



# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

## ACTS 10:19-33

### LESSON: CALLED TO A WIDER OUTREACH —August 27, 2017

#### INTRODUCTION:

**Chapter 10:9-18** <sup>1</sup>Before Cornelius could be welcomed into the Church, Peter had to learn a lesson. Strict Jews believed that God had no use for the Gentiles. Sometimes they even said that help must not be given to a Gentile woman in childbirth, because that would only bring another Gentile into the world. The next day after Cornelius' vision, while the three men were getting near Joppa, Peter went up on the flat roof of Simon's house to pray (10:9). While he waited for the noon meal to be served, he saw the heavens opened and a great sheet let down by four corners. In this sheet were all sorts of ceremonially unclean animals being let down from heaven (10:10-12). Suddenly a voice commanded: *"Rise, Peter; kill and eat"* (10:13). Facing a choice, Peter responded, *"No Lord, I have never eaten anything common or unclean"* (10:14). The Lord spoke to him again and said, *"Do not call what God has cleansed unclean"* (10:15). The sheet was taken up toward heaven, and let down again three times; then it was taken up (10:16). Peter had lived as an orthodox Jew all of his life. The *"clean and unclean foods"* belief was a major problem between Jews and Gentiles in that day. God was not just changing Peter's diet, but his entire program. The Jew was not *"clean,"* and the Gentile *"unclean,"* but both Jew and Gentile were *"unclean before God."* While Peter was mulling over the vision he had seen, there were men sent by Cornelius inquiring for Simon's house standing at the very doorway (10:17). They called out to inquire if Simon, whose other name was Peter, was staying there (10:18).

#### LESSON I. THE CLARAFICATION OF PETER'S MISSION Acts 10:19-23a

**10:19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.** God's timing is perfect, and the three men at Peter's doorway arrived just when Peter was thinking and wondering about the meaning of the vision. You know how you mull things over in your mind. What's the meaning of this? Well, it is the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us to show all things clearly. It was the power of the Holy Spirit that even brought these three men to Peter. They didn't just come on their own. Cornelius was also led after seeing a vision as the angel of God spoke to him. Don't we say all the time *"I was led by the Spirit?"*

**10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.** Now, he is to get up from the roof of the house and go downstairs to the door, and go with them, without doubting. God is not looking for a debate from Peter, just obedience. It is the Lord who sends His servants, not the servants sending themselves because God always prepare the way for good to come forth. Mind you, the Holy Spirit does not inform Peter as to what the men wanted. He was just to go with them in obedience.

**10:21 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?**—Remember, the three men were inquiring and seeking his house (10:17), so when they come to him and he meets them he says *"I am he whom you seek."* Now, Peter gets a chance to ask why they have come.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/gods-gentile-message-to-peter-through-visions/>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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**10:22 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.** Now, the men reveal and clarify why they have come to Peter. They came on behalf of their master Cornelius **"the centurion"**—leader of 100 men in the Roman army. Immediately Peter knows that this man is a Gentile, but he listens. They go on to say that he's known as **"a just man"**—a pious and righteous officer—**"one who fears God"**—God-fearing; who reverences God; worships the true God — **"of a good report"**—he's well-spoken of by the whole Jewish nation; a man of high reputation; whose character can be vouched for among all the nation of the Jews. Cornelius was sent a warning from God where a holy angel instructed him to send for Peter to come to his house, so he could hear the words he had to say.

**10:23a Then called he them in, and lodged them.** Peter invited the men to stay as guests for the night. Normally, Jews did not provide hospitality for Gentiles. It was not said, but understood, that anytime you invite guests into your home after a long trip, you either prepare a meal or ask are they hungry, or need water to drink. That's what a good host does. Peter was used to: • open the door of faith for the Jews in Acts 2; • open the door of faith to the Samaritans in Acts 8; and now, • to open the door to the Gentiles in Acts 10. The Gospel of Christ was to include everyone.

## II. PETER'S ARRIVAL AT CAESAREA Acts 10:23b-27

**10:23b ...And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.**

The next day Peter accompanied the three men and brought along six other brethren (believers) from Joppa to go to Caesarea. Peter knew he was treading troubled waters by associating with Gentiles. He sensed he would need witnesses to what he was doing; therefore, he prepared himself against any attack.

**10:24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and he had called together his kinsmen and near friends.** Cornelius had been humbled by the vision, and was mulling over the experience for four days now, and he even was being humbled and prepared more and more to receive the Jewish messenger. But at the same time Peter had been humbled also. Cornelius was waiting on them as they entered Caesarea the next day. So, he called together his relatives and close friends, so they might receive Peter's message. When you're about to receive some good news, you want others to be with you, the more the merrier.

**10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.** Peter was coming into Cornelius' house and Cornelius fell at Peter's feet, worshipping him. Probably his reaction was evoked from the unusual character of the vision he had. He didn't know who Peter was, only knowing that in this wondrous vision the angel of God instructed him to send for Peter. And Cornelius in an act of deep reverence begins to prostrate himself before Peter, worshipping him. It's like a dream come true. (Can this be? He's here).

**10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.** Even being a strict Jew, Peter could not allow Cornelius to behave in such a manner, and commanded him to stand up; and letting him know that he himself was only a man, not a god. He was a mere man; a human being saved by grace.

**10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.** Peter continued to talk with Cornelius as he was invited into the house, where he undoubtedly did not expect to find a great company of kinsmen and friends of the centurion. Wow, the door for Gentile evangelism was thrown wide open.

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## III. PETER'S INTRODUCTION TO HIS AUDIENCE Acts 10:28-33

**10:28 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.**

Peter's immediate thought was to justify his presence among them and give adequate explanation for this apparent breach of Jewish law. Jew and Gentile had no ordinary social visitation or to associate between each other. Jews also were forbidden to eat certain animals because they were said to be unclean. That would mean that a Jew would least likely find himself eating at the table of a Gentile, *"or come unto one of another's nation."* Thus it would be highly unlikely for Peter to enter or dine the household of a Roman centurion or *"uncircumcised Philistine"* because of the Levitical dietary restrictions. **What then was his reason for doing so?** *"God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."* Hence, Peter immediately began to tell Cornelius what God had showed him in a vision. And in the symbolism of his vision, God was teaching Peter that Gentiles (*represented by the unclean animals*) were acceptable to God, and were to be as much a part of His church as were the Jews. The point is Peter learned a mighty lesson:

- Christ had abolished the distinction between Jew and Gentile.
- Christ had abolished the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile.
- Christ had abolished all distinctions between men, whether racial, social, or some status system.

No man was to treat any other man with anything but love and care, mercy and forgiveness, concern and compassion, and we'll add respect. Yes, Peter's prejudice was wiped out; erased, and overcome. It had been overcome by God.

**10:29 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?**— Therefore, without objection; or arguing; or conflict, Peter says he came as soon as he was sent for. Now, Peter wants to know from Cornelius his reason for sending for him.

**10:30 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,**— In answer to the apostle's question, Cornelius goes on to explain that four days ago he was fasting until this hour. At the ninth hour he prayed in his house, and, behold, a man stood before him in bright clothing. It was an angel of the Lord who spoke unto him.

**10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.** The angel of the Lord let him know that during his fasting and praying, his prayer was heard. Not only because of the fasting and praying, but also his giving; his offerings; his donations; his contributions; his assistance; his charities has been remembered before the sight of God; God has taken notice. Wow! Hallelujah! The heart of a good man is not unnoticed. The point is Cornelius also learned a mighty lesson.

- The man who truly seeks God, moves God. Cornelius declared that God answered his prayer.
- The man who seeks God must listen to God and obey God. Cornelius declared that he listened and did exactly what God said, and that he did it immediately (10:33).
- The man who seeks God must be receptive to the Word of God.

**10:32 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.** The angel of the Lord gave instructions to Cornelius: *"Send to the house of one Simon a tanner in Joppa, and request a man named Simon, whose surname is Peter, and when he comes to Caesarea he will speak unto you."*

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10:33 **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.** Cornelius did not hesitate, but immediately dispatched his representatives to bring Peter to his house. Cornelius still does not understand exactly why this has happened, but he shows a complete readiness to receive whatever Peter has to say. Peter now has a captive audience to hear what the Lord has commanded by the power of the Holy Spirit to speak.

- It is evident that God has led both Peter and Cornelius to this very hour.
- It is evident in this transitional Book of Acts that He has also led both the Jews and Gentiles to this very hour.
- It is evident that the Gentile writer Luke recognized the importance of this hour because of the space he dedicated to it in his narrative.

For the first time Jew and Gentile could sit down with some measure of commonality.

## SUMMARY:

Peter was thinking and wondering about the meaning of the vision when the Spirit said to him that there were three men seeking him. The Spirit told him to arise and go down and go with the men and doubt nothing. Peter went as he was told, down to greet the men saying *"I am he whom you seek"*, and asking *"why they had come."* The men began to reveal and clarify to Peter why they had come. They came on behalf of their master Cornelius the centurion, a just man, who fears God, and has a good report among all the nation of the Jews. Cornelius was divinely instructed by a holy angel to send for Peter to come to his house, so he could hear the words he had to say. After hearing this, Peter invited the men to come in and gave them lodging (**10:19-23a**).

The next day Peter accompanied the three men and brought along six other brethren (believers) from Joppa to go to Caesarea. That day they entered Caesarea and Cornelius was waiting for them, and he had called together his kinsmen and close friends. Peter was coming into Cornelius' house and Cornelius fell at Peter's feet, worshipping him. But Peter raised him up, saying, *"Stand up; I too am just a man."* Peter continued to talk with Cornelius as he was invited into his house, where he undoubtedly did not expect to find a great company of kinsmen and friends of the centurion (**10:23b-27**).

Peter's immediate thought was to justify his presence among those in the house of Cornelius, and give adequate explanation for this apparent breach of Jewish law. It was unlawful for a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another's nation. But God showed him that he shouldn't call any man common or unclean. Therefore, without objection or arguing, Peter says he came as soon as he was sent for. Now, Peter wants to know from Cornelius his reason for sending for him. In answer to the apostle's question, Cornelius goes on to explain that four days ago he was fasting until this hour. At the ninth hour he prayed in his house, and, looked and saw a man standing before him in bright clothing. The angel of the Lord let him know that during his fasting and praying, his prayer was heard, and his giving was remembered in the sight of God. Also, he was to send for Simon, whose surname is Peter in Joppa. He would be staying in the house of Simon a tanner by the sea and will come to speak to him. So, he immediately sent for Peter, and it was good that he came because they were all waiting to hear all things God has commanded him (**10:28-33**).