

Breaking the Gospel Barriers

Key Verse: “*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

Selected Scripture:
Acts 10:1-48

OUR LESSON FOR TODAY

revolves around the call of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. God gave Peter a vision of a great sheet knit on all four corners. This sheet held all manner of unclean beasts, creeping things, and birds. Peter heard a voice telling him to “kill, and eat.” (Acts 10:11-13) Peter was hesitant and declined, saying he was not allowed to eat any common or unclean thing. The Law was very clear on this, saying they were not even to touch any unclean things.

God then tells Peter not to call anything unclean that he had cleansed; the Law had come to an end. The nation of Israel, to whom all of God’s promises pertained (Rom. 9:4), had proven unfaithful.—Matt. 23:37,38

God had heard the prayers of a righteous Gentile and was bringing him into the body of Christ. (Acts 15:14) Peter did not understand the meaning of the sheet until three men came to his house. The Holy Spirit indicated to Peter that he should go with the

men and not to doubt. (chap. 10:20) Peter spoke with the men asking them where they were from and what they wanted of him. The men told Peter about Cornelius; that he was a just man, one who revered God and one who had a good report of the Jews. They asked Peter to accompany them to the house of Cornelius. The three men told Peter that Cornelius had heard through an angel of God to send for Peter.—vs. 22

After arriving in Caesarea, they found Cornelius waiting for them. Cornelius had called his family and friends and fell down at the feet of Peter. Peter immediately told Cornelius to stand up, that he was just a man like Cornelius. (vs. 26) In this we find a lesson of humility. Peter indicated that he was just being used by God as a finger to point one to God. All of God's people are to be "clothed with humility" (I Pet. 5:5), not to call attention to themselves but to God.

Peter tells Cornelius how it had been unlawful for a Jew to keep company with a Gentile, but that now God revealed to his mind not to call anyone common, or unclean. (Acts 10:28) Cornelius explained to Peter how a man in bright clothing had appeared to him and told him that his prayers had come in remembrance before God. Now the time had arrived for the Gentiles to come into the body of Christ.—vs. 31

Peter understood and said, "God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him [reverences him], and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (vss. 34,35) Next, Peter recalls how God anointed Jesus with the Holy Spirit and gave him power to go about doing good, and how God chooses certain ones to be witnesses of his Word. While Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all in the house.

Even the Jews that came with Peter were astonished at what was happening, seeing that even Gentiles received the Spirit and spoke in tongues. Peter then called for those who believed to be baptized. ■