

Acts 10:3: *'He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. ⁴ And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. ⁵ And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter: ⁶ He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.'*

God is about to open wide His Great Work of calling, saving and keeping His newly created Body and Bride for His Faithful Son, the Lord Jesus Christ: each one individually chosen from the foundation of the World.

Verse 7: *'And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; ⁸ And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.'*

This tells us even more about Cornelius; his faith was such that it invited servants and soldiers around him to come to faith as well. They waited on him continually and the implication is that Cornelius was not only a faithful man but that he was a faithful man at all times who, rather than demanding Godly faith in those he commanded, his life invited Godly faith from those who saw him every day. This is further indicated in that Cornelius *'declared all these things unto them'*; these would have been those who would have understood and believed all that he told them; he would not have commissioned those to whom he might say: 'You know... this might sound silly but an angel just appeared to me and told me all these things.' They understood, they believed and they set out the next morning since this day was already waning as the angel had come at around 3 P.M. Cornelius might've wanted to go, himself, but that was not the angel's instruction and God honored his responsibility to remain in command of his posting: Caesarea. These three would surely have been among his most trusted aides as this was the most important mission upon which Cornelius had ever sent any of them. But now we're going to see that this mission is not so straightforward to Peter's understanding... he needed some important preparation:

Verse 9: *'On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:'*

The next morning, as Cornelius' emissaries have been traveling the 35 miles to Joppa, Peter goes up on the roof to pray at about noon, as would have been his custom.

Verse 10: *'And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, ¹¹ And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending upon him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:'*

As Peter is praying, he naturally becomes very hungry since it is lunchtime but Peter, who has been very familiar with the supernatural over the past few years, doesn't need an angel to speak to him, he just falls into a trance. The Greek word, here, translated, 'trance' is: ek'statis from which we get ecstasy. The word means: *'a throwing of the mind out of its normal state: the mind is drawn off from all surrounding objects and wholly fixed on things divine that he sees nothing but the forms and images lying within, and thinks that he perceives with his bodily eyes and ears, realities shown him by God.'* Strong's G1611

Peter is given a 'vision' from God relating to the unusual hunger He has caused in Peter:

Peter sees something like a sheet or blanket, held out flat by the four corners, being lowered down to him.

Verse 12: *'Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. ¹³ And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. ¹⁴ But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.'*

This descending sheet is carrying all kinds of animals, bugs, birds: doubtless even lobsters, vultures, pigs and snakes: all the things the Mosaic Law forbade to eat. Peter has always been a faithful and observant Jew; Jesus lived the same; consequently, he had no reason to believe that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was anything other than the natural culmination of Judaism. All things forbidden by the Mosaic Law must, obviously still be forbidden; all things mandated by the Law must, obviously still be mandated. Peter and the other Apostles

have no understanding, yet, of the New Covenant/New Testament, the Gospel of Grace, having replaced the Old Covenant/Old Testament.

Old Testament and New Testament do not mean the older books of the Bible and the newer books of the Bible; it means the first will and testament from God which was then replaced by His newer, last will and testament, written in Jesus Christ's Blood and ratified upon the death of the testator, the one who dictates, to his lawyer, his last will and testament Who is God, Himself, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His New Will, His New Covenant, His New Testament then went into effect upon the death of the testator. And, when anyone makes a new last will and testament, the old will and testament are no longer in effect; it is replaced completely. To emphasize that important point, less than 40 years later, God caused the Romans to destroy Jerusalem and the Temple, the heart of the Mosaic Law; the Old Covenant of Law was done and replaced!

Peter did not, yet, understand this which is why he was so insistent upon continuing to observe the Law's strictures against eating '*unclean*,' forbidden things. In fact, God's lawyer, His expert in the Law, to whom He dictated His New Will and Testament was Paul. And, just as it is left to the lawyer to explain all the points of the New Will/Covenant/Testament, it will be left to Paul to fully explain the New Will to all of the testatees, the beneficiaries: the True Church... the New Will explained Salvation as the free gift of God, only by His Grace, only through our faith in His Son Who is the Word of God, revealed through God's Word and all for only one purpose throughout, His One overarching Eternal Plan and Purpose: all for the Glory of God.

By the way, the Lord Jesus Christ did not live, perfectly, as a Law observant Jew in order to be holy; He did so because He is Holy, sinless and righteous so that He could complete and fulfill all the Law in our place. Then, after, He actually became sin, for us, finally declaring: 'It is finished! It is fulfilled!' so that we could truly become the Righteousness of God IN Him.

'For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' 2 Cor 5:21

Verse 15: *'But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.'*

Three times God said, 'What God has made clean, don't you call it common or unclean. This was so monumentally serious that God drilled it into Peter three times! Peter knows the voice of God; he had walked with Him for 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ years and even though God had said the same thing three times, Peter is still not understanding; he remains locked into the Mosaic Law; he doubted what God had said to him.

Verse 17: *'Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate, And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there. ¹⁹ While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. ²⁰ Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.'*

While Peter is doubting what God has just said to him, the Holy Spirit tells him go with these men and stop doubting! Doubt nothing! I have sent them!

At first, we read: 'a Voice said to him...' which he immediately recognizes as One he calls: 'Lord.' Then, later, it says 'the Spirit' said unto him...' We must assume both are the Voice of God/the Holy Spirit/the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember: God reveals Himself to man through His Son Who has a physical Body and a Voice. When the Holy Spirit speaks to us... it is unto our spiritual ears, not unto our physical ears, generally speaking but, obviously, God can do anything He pleases. On the other hand, at Jesus' baptism, God the Father spoke, saying: '*This is My beloved Son in Whom I Am well pleased!*' Matthew 3:17

Many Christians doubt about many things, even things which are clearly laid out in Scripture. We have a radio caller who is constantly doubting his salvation: I hope I'm saved; I hope I'll be taken in the Rapture, etc.

Faith, believing, is not blind; a 'leap of faith' is an act of foolishness as it assumes a leap into unknown darkness while trusting God to catch. It is only true faith if God was the One Who said: '*Jump!*'

Verse 21: *'Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?'²² And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.²³ Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.'*

God's angel spoke to Cornelius; Cornelius spoke to his servants; his servants spoke to Peter and Peter went to Cornelius. This only came about because God spoke to Peter and told him to do this; Peter was not going to Gentiles with the Gospel; to his mind, this was a Jewish thing; Jesus Christ was a Jewish Savior and it was all, and only, for the Jews, Peter thought. Jesus had never made it clear to His Apostles, the full scope of all He was doing and planning. He had alluded to this truth in John 10 but, again, it was not clearly explained:

'... he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.³ To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (He only calls His own sheep and He calls them by name: each one, individually, every sheep which His Father had chosen and given to Him)...

⁶ This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them... And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold (Gentiles): them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.' John 10

Now Peter is going to recognize God's plan: something of which he never dreamed...

Verse 24: *'And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and he had called together his kinsmen and near friends.'*

Cornelius understands that something absolutely huge is happening and his first thought is for all his friends and relatives and surely all his servants; this would have been a big crowd. This will be the beginning of all the 'other sheep, not of the Jewish flock.' This Gentile flock will grow out into all the World, whereas, the Jewish flock will not grow as large or as quickly because God has given them a spiritual blindness, for now:

*'... I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid...² God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew...⁵ Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant (Jews) according to the election of grace...⁷ What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election (Jews and Gentiles) hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.⁸ According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear unto this day...¹¹ I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy...¹⁵ For if the casting away of them (Jews) be the reconciling of the world (Gentiles), what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? ¹⁶ For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. (Jesus Christ is the firstfruit and He is the Holy Root)...²⁰ Well; because of unbelief they were broken off...²³ And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again...²⁵ For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; **that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.**²⁶ **And so all Israel shall be saved: ...**²⁷ For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.²⁸ **As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the father's sakes.**²⁹ **For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.** (God's gifts and calling of Israel will never be denied, only postponed for their unbelief)...³² **For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all:** (when Jesus Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation)³³ **O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!**³⁴ **For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?**³⁵ **Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?**³⁶ **For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever'. Amen.** Rom 11*

As well, the gifts and calling of God toward individual Gentiles is also without repentance: when God calls, by His Holy Spirit, one whom He chose from the foundation of the World, His calling and gift of Eternal Life will never be rescinded; we are saved and kept safe through all eternity!

Peter is going to begin understanding these things while in the house of Cornelius, but it will be left to Paul to first understand completely and to then teach these things to the True Church. And even then, as we'll later see, Paul had a tough time, at first, teaching these things to the other Apostles.

Verse 25: *'And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. ²⁶ But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. ²⁷ And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.'*

Peter rightly refuses Cornelius' worship and, yet, this shows how serious and ready Cornelius really is. But then, Peter shows his ignorance of God's plans and how steeped he remains in the legalism of Judaism:

Verse 28: *'And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.'*

I have no standing from which to call Peter stupid but boy, if I did, I certainly would! Unlawful to associate with or to even come unto a Gentile? Where has this guy been for the past 3 or 4 years!? Was Jesus his teacher or not!? Was Jesus an example or not!? What if God hadn't prepared him with a vision? Sorry, can't do such a thing... it's unlawful... this is only for Jews... no Gentiles allowed!

He had watched Jesus interact with Gentiles and even lovingly heal them!

Jesus initiated a conversation with a Samaritan, a woman at that! John 4

Jesus healed the centurion's servant and then said, of the Roman Gentile centurion: *'When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, (including Peter) Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel (including Peter). ¹¹ And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, (Gentiles) and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² But the children of the kingdom (many Jews) shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'* Matthew 8:10

Jesus interacted with a Canaanite woman and healed her daughter. Matthew 15

Jesus interacted with a Gentile woman, a Greek Syrophenician, and cast a demon out of her daughter. Mark 7
So Peter now proudly says, *'Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.'* (so, because God said to, I will condescend to come into your house... *Gentile*)

Verse 29: *'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?'*

Again, dripping with Jewish pride: 'I came, without gainsaying,' I didn't resist or question... I hope you recognize what I'm doing for you. (we seem to remember you doubting, quite a bit, there, Peter!)

I guess I see the pride in Peter because I see it in myself.

Peter is human... that's the point... he succumbs to pride like we all do... he is not nor ever was, the holy, infallible first pope! He's just a man like every man and woman... and every True Christian, man or woman, is every bit as capable of taking the Gospel and acting on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ as was Peter or Paul or any other Biblical character. We are all saved the same way and filled with the same Holy Spirit and enabled to take the Gospel to the same lost and dying World around us... to think, say, and do for the Glory of God.

Verse 30: *'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, ³¹ And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. ³² 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. ³³ 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.'*

We're ready, willing and hungry to hear all the Word of God! O that we would all be so ready, willing and hungry to read, hear and study all the Word of God! (Remember, Cornelius is a Roman centurion with power!)