

ACTS

Chapter 10

Peter and Cornelius

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, 2 a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. 3 About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.” 4 And he stared at him in terror and said, “What is it, Lord?” And he said to him, “Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” 7 When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, 8 and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

10:1 *Caesarea*. Located 30 miles north of Joppa and named in honor of Augustus Caesar, it was the headquarters for the Roman forces of occupation. (CSB)

Cornelius. A Latin name made popular when Cornelius Sulla liberated some 10,000 slaves over 100 years earlier. These had all taken his family name, Cornelius. (CSB)

centurion. Commanded a military unit that normally numbered at least 100 men. The Roman legion (about 6,000 men) was divided into ten regiments, each of which had a designation. This was the “Italian” (another was the “Imperial,” or “Augustan,” 27:1). A centurion commanded about a sixth of a regiment. Centurions were carefully selected; all of them mentioned in the NT appear to have had noble qualities (e.g., Lk 7:5). The Roman centurions provided necessary stability to the entire Roman system. (CSB)

Italian Cohort. The Roman legion, nominally 6,000 men, was divided into 10 cohorts, or regiments, each of approximately 600 soldiers. (TLSB)

10:2 *all his household* – “Family” really means “household” here and would include servants and slaves, not only wife and children. (PBC)

devout. In spite of all his good deeds, Cornelius needed to hear the way of salvation from a human messenger. The role of the angel (v. 3) was to bring Cornelius and Peter together (cf. 8:26; 9:10). (CSB)

Although he was pious and generous, he did not yet know Jesus as his Savior from sin. He would have known there was a coming Messiah. Ancient inscriptions have shown that Gentile patrons gave gifts to synagogues. “Cornelius, living among the Jews, had heard long before about the coming Messiah, through whom he was righteous before God (Acts 10:1–2). In such faith, his prayers and alms were acceptable to God (since Luke calls him devout and Godfearing)” (SA III VIII 8). (TLSB)

There were two classes of converts to Judaism. They were technically called “proselytes of the gate” and “proselytes of righteousness.” Proselytes of righteousness” were former Gentiles who had become Jews in the full sense of the word, having submitted to all the requirements for

membership, including circumcision. “Proselytes of the gate” were not circumcised and were required to observe only the basic requirements of avoiding idolatry, blasphemy, disobedience to magistrates, murder, fornication and incest, robbery and theft, and eating blood. Both the centurion and the Ethiopian treasurer were likely “proselytes of the gate.” Like the Ethiopian, Cornelius was well studied in the Scriptures before his conversion. This is an important point, for it prepared them to receive Jesus as the messiah promised in the OT. (LL)

feared God. The term used of one who was not a full Jewish proselyte but who believed in one God and respected the moral and ethical teachings of the Jews. (CSB)

10:3 *ninth hour of the day.* Another indication that Cornelius followed Jewish religious practices. Three in the afternoon was a Jewish hour of prayer (see 3:1)—the hour of the evening incense. (CSB)

a vision. Not a dream or trance but a revelation through an angel to Cornelius while at prayer. (CSB)

In ch 9, the Lord gave both Ananias and Saul visions, which confirmed His will. (TLSB)

10:4 *terror.* In the presence of the holy God, one stands in terror because of one’s sins. (TLSB)

a memorial. A portion of the grain offering burned on the altar was called a “memorial” (Lev 2:2). (CSB)

10:7 *a devout soldier.* Note emphasis (cf v 2). By contrast, observe how easily the chief priests and elders bribed the soldiers after Christ’s resurrection (Mt 28:11). (TLSB)

10:8 Cornelius would have related the vision only to those whom he trusted. (TLSB)

10:1–8 The Lord prepares Cornelius to learn more about Jesus. Likewise, He prepares and guides our lives in accordance with His good purposes. Therefore, commend your life and ways to your Lord, who at all times has you on His heart. • Father, Your Law reminds me daily that as good as I think I am, I can never be good enough to inherit eternal salvation. Thank You for sending Jesus to fulfill all righteousness for me. In Jesus’ name. Amen. (TLSB)

Peter's Vision

9 The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. **10** And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance **11** and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. **12** In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. **13** And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” **14** But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” **15** And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.” **16** This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. **17** Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon’s house, stood at the gate **18** and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. **19** And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. **20** Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.” **21** And Peter

went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?” 22 And they said, “Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.” 23 So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. 24 And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.” 27 And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. 28 And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. 29 So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.” 30 And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing 31 and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ 33 So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”

10:9 *roof to pray.* It was customary for eastern houses to have flat roofs with outside stairways. The roof was used as a convenient place for relaxation and privacy. (CSB)

Some homes had a flat roof reached by an external stairway. Cf Lk 5:19. Peter likely went up to the housetop for solitude to pray (cf Mt 14:23; Jn 6:15). (TL SB)

10:10 *fell into a trance.* A state of mind God produced and used to communicate with Peter. It was not merely imagination or a dream. Peter’s consciousness was heightened to receive the vision from God. (CSB)

An inspired dream. (Cf 26:13; Ezk 1:1; Dn 7:1; 2Co 12:1.). (TL SB)

10:11 *heavens opened.* Cf Lk 3:21. (TL SB)

10:12 *all kinds animals and birds.* Including animals both clean and unclean according to Lev 11. (CSB)

10:13–14 Peter, in accordance with ceremonial law, would have avoided eating unclean animals. (TL SB)

10:14 *by no means, Lord!* So deeply ingrained was the observance of the laws of clean and unclean that Peter refused to obey immediately. (CSB)

common or unclean. Anything common (impure) was forbidden by the law to be eaten. (CSB)

10:15 *God has made clean.* Jesus had already laid the groundwork for setting aside the laws of clean and unclean food (Mt 15:11; see 1Ti 4:3–5). (CSB)

10:16 *three times.* To make a due impression on Peter. (CSB)

Threefold repetition would have removed all doubt that this vision came from the Lord. (Three times Jesus had asked Peter, “Do you love Me?”; Jn 21:15–17.) (TLSB)

10:17–21 Peter, thoroughly perplexed, could not interpret the vision on his own. The Holy Spirit interpreted the vision and, as often seen in Ac, sent him on a journey. (TLSB)

10:23 *invited them in to be his guests.* By providing lodging for them, Peter was already taking the first step toward accepting Gentiles. Such intimate relationship with Gentiles was contrary to prescribed Jewish practice. (CSB)

The next day. It was too late in the day to start out on the long journey to Caesarea. (CSB)

some of the brothers. Six in number (11:12), they were Jewish in background (10:45). (CSB)

Six fellow Christians accompanied Peter and would become eyewitnesses to God’s work (cf Dt 17:6; Mt 18:19–20). (TLSB)

10:24 Cornelius’s gathering of relatives and close friends underscores their confidence in him and his eagerness to hear Peter’s message. (TLSB)

10:25–26 The man of God clearly shows that wisdom and counsel, forgiveness and salvation come from the one true God. Cf Gn 41:16; Dn 2:27–28. (TLSB)

10:26 *I too am a man.* Possibly Cornelius was only intending to honor Peter as one having a rank superior to his own, since he was God’s messenger. But Peter allowed no chance for misunderstanding—he was not to be worshiped as more than a created being. (CSB)

10:28 Bible Study for coming Sunday. (TLSB)

God has shown me. Peter recognized that his vision had deeper significance than declaring invalid the distinction between clean and unclean meat; he saw that the barrier between Jew and Gentile had been removed (see Eph. 2:11–22). (CSB)

common. Impure or unholy. Cf Mk 7:1–23; Rm 14:13–14. (CSB)

10:29 Cf vv 20–24. (TLSB)

10:30 *Four days ago.* The Jews counted a part of a day as a day: (1) the day the angel appeared to Cornelius, (2) the day the messengers came to Joppa and Peter received a vision, (3) the day the group set out from Joppa and (4) the day they arrived at Cornelius’s house. (CSB)

in bright clothing. Common language to describe an angel when appearing in the form of a man. (CSB)

Cf Mt 28:2–3; Mk 16:5; Lk 24:2–4; Jn 20:12. (TLSB)

10:31 *remembered before God.* Cf Dn 9:20–21, where the angel Gabriel appeared to Daniel while he was still praying. (TLSB)

10:33 *here in the presence of God.* Cornelius recognized that not only had a holy man arrived but that God also drew near through the words Peter was about to speak. (TLSB)

10:9–33 Through a vision, the Lord teaches Peter that holiness is not determined by people, but by what God Himself has ordained as holy and clean. We are powerless to hallow anything. Pray that God's gifts and blessings may be hallowed among us. Through the Gospel, the Lord cleanses and hallows us. • Father, thank You for making me righteous and acceptable through Your Word. Let Your Holy Spirit move me to confess Christ, that others might be made acceptable in Your sight. Amen. (TLSB)

Gentiles Hear the Good News

34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, **35** but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. **36** As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), **37** you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. **39** And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, **40** but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, **41** not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. **43** To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

10:34-43 To adequately set the context for this passage for the average hearer would almost require a full commentary on the Book of Acts. Here, however, it will have to suffice to challenge two common misguided but interrelated assumptions about this book. First of all, it is assumed that Acts is not about Jesus. He is gone. He ascends, so to speak, as the curtain is raised on Acts 1, scene 1, only to appear again as the ghostly vision in Acts 9. Second, it is assumed Acts is about the Holy Spirit and the Church. A view of the book much more in keeping with Luke's purpose might sound something like this: In the Book of Acts, Luke tells the story of the risen Lord Jesus' ongoing work to save his world, making his presence known through the presence of his Spirit and making his voice heard through the mouths of a restored and reconstituted people of God, those who hear and see and proclaim what he, Jesus, is continuing to do and to teach. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

It is of some comfort to us that Peter and the other members of this new people of God in Acts had to learn the same lessons that we readers today must learn. Peter had been with Jesus throughout Jesus' ministry, had been his disciple, had even been sent out to proclaim the kingdom of God (Lk 9:1–6), but when it came to the climax of Jesus' ministry, Peter's denial was ironically true: Peter really did not know Jesus (Lk 22:54–62). Even after a now-risen Jesus taught Peter and the others how to read the Scriptures, proved to them that he had risen and that he had to die, and taught them over the course of forty days about the kingdom of God, Peter still needed time to work out the full implications of all that he now knew and believed about Jesus. Much of that happens in this story with Cornelius (Acts 10:1–11:18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Our Gospel shows Peter right at one of the most important moments of realization and insight. Peter's words, "truly I understand," connect with this story of Peter slowly coming to grasp what it means for the world that "Christ is risen; he is risen indeed." In fact, Peter's opening confession turns this whole section into a story that is just as much about Peter's conversion as it is about Cornelius's. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The importance of this event for Luke is indicated by the fact that he presents the reader with three accounts of it: here in chapter 10, again in chapter 11, and finally a brief summary in chapter 15. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:34-38 The polarization of the races was deeply rooted in the mind-set of the first-century Roman and Jew. One can only imagine how revolutionary the young church's approach to interracial relationships must have been. Roman soldiers treated Jews terribly (Mk 15:16–20). The popular sentiment among the Jews toward the Romans wasn't much better (Mk 12:13–17). And Peter, among others, spent the 40 days between Christ's crucifixion and Pentecost hiding, immobilized by fear of the Romans. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

After Pentecost, we have a different Peter, a God-intoxicated Peter, a Spirit-driven Peter. Before the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter could not have said what he said in v 34. But Peter, like his Jesus before him, has been anointed by the Holy Spirit with power. The Holy Spirit is denoted with one purpose in the book of Acts and that is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). To accomplish this, the Spirit would use the once-impulsive Peter. God sent Peter to Cornelius in Joppa. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Peter says to the large crowd gathered inside the house of Cornelius, "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean" (Acts 10:28). In response, Cornelius tells Peter why he was asked to come. "Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us" (10:33). This is the immediate contextual background to our passage. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

10:34-35 God's message of salvation goes out to all people because all the earth is His. God will write His Word on the hearts of all who believe (Jer 31:33). Cf Rm 14:11; Rv 14:6. (TLSB)

10:34 *I understand - Katalambanomai*. Both active and passive forms of the verb have the connotation of "to be seized upon" or "to grasp." St. Paul uses it in both senses in Phil 3:12, "But I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." John uses it in his Gospel to demonstrate how darkness cannot overcome [understand] light (Jn 1:5). As the verb contains the preposition *kata*, its emphasis is that "the seizing" comes from above (as Peter had experienced at Pentecost and in the vision of the animals in the sheet). This Greek word also connotes that the seizing takes place "suddenly" as God did to the crafty in Job 5:13. Arndt and Gingrich state that it also has the emphasis of someone coming into an inheritance - the exact time is not planned, of course. If we paraphrase the poignant v 34, we come up with this. Peter opened his mouth and said, "I have been seized from above by the once culturally concealed truth of God that he shows no favoritism between racially different peoples." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

"Truly I understand." Luke does not use the word *katalambanō* ("I understand") in his Gospel, but he does use it three times in Acts. Although a word's etymology does not always have a direct

relationship to its meaning, there does seem to be something of the original meaning of the components still in the meaning of this compound. In other contexts, the verb means simply to seize or grasp someone; here, of course, it is used figuratively for the “grasping” done by the mind. If there is anything that the three uses in Acts have in common (4:13; 10:34; and 25:25), it seems to be the idea of bringing very disparate pieces of information together to form a conclusion that “comprehends” all the data. Often, the individual pieces of information appear to be at opposite ends of the spectrum, rendering comprehension impossible, such as the boldness of the apostles in 4:13 together with their illiterateness and lack of education. For an extreme example, see Eph 3:18. Here in Acts 10, Peter seems to have been able finally to bring together into his own comprehension the fact that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God who claimed Israel as a people for his own possession, the God who sent his own Son into the world as a son of Abraham and a son of David, does not have a favorite among the nations of the earth. Few modern readers can appreciate the magnitude of this realization. The idea that God is not a respecter of persons, that he “shows no partiality” (v 34), is not, of course, a new idea. Already in Deut 10:12–22, a passage with many thematic connections to ours, God is revealed as one who shows no partiality and takes no bribes. Now, however, Peter is beginning to see clearly what that means for the way that he, Peter, should relate to other people. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

truly - alētheias: This word is rich in meaning. Its first meaning is “truthfulness, dependability, uprightness, perfect fidelity” with a secondary meaning of “reality as opposed to mere appearances.” In the Old Testament it is used to denote a reality which is regarded as *emet*, “firm,” therefore, “solid,” “valid,” or binding.” It signifies what is “true.” When used of persons, it sometimes expresses that which predominantly characterizes their speech, action, or thought. Deut 22:20 says the charges against a violated virgin must be true. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Etymologically *alētheia* has the meaning of nonconcealment. It is disclosed or discloses itself. It might be concealed, falsified, truncated, or suppressed. It is the full or real state of affairs. *Alētheia* denotes an aspect of the *logos* and causes that which is to be seen. For Plato it is concealed from the senses, which may be comprehended by thinking. It is the opposite of a “reflection” or an “appearance.” The disciples of the Pharisees sense truth about Jesus in their question to him about taxes (Mk 12:14). St. Paul uses it in relation to the motives of the preachers of the Gospel in Phil 1:18, and he uses it in terms of God’s judgment against sinners in Rom 2:2. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

God shows no partiality. God does not favor an individual because of his station in life, his nationality or his material possessions (see note on Jas 2:1). He does, however, respect his character and judge his work. This is evident because God “accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right” (v. 35). Cornelius already worshiped the true God, but this was not enough: He lacked faith in Christ (v. 36). (CSB)

“Peter opened his mouth” (NRSV). An important utterance is about to take place. Peter has played a major role in Acts up to this point. But Peter is about to fade into the background as Acts points steadily toward the ministry of St. Paul. In fact, a threefold movement in Acts makes this apparent. The geographical movement is from Jerusalem to Rome; the religious movement is from Jews to Gentiles; the apostolic movement is away from the Twelve, especially Peter, to St. Paul. But Peter is still part of the narrative, and he has just learned through his vision at Joppa that God shows no partiality (10:9–33). This whole incident may seem a bit trite to today’s hearers, given the present day climate of multiculturalism, political correctness, and ecumenicity. But

Peter's vision was revolutionary for the hearers in his day. Luke fills his gospel as well as this his second volume with a theology of universal grace. God extends himself through Christ and the church to all nations. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 1)

Prosōpolēmtēs, “favoritism,” literally means “to accept a face.” The reference is to a courtroom or a judge who isn't swayed by the appearance of the person being tried. The most frequent way to translate the word is “partiality.” In Deut 1:17, Moses instructs the leaders of his people. “Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of any man, for judgment belongs to God.” God shows no partiality to Greek or Jew (Rom 2:11), to master and slave (Eph 6:9), and is no respecter of persons in Acts 10:34. But the Christian to whom James writes his letter shows favoritism to the rich over the poor (James 2:9). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

10:35 *every nation - ethnei* has the meaning of “people” as opposed to “kings.” The risen Christ spoke to Ananias about Saul in Acts 9:15: “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings.” It also connotes “nations” (as peoples) who oppose each other, as in Mt 24:7, “nations will rise against nations.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

In the Old Testament the word *goiy* is related to it, meaning “foreigner” or “non-Jew.” The disciples who were sent out would be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. Here the word refers to the non-Jew—the nations who hear God and work deeds of righteousness. Cornelius already believes in God but has not been overcome by the love of Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

It is very easy to make this verse say more than it says or less than it says. Peter does not simply say that everyone is acceptable to God no matter what nation he/she comes from, and he certainly does not say everyone is acceptable to God no matter what religion he/she comes from. The “anyone” is qualified by “who fears him and does what is right.” On the other hand, the phrase “in every nation” must be given its full weight. Peter's vision and the events that followed it have brought him to the understanding that even people outside his cultural, national, racial group, even outside his recognized religious community, can genuinely fear God and live righteously and be accepted by God as his own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

what is right - Here *ton logon*, “message,” connects with *alētheia* in v 34. The concealed truth has been revealed in the word about Jesus Christ. The *logos* and the *alētheia* are connected to the *euangellion*, which literally means “good announcement.” The “good announcement” is that hostility doesn't exist between nations, but peace because of Jesus Christ, who is Lord over all nations. We can only imagine how much personal hostility Peter had to overcome to make this announcement to the Gentiles standing before him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

10:36-37 These verses provide a summary of the entire apostolic ministry and mission. Even though the Gospel reading is Mt 3:13–17, the Acts passage aligns better with Mark's gospel, which begins not with the birth narrative, as do Luke and Matthew, but with Jesus' Baptism, which for Luke is the beginning of Jesus' ministry. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 1)

Peter was at the home of Cornelius. The question arises as to what language Peter spoke. He may very well have spoken Greek through an interpreter. Most scholars agree, however, that more

than likely he spoke Aramaic. The text is filled with “Aramaisms.” Luke is heavily dependent on the sources he tells us he is using (Lk 1:1–4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 1)

10:36 *peace*. Between God and man (reconciliation). (CSB)

The hallmark of the kingdom of God is the announcement of peace, healing, and forgiveness. (TLSB)

Lord of all. Lord of both Jew and Gentile (see vv. 34–35). (CSB)

A brief confession or creed, appropriate among Gentiles who had worshiped idols and who perhaps wondered whether the true God would be their God. (TLSB)

We must not let the textual and translational challenges of this verse distract us from the irony of Peter’s statement. If God did play favorites, that is, if his favorite had been Israel, if no other nation on earth enjoyed such a right and privileged relationship with God, then why would God need to send the sons of Israel “good news of peace”? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Recent commentators seem inclined to agree with Tannehill that the statement “He is Lord of all” is not a parenthetical doxology but, on the contrary, the main point of the verse (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke–Acts: A Literary Interpretation*, vol. 2, *The Acts of the Apostles* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1990], 139–40). This good news of peace came in the form of a birth announcement, the news that a Savior who is both Messiah and Lord had been born. The angel had said that this announcement would bring joy to all people (Lk 2:10–14), but Peter is just now realizing that, if Jesus came to be the Lord of all, he must also be the Savior of all. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:37-43 This section compounds the difficulty of describing Cornelius’s “spiritual condition” with satisfying precision. He has already been described as a devout, God-fearing, alms-giving man who prayed continually to God (v 2). An angel of the Lord confirms that his prayers have been heard by God and that his actions have borne witness to his faith (v 4). His own people describe him as *dikaios* (righteous according to human standards, or in a right relationship with God?) and add that the entire Judean nation will back them up on this (v 22). In v 37, Peter begins to recite a history of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He begins by saying, “You yourselves know . . .” The difficulty is in determining where the knowledge of Cornelius and his household ends. There is no clear “But now know this” or “But now I will tell you something you don’t know.” Some readers see a break coming at v 39, but if it is a break at all, it is not as clear or strong as it could have been. Remember that in what follows there is no call to repentance or to faith issued to Cornelius. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:37 *you yourselves know*. Though they had heard about Jesus’ ministry, Peter gave them an eyewitness account of Jesus’ ministry, death, and resurrection. Cf 1Jn 1:1–4. (TLSB)

the baptism John proclaimed. Similar to the outline of Mark’s Gospel, Peter’s sermon begins with John’s baptism and continues to the resurrection of Jesus. This is significant since the early church fathers viewed Mark as the “interpreter” of Peter. See previous summaries of Peter’s preaching (2:14–41; 3:12–26; 4:8–12; 5:29–32). (CSB)

humeis oidate What Cornelius and his household know is that the Good News about Jesus Christ began with the preaching of John at the Jordan River. They know the story—how John’s preaching led to baptism and to the baptism of Jesus. *Ekēruxen* means “proclaimed” or “announced.” It is the fish-swallowed man, Jonah, preaching repentance (Mt 12:41) and about Jesus Christ in Rom 16:25. It is a story spread widely (Mk 1:45) and includes repentance (Mark 1:4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

10:38 *how God anointed Jesus.* See Isa 61:1–3; Lk 4:18–21. (CSB)

ekrisen “anointed” is an aorist active verb, meaning the act has been done or has been completed. Jesus speaks of himself, quoting Isaiah, in Lk 4:18 as anointed by the Spirit of the Lord to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight to the blind, and to release the oppressed. In Baptism the apostles (and all Christians) are anointed by the Spirit of God. “He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come” (2 Cor 1:21b–22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Luke connects Jesus’ Baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit here in the same way that he does in his gospel account (Lk 3:21). Unlike Mark, however, Luke places a prayer in between Jesus’ Baptism and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Some scholars have argued that this serves to delineate clearly between the Baptism of John and the anointing, of Jesus by the Holy Spirit (Gerhard Krodel, *Acts, Proclamation Commentaries* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981] 42). Here is the allusion to Christ’s absolute power and victory over the forces of darkness. Jesus manifests his epiphany and “God was with him.” The Holy Spirit’s anointing is strongly linked to Is 42:1–2 and the anointing of the Servant. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 1)

with the Holy Spirit and with power - Pneumati agiōi, “with the Holy Spirit” for the Spirit features prominently in the writings of St. Luke. A better title for this book could be, “The Acts of the Holy Spirit.” Having been baptized and having been anointed by the Holy Spirit with power from above, St. Paul, in Col 1:11, prays that the Christians there would be “strengthened with all power” so that they may have endurance and patience. Peter has been given power from above to declare that God accepts all nations and races in Christ Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Christ, the Anointed One, fulfilled the prophecies regarding the Messiah (Gn 3:15; 49:10; Is 7:14; Mi 5:2; Mt 1:20; Jn 1:1). (TLSB)

10:39-40 “They put him to death . . . but God raised him.” Many readers of Luke, both scholarly and popular, fail to find a theology of the cross in either of his two contributions to the New Testament. It is true that in the sermons in Acts we hear much more regularly and much more explicitly “you/they killed him” than we hear “he died for you/them.” This may serve more as a criticism of contemporary theologies of the cross than it does as a criticism of Luke’s, however, for there is a point to these messages in Acts that is too often neglected in our preaching. Before they could hear that Jesus died *for their sins*, Peter’s hearers, including even Cornelius and his household, needed to take seriously what it meant for the whole world that Israel had not only rejected but also murdered the Messiah of God. Notice the change in pronouns as the message moves beyond the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem: “you crucified and killed” (2:23); “this Jesus whom you crucified” (2:36); “you killed the Author of life” (3:15); “they put him to death” (here, in 10:39); “those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers . . . asked Pilate to have him executed” (13:27–28); and so on. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:39 *hanging him on a tree.* Jesus' condemnation on the cross came despite God's anointing, the power of the Holy Spirit, and His gracious healing of many. *tree.* Adam and Eve's willful reach for Eden's tree was cured by Christ's willing grasp of the cross. Cf Dt 21:23; Gal 3:13; 1Pt 2:24. (TLSB)

10:40-41 God demonstrated Jesus to be His Son esp through the resurrection, as believers realize (Rm 1:4). (TLSB)

10:41 *who ate and drank.* Those who ate with Jesus after he rose from the dead received unmistakable evidence of his bodily resurrection (see Lk 24:42-43; Jn 21:12-15). (CSB)

10:42 Luther: "Who will harm the man when the great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, to whom the Day of Judgment belongs, is on his side and stands before him with all His glory, greatness, majesty, and might?" (WLS § 2178). (TLSB)

10:43 *forgiveness of sins through His name.* "Peter says we receive forgiveness of sins through Christ's name, that is, for His sake. It is not for the sake of our merits, not for the sake of our contrition, attrition, love, worship, or works. He adds: *When we believe in Him.* Peter requires faith. For we cannot receive Christ's name except by faith" (Ap IV 83). Luther: "Cornelius (Acts 10:43) had to be brought to the new faith that Christ had already come" (WLS § 2125). (TLSB)

10:34-43 Peter affirms for devout Cornelius that Jesus is truly the Christ; the Spirit affirms for Peter that the Gospel applies to all people without partiality. The Holy Spirit unites one and all in the Body of Christ. • Father, thank You for the gift of salvation through Your Son, Jesus Christ. Make me a faithful witness of Your love. Amen. (TLSB)

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. **45** And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. **46** For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, **47** "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" **48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

10:44-48 The rest of the chapter, as well as the additional references to this event, go beyond the text for this Sunday and the purposes of this study. Still, the preacher needs first to come to a clear understanding of what is happening in the passage as a whole before he can proclaim even a portion of it. Hopefully, even without an investigation of these additional passages, we can agree that, if this is an account of Cornelius coming to faith in Jesus, it is at least as much an account of Peter coming to recognize in Cornelius a fellow believer. If Jesus is Lord of all (v 36), then he must also be the Savior of all, and his is the one name that brings forgiveness to the believer. If this is true, the people he gathers in his name will not be composed of just Abrahams, Isaacs, and Jacobs (and Simon Peters); there will also be Corneliuses, and we will find ourselves embracing as brothers and sisters people whose names we cannot yet pronounce with confidence. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

10:44 *the Holy Spirit fell on all.* The Holy Spirit comes through the Word to everyone who hears and believes. Cf Rm 10:17; 15:13; 1Co 2:10-14; 6:11; 1Pt 2:9. Luth: "[Faith is] a living spiritual

flame, by which hearts are set afire, born anew and converted through the Holy Spirit, so that they desire, will, do, and are exactly what the law of Moses expressly commands and requires [Jer 31:33; 2Co 3:3; Rm 3:27; 8:2; 2Co 4:13]... For the living Word of Christ, when preached, imparts the Spirit, who writes the law of God in our hearts with living fire, as happened to Cornelius in Acts 10 [:44], and again Gal. 4 [3:2]: ‘Did you receive the Spirit by works or by the preaching of faith?’ Hence the gospel is called a word of life in John 6[:68]” (AE 36:200–201). (TLSB)

10:45 *Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles* – By giving these Gentiles the same gift He gave the apostles and others at Pentecost, the Lord was dramatically demonstrating that He had broken down the wall of separation. They, as Gentiles, were no longer strangers and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household (Eph. 2:19). (CSB)

astonished ... even on the Gentiles. Apparently the early Jewish Christians failed to understand that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews, and that they would share alike in the benefits of redemption. Gentile proselytes to Judaism, however, were accepted (see 6:5). (CSB)

10:47 *Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people?* † The Gentiles had received the same gift (11:17) as the Jewish believers. This was unavoidable evidence that the invitation to the kingdom was open to Gentiles as well as to Jews. (CSB)

10:44–48 The Holy Spirit demonstrates to the Jewish believers that God indeed desires to pour out His Spirit on “all flesh” (2:17), even Gentiles. The water, the Word, and the Holy Spirit go together. So Peter urges that the Gentiles be baptized right away, without concern for circumcision or ritual purity according to the old covenant. These blessings of Word and Sacrament abide with us today. • Lord, give us Your Word, that our thankfulness points many to Your grace. Amen. (TLSB)