

# 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 #48

COMMENTARY ON: 10:24-33

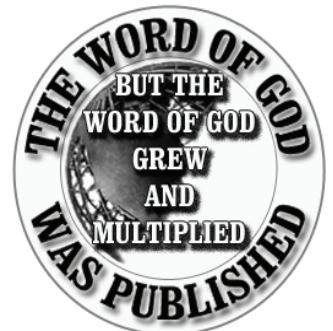
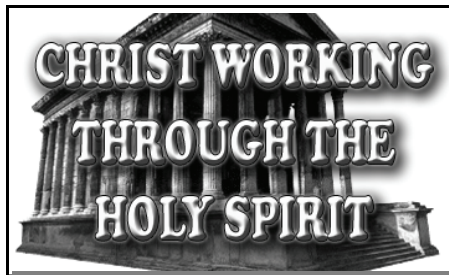
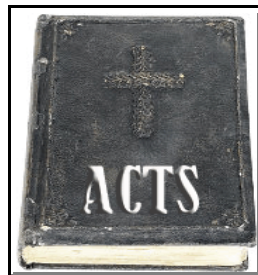
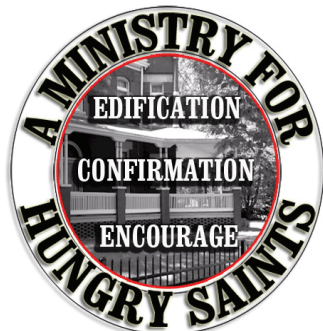
PETER AND CORNELIUS GIVE THEIR EXPLANATIONS

Having been directed by the Holy Spirit to go with the men who have appeared at the house of Simon the tanner, Peter leaves the next morning with the men, with six brethren in Christ from Joppa joining them. The whole account is refreshing in that it centers around the activities of devout people – in the case of Cornelius, a man who was obviously in quest of salvation; in Peter's case, a man who was eager to proclaim the Gospel. Both men were intent upon serving God, and both men were experiencing the expansion of their understanding. Upon arriving at the house of Cornelius, Peter finds many people gathered together to hear the Word of the Lord. At once, he and Cornelius begin speaking with one another concerning the uniqueness of the situation, and how they had both been prepared by God for the occasion. In this passage, we are being exposed to the impact of revelation upon tender, honest, and good hearts. Any response to truth that is not in harmony with the reactions of these men, therefore, is a kind of revelation of an "evil heart of unbelief" (Heb 3:12).

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)

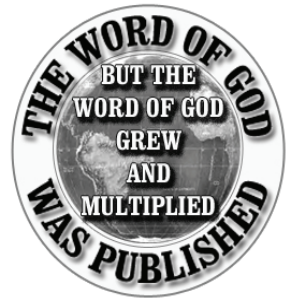


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



## The Book of Acts

### Lesson Number 48



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.

# PETER AND CORNELIUS GIVE THEIR EXPLANATIONS

<sup>10:24</sup> And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends. <sup>25</sup> And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. <sup>26</sup> But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. <sup>27</sup> And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. <sup>28</sup> And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. <sup>29</sup> Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me? <sup>30</sup> And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, <sup>31</sup> And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. <sup>32</sup> Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. <sup>33</sup> Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." (Acts 10:24-33)

## INTRODUCTION

Having been directed by the Holy Spirit to go with the men who have appeared at the house of Simon the tanner, Peter leaves the next morning

with the men. Six brethren in Christ from Joppa join them. When the men came from Cornelius, he had a soldier join them. When Peter returned with

them, six brethren join him. It is evident from the account that the soldier was more than a mere soldier. In fact, he is referred to as "a devout soldier" – the

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word “*devout*” meaning godly, or pious. Behold how those with a reverence for God find themselves coming together – whether they are Jew or Gentile.

The whole account is refreshing in that it centers around the activities of devout people – in the case of Cornelius, a man who was obviously in quest of salvation; in Peter’s case, a man who was eager to proclaim the Gospel. Both men were intent upon serving God, and both men were experiencing the expansion of their understanding. Also, we will observe how devout people focus upon the Word of the Lord, and are intent upon knowing what the Lord has said, and what He requires. This is a common trait among those who fear the Lord. It is not found among those who lack this fear.

The glaring absence of this attitude in our time is a cause for alarm.

Upon arriving at the house of Cornelius, Peter finds many people gathered together to hear the Word of the Lord. **While they were called together by Cornelius himself, there was still a common interest in what was going to take place, else they would probably not have been there.**

At once, he and Cornelius begin speaking with one another concerning the uniqueness of the situation, and how they had both been prepared by God for the occasion. **Everything gravitated to the heavenly agenda, which was the total reason for the involvement of both men.**

In this passage, we are being exposed to the impact of revelation upon tender, honest, and good hearts. Both men report what they have learned from heaven, and how they have been directed. **This has caused their thinking to come to a common point, where true spiritual advance is possible.** It is as though they came from different countries, converging on the same island, or from different rooms of a house, arriving in the same room. This is precisely how a company of people come to comprehend the truth of God. Whether they are separated from one another, or are privileged to company with one another, they must arrive at the point of a “*common salvation*” (Jude 1:3), and a “*common faith*” (Tit 1:4).

### ALL ROADS DO NOT LEAD TO GOD

Contrary to some ideas, all roads do not lead to God. Jesus said there was a broad that leads to destruction, and He gave no indication that it is clearly marked so that casual travelers can detect and avoid it. He also said that there was a single “*way*” that leads to life, and a solitary and restrictive “*gate*” by which it is accessed (Matt 7:13-14).

There are various means that men employ in their quest to find Divinity, ultimate truth, or unshakable reality.

#### Philosophy

One of the premier methods involves philosophy. Analytical Philosophy involves an discriminating

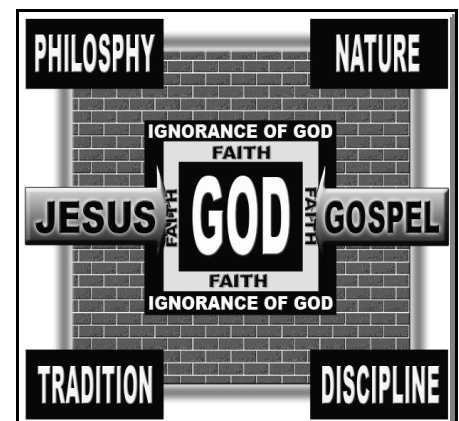
approach that employs worldly wisdom and natural aptitude. Moral philosophy involves a study of human conduct that employs the assignment of certain norms and definition based purely upon the psychoanalysis of men. Natural philosophy involves the analyzation of nature, and a consequent statement of various laws and characteristics that are based upon the wisdom of men. While there may be some place for this approach when dealing with things under the sun, they have no value in an effort to know God, arrive at an understanding of His will, or obtain His approval. It cannot penetrate the brick wall of the natural man and the ignorance produced by sin.

#### Nature

Some men have sought to find God by studying nature. Beholding in it some measure of order, they imagine that it will assist them in finding God, discerning His will, or gaining His acceptance. **But nature does not deliver a message that is precise enough to provide a profitable perception of God.** The best that it can do it testify of the reality of God and of His power (Rom 1:20). Even then, the affirmation of Scripture is that no man has ever formed an acceptable concept of God through nature. Instead, they concluded that they ought to worship nature in its varied forms (Rom 1:23,28).

#### Discipline

There have also been men who have imagined that God could be discovered by some form of bodily or mental discipline. In doing this, they think they can find Divine approval and strength. Thus some men have fasted for long periods, or stood in one position for



Upon meeting, both Peter and Cornelius relate how heaven has contacted them, and what was said – by Given O. Blakely

a long time, or followed some form of transcendental meditation. **But none of these attempts brought clarity of understanding concerning God or His ways.** Nor, indeed, did they gain a sense of God's acceptance of them.

**Tradition**

This, in my judgment, is the most difficult to overcome – the religious traditions of men. This difficulty is owing to the feigned association of the traditions with the Lord Himself, as well as the access men have to Him. Let me define “tradition” as I am using the word. As used in Scripture this is more than a mere thought or opinion. When the Scriptures use this word in bad sense, they employ a term that means, “The body of precepts, esp. ritual, which in the opinion of the later Jews were orally delivered by Moses and orally transmitted in unbroken succession to subsequent generations, which precepts, both illustrating and expanding the written law, as they did were to be obeyed with equal reverence.” <sup>THAYER</sup> **In other words, these represent the opinions of men concerning something that God has said. Those opinions are then encased in a precept, or requirement (like the washing of hands—Mark 7:5). This requirement is then bound upon men, carrying all of the force of a word that**

**commandment of God by your tradition?”** (Mat 15:3). He also said those traditions “**made the commandment of God of none effect,**” removing its effectiveness (Matt 15:6), and rendering the Word of God itself as powerless (Mk 7:13). In fact, Jesus said that to take hold of “*the tradition of men,*” it was necessary to “**lay aside the commandment of God**” (Mk 7:8). It is difficult to conceive of anything being more serious than these effects!

Throughout the history of the church, it has struggled against the traditions of men – rules and precepts that have been bound upon men just as though they were given by God, and were stipulated in Scripture precisely as they are encased in the traditions. Permit me to name a few of the more apparent ones.

- ⇨ That it is wrong for priests to marry, even though “*it is better to marry than to burn*” [with lust] (1 Cor 7:9).
- ⇨ That it is wrong to eat certain meats, even though God says they are all to be received with thanksgiving (1 Tim 4:3-4).
- ⇨ That the Lord's Table is observed for the forgiveness of sins, when God

- ⇨ That men are saved through a five-step plan, even though no men inquiring about salvation were ever told such a thing (Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31)..
- ⇨ That men are saved by repeating a prayer, even though that is nowhere affirmed to be the means through which salvation is realized (Eph 2:8).
- ⇨ That evangelizing the lost is the fundamental work of the church, when the edification of the body is said to be the objective (Eph 4:11-12).
- ⇨ That elders are the administrators of the affairs of the church, when the Scriptures say they are to “*feed the flock of God*” (1 Pet 5:2).
- ⇨ That women are fundamentally inferior to men, even though the Spirit teaches there is not even a distinction of female in Christ (Gal 3:28), speaks of prominent women (Acts 17:4), and admonishes even men to assist holy women in certain ministries they have (Rom 16:2).
- ⇨ That the man is the priest and manager of the household, and all decisions must go through him, even though children are told to honor their mother as well as their father (Lk 18:20), and hearken to the law of their mother (Prov 1:8; 6:20). Younger women are even admonished to marry, bear children, and guide, or manage the house (1 Tim 5:14).

**In other words, these represent the opinions of men concerning something that God has said. Those opinions are then encased in a precept, or requirement (like the washing of hands—Mark 7:5). This requirement is then bound upon men, carrying all of the force of a word that had been given directly from God. In other words, the tradition is equated with Scripture.**

had been given directly from God. Stated yet another way, the tradition is equated with Scripture.

Jesus soundly denounced such traditions, affirming that they transgressed the commandment of God: “*But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the*

says it is where we remember Jesus and proclaim His death (1 Cor 11:24-26).

- ⇨ That it is sinful to use a musical instrument in expressing praise to God, even though the Scriptures speak of “*the musical instruments of God*” (1 Chron 16:42), and “*the harps of God*” (Rev 15:2).

There is a vast difference between a private view and the tradition of men. There is freedom to have private views, but they may not be bound men as a law from God – which is something that the traditions of men seek to do. I say this because it is not my intention to encroach on the right of any person to have views that spring from a good conscience. I am speaking of opinions that are employed to sit in judgment of others. Also, a person may unnecessarily constrict their own life by such perceptions when God makes no such demands of them. These areas will be addressed and settled as a person grows up into Christ. Those in Christ must be willing to allow such a process to take place in their peers as well, allowing

the formation of a good conscience.

In view of these things, my own observation is that any response to the truth of God that is not in harmony with the reactions of Peter and Cornelius, is a kind of revelation of an *“evil heart of*

*unbelief”* (Heb 3:12). Both of these men were faced with something that did **not** conform to their present perception. Both of them were being confronted by something that bore directly upon the conscience, and upon an extended practice in their lives. There were also

some traditions held that complicated the whole matter. Yet, neither of them clung obstinately to their old way of thinking. **The horizon of truth was being expanded, and both Cornelius and Peter responded to it in faith, together with a good conscience.**

**THE NEXT DAY THEY ARRIVE IN CAESAREA**

<sup>10:24</sup> **And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.”**

Ten men had left Joppa, traveling northward to Caesarea – approximately thirty miles. The group consisted of two servants, one soldier, Peter the apostle, and twelve brethren – believers in Jesus – from Joppa. All of the men were devout, including the servants, who were members of a household *“that feared God”* (Acts 10:2). Two groups, both noted for being *“devout,”* yet one group was more advanced than the other, having heard and embraced the Gospel, which shed a greater light. One group of men were living within the framework of the Old Covenant. The other were joyously within the larger perimeter of the New Covenant. Both groups were in a favorable position with God, yet one was justified and one was not. One was illuminated and one was not. One had been reconciled to God, and the other had not. One had been born again, yet the other had not. **Yet, both groups were in a state of advancing.** One was moving toward birth, and the other we as moving toward glory. One was being prepared for justification, and the other was in a state of justification, yet still being changed by the Holy Spirit into the image of Jesus.

Within some of the constraints of certain sectarian stances, these men could never have traveled together – at least not without condemning one another. **However, a single purpose and work was directing them, and when those are from heaven, they tend to unite those who would otherwise be divided.**

**THE MORROW AFTER**

*“And the morrow after they*

*entered into Caesarea.”* Other versions read, *“the following day,”*<sup>NKIV</sup> *“the day after that,”*<sup>BBE</sup> and *“the next day.”*<sup>MRD</sup>

After leaving the morning following the arrival of the three men, the entourage arrive at the city of Caesarea some time the next day, the trip lasting 1-1<sup>1/2</sup> days. Even in our time, a trip of that duration for purposes of delivering the truth to an inquiring soul is exceeding rare. A trip of this length would compare to one of 500-700 miles in our time. Of course, such a trip would be spent in the relative ease of a vehicle of

will of God – as all who have experienced it can attest. **I do not doubt that these men all arrived in Caesarea with in a state of high spiritual exhilaration and anticipation.** They were engaged in something that had been initiated by heavenly communication – both to Cornelius and to Peter.

- ⇒ A vision appeared to Cornelius (10:5)
- ⇒ An angel spoke to Cornelius (10:5b)
- ⇒ Cornelius’ actions had come up as a memorial before God (10:4)

**A trip of this duration would compare to a trip of 500-700 miles in our time. Of course, such a trip would be spent in the relative ease of a vehicle of some sort, yet, the average person would consider it tiring, and would not want to commence immediately with some kind of focused endeavor. However, no such circumstances are made known in our text.**

some sort, yet, the average person would consider it tiring, and would not want to commence immediately with some kind of focused endeavor. However, no such circumstances are made known in our text. It reads as though they had, so to speak, walked across the street, beginning their communication without delay.

**The Impact of Involvement with God**

There is a certain enlivening impact that results from being involved in the good, and acceptable, and perfect

- ⇒ An angel told Cornelius what he was to do (10:5-6)
- ⇒ Peter had seen heaven opened (10:11a)
- ⇒ Peter saw a *“certain vessel”* descending out of heaven to him (10:11b-12)
- ⇒ A voice from heaven spoke to Peter (10:13,15)
- ⇒ The Holy Spirit directed Peter

concerning what he was to do (10:19-20)

There had been more heavenly communication with these two men, within a period of two days, than entire generations of people had experienced. In addition to Peter having an understanding of this, He also knew the enthronement of Jesus had changed the degree of Divine involvements with men. It is difficult to comprehend how all of these things must have impacted upon what took place among these men as they made their way to Caesarea. I do not

root meaning: "to look for," THAYER "expect, anticipate, with the added element of tension arising from hope or fear," FRIBERG "live in suspense, wait or be on watch," UBS "to wait with anxiety," LOUW-NIDA and "to expect, wait for a person." LIDDELL-SCOTT

The words "waited for" contain the idea of fervency, waiting with anticipation, and being in a state of suspense, or excitement. Modern colloquialisms that express this attitude include, "I can hardly wait to meet him" or, "he was on pins and needles."

The idea is that all of Cornelius' thoughts were focused on the arrival of

reservations or preconceived notions, they are not ready to be instructed concerning the appropriation of salvation. To my knowledge there are few examples in Scripture, if, indeed, there are any at all, of a person being told what to do to be saved who had no prevailing interest in salvation. I realize that this contrasts sharply with many notions of evangelizing and soul-winning. However, it is the preaching of the Gospel itself that arouses in men a desire to be saved, not relating a plan whereby they are to be saved.

So far as the involvement of men is concerned, instructions on how to be saved really mean very little to any person who does not desire to be saved. If there is not first evidence of some Divine work within, teaching men what they ought to do to be saved is premature, to say the least. Although this may appear to be very elementary, there is lot of confusion among professing believers on this matter. This is why the text before us is especially relevant.

**HE HAD CALLED TOGETHER HIS RELATIVES AND FRIENDS**

Other versions read that he had called "his relatives and close friends," NKJV "all the kindred of his family, and also such intimate friends as he had," MRD and "all his relations and intimate friends." PHILLIPS

While salvation is, indeed, a personal matter, it is not a private one. As everyone who has had a prevailing interest in salvation knows, that interest is accompanied with a concern for others who are close to them. No person who believes has the faintest desire to be the only one who does so. It is the nature of faith, hope, and love, to spread, desiring that others participate in the blessing.

Even at the inception of spiritual life, before it is birthed, there is a kind of accord with the Divine nature that is developed. The Lord Himself desires that "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:4). Even so, those who are being drawn toward Him participate in that desire. This principle is being lived out in Cornelius, as well as in Peter, who is the one bringing the good news to him.

**Until a person desires Divine approval more than anything else, and is ready to hear what God has commanded, without any reservations or preconceived notions, they are not ready to be instructed concerning the appropriation of salvation.**

doubt that the trip seemed to pass very swiftly.

It is one thing to talk about what God is doing. It is quite another to become involved in it. In my understanding, no place has been made for an individual or a group to voice a view of something God is doing while they themselves are external to it. I do not know how the validity of such a procedure can be validated.

**CORNELIUS WAITED FOR THEM**

"And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends." Other versions read that Cornelius "was waiting," NJKV "was expecting," NIV "was looking for them," DARBY "was waiting anxiously for them," NET and "was waiting for an expecting them." AMPLIFIED

Cornelius was not casual in his response to Divine direction. The words "waited for" are translated from as single Greek word – προσδοκῶν. This word "denotes mental direction," THAYER and has the following

Peter. At this point, his entire life revolved around this anticipated event. And what was there about this occasion that elicited such a fervent desire and expectation in this centurion? Was it that he was going to meet a famous man? Indeed not! It was that he was going to be told what God wanted him to do! The servants told Peter Cornelius had sent for him so that he could "hear words" from him (Acts 10:22).

The record will confirm that the words would have to do with Cornelius and those with him being saved. In other words, the matter of salvation, or being delivered from sin and put in right relation with God now dominated the mind of this man. He anxiously awaited the arrival of a man who would tell him what God had commanded.

I will tell you that it is not likely that any person will ever be saved who does not obtain this mindset. Until a person desires Divine approval more than anything else, and is ready to hear what God has commanded, without any

**CORNELIUS WORSHIPS PETER**

**“<sup>25</sup> And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.”** Other versions read, “*fell at his feet in reverence,*” <sup>NIV</sup> “*worshiped him,*” <sup>NRSV</sup> “*gave him worship,*” “*did him homage,*” <sup>DARBY</sup> “*at his feet adored,*” <sup>DOUAY</sup> “*did him reverence,*” <sup>NJB</sup> “*did bow before him,*” <sup>YLT</sup> and “*paid worshipful reverence to him*” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

It is quite possible that Cornelius met Peter before he actually arrived at his home. Because he was anxiously awaiting the arrival of Peter, this is probably what took place.

Here, the word “*worshiped*” describes a **physical activity**, as compared to an inward expression of the heart. It comes from the Greek word προσεκύνησεν, which has the following lexical meaning: “to prostrate oneself . . . by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance,” <sup>THAYER</sup> “(fall down and) worship, do obeisance to, prostrate oneself before, do reverence to,” <sup>GINGRICH</sup>

Technically, what Cornelius did was not tantamount to the fear of God, or having another god before Him. However, even physically bowing down in homage and an attitude of submission to any created personality is forbidden by God. The Law said of idols, “*Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me*”(Ex 20:5). Physically bowing down or serving an inanimate object was strictly forbidden by the Law, which had “*a form of knowledge and of the truth*” (Rom 2:20). Whether it was the brazen serpent Moses made (2 Kgs 18:4), or statute of Molech or Baal (2 Kgs 11:7), this was a forbidden practice. In our day, it is still wrong, whether it is an image of Buddha or of the virgin Mary. This is why the three Hebrew children refused to fall down before the giant image that

Nebucahnezzar had reared up in Babylon (Dan 3:5-18).

It is quite true that falling prostrate before a person in the expression of honor was practiced among oriental people. Abraham bowed himself to the children of Heth (Gen 23:7), and before the people of the land (Gen 23:12). Jacob bowed seven times before his brother Esau (Gen 33:3). His handmaidens and their children did the same (Gen 33:6). Leah and her children, together with Joseph [not Jacob’s son, who was not yet born] and Rachel did the same (Gen 33:7). When angels appeared as men before Abraham and Lot, they bowed down before them (Gen 18:2; 19:1). Ruth bowed down before Boaz (Ruth 2:10). There are a few other instances like this recorded in Scripture (1 Sam 20:41; 25:23; 28:14; 2 Sam 14:22,33; 24:20; 1 Kgs 1:23; 2:15; 1 Chron 21:20). **However, those were times when less of God Himself was known, and little light had been shed on His Person.** It appears from the record that this is why these actions, many of which were very much like the action described in our text, were tolerated. By *tolerated*, I mean **by** the person to whom the others bowed. Although some of them were holy men, yet their understanding of God Himself

were reconciled to God.

When the devil tempted Jesus during those forty days following His baptism, he endeavored to induce Jesus to fall down before him. “*Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me*” (Matt 4:9). The word translated “*worship*” is a form of the same word used in our text: προσκύνησας. This is also the word used to describe John falling down before an angel during the giving of the Revelation (Rev 19:10; 22:8). Both times John did this, the angel forbade his reaction, telling him to not do it. **Remember, this was an overt activity that God had forbidden for anyone but Himself.** The angel knew that this included even lofty heavenly personalities, and solemnly reminded John of that fact.

Most of the times this kind of *bowing down* is mentioned in the New Covenant Scriptures (sixty times), it refers to men either bowing before Jesus, or God the Father (Matt 2:2,8,11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17; Mk 5:6; Lk 24:52; John 4:23,24; 9:38; 12:20; Acts

**Technically, what Cornelius did was not tantamount to the fear of God, or having another god before Him. However, even physically bowing down in homage and an attitude of submission to any created personality is forbidden by God.**

was vastly inferior to that which has now been made known. It was not, therefore, that men were willing to receive something God had forbidden, but because they did not yet possess a fully formed understanding of both the depravity of man and the absolute holiness of God. However, in our text, the conditions just described no longer existed – at least not among those who

8:27; 24:11; 1 Cor 14:25; Heb 1:6; Rev 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:1,16; 14:7; 15:4; 19:4,10; 22:9).

Now, we will see how a man of God, who possesses a fuller knowledge of Him, is acquainted with His ways, and is not overcome by the circumstance, responds to this action of Cornelius. **Behold how a true disciple thinks!**

**PETER REFUSES THE WORSHIP**

**“<sup>26</sup> But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.”** Other versions read, “Peter lifted him up, saying,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “I too am just a man,”<sup>NASB</sup> “I am only a man myself,”<sup>NIV</sup> “I am only a mortal,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “I myself am also a human being,”<sup>NAB</sup> “I’m a human being just like you!,”<sup>NLT</sup> “I’m not a God!”<sup>LIVING</sup> and “I am nothing more than a human.”<sup>CEV</sup>

Peter refuses to allow Cornelius to bow down to him. He has a more thorough understanding of both the nature of men and the nature of God. While Cornelius was not treating him as though he was God, or even some lesser god, yet Peter considers the action of Cornelius inappropriate. His reaction was similar to that of Paul and Barnabas when certain men in Lystra thought they were gods, and were going to make sacrifices to them. When the men of God heard of their intention, “they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? **We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein**” (Acts 14:15). Even after some extensive reasoning on the matter, they “scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them” (Acts 14:18).

**Within those insightful laborers of the first century, there was an acute sensitivity to proper manners and expressions.** The thought of a man receiving admiration or recognition that was due only to God was repulsive, and they would not allow it.

Lest anyone imagine that this sort of activity has become obsolete in our

time, the Roman Pope still receives such recognition, with men bowing before him, kissing his ring, and even his feet. The Roman church also still promotes and practices what it referred to as *genuflection*, which is to bow, bending the knee to certain images that are thought to be sacred. Other orthodox churches also practice the honoring of prelates in this manner.



**It is important to note that there is a level at which all human distinctions are dissolved.** As a general rule, the closer one is to the earth, the more prominent such distinction become. However, the closer one is to the Lord, and the more aware they are of heavenly things, the less likely it is for such distinctions to be entertained. In Christ, no individual is permitted to “*think more highly of himself than he ought to think.*” **Rather, they are to think of themselves in direct relation with ‘the measure of faith’ that God has “dealt,” or dispensed to them** (Rom 12:3). Also, when considering other men, believers are not to assign a greater worth to the individual than their words and deed support. Paul carefully stated the case in

these words: “*For if I do wish to boast I shall not be foolish, for I shall be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one may credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me*” (2 Cor 12:6).

In stark contradiction of these things, and especially within Christendom, there is a remarkable veneration of men who have little to say, and appear to do little that is declared to be valuable in the eyes of God. Too often religious leaders are abysm ally ignorant of the Word of God and the purpose of God – to say nothing of the Lord Himself and “*His Christ.*” If you were to remove their academic credentials, and refuse to fasten your attention on their outward accomplishments, there would be precious little that would distinguish them from other men. This is not an acceptable practice, even though it is quite common. **In Christ Jesus, the mark of greatness has to do with serving, not ruling** (Mark 9:35). This has particular regard to the distribution of spiritual nourishment that God provides in Christ and through His Word, and assisting men in things that pertain to life and godliness. **No man is truly great who is deficient in these areas.**

Even though Peter is anything but incompetent in matters pertaining to life and godliness, and the declaration of the mind of God, yet he refuses the honor Cornelius attempts to give him. He does not do so because of any disdain for Cornelius, or any feigned humility. **Rather, as he is basking in the light of the knowledge of God, he perceived such honor as wholly unreasonable.** He knew there was One greater than himself, and that it would be nothing more than a distraction to receive such honor.

**PETER FINDS MANY WHO HAD COME TOGETHER**

**“<sup>27</sup> And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.”**

**AS HE TALKED WITH THEM**

“And as he talked with him, he went in . . .” Other versions read, “And

he went in, talking with him,”<sup>DARBY</sup> “While he conversed with him,”<sup>NAB</sup> “Peter continued talking with him as he went

in.”<sup>NET</sup> *“Talking together they went in,”*  
<sup>NJB</sup> *“So they talked together and went inside,”*<sup>NLT</sup> *“So he got up and they talked together for a while and then went in,”*  
<sup>LIVING</sup> and *“Then Peter went right into the house in deep conversation with Cornelius.”*<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

And what do you suppose these two men were walking about, being instantly engaged in conversation? The weather? The trip from Joppa to Caesarea? Peter’s first impression of Cornelius’ dwelling? To even ask such questions appears rather foolish! Considering what had prompted Cornelius to call send for Peter, and what had moved Peter to come with the men

way honor His name.

Over the years I have observed, with some degree of sorrow, the great difficulty with which professing Christians attempt to make the transition from the carnal to the spiritual. I have especially noted that this trait is more prominent among professed church leaders, who are often quite uncomfortable with such a passage. They appear to be more comfortable with things have have to do with this world, though often making a valiant effort to connect them with the things of God.

You will find a remarkable consistency throughout this entire

and “great crowds.”<sup>UBS</sup> A significant number of people were gathered together at the house of Cornelius – all being assembled within four days from the time he was notified from heaven to send for Peter. His family was there, together with those servants belonging to the household. In addition, he had called in relatives (“kinsmen”), and close friends.

You may recall that when Matthew prepared a feast for Jesus, there were a great number of people who were also there. During that occasion, Matthew says that *“many publicans and sinners came and sat down with”* Jesus *“and His disciples”* (Matt 9:10). Mark says of that group, *“for there were many”* (Mk 2:15).

**The very notion contradicts everything we know about the impact of Divine confrontation. And yet, across the length and breadth of this land, there are casual and quotidian conversations taking place among those who say they have come to worship the Lord or in some way honor His name.**

It ought to be noted that those who have a genuine interest in the Savior are always forward to seek for others to join them in their quest to be taught by Him and about Him. What earnest disciple has not experienced a bit of frustration in attempting to gather a group of relatives and friends together for exposure to the things of God? Yet, Cornelius has managed to accomplish this, even further confirming the presence of the Lord in this entire experience.

without questioning their mission, should indicate this was no casual conversation. **How can a man who has seen and been directed by an angel speak casually with the person of whom that angel spoke?** And how can a man who has had a vision from heaven accompanied by a command and response, and repeated three times, additionally being specifically directed by the Holy Spirit, now engage in mundane conversation at his appointed destination? The very notion contradicts everything we know about the impact of Divine confrontation. And yet, across the length and breadth of this land, there are casual and quotidian conversations taking place among those who say they have come to worship the Lord or in some

account. Everything will find its center in the salvation of God as wrought out and revealed in Jesus Christ.

**HE FOUND MANY THAT WERE COME TOGETHER**

*“ . . . and found many that were come together.”* Other versions read, *“found many people assembled,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“found a large gathering of people,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“found many person s gathered,”*<sup>RSV</sup> *“saw that a great number of people had come together,”*<sup>BBE</sup> and *“found a large group of persons assembled.”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

The word translated “many” has the following lexical meaning: “multitude, numerous, great . . . equivalent to abundant,”<sup>THAYER</sup>

**There have been a few times when I have experience something like this – when a body of people came together for the express purpose of advancing their understanding of the Lord and His purpose.** These very gatherings (A Ministry for Hungry Saints) are a sterling example of this phenomenon. There are precious few Kingdom laborers who have enjoyed the benefits of such gatherings, as countless faithful ministers of the Gospel can testify. **One of the sure marks of the legitimacy of a gathering of believers is an unquenchable appetite for the things of God, and a prevailing interest in coming together hear the word of God**

**A PIECE OF COMMON, YET OBSOLETE, KNOWLEDGE**

<sup>28a</sup> *And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for*

*a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation . . .”*

**YOU KNOW IT IS UNLAWFUL**  
*“And he said unto them, Ye know*

*Upon meeting, both Peter and Cornelius relate how heaven has contacted them, and what was said – by Given O. Blakely*

how that it is an unlawful thing . . .” Other versions read, “how unlawful it is,” NKJV “it is against our law,” NIV “it’s forbidden,” CSB “how abominable it is,” DOUAY “an unlawful thing,” ERV “how wrong it is,” GWN “against the Jewish laws,” LIVING “strictly forbidden,” ISV “it is illegal” MONTGOMERY and “is not lawful or permissible.” AMPLIFIED

Although the Law of Moses did not specifically forbid contact with the Gentiles, there were certain overtones in it that led conscientious men to this conclusion. Solemnly the Israelites were admonished not to learn the way of the heathen that initially occupied the promised land. Anyone who learned and practiced the ways of the heathen would “be cut off from among their people” (Lev 18:24-30). When Israel came into Canan, the Lord told them to cast out the heathen nations, and to make no covenant with them or show them mercy. “When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; **thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them**” (Deut 7:1-2).

The people were also told not to marry any of the heathen. “Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son” (Deut 7:3). The reason for this prohibition was spelled out: “For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly” (Deut 7:4). It is obvious, therefore, that the notion that marriage can be the means of converting wayward souls did not originate with the Lord. It is a human imagination, and has brought great damage to the church of God. God told the people how to deal with the heathen, and it was most precise: “For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself,

above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deut 7:6).

Some years later, during the renewal that took place in the days of Ezra, the people confessed they had not honored this Divine prohibition. “Which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean

**The practice of Jews having no official dealings with non-Jews was well known during the time of Jesus. This is precisely why the Samaritan woman was astounded that Jesus had asked her for a drink of water.**

land with the filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness. Now therefore give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto your sons, nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever” (Ezra 9:12).

The practice of Jews having no official dealings with non-Jews was well known during the time of Jesus. This is precisely why the Samaritan woman was astounded that Jesus had asked her for a drink of water. She responded to His request, “How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans” (John 4:9). Jesus did not tell her that this was not true, or that it was driven by a misconception of the nature of the Law. He rather spoke to her of the coming of a better day.

Peter had also spent three years with Jesus, during which He heard the Lord command the apostles, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not” (Matt 10:5). Although the Law did not expressly say the Jews could not enter into the dwelling of a Gentile, it is easy to see how men were led to that conclusion. If the jeopardy was as the Lord declared – that

they could lean the way of the heathen – then thoughtful men surmised that they ought not choose to be among them. Further, if any Gentiles came among them, they were under obligation to keep the Jewish laws (Ex 12:49; 23:12; Lev 24:16,22; Num 1:51; 9:14; 15:15-16,26,29; 19:10; 35:15; Deut 1:16).

The restrictions were required

because of the fundamental ignorance of the Gentiles who “know not God” (1 Thess 4:5). It is why they were described as “sinners of the Gentiles” (Gal 2:16).

By means of the Law, a very real “middle wall of partition” had been erected between the Jew and the Gentile (Eph 2:14). Peter knew this and had maintained his life within the framework of that perception. **However, with the advent of Jesus something had occurred of which Peter was not yet aware.** In his involvement with Cornelius, the Lord would show him what had happened.

#### Peter Said It to Them

The words that follow were spoken to all of the people who were gathered at the house of Cornelius: “He said unto **THEM**.” Further, these people were well aware of the circumstance. There was already an awareness of the mindset of God’s people, even though, at this time, there was more revelation on the subject will be discussed.

**In our time, it is exceedingly difficult to establish the mindset of professing Christians – what the Christian community thinks of this or that.** As has been confirmed by recent religious surveys, the average Christian knows very little about God, Christ, heaven, or hell – to say nothing about justification, sanctification, and the eternal purpose of God. The very foundations and basic elements of the

doctrine are scarcely known among professing believers, as men have been led down bypaths that feed the worldly desires of the people.

In our text, there was a very keen awareness of what the people of God believed, and what they practiced. Oh, that such an awareness would be restored in our time! Today there are such divisions and fragmented knowledge that relatively few professing Christians have any accurate understanding

the praises of Him” who has called them “out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet 2:9). **How is it possible for such a people to not have distinctive manners and persuasions?** How can a distinctive people be without observable distinctions? How can a special people have no special marks of identity? How can a chosen people have no indications in their manner of life that so identifies them? Of course, such circumstances are glaring contradictions. They simply are not even possible, for were they to exist,

34:9; Zech 8:23; John 4:9; 18:35; Acts 10:28; 13:6; 18:2,24; 19:14,34; 21:39; 22:3; Rom 1:16; 2:9,10,17,28,29; 3:1; 10:12; 1 Cor 9:20; Gal 2:14; 3:28; Col 3:11). The word “Jews” occurs two hundred and fifty-seven times, with one hundred and seventy-five of them being in Matthew through Revelation. “Jewess,” a female Jew, occurs two times (Acts 16:1; 24:24). “Jewish” is found once, in Titus 1:14. “Jewry” is found twice (Luke 23:6 and John 7:1), being translated “Judea” in later versions. Thus, with nearly three hundred references to some form of this word, its distinction is clearly seen.

**Today there are such divisions and fragmented knowledge that relatively few professing Christians have any accurate understanding concerning the nature and direction of spiritual life. Consequentially, there are only very general and crude notions concerning what they believe and practice.**

When Peter says, “a man that is a Jew,” he is speaking of infinitely more than nationality or ethnicity. “A Jew” was a member of a chosen race – a special group of people to whom God had vouchsafed the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service of God, and the promises. They were the offspring of “the fathers,” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the body of people from which Jesus sprang forth (Rom 9:4-5).

concerning the nature and direction of spiritual life. Consequentially, there are only very general and crude notions concerning what they believe and practice.

they would suggest a powerless God who separates a people who bear no signs of that separation.

**It is, therefore, of great interest to know precisely what these people practiced, and why they did so.** For the perceptive among them, not mingling with the Gentiles was not a matter of carnal prejudice. It rather reflected a Divine choice, and one that could include Gentiles that were willing to acclimate to their Divinely directed manner of life. The provision of Jewish synagogues for Gentile proselytes (Acts 6:9), and presence of proselytes among them (Acts 6:5; 16:9) confirm this to be the case. This was a matter of conscience toward God.

It seems to me that this circumstance contradicts the very idea of God having special people – a body of individuals described as having been purified “unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Tit 2:14), and those who are a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people,” who are to “show forth

**FOR A MAN THAT IS A JEW**

“ . . . for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation . . . ” The term, “Jew” originally referred to someone from the tribe or country of Judah. Eventually, it came to refer to all of the people of the Hebrew language. This word is used thirty-two times in Scripture, first appearing in the book of Esther (Esth 2:5; 3:4; 5:13; 6:10; 8:7; 9:29,31; 10:3; Jer

**GOD HAS SHOWN ME**

<sup>28b</sup> . . . but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

Immediately Peter relates something that God has taught him – something critical to the situation.

**GOD HAS SHOWN ME**

“ . . . but God hath showed me . . . ”

Most of the standard versions read “God has shown me.” Other versions read, “God has made it clear to me,”<sup>BBE</sup> “to me God did show,”<sup>YLT</sup> “God has taught me,”<sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> “God has shown and taught me by words,”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “God has shown me plainly.”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

The word “shown” is translated from a word that has the following lexical

meaning: “to expose to the eyes; metaphorically to teach one what he ought to do . . . to give the evidence of proof of a thing,”<sup>THAYER</sup> and “to point out.”<sup>LEH</sup>

**Some Examples**

This same language is used elsewhere in Scripture, and is indicative of the kind of involvement God has with those with whom He is working. It is both personal and effective.

- ⇨ **A HEATHEN KING – CONCERNING THE DREAM OF PHARAOH AND THE COMING FAMINE.** “And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, *The dream of Pharaoh is one: **God hath showed** Pharaoh what he is about to do*” (Gen 41:25). In this case the matter shown was not understood by Pharaoh, and therefore had to be interpreted by Joseph.
- ⇨ **A CHOSEN PEOPLE – CONCERNING THE REVELATION AT SINAI.** “And ye said, *Behold, the LORD our **God hath showed** us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth*” (Deut 5:24). Here, what was made known included aspects of the Divine nature, as well as a definition of morality and detailed instructions concerning ordained routines.
- ⇨ **CORRUPTED GENTILES – WHAT COULD BE KNOWN OF GOD FROM NATURE.** “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for **God hath showed** it unto them” (Rom 1:19). In this case, what was shown was not comprehended. Further, there was no earnest inquiry into the matter, for which men were judged.

**In Our Text**

In this text, God had shown something to Peter, who had been reconciled to God and made a partaker of the Divine nature. **Unlike Pharaoh, he will not have to call for another person to interpret what was shown to him.** Unlike the Israelites, the matter will not have to be bound upon Him by reaffirmation. Quite different from the Gentile world, he will not ignore what has been shown or assign a corrupted meaning to it.

**A Unique Trait of the New Covenant**

The prophets foretold a time when men would, in a unique manner, be taught by God.

- ⇨ “And many people shall go and say, *Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and **He will teach us of his ways,** and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion*

*shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem*” (Isa 2:3).

- ⇨ “And all Thy children shall be **taught of the LORD;** and great shall be the peace of thy children” (Isa 54:13).
- ⇨ “And many nations shall come, and say, *Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and **He will teach us of His ways,** and we will walk in His paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem*” (Micah 4:2).

Jesus referred to this teaching, declaring that those who came to Him had experienced such a blessing: “*It is written in the prophets, And **they shall be all taught of God.** Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me*” (John 6:45). Paul also confirmed that such teaching takes place among those who are in Christ Jesus. “*But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another*” (1 Thess 4:9).

It is clear from the prophecies, the words of Jesus, and the writings of Paul, that this teaching involves more than the conveyance of mere factual information. The prophets indicated that Divine tutelage would bring a familiarity with God’s “ways.” Jesus indicated that it would result in people coming to Him to appropriate what He had been appointed to give. Paul informs us that this teaching results in believers having a love for one another.

We see, therefore, that in this text what is “**shown**” is not merely the relating of a commandment or precept. This is *showing*, or *teaching*, that is of a higher order – one that is more in keeping with the nature of the New Covenant, in which the laws of God are written upon the heart and put into the mind (Heb 8:10; 10:16). This will become apparent as we note what Peter was shown, or taught.

**DO NOT CALL ANY MAN COMMON OR UNCLEAN!**

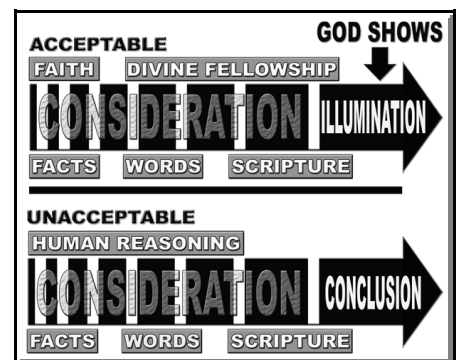
“... that I should not call any

man common or unclean.” Other versions read, “*unholy or unclean,*”<sup>NASB</sup> “*Impure or unclean,*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*profane or unclean,*”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*polluted or unclean,*”<sup>GENEVA</sup> “*defiled or unclean,*”<sup>MRD</sup> “*defiled or ritually unclean,*”<sup>NET</sup> “*think of anyone as inferior,*”<sup>LIVING</sup> “*vulgar or ceremonially unclean,*”<sup>WILLIAMS</sup> “*common or unhalloved or [ceremonially] unclean,*”<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “*unclean or unfit.*”<sup>CEV</sup>

If we review precisely what was shown to Peter and said to him while he was on the rooftop, here is what we find.

- ⇨ He saw a sheet let down from heaven with all manner of four foot beasts, wild beasts, creeping things, and fowls in it.
- ⇨ He was told get up, kill some of these creatures, and eat them.
- ⇨ After responding that he had never eaten anything unclean, Peter was told not to call anything that God had cleansed “*unclean*” (Acts 10:11-16).
- ⇨ Following the vision, which was repeated three times, and upon the arrival of the three men from Cornelius, the Holy Spirit spoke to Peter: “*While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them*” (Acts 10:19-20).

It is therefore evident that what was *shown* to Peter did not take place on the rooftop, but was actually accomplished as he considered the matter. **The teaching that took place was within the context of Divine fellowship** (1



Cor 1:9; 1 John 1:3). In that fellowship, Peter took into his mind what had been shown and said to him. Those things were *“mixed with faith”* (Heb 4:2). **That is, his thinking began with the Person and will of God, and his unmitigated trust in the Lord.** Into that scenario, Peter pondered what he had seen and heard, handling it as a kind of spiritual treasure box. In that process, God opened the treasure box, unveiling to the understanding of Peter something that he had never seen before.

**What Peter had now seen – that he should refer to no man as being “common of unclean” – was not a conclusion that he reached through logical thinking.** Also, it is **not** that he ignored logical thinking, and God forbid that anyone should exalt such a manner of thought. So far as logic is concerned, Peter’s reasoning was based on the fact that God is true, He does not lie, and He has a purpose that is to be comprehended. That was truly analytical thinking. **However, what he came to see was what God “showed” him, not what he concluded – and there is a vast difference between the two.**

As has been confirmed in the Christian community, men – even deeply religious men – have this inveterate tendency to rely upon *“the wisdom of men.”* This includes both manners of thinking and the means of ascertaining the meaning of the Word of God. Today there is a great body of both literary and verbal dialog that focuses on such things as hermeneutics (the science of interpretation), language expertise, and arriving at conclusions by means of consensus, historical analysis, and statistical analyzation. **None of these approaches have any validity at all when it comes to understanding the things of God.** This is because those are matters that are both governed and determined by God, and can only be discerned through a living identity with Him.

This is precisely why the Word of God can **only** be profitable to a people when it is mixed with faith – which is intensely personal (Heb 4:2).

#### An Erroneous View

**This is also why men should question the validity of defining faith as**

**a body of doctrine – something that is quite common among purported Christian scholars.** McClickok and Strong’s Cyclopedia refers to this approach in its definition of faith, adding a key observation. “An objective body of truth: ‘the faith;’ designated by the schoolmen as *fides quae creditur*, the faith which is believed. So the Augsburg Confession speaks of ‘our holy faith and Christian religion.’ (This sense does not occur in N.T.)” It also adds, “A rule of thought, the *fides penes quam creditur*: so the Roman Catholics say such a thing is “of faith” (not found in N.T.)”

Commentators have long taken the above view of the expression *“the faith which was once for all delivered”* (Jude 1:3). Here are some of the statements that have been written.

⇨ “To the Church universal, the whole body of believers, has been committed, therefore, a sacred deposit of truth, here called the faith, embracing evangelical history, doctrine, and precept. This body of truth is a permanent trust.” PULPIT COMMENTARY

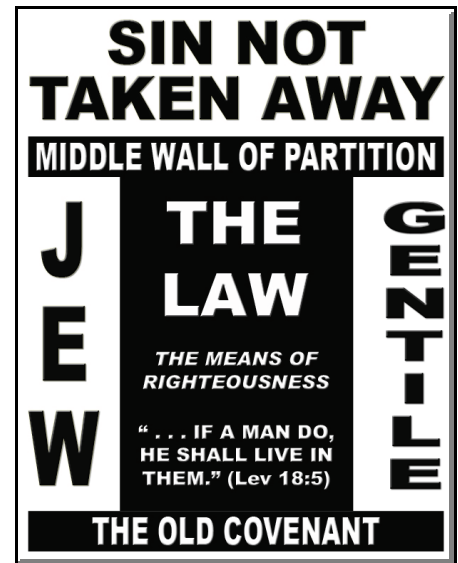
⇨ “. . . by the ‘faith’ is meant the doctrine of faith, in which sense it is used whenever faith is said to be preached, obeyed, departed, or erred from, or denied, or made shipwreck of, or when exhortations are made to stand fast, and continue in it, or to strive and contend for it, as here; and which is sometimes called the word of faith, the faith of the Gospel, the mystery of faith, or most holy faith, the common faith . . .” JOHN GILL

⇨ “The system of religion revealed in the gospel. It is called “faith,” because that is the cardinal virtue in the system, and because all depends on that. The rule here will require that we should contend in this manner for all “truth.” ALBERT BARNES

⇨ “Dative of advantage. Here not in the sense of trust, but rather of the thing believed in as in verse 20; Ga 1:23; 3:23; Php 1:27.” ROBERTSON’S WORD PICTURES

All of these views represent an interpretation of the text, and not the text itself. They suggest that faith is not an entity of itself. Yet, faith is declared to be something that *“came”* (Gal 3:23), is *“obtained”* (2 Pet 1:1), comes to us through grace (1 Tim 1:14), and is given by Christ (Eph 6:23). **Faith, while possessed by the individual, is actually separate from him.** He possesses faith, but it originated outside of himself. Further, the qualities ascribed to faith,

and the things that are said to be accomplished through it, cannot be ascribed to a body of teaching.



The word from which *“faith”* is translated in Jude 1:3 is *πίστεις*. This word is used fifty-eight times in Scripture (Acts 3:16; 6:7; 14:22; 15:9; 16:5; 26:18; Rom 3:28; 4:19,20; 5:2; 11:20; 14:1; 1 Cor 16:13; ; 2 Cor 2:4; 8:7; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 2:20; Phil 1:27; 3:9; Col 1:23; 2:7; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 1:2,4; 2:7,16; 3:13; 4:12; 2 Tim 1:13; 3:10; Tit 1:13; Tit 2:2; 3:15; Heb 4:2; 11:3,45,7,8,9,11,17,20,21,22,23,24,27,28,29,30,31; James 1:6; 2:5; 1 Pet 5:9; 2 Pet 1:5; Jude 1:3,20). It is interesting that the same word is used in Hebrews 4:2 that is used in Jude 1:3. There it states that *“the word preached”* was not *“mixed with faith.”* In the Greek, the article “the” precedes: i.e., **“the faith.”** Here, then, the body of the things to be believed, *“the word preached,”* is clearly distinguished from *“the faith”* itself. This means that, as used in Scripture, faith does not stand for **what** is believed, but for the actual apprehension of what is believed.

One of the rare departures from this scholastic view of Jude 1:3 was provided by John Calvin. He said of the text, “He says that faith had been once delivered, that they might know that they had obtained it for this end, that they might never fail or fall away.” CALVIN ON JUDE

#### Why Say These Things?

It is necessary to say these things because of the impact of mere traditional

approaches to the understanding of truth. **When God “showed” Peter that he should not call any man common or unclean, it seems to me to be questionable that he did so through Peter analyzing a body of doctrine.** It was rather the personal faith of the apostle that was used to bring him to a proper conclusion of the matter.

**Call No Man Common or Unclean**

So far as the record is concerned, this is not something God said, but something He “showed,” or revealed. It was something concealed within the Gospel – something that had to be unveiled. **That is, there were effects wrought by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that had not yet seen comprehended by Peter – and this event took place an estimated ten years after the day of Pentecost (41 A.D.).**

Prior to Christ’s death, a certain condition existed in the world that was owing to the dominance of sin. Sin had not been taken away, either in its entirety or partially. **No sin – not so much as a single one – had actually been removed or blotted out.** In preparation for the coming Savior, God created and selected a nation with whom He worked exclusively. Though small, they were isolated from all other families, or nations, of the earth. That separation was formalized by means of a covenant – the “*first covenant*” (Heb 8:7; 9:1). The covenant was a moral one, and was presented in the Ten Commandments, which are referred to as “*the words of the covenant*” (Ex 34:28).

From the standpoint of the identity of the people, this covenant became a “*middle wall of partition*” between the Jews and the Gentiles. Although both peoples were under the dominion of sin, Israel, because of its role in bringing forth the Savior, was given special privileges (Rom 9:3-5). **As long as sin was not dealt with directly, this distinction remained, being required because of God’s righteousness.** Further, God’s work was on their side of the wall.

However, when Jesus “*put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself*” (Heb 9:26), the whole situation changed. The “*middle wall of partition*” was removed, and a common basis for dealing with all

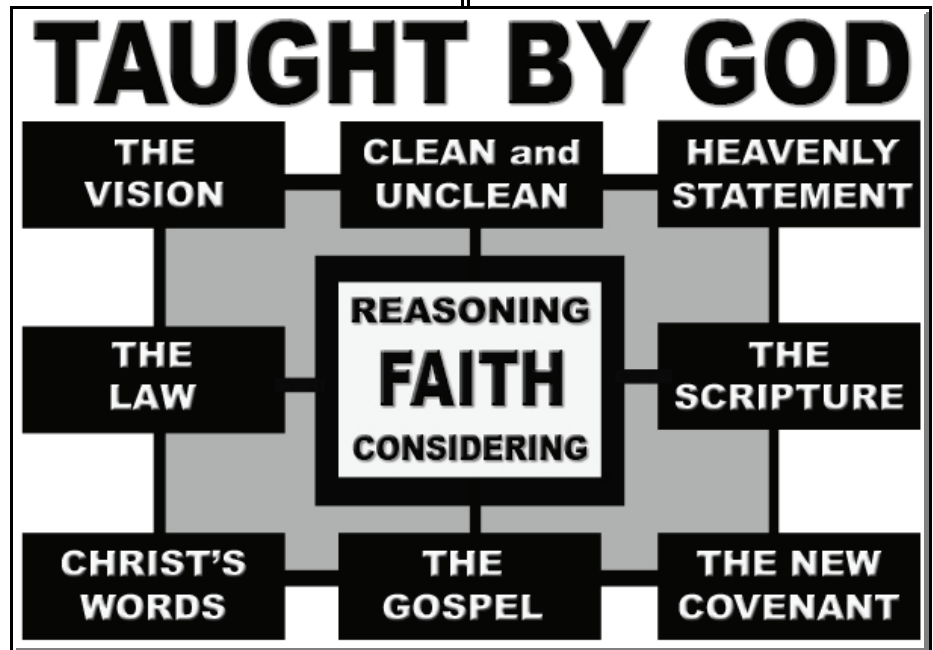
men was put into place. Paul referred to this when he said of Jesus, “*For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us*” (Eph 2:14). Now, no man could be viewed as “*unclean*” because of an outward distinction. That is, no man was excluded from Divine consideration purely upon the basis of their bloodline or being uncircumcised.

This is the truth that was opened to Peter. It is what God “*showed*” Him. However, He did not do this by simply saying the separation of Jew and Gentile

strange, and thus he was able to embrace it immediately. He will now shape his life around what he has been shown.

**A CONCLUSION**

When the devil is successful in suppressing the truth, diverting the attention of men to religious tradition, and placing an emphasis on this present evil world, something of significance takes place. **Men are brought to the point where they cannot reason properly.** They do not possess the components required for sound thought, and therefore they arrive at erroneous conclusions. **Just as**



no longer existed. Rather, he used the knowledge that he already had – the Law and its various requirements, the Scriptures, the words of Jesus, the Gospel, and the New Covenant. He then brought into the mixture the things that were new – the vision and the statements that attended it, and the words of the Holy Spirit. All of this was gathered together in, then mixed with faith. The shaking together of this mixture was accomplished in Peter’s thoughts – his reasoning and consideration. It was within this activity that the Lord drew near to him, as Jesus did to the two on the road to Emmaus. **He then showed Peter a perspective that he had never seen before – yet it all made perfect sense to him because of his faith.** It was something new, but it was not something

**you cannot build a stable house that can withstand storms out of newspapers and cardboard, so men cannot build good spiritual thoughts out of religious tradition and the wisdom of this world.**

Many church people have arrived at completely inaccurate conclusions, and derived damaging opinions and views, because they have gone about the work of thinking with **unacceptable** components. Perhaps they have mingled together principles of psychiatry, statistical data from human research, and the observations of certain philosophers. Then they have brought into the mixture the religious persuasions of men and their undeveloped and juvenile opinions. **The whole conglomeration is only capable of producing erroneous conclusions.** God

will not dignify such a procedure by drawing near to teach the individual caught up in it. Nor, indeed, can faith operate in such a surrounding, for there is no spiritual substance in it – nothing that faith can grasp.

It is essential that professing Christians extend themselves to have a working knowledge of the text of the Scriptures, for they alone are able to make men “wise unto salvation” (2 Tim 3:15). The Scriptures are also the appointed means of coming into spiritual

maturity (2 Tim 3:17). In addition to this, it is imperative that believers be given a consistent and robust diet of the Word of God. All of this also requires a surrounding of godly souls, who themselves are also living by every word of God.

## I CAME WITHOUT GAINSAIING

<sup>29a</sup> **Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for . . .**

### I CAME WITHOUT GAINSAIING

“Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying . . .” Other versions read, “without objection,” <sup>NKJV</sup> “without even raising any objection,” <sup>NASB</sup> “without question,” <sup>BBE</sup> “without raising any questions,” <sup>CJB</sup> “without saying anything against it,” <sup>DARBY</sup> “without saying nay,” <sup>GENEVA</sup> “making no doubt,” <sup>DOUAY</sup> “I didn’t object,” <sup>GWN</sup> “without delay,” “I came unto you willingly,” <sup>RWB</sup> “I didn’t argue,” <sup>IE</sup> “I didn’t hesitate,” <sup>ISV</sup> “without demur,” <sup>MONTGOMERY</sup> “without hesitation or objection or misgivings,” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and “without complaint.” <sup>LITV</sup>

The word translated “without gainsaying” has the following lexical meaning: “without contradiction,” <sup>THAYER</sup> “without raising any question, without objection, without hesitation,” <sup>FRIBERG</sup> and “pertaining to what cannot be spoken against or objected to - cannot be denied, without opposition, without objection, indisputable.” <sup>LOUW-NIDA</sup>

Remember, we are being exposed to real spiritual life, not a theoretical scenario. It is quite common to hear preachers and teachers speak about how hesitate “we all are” to respond to Divine directives. These days, much is made out of how men argue with God, resist doing what they know is right, and entertain personal views differing with those of the Lord. For some, this appears to address life right down where the rubber meets the road, so to speak. However, nothing could be further from the truth! It is the “carnal mind” that is “enmity against God,” not the spiritual mind (Rom 8:7). Jesus said His sheep know Him, hear His voice, follow Him, and refuse to follow a

stranger (John 10:4-5,8,13). **That is not the way they ought to be, but is rather the way they are.** This is being lived out in our text.

Peter was asked to do something he had never done before – not in all of his life, and he was a mature man. **He was faced with a fundamental change in how he was to view mankind.** He was directed to go with some Gentiles to the house of a Gentile, which contradicted even his conscience. He was not told the nature of the mission. He was simply told to go with the men standing at the door, doing so “doubting nothing.”

never doubts. Those are all traits of the flesh and of unbelief. You will never read in Scripture of someone who believed, and in that posture disobeyed; or, had faith and doubted what was believed, or believed what the Lord said, but argued with Him about what He had declared.

### AS SOON AS I WAS SENT FOR

“ . . . as soon as I was sent for . . .” Other versions read, “when I was sent for,” <sup>NASB</sup> “when I was summoned,” <sup>CJB</sup> “as soon as I was sent for,” <sup>WEB</sup> and “when the men invited me to come.” <sup>IE</sup>

Peter did not ask the men to wait while he sought for an answer from the

**Peter did not ask the men to wait while he sought an answer from the Lord. He did not ask them to pray with him about what he ought to do. He did not ask for time to think the matter out, weigh all of the options, and determine how best to meet their need. He did not quote Solomon’s words – “in the multitude of counselors there is safety” – then call some of the other apostles and ask their advice**

Now, initially, that is what Peter had to work with. He asked no further questions. He made no objections. He did not attempt to justify his views at that time – views he had held for his entire life. He simply proceeded to do what the Spirit had instructed him to do. Like Abraham, he moved out “not knowing whether he went” (Heb 11:8). He also was “strong in faith, giving glory to God” (Rom 4:20).

**That is the way faith responds.** It never disobeys, never hesitates, and

Lord. He did not ask them to pray with him about what he ought to do in response to their request. He did not ask for time to think the matter out, weigh all of the options, and determine how best to meet their need.

He did not quote Solomon’s words – “in the multitude of counselors there is safety” – then call some of the other apostles and ask their advice (Prov 11:14). Within the framework of the New Covenant, such an approach is not always appropriate.

## WHY HAVE YOU SENT FOR ME?

<sup>29b</sup> . . . *I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?*” Other versions read, “*for what reason have you sent for me?*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “*May I ask why you sent for me?*”<sup>NIV</sup> “*What then is your purpose in sending for me?*”<sup>BBE</sup> “*Why did you send for me?*”<sup>CSB</sup> “*I want to know why to sent for me?*”<sup>GWN</sup> “*May I ask, then, why you summoned me?*”<sup>NAB</sup> and “*I should like to know exactly why you sent for me,*”<sup>NJB</sup> “*Now tell me what you want,*”<sup>LIVING</sup> and “*Now I want to know what made you send for me.*”<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

At this point, all Peter knows is what the servants of Cornelius have told him. Cornelius was told by an angel to send for Peter “*to hear words from*” him (Acts 10:22).

One can only speculate the response of a modern preacher or teacher if he received a request like that. The specialist in marriage might imagine he was receiving a request to assist in the development of happy home conditions. The specialist in finances might think the inquirer was interested in learning how to set up a family budget. The specialist in youth activities might consider this to be an inquiry for assistance in handling a wayward child. Of course, all such tributaries of religious thought were not yet developed at that time. **Also, Peter was versed enough in the things of God, and was living close enough to the Savior, to handle critical issues without advance preparation.** He knew that the same Spirit who sent him could empower him.

There is something else that can be seen here. **Those who are brought into**

**the vineyard of the Lord will be required to fulfill their work by faith.** There is no valid work in the Kingdom that can be done independently of a strong faith. Notwithstanding this circumstance, there is a phenomenal amount of *Christian* work being done that does not apparently require faith. However, the kind of work that the Lord honors, and does not forget, is referred to as a “**work of faith, and labor of love**” (1 Thess 1:3). Such efforts are also referred to as a “*work and labor of love*” (Heb 6:10). Paul further prayed that God would fulfill in His people the “**work of faith with power**” (2 Thess 1:11).

The kind of work to which I have just referred often involves being sent somewhere without any details concerning what the worker will find – like Paul’s vision of a man in Macedonia calling out, “*Come over into Macedonia and help us*” (Acts 16:9). Paul and Silas had no idea what they would find when they arrived in Macedonia. In fact, their first subject was not even a man, but a group of women who were praying by a riverside. Then there is the case of Philip who was told to “*go South unto the way that leadeth down from Jerusalem to Gaza*” (Acts 8:26). Even after Philip found the road, the Spirit told him catch up with a specified chariot, and join himself to it. Philip had no idea what he would find, or the nature of the opportunity that would be opened to him.

The same was true of the disciples, whom Jesus told to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Lk 24:49). He did not tell them the details of what would happen after that – only that they would be witnesses unto Him in Jerusalem,

Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). The day of Pentecost, the confrontation of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful, and the opposition of the chief priests, captain of the Temple, and the Sadducees, were all unspecified ahead of time – as well as the handling or need to appoint men to oversee the daily distribution of food, and the handling of the case of Ananias and Sapphira. **All these things had to be handled as they occurred.** When they took place was no time to commence living by faith and walking in the Spirit. Neither was it possible to prepare the brethren for them by means of a work shop or a special series of studies on methods and techniques.

**The weakness of teaching methods and techniques is found in the fact that they do not integrate with an unknown plan or circumstance.** Nor, indeed, do they contribute to God-honoring participation and effectiveness in doing the will of the Lord. Once again, all of this is being lived out in our text. We are being exposed to a slice of Kingdom life, and the manner in which God calls His people into His own good work.

Satisfying and effective involvement with the living God depends on the faith of the participants, for “without faith, it is impossible to please God” (Heb 11:6). That is true whether we are speaking of Cain or Abel, Noah or Abraham, or David or Paul. There is no place in Divine fellowship for unbelief or recalcitrance. Those are things that exclude men from blessing.

## FOUR DAYS AGO I WAS FASTING

<sup>30a</sup> *And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour. . .*” Cornelius does not launch into a lengthy dialog about how much he wants to know the will of the Lord. That desire was certainly present, but he first relates the real reason why he had sent for Peter. It

was not that he had heard about Peter, and therefore thought his relative nearness to his home was an excellent opportunity to contact him. **He had sent for Peter because a heavenly messenger had told him to do so.** Peter, on the other hand, was there because the Holy Spirit

had directed him to go with the men sent from Cornelius.

At this point we see the length of time required to get Peter to the house of Cornelius – four days! **In a sense, those days were testing the faith of Cornelius,**

as well as the fervency of his desire and the degree of his obedience. A person with only a casual interest in the salvation of God could not have waited four days. Cornelius, on the other hand, not only waited, but took the opportunity to fill up his house with his own household, relatives, and close friends. It is still true that the measure of a person's interest in the things of God is revealed in how much they are willing to do to obtain a spiritual understanding, and how long they can endure.

#### FOUR DAYS AGO I WAS FASTING

*"And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour . . ."* Other versions read, *"Four days ago to this hour, I was praying,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"Four days ago I was in my house praying at this very hour,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer,"*<sup>RSV</sup> *"This is now the fourth day since about this time I was observing the ninth hour (three o'clock in the afternoon) of prayer in my lodging place."*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup> and *"Three days."*<sup>PHILLIPS</sup>

The word used here is προσευχόμενος, and means "offer prayers,"

<sup>THAYER</sup> and "technical term for talking to a deity in order to ask for help, usually in the form of a request, vow, or wish pray, speak to (God), ask."<sup>FRIBERG</sup>

The meaning of the text is

the hour that Peter had arrived. It therefore appears that Cornelius has been praying for four days, like Saul of Tarsus had prayed for three days (Acts 9:9,11). This is why the word "fasting" is

**At this point we see the length of time required to get Peter to the house of Cornelius – four days! In a sense, those days were testing the faith of Cornelius, as well as the fervency of his desire and the degree of his obedience. A person with only a casual interest in the salvation of God could not have waited four days.**

somewhat garbled by some of the translations. Later versions, such as the NASB, NIV, and NRSV represent the text as saying Cornelius was praying four days ago about the same hour that Peter now has arrived at his home. This does

not appear to be the meaning. The word translated "unto" [this hour] does mean "up to a certain point in time."<sup>THAYER</sup> The point in time is specified as "this hour" – that is,

employed in the KJV. This is also in keeping with the nature of spiritual life, which is not turned on and off, operating in cycles. While the early disciples waited in Jerusalem, they also prayed (Acts 1:14). Once they heard from Jesus, they continued in prayer until the appointed time. Once Saul heard from Jesus, he also continued in prayer until the appointed time, when he would be told what to do. It is therefore reasonable to consider that Cornelius did the same.

## A MAN STOOD BEFORE ME

<sup>30b</sup> . . . and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing . . ."

#### THE NINTH HOUR I PRAYED

*" . . . and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house . . ."*

Cornelius states that he saw a man before him at the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. This is, as we should expect, in strict accord with the report of Luke in Acts 10:1. The earlier account does not say that Cornelius was praying at the time – only that he saw a vision "evidently about the ninth hour." Also, according to the record, the servants did not tell Peter than Cornelius was praying at the time of the vision. However, now our understanding is enlarged on the matter.

It appears that the vision was actually heaven's response to the

particular prayer Cornelius was praying.

#### A MAN STOOD BEFORE ME

*" . . . and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing . . ."* Other versions read, *"shining garments,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"shining clothes,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"dazzling clothes,"*<sup>NRSV</sup> *"bright apparel,"*<sup>RSV</sup> *"a dazzling robe,"*<sup>CSB</sup> *"white apparel,"*<sup>DOUAY</sup> and *"radiant clothes."*<sup>GWN</sup>

Acts 10:1 states that Cornelius "saw in a vision . . . an angel of God coming in to him." There, the commissioning of the angel was the particular emphasis, and therefore he is said to have been coming in to Cornelius. Speaking of the same visitation, Cornelius emphasizes the arrival of the heavenly messenger, saying, *"a man stood before me."*

Actually, this was not a man, but only had the appearance of a man. The

clothing that he was wearing substantiated that this was actually a messenger from heaven – a holy angel. Acts 10:3 categorically says that: *"an angel of God coming in to him."* The servants also reported to Peter that Cornelius was *"warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee"* (Acts 10:22). This confirms that Cornelius had reported to them that it was, in fact, an angel that had appeared to him.

#### HEAVEN VERSUS EARTH

There is such a stark contrast between heavenly personalities and those upon earth, that they are often seen as being associated with whiteness, light, and brightness. **Men are never impressive to heavenly beings, nor are they ever seen in this world as arrayed in dazzling garments.** Earth is the inferior realm, where corruption and defilement have cast a shadow upon humanity. But it is not so with those who are from

heaven. Even when Moses and Elijah came back from the other side to speak with Jesus about the death He would accomplish, they “*appeared in glory*,” or “*In glorious splendor*” (Lk 9:30-31).

When Jesus was transfigured, “*His raiment was white as light*” (Matt 17:2), and “*became shining*” (Mk 9:3).

When the women came to the tomb where Jesus had been buried, they were met by “*two men . . . in shining garments*,” indicating they were really angels (Lk 24:4). When Jesus ascended into glory, angels appeared to the disciples as “*two men . . . in white apparel*” (Acts 1:11). Redeemed souls

that have been seen on the other side are said to be “*arrayed in white robes*” (Rev 6:11; 7:9,13). **There is a certain purity and glory that pervade the heavenly realms.** It causes personalities sent from there to earth to appear distinct from men, even though they take upon themselves in their likeness.

## THY PRAYER IS HEARD

“**31 . . . And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.**”

Cornelius now gives a precise report of the words of the angel who came to him. Four days have passed, but he has not forgotten what was said.

### YOUR PRAYER IS HEARD

“ . . . And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard . . . ”

In Acts 10:4, the report was that Cornelius “*prayers*” had come up before God as a memorial, for it is said that he “*prayed to God always*.” Here, however, some more details are provided. **The angel states that a specific prayer had been heard: “*thy prayer is heard*.”** With the exceptions of the Living Bible, and the Contemporary English Version, all forty-seven versions of Scripture that I have read the same. Cornelius’ “*prayer*” was heard.

It appears from this that Cornelius had been calling upon the name of the Lord, seeking more light, and making some petition relative to the appropriation of salvation. Here is an example of the Law, in the role of a schoolmaster, bringing a person to the point where they are ready for Christ (Gal 3:24-25). It is possible that the servants, according to the record, had not reported the matter of Cornelius’ prayers to Peter.

### YOUR ALMS ARE REMEMBERED

“ . . . and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.” Other versions read, “*your alms are remembered in the sight of God*,” <sup>NKJV</sup>

“*have been remembered before God*,” <sup>NASB</sup> “*remembered your gifts to the poor*,” <sup>NIV</sup> “*your offerings are kept in His memory*,” <sup>BBE</sup> “*remembered your acts of charity*,” <sup>CJB</sup> “*your charitable gifts have not been forgotten by God*,” <sup>NJB</sup> “*your gifts to the*

*be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting*” (Psa 139:23-24).

However, there are also things that God beholds in those with honest and good hearts that delight Him. He

**It is possible to be intimidated by the knowledge that God sees and knows everything – the words and deeds of men, and their thoughts as well. Some have presented this as though God is only searching for something that He cannot receive – looking for some flaw or deficiency in His creatures.**

*poor have been noticed by God!*” <sup>NLT</sup> “*your charities have been put on record before God*,” <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and “*your donations to the poor have been known and preserved before God [so that He heeds and is about to help you!]*” <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

**It is possible to be intimidated by the knowledge that God sees and knows everything – the words and deeds of men, and their thoughts as well.** Some have presented this as though God is only searching for something that He cannot receive – looking for some flaw or deficiency in His creatures. There is no question that He does see such things, being fully aware of them. It is also true that those who are of tender heart want such things to be discovered by the Lord. Therefore they pray with David, “*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there*

wants us to know that He is “*not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister*” (Heb 6:10).

For some, it might be difficult to reconcile this with the fact that “*all of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags*” (Isa 64:6). However, the meaning of that affirmation is that the best of our deeds cannot become a **basis** for our justification. They are not sufficient to pay the debt for any of our unrighteousnesses, and they cannot outweigh our past. But, this is not the kind of thing that is being declared in our text – that Cornelius was accepted by God upon the basis of his prayers and giving to the people of God who had need. Rather, he had demonstrated a certain discontent with himself, and was in quest

of Divine approval. This was doubtless the result of an honest and good heart.

Therefore, God will show him more, and give him more, because he has handled well the limited spiritual

resources to which he had access. He has been faithful over a little, and will therefore be given more. He will no longer have to struggle with limitations in his understanding. God will send him to get a man who will know what he

ought to do to avail himself of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He will speak to Cornelius through a man He has taught. Rest assured, this is still the Divine manner.

## SEND FOR PETER

***“<sup>32</sup> Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.”***

What kind of heavenly direction will Cornelius receive. To whom will he be sent? Will it be a young Christian, who does not yet have a grasp of the salvation of God? Will it be someone who has a good supply of tracts, like The Four Spiritual Laws, or The Roman Road? Will

exactly what Luke reports in Acts 10:5-6. It is also what the servants reported to Peter when he asked them why they had asked for him (Acts 10:22).

And why were they sent to Peter? Or, why was Philip sent to the Ethiopian? Or, why was Ananias sent to Saul of Tarsus? **It is because they had an understanding of the salvation of God!** They did not come to present an easy way to be saved, or recite a procedure that had been developed by the Jerusalem

contemporary theology that remains prevalent to this day. If he lacked maturity, or was not conversant with the salvation of God, and acquainted with the Scriptures, he would not have been able to respond properly.

### HE WILL COME AND SPEAK TO YOU

*“ . . . who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.”* Later versions omit this expression, but they have served no noble purpose in doing so. When the servants told Peter why they were sent, they reported the angel had said it was in order that Cornelius might *“hear words of thee”* (Acts 10:22). The next verse of our text states the people were all there *“to hear all things that are commanded thee of God”* (Acts 10:33). Later, when Peter reported the incident to the brethren in Jerusalem, he said the angel told Cornelius Peter *“shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved”* (Acts 11:14).

**Our text will confirm the importance of this, for Peter will confront things he has never confronted before. In fact, he will behold something tasking place that contradicts a vein of contemporary theology that remains prevalent to this day. If he lacked maturity, or was not conversant with the salvation of God, and acquainted with the Scriptures, he would not have been able to respond properly.**

he send him to a Bible supplier? Will he be invited to a series of local meetings or workshops that outline how men are to be saved?

See, these are what men do, but why do they take such a course of action? Mind you, it is not that I stand in judgment of those who make a hearty effort to reach the lost. My question involves why God did not follow that kind of procedure.

### CALL FOR PETER

*“Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side . . . .”* This is

church. They were acquainted enough with the salvation of God to meet a person where they were, and open their eyes, turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18). **The person who reaps the fields that are white unto the harvest must first have partaken of the fruit he is attempting to dispense.** There must be some level of maturity present in the person so that they are capable of properly representing and presenting the Lord and His Christ.

Our text will confirm the importance of this, for Peter will confront things he has never confronted before. In fact, he will behold something taking place that contradicts a vein of

Peter did not come to Cornelius' house to sing a song, or give a personal testimony, or recite a creed of some sort. He came with message that would not only define what God is doing in Christ Jesus, but would enable Cornelius and those with him to obtain the blessing of salvation by grace through faith.

It ought to be noted that there is a sense in which Divine appointments are guaranteed to proceed according to Divine plan, being brought to their appointed conclusion. **The reason for this includes God's consistent employment of those who are knowledgeable of Him and His will, and are supple in His hands.** Throughout Scripture, there is a remarkable consistency in this manner of the Lord. It is part of His *“ways.”*

A person who lives by every word of God, walking by faith, will eventually come to the point where they are *“thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* – *“a vessel unto honor, sanctified,*

*and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work”* (2 Tim 2:21). Let it be clear that one of the functions of godly leaders is to see to it

that such men are raised up under their ministry (2 Tim 2:2). Holy men consider succeeding generations, and do not limit themselves to their own.

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## IMMEDIATELY, I SENT FOR YOU

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<sup>33a</sup> ***Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come.***

### IMMEDIATELY

*“Immediately therefore I sent to thee . . .”* Other versions read, *“at once,”* <sup>RSV</sup> *“Forthwith,”* <sup>ASV</sup> and *“without delay.”* MONTGOMERY

Here again we are confronted with an invariable trait of those who believe: **they respond as soon as they can see or comprehend.** Every response thus far has been on this wise – instant, and without delay. Those who were convicted on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:40). The response of the lame man to Peter’s word (Acts 3:6-7). The disciples when their prayer was answered concerning speaking with boldness (Acts 4:31). The Samaritans response to Philip (Acts 8:12). Philip’s direction to the eunuch (Acts 8:26,29). The eunuch’s response to the preaching of Christ (Acts 8:38). Saul’s response to Jesus (Acts 9:6-8). Ananias response to the call to go to Saul (Acts 9:13-17). The response of Saul to Ananias (Acts 9:17-18). The response of Aeneas to

Peter’s command to pick up his bed and walk (Acts 9:34). Dorcas’ response to Peter’s call to sit up, though she was dead (Acts 9:40). Cornelius response to the angel (Acts 10:7-8). The servants response to Cornelius’ word, as directed by the angel (Acts 10:9). Peter’s response to the Spirit’s direction (Acts 10:23).

**How do men explain the presence of lethargy and indolence within the professed church.** Why are motivators and organizers in such demand among professing Christians? How can men be identified with the Lord Jesus, yet lack the very qualities that are found wherever He works? No explanations are required, for we already know. They are lacking in faith, and it is not possible to be deficient in a more critical area!

### YOU HAVE DONE WELL TO COME

*“ . . . and thou hast well done that thou art come.”* Other versions read, *“you have been kind enough to come,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“if was good of you to come,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“you did the right thing coming,”* <sup>CSB</sup> *“Thank you for coming,”* <sup>GWN</sup> *“I thank you heartily for having come,”* <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup> and *“you [being a*

*Jew] have done a kind and courteous and handsome thing in coming.”* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

In my judgment, some of the versions have wholly misrepresented the nature of Cornelius’ response, as though it was nothing more than an expression of politeness and congeniality – like thanking Peter for taking time out of his busy schedule to honor Cornelius’ request.

This **not** a proper reflection of what was taking place here. This is a matter over which heaven was presiding. It was an answer to prayer. An angel was involved in the matter. There were two visions given from heaven, one to Cornelius and one to Peter. The Holy Spirit was active in both speaking and directing. Words were going to be delivered that were commanded by God, and would tell men what to do to be saved. Within that context, I hardly see how Peter’s response could be viewed as anything but *“the right thing,”* and something that was *“well done.”* This involved infinitely more than being kind and courteous. **Here is obedience to God!**

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## WE ARE HERE TO HEAR EVERYTHING GOD COMMANDED YOU

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<sup>33b</sup> ***Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.***

These words from Cornelius will confirm that when he saw Peter he was not thinking of mere human kindness and consideration. I do not doubt that such thoughts were involved, but they were in the back seat of Cornelius’ thinking, not in the driver’s seat.

### WE ARE ALL PRESENT

*“Now therefore are we all here present before God . . .”* Other versions read, *“in the presence of God,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“present in the sight of God,”* <sup>RSV</sup> *“waiting before God,”* <sup>NLT</sup> *“before God,”* <sup>YLT</sup> and *“in God’s presence.”* <sup>WEYMOUTH</sup>

**It is evident that God was dominant in their thinking, and was the ultimate reason for their gathering.** This is the only acceptable frame of mind and spirit when we come together to hear what the Lord has said. It is a marvelous

expression of spiritual insight and a desire to please and serve the Lord. **This is the secret to the productive gathering of believers.** Where this attitude is missing, there is no reason for professing Christians to come together. I do not believe a person could support the idea that coming together out of a sense of institutional obligation, and with no lively awareness of the Lord Himself, is in any way pleasing to God. Oh, that the *“we are all here present before God”* mentality was more obvious in the

churches.

**TO HEAR WHAT GOD HAS COMMANDED**

“. . . to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.” Other versions read, “everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us,”<sup>NIV</sup> “all the things which the Lord has given you to say,”<sup>BBE</sup> “everything the Lord has ordered you to say,”<sup>GWN</sup> “the message God has given you,”<sup>NLT</sup> and “all the instructions God has given you.”<sup>NJB</sup>

**This is the attitude of faith!** Faith will not settle for some of what God has commanded, or a portion of the message He has delivered. Faith wants to hear it all – “**everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us!**” How do you account for people with honest and good hearts that have not been exposed to “*all the counsel of God?*” (Acts 20:27)? Some who have laborer for the Lord have actually been told to withhold some of what God has said, and not to speak on it, lest the people be offended. How should a man of God respond to such requests? He should ignore them, and even rebuke the requesters before all, that others may fear (1 Tim 5:20).

Note that this sizeable gathering did not draw back from the idea of being **commanded** by God. Flesh does not like to think about God commanded people –

but faith has no difficulty with it. It will shout out, “*What wilt Thou have me to do?*” The heart in which faith is welcomed is not content to remain ignorant concerning what God has commanded to

**publish, and set up a standard: publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces**” (Jer 50:2).

**What a blessed gathering it is when people come together to hear what God has commanded to be both heard and done! And more blessed still is that audience who can find a man who will tell them what the Lord has commanded – who will deliver the Word that God has sent out into the world!**

be declared!

What a blessed gathering it is when people come together to hear what God has commanded to be both heard and done! And more blessed still is that audience who can find a man who will tell them what the Lord has commanded – who will deliver the Word that God has sent out into the world!

When Jeremiah was told of the fall of Babylon and the destruction of its false gods, **God demanded that the news be published abroad.** Here is what He said. “*Declare ye among the nations, and*

Now, if that was the word when God brought down Babylon, what do you suppose **He will say about the message of salvation?** What of the announcement of peace, reconciliation, and the ending of the Law as a means to righteousness? What of the exaltation of Jesus, the soon demise of the world, and the swallowing up of death? What of an eternal inheritance, and a house in heaven?

May there be a fresh awareness of these things when we gather together to hear everything that the Lord has commanded to be proclaimed! Faith delights in such proclamations.

**CONCLUSION**

Once again, we have seen the manner of the Kingdom. **Those who engage in efforts to please and serve the Lord, honoring their conscience and seeking spiritual enlargement, will not be disappointed.** Further, those who live

by faith and walk in the Spirit, fighting the good fight of faith and laying hold in eternal life, will find themselves in the service of the King. The eyes of the Lord are still scanning the earth, running to and fro in quest of a man whose heart is

perfect toward Him. He will show His covenant and divulge His secret to such souls, employing them in His good, and acceptable, and perfect will. May you be among that number, enjoying all of the benefits of being included in such a host!

**Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 3/28/2008. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The Forty-ninth lesson will cover verses 34 through 43 of the tenth chapter: “PETER PREACHES TO CORNELIUS.” It is critical to consider the content of Peter’s message – particularly since he has a Gentile audience. How will He speak about Jesus? What will He accent? What will he require of the people? In all of this, we are beholding the Gospel being preached with both insight and wisdom. 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.**

*Upon meeting, both Peter and Cornelius relate how heaven has contacted them, and what was said – by Given O. Blakely*

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**A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.**

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 <p>The Word of Truth Radio Broadcast WITH RADIO EVANGELIST GIVEN O. BLAKELY 91.7<sup>F</sup><sub>M</sub> KNEO RADIO MONDAY THRU FRIDAY AT 4:00 PM. Clarifying the nature and content of the Gospel</p>	 <p>A black and white photograph of a man in profile, wearing glasses and a suit, speaking into a microphone.</p>	<p><b>THE WORD OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST</b></p> <p><b>KNEO, 91.7 FM 4:00 - 4:15 PM Monday thru Friday</b></p> <p><b>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.</b></p>
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*Table in the Wilderness*

April 11-13, 2008

Friday evening and Lord's Day Evening – Blakely Home  
Saturday and Lord's Day morning – Don DeWelt Prayer Center

**BROTHERS AND SISTERS**  
**SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY**  
***DURING FEBRUARY 2008***

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| 1. <i>Given O. Blakely</i> (AM Table Meditation, PM Message, PM Message).   | 10. <i>Matthew Cobb</i> (PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation, PM Exhortation). | 22. <i>Mariah Murphy</i> (AM Closing Scripture/Prayer, Read PM Sermon Text).                             |
| 2. <i>Aaron Hutchcraft</i> (AM Message, AM Table Meditation, Teach AM Class, PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation). | 11. <i>Michael Blakely</i> (AM Exhortation, AM Opening Word).                  | 23. <i>Gene Hutchcraft</i> (AM Calling, AM Message, AM Table Meditation, PM Introduction).               |
| 3. <i>Ricky Sims</i> (Teach AM Class, AM Exhortation, AM Message, PM Introduction, PM Table Meditation, Lead PM Singing).                               | 12. <i>Tasha Sims</i> (Lead AM Singing).                                       | 24. <i>Debbie Hutchcraft</i> (Lead PM Singing).  |
| 4. <i>Robert Cobb</i> (AM Table Meditation, AM Exhortation, AM Exhortation, PM Message).  | 13. <i>Levi Miller</i> (Lead AM Singing).                                      | 25. <i>Judah Hutchcraft</i> (AM Closing Scripture/Prayer, Read AM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text).     |
| 5. <i>Jeremy Williams</i> (PM Introduction, PM Message).  | 14. <i>Amanda Miller</i> (AM Opening Word).                                    | 26. <i>Logan Williams</i> (Play AM/PM Lord's Table Interlude, Read AM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text). |
| 6. <i>Tony Parker</i> (AM Message, AM Calling).   | 15. <i>Nichole Williams</i> (AM Opening Word, PM Introduction).                | 27. <i>Baylie Sims</i> (AM Closing Scripture/Prayer, Read PM Sermon Text).                               |
| 7. <i>June Blakely</i> (Lead PM Prayer Session, Teach AM Class).  | 16. <i>Eva Blakely</i> (AM Reading Poetry, AM Reading Poetry).                 | 28. <i>Annie Sims</i> (Read AM Sermon Text, AM Closing Scripture/Prayer).                                |
| 8. <i>Barbara Hutchcraft</i> (Lead AM Singing, AM Calling, Lead Scripture Shower, Lead Scripture Shower).   | 17. <i>Michele Cole</i> (Play Piano, Lead Scripture Shower).                   | 29. <i>Nicole Franklin</i> (Lead PM Singing).  |
| 9. <i>Jonathan Blakely</i> (AM Opening Word).   | 18. <i>Melissa Parker</i> (AM Calling, Lead AM Singing).                       | 30. <i>Preparing Lord's Supper</i> (Various sisters).  |
|   | 19. <i>John Hill</i> (Lead Intercessory Prayer).                               |  |
|   | 20. <i>Isaac Murphy</i> (Lead Scripture Shower, Lead PM Singing).              |  |
|   | 21. <i>Micaela Murphy</i> (Read AM Sermon Text).                               |  |