER</sup> and “as a religious technical term, of Israel as God's chosen people.”<sup>FRIEBERG</sup>

**Cornelius is depicted as giving to the poor among the Jewish people –**

**distinguished his gifts as being related to fearing God – and that is the whole point of the text.** This specifically relates to the promise God made to Abraham: “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee” (Gen 12:3). Isaac also said these words to Jacob: “blessed be he that blesseth thee” (Gen 27:29-30). In his prophecy concerning Israel, Balaam said of them, “Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee” (Num 24:9). You may recall that one thing that commended a certain centurion whose servant “was sick and ready to die” was spoken by the disciples to Jesus: “For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue” (Luke 7:5). Jesus did not rebuke their statement. Instead, “He went with them,” and healed the centurion's servant (Lk 7:6-10). This was also the man of whom Jesus said, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel” (Luke 7:9) – something He said of no other person.

The view of “people” that considers those who are identified with the Lord perfectly coincides with the teaching of Jesus, who revealed that there is a sense in which the eternal destiny of people will depend upon how they responded to His “brethren” (Matt

**Whatever may be said about not being afraid of God, or not being controlled by fear, the truth of the matter is that those who know the Lord are afraid of the consequences of displeasing Him, not obeying Him, or in any way living as though He did not exist.**

“THE people.” As Peter says of the Gentiles, as compared to the Jews, they are “not a people” (1 Pet 2:10; Deut 32:21; Isa 7:8). All other nations are gathered under the single appellation “Gentiles.” **God recognized no national distinction other than that of Israel, the only conglomerate of individuals that He, outside of Christ, has consolidated under one name.**

The text neither states or suggests that the Jewish poor were the only ones to which Cornelius gave alms. **They were, however, the people who**

25:40,45). In this day of generalities, this view has been so obscured it is scarcely known among professing Christians.

**HE PRAYED ALWAYS**

“... and prayed to God alway.” Other versions read, “prayed continually,”<sup>NASB</sup> “prayed to regularly,”<sup>NIV</sup> “prayed constantly to God,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “supplicating God continually,”<sup>DARBY</sup> “was a man of prayer,”<sup>LIVING</sup> and “was a real man of prayer.”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

There are several different Greek words for praying.

**Every person is expected to live up to the measure of truth they possess. Only then will more be given. This fact explains why many people have little ... Cornelius was living up to the knowledge that he did have of God, and was doing so consistently and with integrity.**

- ⇒ προσεύχομαι (Matt 5:44) – to speak to or make requests of God. <sup>THAYER</sup>
- ⇒ παρακαλέω (Matt 26:53) – to ask for something earnestly and with propriety. <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>
- ⇒ δέομαι (Acts 8:22) – to ask for with urgency, with the implication of presumed need. <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>
- ⇒ δέησις (Rom 10:1) – that which is asked with urgency based on presumed need. <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>
- ⇒ εὔχομαι (2 Cor 13:7) – petitionary pray, or appeal to God. <sup>FRIBERG</sup>
- ⇒ ἑντευξις (1 Tim 4:5) – meeting with one, as a form of intercession. <sup>FRIBERG</sup>
- ⇒ εὐχή (James 5:15) – to speak to or make requests of God. <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>
- ⇒ ἐρωτάω (1 John 5:16) – make a request of God. <sup>FRIBERG</sup>

The word used here is **δεόμενος**, which a form of **δέομαι**, and means “to ask or beg.” <sup>THAYER</sup> “make petition, plead, ask,” <sup>FRIBERG</sup> “implore,” <sup>UBS</sup> and “to ask for with urgency, with the implication of presumed need - ‘to plead, to beg.’” <sup>LOUW-</sup>

<sup>NIDA</sup> The idea presented here is that of dependency upon God, as though to say Cornelius always depended, or relied, upon God by means prayer. This kind of attitude was found in David. “*Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice*” (Psa 55:17). Cornelius articulated his desires to God. Prayers of this sort are found in the book of Psalms.

⇒ “*Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me: for Thou art the God of my salvation; on Thee do I wait all the day*” (Psa 25:5).

⇒ “*Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto Thee daily*” (Psa 86:3).

Also, prayer, by its very nature, is an expression of faith, for “*he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*” (Heb 11:6).

#### A Technicality

On one occasion, after God had healed a blind man, the restored man was confronted by skeptics. They questioned the possibility of Jesus of Nazareth being heard by God. He replied, “*Now we know that God **heareth not***

*sinner*: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth” (John 9:31). Some, seeking to capitalize on this verse, teach that unless a person is in Christ, their prayers will not be heard, because they are “*sinner*.” However, the case of Cornelius confirms that this is not an accurate statement. The idea of the statement made by the former blind man is that those devoted to sin, and who have no interest in being forgiven by God, will not be heard by Him. However, He will not turn a deaf ear to those who are seeking Him with their whole heart, are discontent with their sin, and are relying upon Him. He will not, however come to the aid of those who are living an enmity with Him, and turning away from what sparse knowledge they may have of Him. Thus it is written, “*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*” (Psa 66:18). “*The LORD is far from the wicked: but He heareth the prayer of the righteous*” (Prov 15:29). To a hypocritical nation the Lords said, “*And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean: put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil*” (Isa 1:15-16). **Every person is expected to live up to the measure of truth they possess. Only then will more be given.** This fact explains why many people have little.

I therefore conclude that Cornelius was living up to the knowledge that he did have of God, and was doing so consistently and with integrity. It is for this reason that the Lord, who have given attention to his demeanor, will now intervene, bringing further light to him.

## HE SAW A VISION

“<sup>3</sup> He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.”

This Divine initiative was toward a “*devout man*.” Although this approach conflicts with many contemporary views of evangelism and missions, we will find

that it is a fairly consistent approach in the record of Divine initiatives. This was the approach on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5). Paul was noted for carrying the Gospel to “*devout*” people (Acts 13:50; 17:4,17). Everywhere he went, he first delivered the Gospel in the synagogues (Acts 9:20; 13:5,14; 14:1; 17:1,10,17; 18:4, 19; 19:8). It is the manner of the Lord to

operate according to this revealed principle: “*And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath*” (Mark 4:25).

Jesus also revealed an aspect of the Kingdom that is interesting to consider. He portrayed outsiders as receiving the **second** invitation to the supper of salvation, not the first. When declaring the kingdom of heaven was likened to “a certain king which made a marriage for his son,” he said that those who had already been “bidden” were to come. When they did not come, he sent a second word, telling them that all things were ready – that they should come to the marriage. When they again declined, he judged them and told his servant, “Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage” (Matt 22:9; Lk 14:23).

In the case of Cornelius, he being a Gentile, fell into the second category who were offered salvation. As it is written, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and **also to the Greek**” (Rom 1:16). Doctrinally, this was the result of “some” of the Jewish branches being broken off, and the branches from a wild olive tree being grafted into their tree (Rom 11:17-20).

In further confirmation of this principle, Jesus told His disciples “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, **beginning at Jerusalem**” (Luke 24:47). Additionally He told that they would be His witnesses “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

**When the apostles began preaching, they did precisely as Jesus had told them, first preaching the Gospel to those who had been cultured to receive it.** Now, heaven moves to bring salvation to the Gentiles. This will be done in fulfillment of the prophets.

⇨ “And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious” (Isa 11:10).

⇨ “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to

the Gentiles” (Isa 42:1).

⇨ “I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles” (Isa 42:6).

⇨ “And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth” (Isa 49:6).

⇨ “Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their

shoulders” (Isa 49:22).

⇨ “And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising” (Isa 60:3).

#### A VISION ABOUT THE NINTH HOUR

“He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day . . .”

Other versions read, “about three in the afternoon he had a vision,” <sup>NIV</sup> “While wide awake one afternoon he had a vision – it was about three o’clock,” <sup>LIVING</sup> and “in a dream.” <sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

The word “evidently” means clearly. Other versions read, “clearly,” <sup>NKJV</sup> “distinctly,” <sup>NIV</sup> “openly,” <sup>ASV</sup> “plainly,” <sup>DARBY</sup> “manifestly,” <sup>DOUAY</sup> “plainly,” <sup>NAB</sup> “perfectly clearly,” <sup>PHILLIPS</sup> and “perceived in sight.” <sup>INTERLINEAR</sup>

Visions have been used by God to

communicate with men through all ages.

**PRIOR TO THE LAW.** God spoke to Abraham in a vision (Gen 15:1). He also spoke to Jacob in a vision (Gen 46:2).

**AFTER THE GIVING OF THE LAW.** God spoke in visions to Samuel (1 Sam 3:15), Nathan (2 Sam 7:17), Iddo (2 Chron 9:29), Isaiah (2 Chron 32:32; Isa 1:1), Ezekiel (Ezek 1:1), Daniel (Dan 2:19; 4:5; 7:1; 8:1; 9:21; 10:1), Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:28); Obadiah (Obad 1:1), Nahum (Nah 1:1), and Habakkuk (Hab 2:2).

**AFTER JESUS CAME INTO THE WORLD.** God gave visions to Peter, James, and John (Matt 17:5), Zacharias (Luke 1:22), the women who came to the tomb of Jesus (Lk 24:23), Ananias (Acts 9:10), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:12), Cornelius (Acts 10:3), Peter (Acts 10:17; 11:5; 12:9), Paul the apostle (Acts 16:9; 18:9; 26:19; 2 Cor 12:1),

**When the apostles began preaching, they did precisely as Jesus had told them, first preaching the Gospel to those who had been cultured to receive it. Now, heaven moves to bring salvation to the Gentiles. This will be done in fulfillment of the prophets.**

and John the beloved (Rev 9:17).

Defined etymologically, a vision is “that which is seen, a sight, spectacle . . . a sight divinely granted in an ecstasy or in sleep” <sup>THAYER</sup> and “vision as opposed to figment of the imagination.” <sup>GINGRICH</sup>

Academically, a vision is defined as “a supernatural presentation of certain scenery or circumstances to the mind of a person while awake,” <sup>MCCLINTOK-STRONGS</sup> and “a vivid apparition, not a dream.” <sup>EASTON</sup>

Doctrinally, valid visions are initiated by God Num 12:8; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). There are also vain visions, which are nothing more than the imagination of men (Ezek 12:24; 13:7). **While there are valid and profitable visions, they are not the greatest means of Divine communication.** This is confirmed by God’s own word to some of Moses’ critics: “Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will

Speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Num 12:6-8). **This by no means justifies a demeaning view of visions, but rather gives us a proper perspective of them so we will not be prone to covet them or seek them.**

Visions can be extensive. For example, the entire book of Isaiah was a vision (Isa 1:1). The same is true of the prophesy of Obadiah (Obad 1:1), Nahum (Nah 1:1), much of the book of Daniel (Dan 7:1,7,13; 8:1,17,26; 10:1,8,16), and at least great sections of the book of the Revelation (Rev 9:17).

A vision is distinguished from a dream (Num 12:6; Job 20:8; 33:15), although the distinction is not labored in Scripture. In both cases, however, something is both seen, and something is generally heard in words as well.

### Cornelius Has A Vision

Thus, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Cornelius has a vision, being able to see things for which his natural eyes were not adapted. **What he will see is not something that came into the circumference of his natural vision, but something God enabled him to see.** It seems to me that it is comely to think of God as having both the ability and the inclination to cause men to see things that are otherwise unseeable.

### AN ANGEL CAME IN TO HIM

*"... an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius."* Every major version reads "angel of God," emphasizing the one to whom the angel belonged, and for whom he spoke. An exception to this rule is found in a single version reading "from God." <sup>GWN</sup> The literal rendering of the Greek words involved are "angel of the God."

**Angels are heavenly messengers that are sent out from God to deliver a word from Him, or work something He has purposed.** They are wholly devoted to

the execution of the Divine will, and never work according to the will of man. Men can neither summon them nor dispatch them. They are never depicted as asking men what they desire them to do. Speaking of both God and Christ, angels are referred to as "His angels" (Job 4:18; 91:11; 103:20; 104:4; 148:2; Matt 13:41; 16:27; Heb 1:7; Rev 3:5). They take orders from God (Psa 91:11), and they do His commandments and hearken to His voice (Psa 103:20). They are also described as ministering spirits who are charged with the care of the saints of God (Heb 1:13-14).

Now, one of these holy angels comes to Cornelius in a vision – that is, while he was awake, this centurion was given the ability to see an approaching angel – coming right straight toward him. What is more, the angel speaks to him, calling him by name – "Cornelius!" **Now we will see how a devout man, who fears God, gives alms to the people of God, and always prays reacts to the sight of a holy angel coming toward him.** We may be sure he will not be casual.

## HE WAS AFRAID

**"<sup>4a</sup> And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord?"**

There is no record of a vision being given to someone who did not see it. The very word "vision" has two sides to it: something to be seen, and someone who sees it. There is no word in Scripture about a person refusing to look at what was made known in a vision. I do not believe there is any example in the Word

of God of a person asking for a vision, or in any way seeking one. **There is a sense in which the vision is imposed upon the individual.** They are, therefore, given in strict accordance with Divine discretion. Here God gives a vision to a non-Jew, who is not in Christ, and, so far as we know, had not yet heard the Gospel of Christ. He is a member of a foreign government that God has already determined will fall, and that is exercising dominion over the chosen

people of God. He is not a peaceful man, but is a military man. **Yet, in spite of all those seeming restrictions, Cornelius had, without Christ, risen to more lofty spiritual heights than many professing Christians.**

The point to see here is that God will **not** overlook such a person – one who is consistently devout. **Of old time God has revealed there are certain types of people for which He is looking, and toward whom He is disposed to show favor.** Because this is not the kind of God that is being declared in our time, it is good that we briefly consider this aspect of the Divine nature. I hardly see how person can advance very far in the faith until this perspective is obtained.

⇒ **TENDER HEARTED AND HUMBLE.** "Because *thine heart was tender, and thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD... I also have heard thee, saith the LORD*" (2 Kgs 22:19).

**Of old time God has revealed there are certain types of people for which He is looking, and toward whom He is disposed to show favor. Because this is not the kind of God that is being declared in our time, it is good that we briefly consider this aspect of the Divine nature.**

⇨ **A HEART THAT IS PERFECT TOWARD HIM.** *“For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him”* (2 Chron 16:9).

⇨ **A BROKEN HEART AND A CONTRITE SPIRIT.** *“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit”* (Psa 34:18). *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise”* (Psa 51:17).

⇨ **THE LOWLY.** *“Though the LORD be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off”* (Psa 138:6).

⇨ **THE CONTRITE AND HUMBLE.** *“For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones”* (Isa 57:15).

⇨ **THE MEEK.** *“The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me: because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound”* (Isa 61:1).

⇨ **THOSE WHO TREMBLE AT HIS WORD.** *“... to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word”* (Isa 66:2).

This very passage will confirm the truth of these affirmations.

**WHEN HE LOOKED ON HIM**

*“And when he looked on him, he was afraid . . .”* Other versions read, *“when he observed him,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“fixing his gaze upon him,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“stared at him,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“stared at him,”*<sup>NRSV</sup> *“fastening his eyes upon him,”*<sup>ASV</sup> *“stared at the angel,”*<sup>CJB</sup> *“having fixed his eyes upon him,”*<sup>DARBY</sup> *“beholding him,”*<sup>DOUAY</sup> *“looked intently at him,”*<sup>NAB</sup> *“looked steadily at him,”*<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and *“having looked earnestly*

*upon him.”*<sup>YLT</sup>

Remember, Cornelius was not merely beholding an unusual sight. He was witnessing a holy angel advancing toward him – *“coming in to him.”*

**HE WAS AFRAID**

*“ . . . he was afraid . . .”* Other versions read, *“and being much alarmed”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“in fear,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“in terror,”*<sup>NRSV</sup> *“and being affrightened,”*<sup>ASV</sup> *“terrified,”*<sup>CJB</sup>

**Cornelius was terrified at the sight – not because he was purposefully living at a distance from the Lord, but because of the hostility of the flesh, and the stark contrast between a person from heaven and one upon the earth. It is this contrast that enables a person to properly evaluate the presence of the Lord.**

*“and become full of fear,”*<sup>DARBY</sup> *“being seized with fear,”*<sup>DOUAY</sup> *“being much alarmed,”*<sup>NAU</sup> and *“becoming greatly afraid.”*<sup>NET</sup>

Cornelius was terrified at the sight – not because he was purposefully living at a distance from the Lord, but because of the hostility of the flesh, and the stark contrast between a person from heaven and one upon the earth. It is this contrast that enables a person to properly evaluate the presence of the Lord. As long as we remain in the body, we do well to thank God for the veil that obscures glory – even the glory of an angel. Whether Cornelius, Daniel, or John the beloved, the frightening confrontation of a holy angel is still a significantly reduced appearance.

It is apparent that the appearance of an angel is not always like those who visited Abraham and Lot. Angels came *“unawares,”* and either man knew they were entertaining angels, who had the appearance of men (Heb 13:2; Gen 18:2-10; 19:1-3). The same experience happened to Manoah and his wife, to whom it was later revealed that they had, in fact, faced an angel (Judges 13:15-25). However, this was not always the manner in which angels appeared to

men. Often the appearance of them caused great fear (Dan 10:7-12; Lk 2:9). Such was the case with Cornelius. **This was doubtless the result of discerning the obvious superiority of the angel, and the corresponding inferiority of Cornelius himself.**

There is such a variance between heaven and earth, that when it is clear that some heavenly personality has intervened in the affairs of men, flesh

and blood draws back in fear. **One can only speculate what kind of fear and trembling will fall on all of the ungodly when Jesus appears in all of His glory with “all the holy angels”** (Matt 25:31).

In a sense, the absence of a phenomenon of this sort is a test, to see whether or not we are willing to serve the Lord – like Israel in the wilderness. It is said of that trek, *“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no”* (Deut 8:2). All of the time they were in that wilderness, there was a mighty angel accompanying them (Ex 23:20,23; 32:34). Yet, that angel was not apparent to them. Judging from outward appearance, it could not even be concluded that a mighty angel was with them – but he was.

**When the presence of the Lord is not apparent, life is like an arid desert.** Yet, the child of God must proceed on, believing that the Lord is not far from every one of us. Men who lived during such desolate times include Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Gideon, Daniel, the Prophets.

**Those who fear God and are devout, are eager to know if there is something the Lord wants them to do – or if there is something unacceptable in their lives.**

**WHAT IS IT LORD?**

“ . . .and said, *What is it, Lord?*”

Every standard translation reads precisely the same: “*What is it Lord?*” Some of more liberal translations read, “*What do you want, sir?*”<sup>GWN</sup> a “*What, my*

*Lord?*”<sup>MRD</sup> and “*What is this all about?*”<sup>CEV</sup>

According to John Gill, this interrogation might be phrased as follows: “What is the matter?” “What is to

be said and done?” “What is the reason for this unusual appearance?” I would add that this response also reveals the character of Cornelius. He does not run in fear like Adam (Gen 3:8), but comes closer, as Moses did to the burning bush (Ex 3:3). **Those who fear God and are devout, are eager to know if there is something the Lord wants them to do – or if there is something unacceptable in their lives.** They want nothing between them and the Lord, and are eager to do His will. Even though they fear, yet they will draw near to hear and learn.

**HIS PRAYERS WERE HEARD, AND HIS ALMS WERE NOTED**

“<sup>4b</sup> *And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.*”

Being a messenger from God, the angel delivers a word to Cornelius. He does not come to smite him, as the angel of the Lord smote Herod (Acts 12:23). He rather comes to inform him of how the Lord has reacted to His life. **Frequently messengers from heaven have informed people of how they are viewed in heaven.** An angel told Jacob that he had power with God and man (Gen 32:26). An angel informed Gideon that he had been assessed as a “*mighty man of valor*” (Judges 6:12). The Lord sent an angel to tell Hezekiah He had heard his prayers and seen his tears (2 Kgs 20:5). An angel told Daniel that he was “*greatly beloved*” in heaven (Dan 9:23; 10:11,19).

Not only does the Lord *try*, or test, the hearts of men (Prov 17:3), **He responds to what He sees.** Not only does He *ponder* the hearts of men, **He is moved by what He sees.** Our text will prove to be a sterling example of this.

It is interesting to ponder how we would react if a messenger was sent to us to reveal how heaven has viewed our own works – our prayers and our giving in particular. In the case of Cornelius, a good report will be given, together with instruction concerning the appropriation of salvation in Christ Jesus.

**THY PRAYERS AND THINE ALMS**

“*And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms . . .*” Other versions read, “*prayers and gifts to the poor,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*your prayers and your offerings,*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*prayers . . . and acts of charity,*”<sup>CJB</sup> “*prayers and almsgiving,*”<sup>NAB</sup> and “*thy prayers and thy kind acts.*”<sup>YLT</sup>

It is arresting to consider just what had been noticed in heaven: the “*prayers*” and “*alms*” of Cornelius – **what was spoken to God, and what was given to men.**

**Prayers**

It is evident from what is said that the prayers of Cornelius were more than a mere formal repetition – something that was common among Jewish leaders (Matt 6:7). The text suggests his prayers were more in the order of supplications and petitions. The elements of seeking and asking were in them; the presence of inquiry and fervent desire. The response of the Lord strongly suggests that involved a quest for the salvation of God.

**Alms**

The word “*alms*” means “the benefaction itself, a donation to the poor,”<sup>THAYER</sup> “as benevolent activity toward the poor donation, almsgiving, charitable giving,”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> and “giving money to a needy person.”<sup>UBS</sup> As used here, “*alms*” refers to **the actual gift itself**, and not the pity and mercy that compelled Cornelius to give it. Just as the Lord observed the two mites that the widow cast into the Temple treasury, so the

Lord had observed the amount of the gifts Cornelius had given to the poor. **Once again, I want to emphasize that this particularly refers to the Jewish poor, and not merely the poor in general.** Cornelius will learn first hand what it means for God to bless those who bless Israel (Gen 12:3; 27:29; Num 24:9).

**A MEMORIAL BEFORE GOD**

“ . . . *are come up for a memorial before God.*” Other versions read, “*ascended as a memorial,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*gone up for a memorial,*”<sup>ASV</sup> “*Have come up to God, and he has kept them in mind,*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*have gone up into God's presence, so that he has you on his mind,*”<sup>CJB</sup> “*are come up into remembrance before God,*”<sup>GENEVA</sup> “*God is aware of your prayers and your gifts to the poor, and he has remembered you,*”<sup>GWN</sup> “*Your prayers and charitable gifts have been accepted by God,*”<sup>NJB</sup> “*have been received by God as an offering,*”<sup>NLT</sup> “*Your prayers and charities have not gone unnoticed by God!*”<sup>LIVING</sup> “*God has not forgotten the things you have done,*”<sup>IE</sup> “*have gone up and have been recorded before God,*”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “*have gone up to Heaven and are remembered before God,*”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup> and “*God is pleased . . . and is ready to answer you.*”<sup>GNB</sup>

**Come up**

The God of heaven had taken due note of both the prayers and alms of this man. **This means these deeds were properly motivated,** for “*God is not unrighteous to forget your work and*

labor of love, which ye have showed toward His name” (Heb 6:10). The prayers were toward God Himself, and the alms toward the people who belonged to Him.

The words “come up” suggest that the prayers and alms of Cornelius were consistent expressions, not sporadic ones. The picture is of them **continually** coming before the attention of God. There are people who pray and give occasionally, but it is not their manner of life. While I am not prepared to say that such activities are never noted by God, they are not the kind of activities to which our text refers. An example of a noble deed done occasionally is the account of the good Samaritan that Jesus gave (Lk 10:33). The deed the man was solitary, but addressed a specific situation at a particular time. Addressing an unusual crisis in the name of the Lord is good, and will be duly noted in heaven, as is confirmed in the account of the good Samaritan. **However, in this text, the point is the continuity of Cornelius’ prayers to God and gifts to the poor.** He had faithfully cast his bread upon the waters, and now it will come back to him (Eccl 11:1). This text will also speak of the fulfillment of one of Solomon’s proverbs: “*He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor*” (Prov 22:9).

### Memorial

This is an intriguing word: “*memorial*.” It is translated from the Greek word *μνημόσυλον*, which has the following meaning: “that by which the memory of any person or thing is preserved,” <sup>THAYER</sup> “what is done that causes someone not to be forgotten memorial, means of reminding,” <sup>FRIEBERG</sup> “something done to arouse the memory of another,” <sup>UBS</sup> and “something done to arouse the memory of another.” <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>

**A memorial is not the remembrance itself, but the thing that provokes the remembrance.** It is what causes a person to think upon something in particular, whether a person or something the person has done. **In this text, the prayers and alms of Cornelius were the things that moved God to think upon him.** They were the “*memorial*.” The idea is that God was aware of the consistent prayers and alms of Cornelius, and therefore thought upon him, determined to do him good.

On the surface, this may appear to contradict the statement that salvation is “*not of works*.” However, we must not be infantile in our thinking. God will not save Cornelius because he did these things, but will open the door of faith to him because of his activity – and there is a significant difference between

*she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise*” (Luke 7:12-14).

**On the surface, this may appear to contradict the statement that salvation is “not of works.” However, we must not be infantile in our thinking. God will not save Cornelius because he did these things, but will open the door of faith to him because of his activity – and there is a significant difference between the two.**

the two. Mind you, the door of faith is not opened **ONLY** to those who have done good. However, here is an example of God doing so. **This confirms that God is not looking for a reason to condemn men,** for those who do not believe on Jesus are “*condemned already*” (John 3:18).

The Lord is often said to have been favorably moved by the condition of people, or what they have done.

- ⇨ **LEAH.** “*And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren*” (Gen 29:31).
- ⇨ **MOSES.** “*And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I*” (Ex 3:4).
- ⇨ **ISRAEL.** “*For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And the LORD said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash*” (2 Kgs 14:26-27).
- ⇨ **THE WIDOW OF NAIN.** “*Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and*

⇨ **WANDERING MULTITUDES.** “*And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things*” (Mark 6:34).

In Scripture, God is said to have “*remembered*” several people. These include the following:

- ⇨ **NOAH** (Gen 8:1). Following the flood, every living thing, and all that was in the ark. He then made a wind to pass over the earth that caused the waters to recede.
- ⇨ **ABRAHAM** (Gen 19:29). Before destroying Sodom, God remembered Abraham, and because of it sent Lord “*out of the midst of the overthrow*.”
- ⇨ **RACHEL** (Gen 30:22). When the Lord remembered Rachel, who was barren, He “*opened her womb*.”
- ⇨ **HANNAH** (1 Sam 1:19). After Hannah had prayed for a child for some time, and was also provoked by her adversary, the Lord remembered her and she conceived.
- ⇨ **ISRAEL** (Psa 78:39; 136:23). Even though Israel had provoked Him many times, the Lord spared them because He remembered “*they were*

but flesh.” He also remembered them “in their low estate,” and “redeemed them from their enemies.”

The Lord is also said to have “remembered” His covenant (Ex 2:24; 6:5; 105:8). Once He even “remembered His covenant for” Israel (Psa 106:45). He also is said to have “remembered His mercy” (Psa 98:3).

In all of these cases, His remembrance was the prelude to His working – particularly the showing of great mercy. This is a Divine manner that we do well to know. It opens up something of what is involved in being “followers of God as dear children.” The recollection of such people may be the occasion for some special mercy during the time of need, as in the case of Noah.

Such devotion and commitment may also be the reason for God sharing His “secret” and revealing aspects of “His covenant,” unveiling secrets that are unknown (Psa 25:14). Such remembrance may even prove to be the reason for delivering another person, as when the Lord delivered Lot because He remembered Abraham, or blessed Israel because He remembered His covenant.

## DIRECTION FROM HEAVEN

“<sup>5</sup> And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: <sup>6</sup> He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.”

Joppa,”<sup>NASB</sup> and “you must send some men to Joppa.”<sup>NJB</sup>

Here is the sanctified the use of the authority of Cornelius, for he was a “centurion,” over one hundred men. He will now employ that authority for a holy

God who has heard Cornelius, and chosen to enlighten him, has also chosen the one who will deliver the word of the Lord to him. His name is Simon – a common name. That is not the name that will distinguish him. The distinguishing name is “Peter,” which identified him as one whom Christ had chosen.

**The God who has heard Cornelius, and chosen to enlighten him, has also chosen the one who will deliver the word of the Lord to him.**

The choice of the messenger was strictly at the discretion of the Lord. He chose Philip to go to Ethiopian eunuch, Ananias to go to Saul of Tarsus, and now Simon Peter to go to Cornelius. Truly, the government has been placed upon the shoulder of the Lord Jesus Christ!

### WHERE IS LODGES

“<sup>6</sup> He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side...”

The “sea” of reference was the Mediterranean Sea on which the city of Joppa was situated. That is where we are informed Peter remained for “many days” (Acts 9:43). He was waiting in a specific house until the appointed time, like Saul of Tarsus waited in the house of one named Judas, which was located on a street “called Straight” (Acts 9:11). All of this involved the Lord positioning people for an assigned work.

### HE WILL TELL THEE

“... he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.” Other versions read, “what you must do.”<sup>NKJV</sup> This phrase is omitted from modern versions. Whatever may be said in justification of its omission is not acceptable. Later, when Peter gives a report of this incident he said Cornelius was told that Peter was

Here again, we will see the manner in which God employs human instrumentality as well as the ministry of holy angels. God rarely deals directly with people – such as He did with Noah (Gen 6:3ff), Abraham (Gen 13:14), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:5), or John on the Isle of Patmos (Rev 1:13). Even in those cases, it is not certain the Lord did not speak through an angel, although, if that was the case, a point is not made of it. My point here particularly relates to human involvement – not by the choice of men, but by the choice of God Himself. It is He who determines that “every” man is provided with a minister who will bring the word of salvation to them (Rom 10:15; 1 Cor 3:5).

### SEND MEN

“And now send men to Joppa...” Other versions read, “dispatch men to

purpose. It is to be assumed that the men he sends will be those who are under his authority. He will not hire a professional messenger, but will dispatch those over whom he has rule. He will, in other words, use what is in his hand – like Moses used his rod, and David used his sling. So Cornelius will use his men.

### FOR ONE SIMON

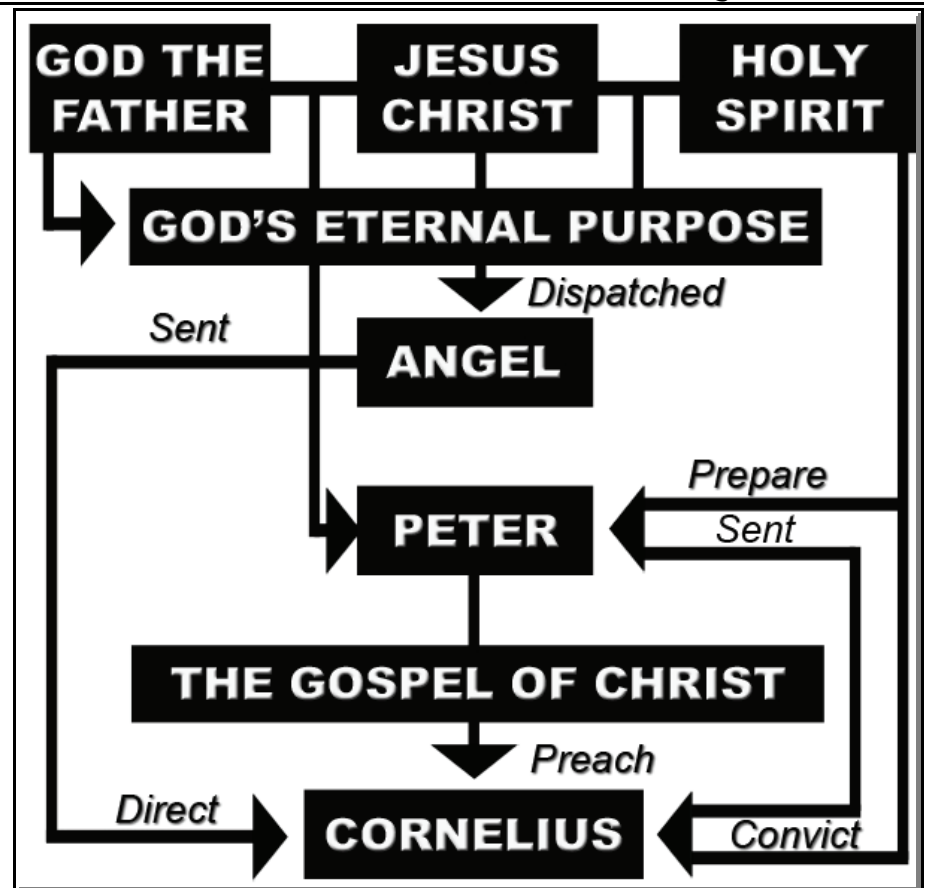
“... and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter...” Other versions read, “who is also called Peter,”<sup>NASB</sup> and “known as Peter.”<sup>NJB</sup>

“Simon” was the name given to him by men. “Peter” was the name given to him by Jesus (Matt 10:2; 16:18; John 1:42). The word of the Lord is very specific. He does not tell Cornelius to go to Jerusalem and inquire if there is someone there who can speak to him. The

the one, "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). This verse is included in all of the versions that omit the expression of reference in verse six. The statement, then, is an accurate one, precisely stating what Cornelius would be directed to do.

There are requirements for those who desire the salvation of God, and they have not been established by men. Those who have been convicted by the Spirit (John 16:7-1) sense this, and it directs the manner in which they respond to the Gospel: i.e. "what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37); "what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6); "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Acts 8:36); "what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Where this kind of inquiry is not found, or some positive indication of the presence of such a mind, there is probably some additional preaching to be done. It certainly is not proper to suggest to non-inquiring people that they repeat a simple prayer – something for which there is not a solitary example in all of Scripture.

Heaven was involved in the matter we are reviewing, interacting with both men and angels. This is how the Kingdom of God functions. God does not merely give orders to men, leaving to their own selves to work out critical matters. The government of God includes the dispatching of holy angels by the Son of God, the preparatory work of the Holy



Spirit, and precise directions for men. All of this is being lived out in our text. Men have not been left to themselves, and the world does not function on its own. We are being given a glimpse of behind-the-scenes activities involving both angels and men.

Now, the lot is cast into the lap of

Cornelius, as stated in Proverbs 16:33. If what has been said of him is true, he will instantly respond to the glory of God, and wisdom will be justified of her children (Matt 11:19). Remember, the book of Acts contains the record of the working of the Lord, as well as the proper human responses to it.

## THE RESPONSE OF CORNELIUS

***"And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa."***

The "angel of God" had come and is now departed. What kind of impact will this visitation have? That is the question. Heavenly visitations, whatever form they may take, are not an end of themselves. It is the response of men

that makes the visitation profitable. When, for example, Jerusalem was visited by "the Dayspring from on high," it was a most marvelous circumstance. However, because the people did not respond properly, it actually became the basis for their judgment rather than their blessing. This is why Jesus lamented over the city saying, "Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast

a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation" (Luke 19:42-44).

Many a soul has had the door of opportunity opened to them by heaven, yet have not responded to it in faith. Cain was in this category, for before he killed his brother, God told him if he did well, he would be accepted (Gen 4:7).

Israel also had the opportunity to send spies into the land of Canaan to confirm that what God had said about it was true. However, they chose to believe the words of unbelievers, and were thus excluded from the land, not being able to enter into it because of their unbelief (Heb 3:19).

We will see in Cornelius the proper response to a Divine directive. It will be immediate and thorough, and nothing will be left undone.

### HE CALLED HIS HOUSEHOLD SERVANTS AND A DEVOUT SOLDIER

*“And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually . . .”*

As is customary with heavenly messengers, this angel delivered the

fellowship into which we have come in Christ Jesus. As it is written, *“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels”* (Heb 12:22).

Now, having delivered his message, the angel has left, and Cornelius enters into the work, doing the bidding of the Lord.

### He Called Two Servants and a Devout Soldier

Immediately Cornelius calls two of his household servants – men who were not soldiers, but were part of his immediate household staff. He also called a devout soldier who served him continually – *“of those who were in constant attendance upon him,”*<sup>NASB</sup> or *“at all times.”*<sup>BBE</sup>

In our culture, such arrangements are not common – but they are in

heaven. It is most unfortunate that the Christianity of our time, particularly in the United States of America, knows little of a genuine commitment to the Lord, or of being devout. The thrust of contemporary Christianity has placed the stress on the worldly circumstances of believers, thereby neutralizing the possibility of living solely for the Lord. The requirement for believers to crucify the flesh (Gal 5:24), live unto the Lord (2 Cor 5:15), take up their cross and follow Christ (Matt 16:24), and perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord (2 Cor 7:1) are uncommon in the modern church. It is for this very reason that devoutness is rare.

### HE DECLARED ALL THINGS TO THEM

*“And when he had declared all these things unto them . . .”* Other versions read, *“and when he had explained,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“told them everything that had happened,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“related everything to them,”*<sup>RSV</sup> and *“rehearsed all things unto them.”*<sup>ASV</sup>

These were servants, yet Cornelius told them everything, bringing clarity to their mission. This was not the ordinary manner of masters with their servants. Jesus once said of ordinary servants, *“Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you”* (John 15:15). **I gather, therefore, that in this matter the men he called were not functioning as mere servants, but as kindred spirits** – for it is said of Cornelius that he *“feared God with all of his house”* (household<sup>NKJV</sup> – 10:1).

Jesus sent His disciples out armed with the facts in the case. They knew why they were being sent, what they were to say, and how men would respond to them. True ministry cannot be accomplished while walking in the dark. Candidly, we are told that if we *“walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7). Those who are in any proximity to Jesus tend to themselves walk in the light – knowing whom they have believed, understanding the will of the Lord, and knowing the destiny toward which they are

**Those who operate within the framework of the will of God do not waste time, nor are they slothful in executing the will of God. This is particularly true of angels, who are a kind of archetype of the servants of the Lord.**

message he was given, and then departed. It is said of the holy angels, *“Bless the LORD, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word”* (Psa 103:20). Their ministry is immediate and effective, like a flame of fire. As it is written, *“Who maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire”* (Psa 104:4).

Those who operate within the framework of the will of God do not waste time, nor are they slothful in executing the will of God. This is particularly true of angels, who are a kind of archetype of the servants of the Lord. When an angel appeared to John, he identified himself as *“thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus”* (Rev 19:10). Furthermore, angels are among the

Scripture. Jesus Himself often spoke of the association of servants to their master, or householder (Matt 10:24-25; 18:23-34; 24:45-50; 25:14-30; Mk 12:1-11). **The influence of Cornelius over those who served him is apparent.** First, he feared God with all of his house (10:2), and second, one of the soldiers who accompanied the two servants was also *“devout”* (10:7).

This is a sterling example of someone letting their light shine. These men had no doubt seen Cornelius’ *“good works,”* and glorified God by also fearing Him and being devout.

It ought to be noted that there are many advantages to being *“devout”* – a condition in which the manner of one’s life is perfectly consistent with their profession of allegiance to the God of

journeying.

Now, Cornelius exhibits this trait, informing his servants of the vision that he has had, and the commission that he has been given. In this matter, he does not consider the servants unworthy of possessing this knowledge. He also confirms that he is not ashamed of the vision, nor does he entertain the notion that his servants might consider it foolish or far-fetched.

All of this indicates that there was a closeness in the household that was created by the fear of the Lord and devout conduct. **There was an accord that transcended social convention, even though it did not interfere with it.** There was a sense in which the men were subordinate to Cornelius. However, that was not their only relationship. There was a superior manner of life that allowed for a closeness that could not be had within the framework of human custom.

This principle can be seen today in various social and domestic associations. **When interpersonal relationships are maintained at a higher level in which the fear of the Lord, and even faith in Christ, exist, there is a wider latitude in which men can operate.** It is one in which there is more profitability.

**HE SENT THEM TO JOPPA**  
“... he sent them to Joppa.”

Thus the men are sent on their way knowing the WHY of their mission, as well as the basis of it. While they are obeying their master according to the flesh, they are also fulfilling a word that has come from heaven.

The people of God can learn from this example. **It is better when the people of God know WHY they are fulfilling the**

**word of the Lord.** While it is true that obedience is required whether we understand the reasons or not, that is not the best way to live. It is far better to know the rationale that is behind spiritual life. That knowledge removes the tediousness that can otherwise be experienced. There is a stage in spiritual life that is much like that of an earthly child – one in which we do what we are told simply because we are told to do so. **However, that is not a state in which we are to remain.** We are candidly told, *“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is”* (Eph 5:17). Again, we are admonished to so order our lives that we will come to know and understand the will of the Lord. *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable,*

- ⇨ It is appointed unto men to die once, and then to stand before God in judgment (Heb 9:27).
- ⇨ We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can take nothing out of it (1 Tim 6:7).
- ⇨ We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the outcome of what we have done, whether it is good or evil (Rom 14:10; 2 Cor 5:10).
- ⇨ Jesus died and rose again in order that we might no longer live for ourselves, but for Him (2 Cor 5:15).

There is a sense in which we have been sent on a mission, like the servants and soldier of our text. As sojourners, we

**The people of God can learn from this example. It is better when the people of God know WHY they are fulfilling the word of the Lord. While it is true that obedience is required whether we understand the reasons or not, that is not the best way to live. It is far better to know the rationale that is behind spiritual life.**

and perfect, will of God” (Rom 12:2).

A few of the reasons that undergird the necessity of being holy and making preparations for eternity are as follows. They provide a framework of reasonability within which we may live.

- ⇨ Jesus gave Himself to deliver us from this present evil world (Gal 1:4).

are traveling to another country, which is a better one (1 Pet 2:11; Heb 11:16). As Cornelius did, our Lord has given us the facts in the case, and why the journey must be made. This world is destined for destruction – reserved unto fire (2 Pet 3:7), and we are preparing to leave it. In that context, a godly and separated life makes perfect sense.

**CONCLUSION**

The opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles is a significant event in Scripture. **It does not chronicle the abandonment of Israel, but the inclusion**

**of the Gentiles in the promises that were given to them.** The Gentiles have been made partakers “with them” of “the root and fatness” of their heritage (Rom

11:17). Paul provides the rationale behind this Divine arrangement in a remarkable statement to the Ephesians. This gives us a picture of the greatness of

salvation, as well as some of its intricacies. "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who

sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity

thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph 2:11-19). All of this is beginning to take shape in our text. The Lord is bringing His promise to pass in a most remarkable way.

**Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 2/15/2008. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The Forty-Sixth lesson will cover verses 9 through 16 of the tenth chapter: "PETER IS GIVEN A VISION." Having been brought to Joppa providentially, Peter is devoting himself to prayer when the Lord gives him an extraordinary vision. On the surface, it appears to Peter to be a test. However, it proves to be the prelude to the Gospel being sent to the Gentiles. This event is considered an epoch in the history of the church, and much is revealed in it about the Lord Himself. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.**

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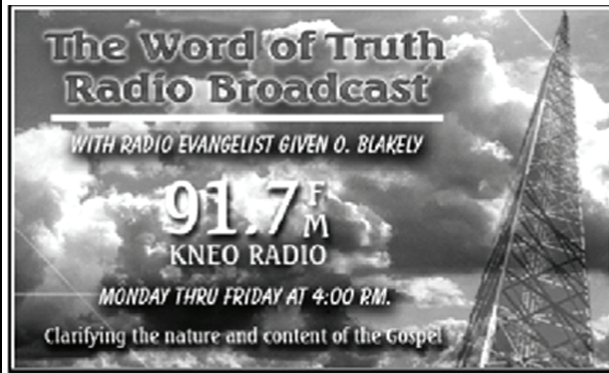

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COMMENTARY on Acts: <http://wotruth.com/Acts.htm>

## BROTHERS AND SISTERS SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY DURING JANUARY 2008

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <i>Given O. Blakely</i> (PM Message, PM Message, PM Exhortation).</li><li>2. <i>Aaron Hutchcraft</i> (AM Table Meditation, PM Introduction, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation).</li><li>3. <i>Ricky Sims</i> (AM Message, AM Exhortation, Lead PM Singing, PM Table Meditation).</li><li>4. <i>Robert Cobb</i> (Teach AM Class, AM Message, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation, Lead PM Singing).</li><li>5. <i>Jeremy Williams</i> (AM Exhortation, AM Table Meditation, PM Message).</li><li>6. <i>Tony Parker</i> (AM Message, AM Opening Word, Teach AM Class).</li><li>7. <i>June Blakely</i> (Lead PM Prayer Session, Teach AM Class).</li><li>8. <i>Barbara Hutchcraft</i> (AM Calling, PM Introduction, PM Introduction).</li><li>9. <i>Jonathan Blakely</i> (AM Calling).</li><li>10. <i>Matthew Cobb</i> (PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation).</li></ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>11. <i>Michael Blakely</i> (AM Opening Word, AM Table Meditation, AM Message).</li><li>12. <i>Tasha Sims</i> (Lead AM Singing, AM Calling).</li><li>13. <i>Anita Cobb</i> (AM Closing Scripture/Prayer).</li><li>14. <i>Levi Miller</i> (Lead AM Scripture Shower).</li><li>15. <i>Amanda Miller</i> (AM Calling).</li><li>16. <i>Mattie Blakely</i> (PM Introduction).</li><li>17. <i>Eva Blakely</i> (Lead AM Singing).</li><li>18. <i>Michele Cole</i> (Play Piano.)</li><li>19. <i>Melissa Parker</i> (Lead PM Singing).</li><li>20. <i>John Hill</i> (Lead Intercessory Prayer).</li><li>21. <i>LaVaine Murphy</i> (AM Table Meditation, AM Opening Word).</li><li>22. <i>Isaac Murphy</i> (Lead AM Scripture Shower).</li><li>23. <i>Micaela Murphy</i> (Read AM Sermon Text)</li><li>24. <i>Mariah Murphy</i> (Read PM Sermon Text,</li></ol> | <p>Read PM Sermon Text).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>25. <i>Gene Hutchcraft</i> (AM Exhortation, AM Exhortation, PM Message).</li><li>26. <i>Charlene Tucker</i> (AM Opening Word).</li><li>27. <i>Judah Hutchcraft</i> (Read PM Sermon Text).</li><li>28. <i>Logan Williams</i> (Play AM/PM Lord's Table Interlude, AM Closing Scripture/Prayer, Read AM Sermon Text, Lead AM Singing, Lead PM Singing).</li><li>29. <i>Baylie Sims</i> (AM Closing Scripture/Prayer, Read PM Sermon Text).</li><li>30. <i>Annie Sims</i> (Read AM Sermon Text, AM Closing Scripture/Prayer, Read AM Sermon Text).</li><li>31. <i>Nicole Franklin</i> (Lead AM Singing, Lead AM Scripture Shower).</li><li>32. <i>Pat Jones</i> (Lead Scripture Shower).</li><li>33. <i>Preparing Lord's Supper</i> (Various sisters).</li></ol> |
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 <p>The Word of Truth Radio Broadcast WITH RADIO EVANGELIST GIVEN O. BLAKELY <b>91.7 FM</b> KNEO RADIO MONDAY THRU FRIDAY AT 4:00 PM. Clarifying the nature and content of the Gospel</p>	 <p><b>THE WORD OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST</b> KNEO, 91.7 FM 4:00 - 4:15 PM Monday thru Friday</p> <p>The purpose of this program is to clarify the nature and content of the Gospel of Christ. Our target is the body of Christ, and our aim is to strengthen their faith and enhance their hope.</p>
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