

## LESSON 9

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### THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED TO THE GENTILES (PART 1)

#### A GENTILE (CORNELIUS) SENDS FOR PETER (10:1–8)

“The dividing wall” between Jews and Gentiles was “the Law of commandments contained in ordinances”—that is, the Old Testament law. Although the wall between Jews and Gentiles came down *theoretically* at Calvary, it came down *practically* at Caesarea. To put it another way, the wall came down in the mind of *God* in Luke 23 (Mt. 27; Mk. 15; Jn. 19), but not in the mind of *men* until Acts 10. Part of the problem was that the Jews had added their own fortifications to “the dividing wall.”

In an attempt to reconcile two individuals, it is a good idea to first talk to each of them privately—and it is generally best to start with the one most ready to be reconciled. Therefore, God approached the Gentile first.

1. Why was Caesarea an important city in the eyes of the Romans?
2. Who was Cornelius?
3. What was Cornelius’ reputation?
4. How does 10:4 call up the imagery of sacrifices?
5. Why did the angel instruct Cornelius to send for a man to teach him the gospel instead of teaching Cornelius himself?

### **PETER'S VISION (10:9–23a)**

The scene shifts to Joppa. It was noon on the next day, and the three men sent by Cornelius were approaching the city. The only way they could have made the trip that quickly was if they had traveled most of the night. As the exhausted messengers moved toward Joppa, God started preparing Peter for their arrival.

6. What does 10:10 mean by saying Peter “fell into a trance”?
7. Why would Peter not have been inclined to “kill and eat” *any* of what he saw in the sheet?
8. Why did God use a vision of food to tell Peter that Gentiles were no longer to be considered unclean?
9. Why did Peter not set out immediately with Cornelius’ men for Caesarea?

### **THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSEHOLD (10:23B–48)**

The preacher was ready, but God still had to work on the rest of the Jewish Christians. The “big step” of preparing them consisted of a number of smaller steps.

10. What was the first of the smaller steps of preparing the rest of the Jewish Christians to accept what God revealed to Peter?
11. What was ironic about the fact that Cornelius “worshiped” Peter when he arrived?
12. Why does 10:34 inform us that Peter began his sermon by “opening his mouth”?
13. How did this sermon differ from those Peter delivered to Jewish audiences?
14. Why would Peter have assumed that Cornelius’ household had a rudimentary knowledge of Jesus?
15. What aspect of Jesus’ ministry was the emphasis of this sermon?

16. What was the purpose of the outpouring of the Spirit on Cornelius' household?
17. What does "the gift of the Spirit" refer to in this context?
18. What problems can be seen in the position that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was given to show that Cornelius and his household were already saved?
19. Why were Cornelius and his friends baptized?
20. Why did Peter make an extended stay at the home of Cornelius?