



**“Peter Meets Gentiles”  
Acts 9:32-10:48**

Study Guide #14 for the week of  
May 1, 2022

**Aeneas and Dorcas - [Acts 9:32-43](#)**

**Some questions to answer and discuss:**

1. What are some of your most treasured memories of a late friend, relative, or coworker?
2. What happened to Dorcas? ([9:37](#))
3. What did Peter do when he was alone with the dead woman? ([9:40-41](#))
4. How did the miracle of raising Tabitha further the kingdom of God? ([9:42](#))
5. Why do some Christians suffer and die, while others are healed of their sickness?
6. What can you do to help a widow who needs assistance?

**Life Application Bible Notes**

[9:36](#) The important harbor city of Joppa sits 125 feet above sea level overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. Joppa was the town into which the cedars of Lebanon had been floated to be shipped to Jerusalem for use in the Temple construction ([2 Chronicles 2:16](#); [Ezra 3:7](#)). The prophet Jonah had left the port of Joppa on his ill-fated trip ([Jonah 1:3](#)).

[9:36-42](#) Tabitha made an enormous impact on her community by "always doing kind things for others and helping the poor," by making coats and other garments ([9:39](#)). When she died, the room was filled with mourners, very likely many of the people she had helped. And when she was brought back to life, the news raced through the town. God uses great preachers like Peter and Paul, but he also uses those who have gifts of kindness like Tabitha. Rather than wishing you had other gifts, make good use of the gifts God has given you.

[9:43](#) In Joppa, Peter stayed at the home of Simon, a tanner of hides—a leatherworker. Leatherworkers made animal hides into leather. It is significant that Peter was at Simon's house because leatherworking involved contact with dead animals, and Jewish law considered it an "unclean" occupation. Peter was already beginning to break down his prejudice against people who were not of his kind and who had customs that did not adhere to Jewish religious traditions.

## Cornelius Calls for Peter - [Acts 10:1-8](#)

### Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. What would be appealing or unappealing to you about a career in the armed forces?
2. How did the angel affirm the centurion's life-style? ([10:4](#))
3. What did the angel command Cornelius to do? ([10:5-6](#))
4. When the angel left, what did Cornelius do? ([10:7-8](#))
5. What neighbors and friends remind you of Cornelius?
6. How do you need to be more like Cornelius?
7. This week, what can you do to imitate the centurion's God-fearing life-style?

### Life Application Bible Notes

[10:1](#) This Caesarea, sometimes called Palestinian Caesarea, was located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, 32 miles north of Joppa. The largest and most important port city on the Mediterranean in Palestine, Caesarea served as the capital of the Roman province of Judea. This was the first city to have Gentile Christians and a non-Jewish church.

[10:1](#) This Roman officer was a centurion—a commander of 100 soldiers. Although stationed in Caesarea, Cornelius would probably return soon to Rome. Thus, his conversion was a major stepping-stone for spreading the Good News to the empire's capital city.

[10:2](#) What will happen to the heathen who have never heard about Christ? This question is often asked about God's justice. Cornelius wasn't a believer in Christ, but he was seeking God and was reverent and generous. Therefore, God sent Peter to tell Cornelius about Christ. This shows that God "rewards those who sincerely seek him" ([Hebrews 11:6](#)). Cornelius's story demonstrates God's willingness to use extraordinary means to reach those who desire to know him. Those who sincerely seek God will find him! God made Cornelius's knowledge complete.

[10:3](#) Cornelius had a vision featuring a heavenly messenger. God spoke to other Bible characters through a variety of means—the burning bush of Moses ([Exodus 3:1-4](#)); the talking donkey of Balaam ([Numbers 22:21-30](#)); the gentle whisper heard by Elijah ([1 Kings 19:11-14](#)); the strange object lessons of Jeremiah ([Jeremiah 13:1-11](#)). Simply put, God speaks to his people in remarkably different ways—through the written Scriptures, through the words of others, through circumstances and events. It is up to us to listen, to be perceptive, to be alert. What is God trying to say to you today?

## Peter's Vision - [Acts 10:9-23](#)

### Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. At an ethnic food festival, would you try a variety of international dishes or immediately seek out the hot dog stand? Why?
2. What did Peter experience while food was being prepared for him? ([10:10-16](#))
3. What happened while Peter was wondering about the vision? ([10:17-20](#))
4. How was Peter prepared for the messengers? ([10:19-20](#))
5. What are some reasons we reject or avoid certain people?
6. How can you show acceptance of those who don't "fit in"?
7. What new relationships can you ask God to bring into your life this week?

### Life Application Bible Notes

[10:12](#) According to Jewish law, certain foods were forbidden to be eaten (see [Leviticus 11](#)). The food laws made it difficult for Jews to eat with Gentiles without risking defilement. In fact, the Gentiles themselves were often seen as "unclean." Peter's vision meant that he should not look upon the Gentiles as inferior people whom God would not redeem. Before having the vision, Peter would have thought that a Gentile Roman officer could not become a follower of Christ. Afterward he understood that it was his responsibility to go with the messengers into a Gentile home and tell Cornelius the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ.

[10:15, 16](#) Steeped in Jewish tradition and filled with certain biases, Peter was convinced his views on the Gentiles were correct. It took a three-part heavenly vision for God to change Peter's mind. One of the most basic and practical lessons from this encounter is that when God speaks, we must not challenge what he says. Doubting God is the rebellion of Eden. When God says something is so, we must not debate with him. The right response is humble submission to his revealed truth. Are you trying to argue with God over some point that he has already made clear?

[10:21, 22](#) Cornelius was religious, devoted, generous, respected, and sincere ([10:1, 2](#)). However, he was still spiritually separated from God. Because he needed to understand the gospel, God sent Peter to present to him the truth about salvation. Be careful not to equate earnestness with righteousness before God. We are brought into right standing with God by faith in Christ alone. Have you trusted in Jesus? Are you sharing with others—even those who seem religious—the truth that Christ is the only way to God?

## Peter at Cornelius' House - [Acts 10:24-48](#)

### Some questions to answer and discuss:

1. If a family from another country moved in next door, how might you welcome them to the neighborhood?
2. In what way was Peter's understanding of God changed by his vision? ([10:34-35](#))
3. What was Peter's message to the group? ([10:34-43](#))
4. Why did Peter suddenly stop talking? ([10:44-46](#))
5. How do cultural and religious barriers hinder growth in our faith?
6. If you had a vision like Peter's, what deep-seated prejudices would you be called on to get rid of?
7. What is the first step you could take to show respect for a racial or cultural group that is different from you?

### Life Application Bible Notes - Acts 10:23-48

[10:34, 35](#) Perhaps the greatest barrier to the spread of the Good News in the first century was the Jewish-Gentile conflict. Most of the early believers were Jewish, and they thought it scandalous even to think of associating with Gentiles. But God told Peter to take the Good News to a Roman, and Peter obeyed despite his background and personal feelings. (Later Peter struggled with this again—see [Galatians 2:11-14](#).) God was making it clear that the Good News of Christ is for everyone! We should not allow any barrier—language, culture, race, geography, economic level, or educational level—to keep us from telling others about Christ.

[10:35](#) Every nation has people who are restless for God, ready to receive the Good News—but someone must take it to them. Seeking God is not enough—people must find him. How then shall seekers find God without someone to point the way? Is God asking you to show someone the way to him? (See [Romans 10:14,15](#).)

[10:37-43](#) Peter's brief and powerful sermon contains a concise statement of the Good News: Jesus' perfect life of servanthood; his death on the cross; his resurrection, personally witnessed and experienced by Peter; Jesus' fulfillment of the Scriptures; the necessity of personal faith in him. A sermon or witness for Christ does not need to be long to be effective. It should be Spirit-led and should center on Christ, the way and the truth and the life.

[10:43](#) Two examples of prophets testifying about Jesus and his forgiveness of sins are [Isaiah 52:13-53:12](#) and [Ezekiel 36:25, 26](#).

[10:45](#) Cornelius and Peter were very different people. Cornelius was wealthy, a Gentile, and a military man. Peter was a Jewish fisherman turned preacher. But God's plan included both of them. In Cornelius's house that day, a new chapter in Christian history was written as a Jewish Christian leader and a Gentile Christian convert each discovered something significant about the other. Cornelius needed Peter in order to hear the Good News and know the way of salvation. Peter needed Cornelius in order to know that Gentiles were included in God's plan. You and another believer may also need each other to understand how God works!

**10:47, 48** In this case, the people were baptized *after* they received the Holy Spirit, publicly declaring their allegiance to Christ and identification with the Christian community.

**10:48** Cornelius wanted Peter to stay with him for several days. He was a new believer and realized his need for teaching and fellowship. Are you as eager to learn more about Christ? Recognize your need to be with mature Christians, and strive to learn from them.

*Acts Study Guide questions and notes are from*

