



THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

LESSON 10 - STUDY QUESTIONS ACTS 10:1-49

DAY ONE

1. Was there something in the Reflection that made you stop and think, or did a question from Father McBride's commentary (end of chapter 9) pique your curiosity?

Read Acts 10:1-8

2. At the end of last week's chapter, Peter raised Tabitha from the dead and went to lodge with Simon the tanner in Joppa. In today's lesson we meet Cornelius, a Roman Centurion who lives in Caesarea. What are some things that you learn about Cornelius from verses 1 and 2?

3a. One afternoon, at three o'clock, an angel appeared to Cornelius and addressed him by name (verse 3). How did Cornelius answer in verse 4?

b. The angel told Cornelius that his prayers and alms had ascended as a memorial before God (verse 4). The word "memorial" or "remembrance" represents a special sacrifice in both the Old and New Testament. Read and record the following:

Numbers 10:10

Luke 22:19

4. What was Cornelius asked to do in verses 5 and 6?

5a. According to verses 7 and 8, how did Cornelius respond?

b. Do you find anything surprising or unusual about Cornelius' treatment of his slaves and soldier?

6. CONNECTION: Cornelius was a Gentile, a non-Jew, who renounced the Roman gods and worshipped the one, true God. He was not circumcised, but he was a God-fearing man who prayed often, gave to the poor, and encouraged his household to do the same. Cornelius' quality of generosity has been highly valued in the Christian faith since the beginning. For most of us, money is usually in short supply. But whether one is a Roman Commander, or the widow in the back of the Temple, almsgiving is a blessing to the giver. Share with your group a time when your generosity has been a blessing back to you.

Read Tobit 4:7-11 and record a phrase about generosity, then write a prayer thanking God for His generosity.

DAY TWO

Read Acts 10:9-16

7. As this passage opens, Cornelius' emissaries were approaching Joppa about noon of the following day. At the same time, Peter went up to the rooftop of Simon the tanner's house to pray (verse 9). Describe what happened on the rooftop from verse 10.

8a. Summarize what Peter saw in his trance, from verses 11 and 12.

b. In the Bible, a description of a trance is usually considered a means of divine communication. For example, read and record the following:

Genesis 15:12

Daniel 10:9

9a. According to verse 13, Peter heard a voice saying, "Get up Peter, kill and eat." How did Peter reply?

b. Peter is referring to the dietary rules from Leviticus 11:1-8. Read this passage and summarize why Peter might have said this.

10a. According to Acts 10:15, the Lord spoke to Peter again. What was said?

b. Read and record Matthew 15:10-11. Do God's words in Acts 10:15 relate to this passage?

11a. According to verse 16, how many times did the vision (the thing) appear to Peter before it was taken up to heaven?

b. It often took three times for Peter to “get” God’s messages. What two other incidents from Peter’s life does this bring to mind (refer to Mark 14:30 and John 21:15-17)?

12. **CONNECTION:** The Jews were a "people", a cohesive group, worshipping and living according to the Torah, sharing dietary habits and religious traditions that set them apart. In his trance, Peter recoiled from eating what the Torah defined as unclean food, but God showed him that dietary laws separated the Jews from other nations, and that these were no longer necessary. All people, including the Gentiles, were to be called to salvation in Christ. Peter had to be told three times. Sometimes we, too, are resistant to change, even if the change is God's will. Can you remember a significant change in your life ... something that changed your identity (whether by marriage, or a physical move, or other change in circumstance), that required great faith? In what ways did the change make you a "new" person in Christ, and what were the positive outcomes of this change?

Read and record 2 Corinthians 5:17 and let these thoughts lead you into prayer.

DAY THREE

Read Acts 10:17-23

13. As today's lesson begins, Peter was still on the roof of Simon the tanner's house. As he continued to puzzle over his vision, what suddenly happened down by the gate, according to verses 17 and 18?

14a. While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit spoke again to Peter. What did the Spirit tell Peter, according to verses 19 and 20?

b. How would you characterize the tone of the Holy Spirit's directive to Peter in these verses?

15. Peter went down to receive the three messengers in verse 21. What did he say to them?

16a. In the beginning of verse 22 the men tell Peter about Cornelius' vision and why they have come. There is one new detail though. What is it? Compare this description to the one given in verses 1 and 2.

b. What did the three men say was the reason for their coming at the end of verse 22?

17a. Abraham, in the Old Testament, also received three emissaries. Read Genesis 18:2-8 and point out some similarities.

b. Peter invited them in and gave them lodging. What did he do the next day according to verse 23?

18. CONNECTION: Peter, having been directed by the Spirit, welcomes the three emissaries of Cornelius and shows them hospitality. Peter was given the role of breaking the longtime prohibition of associating with Gentiles. Hospitality is shown in its most divine sense through Our Lord Jesus Christ - who called the weary to Himself, fed the hungry, mended the broken, and ate with sinners and tax collectors. Can you remember a time of great hospitality in which you were a blessing to "strangers", bringing together disparate groups in a loving celebration? Or perhaps you remember receiving such hospitality. Share with your small group.

Read and record Hebrews 13:2 and let thoughts of true hospitality lead you into prayer.

DAY FOUR

Read Acts 10:24-33

19. In today's lesson Peter and some of the believers from Joppa went with Cornelius' men to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them. What did he do in preparation (verse 24)?

20a. Cornelius was a Roman centurion, a Gentile, but an angel of God had come to him in a vision and told him to send for Peter. What did Cornelius do when Peter entered the room, according to verse 25?

b. Verse 26 tells us how Peter reacted to Cornelius. What did Peter do and say?

21. Peter and Cornelius walked into the house together, talking as they went. When Peter got into the house (verse 27), he found that many had assembled. Record Peter's words of verse 28 which reflect his discomfort with the situation, but convey his faith and his willingness to let God's will be done (verse 28).

22a. According to verse 29, Peter had come without objection, believing that God was calling him to Caesarea. What does he ask those gathered at Cornelius' home?

b. Verses 30-32 contain Cornelius' detailed answer to Peter's question. What particular detail seems significant to you and why?

23. Record Cornelius' concluding words from verse 33 and explain what this says about Cornelius' faith.

24. CONNECTION: So much has taken place in Peter's life in such a short time! Not long before, Jesus had told Peter and the apostles not to leave Jerusalem until they had received the power of the Holy Spirit. Now Peter, armed with that power, has gone to Lydda, Joppa and then Caesarea. He is even preaching to Gentiles. These were not comfortable trips for him, but he obeyed God's will. What in your life right now calls you to obedience? Is it a "difficult" husband, elderly parents, young children, or an illness? Briefly describe your challenge and how you have responded with God's help. Are there certain prayers that you find most helpful?

God blesses an obedient spirit. Read and record the words of Jesus from Luke 11:28, and write a prayer today asking Him to help you obediently and lovingly face your challenges.

DAY FIVE
Read Acts 10: 34-43

25a. At the start of today's lesson, Peter began to preach to Cornelius and his family that God shows no favoritism (verse 34). Do you agree? Why or why not?

b. In verse 35 Peter told them that anyone in any nation who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him. Read and record the following verses which also help us to understand that God shows no partiality.

Romans 2:11

Galatians: 3:28

26. In verse 36 Peter told them that Jesus preached the good news of peace to the people of Israel and that He was Lord of all. Note that he began verse 36 with the words "You know." What are some reasons he might have used these words?

NOTE: Contemporary scholars suggest that in verses 36-40 Luke used one of Peter's sermons directed to Christian readers because the introductory words would indicate familiarity with the story.

27a. In verses 37-38 Peter tells them of Jesus' life and ministry, from the time of His baptism by John the Baptist, to the anointing of Jesus by the Holy Spirit with power, through Jesus' good works and healing among all who were oppressed by the devil. From the end of verse 38, how did Jesus accomplish this?

b. Verse 39 is a powerful statement that confirms the truth of Luke's testimony: "We are witnesses to all that he did in Judea and in Jerusalem." What terrible thing was done to Jesus, and how did God bring good of it, according to verse 40?

28. To whom did Jesus appear after he rose from the dead (verse 41)?

29a. Beginning in verse 42 Peter explains the mission God entrusted to those who were chosen as witnesses. What are they to do?

b. Peter ends his discourse in verse 43 with the testimony of the prophets. What is this testimony?

30. CONNECTION: Cornelius and his household are God-fearing people, hungry for the Good News of the Gospel. Like Peter, we have each been blessed to have met a person who was open to hearing God's Word. Was it a person who needed the comforting words of God's love for them, or perhaps needed to hear the truth that would give meaning to their lives? Think of a time when you, like Peter, were able to witness to Christ's message of hope, forgiveness, and salvation. Record some details about your experience as God's witness.

Read Romans 10:14-15. Record the quote given at the end of verse 15 and hold on to that thought as you humbly begin your prayer.

DAY SIX
Acts 10:44-48

31a. As yesterday's passage closed, Peter was addressing the people gathered in Cornelius' house. According to verse 44, what happened as Peter was preaching?

b. Read Acts 2:1-4 and list a similarity and difference between the coming of the Holy Spirit to the apostles on Pentecost and to the Pentecostal experience of these Gentiles.

32. The Jewish believers ("*the circumcised believers*") who had accompanied Peter to Cornelius's home were astounded. What was so astonishing to them (verse 45)?

33a. According to verse 46, what convinced them that the Holy Spirit had been poured out on these Gentiles?

b. What did Peter ask in verse 47 as a result of this obvious outpouring of the Holy Spirit on these Gentiles 47?

34a. Peter's words and actions indicate the great authority he had in the early church. Because Peter had such great authority, it was quite natural for him to give orders. According to verse 48 what order did he give?

b. How did the people respond to Peter after their baptism and why might they have responded in this way?

35. CONNECTION: Peter and Cornelius had different backgrounds: Peter was Jewish, a fisherman, and had known Jesus in the flesh. Cornelius was a Gentile, a soldier, and came to know Jesus in the Spirit. As different as they were, on that day they were called to work together so that many more people could be baptized and brought into Christianity. They put aside their differences and joined efforts for the good of the Kingdom. Describe a time when you have seen this same dynamic - two (or more) persons with different ideas, bearing with one another, working together for good rather than allowing differences to surface and cause division.

Read Colossians 3:13-14; record verse 14. As you begin your prayer, ask God to reveal to you how you are to apply these words in your relationships.

After completing this lesson, read Chapter 10 (refer to pages 74–78 in the edition copyrighted in 1992 by Our Sunday Visitor or pages 73-79 in the edition reprinted in 2013 by Saint Benedict Press) in the *Meditation and Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* by Alfred McBride, O. Praem. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible: Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

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