

# REACHING Those People

BY Tracy Jennette

## Acts 10:1-11:18 ESV

**ARE YOU READY?** Are you ready to “eat” God’s Word today? He has an exciting, challenging meal for us.

**PRAY WITH ME** – Father, we need Your food. We are self-centered and self-righteous. Show us Your ways today. Challenge us. We are focusing on You and nothing else.

Okay, let’s read the passage and digest it together.

**IT’S ONE STORY**, but let’s take it in four parts.

READ the first passage below.

### Acts 10:1-8

*At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, <sup>2</sup> a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. <sup>3</sup> About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.” <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. <sup>6</sup> He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.” <sup>7</sup> 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, <sup>8</sup> and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.*

#### Who is the man in verses 1-2?

#### Name six traits about him.

Cornelius was not a Jew; therefore, he was a Gentile. Who visited Cornelius (verse 3)?

What did the angel look like? (Look in verse 30 where Cornelius describes his experience.)

Cornelius was a devout man. What did Cornelius do that was regarded as an offering to God (verse 4)?

The angel of God told Cornelius to send men to Joppa to invite a certain man back to Cornelius’ house. Who was that man?

What do we know about Simon Peter? (See Matt 4:18-20.) Was Peter a Jew or a Gentile?

#### SO, LET’S SUMMARIZE

Cornelius, a very devout and righteous non-Jew (or \_\_\_\_\_), was visited in a vision by an \_\_\_\_\_ who was bright and shining and in the form of a man.

The angel told Cornelius to invite \_\_\_\_\_ (who was a Jesus follower) to his house. Cornelius orders his men to travel to the city of Joppa to get Peter.

OKAY, LET'S PRESS ON

READ the next section. Cornelius' men have begun the journey to visit and get Peter.

### Acts 10:9-23

<sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance <sup>11</sup>and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. <sup>12</sup>In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. <sup>13</sup>And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." <sup>14</sup>But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." <sup>15</sup>And the voice came to him again a second time, What God has made clean, do not call common." <sup>16</sup>This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. <sup>17</sup>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 <sup>18</sup>and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. <sup>19</sup>And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup>Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." <sup>21</sup>And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" <sup>22</sup>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." <sup>23</sup>So he invited them in to be his guests.

As Cornelius' men approached Joppa, \_\_\_\_\_ was on his roof (verse 9). And what was he doing on the roof?

Peter fell into a trance and saw a large \_\_\_\_\_ containing lots of \_\_\_\_\_ (verses 11-12).

In the vision, a voice commanded Peter to do what?

Peter, being a good Jew, refused to eat such unclean animals. He knew that God had deemed such animals unclean for Jews to eat or even touch. The ceremonial law of the Old Testament had set this forth. But the coming of Jesus, the final cleansing sacrifice, lifted those food restrictions. He abolished these long-held barriers between persons. (See Mark 7:17-23.)

What did Jesus say in Mark 7:17-23?

When Peter refused to eat, the voice from God said what (verse 15)?

How many times did the voice say, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean"?

And suddenly, how many "unclean" men arrived at Peter's door?

The fact that God told Peter three times and those three men arrived is not a coincidence. What was God showing Peter by giving him the vision of the sheet?

God was equating unclean/un-kosher animals to what?

When Cornelius' men arrived, the \_\_\_\_\_ spoke to Peter and commanded him to \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 20).

Why did the angel tell Cornelius to go and get Peter (verse 22)?

In a trance, Peter saw a large \_\_\_\_\_ containing animals/reptiles/birds which he regarded as unclean, according to God's dietary laws for Jews in the Old Testament.

The voice during the trance told Peter to \_\_\_\_\_ the unclean animals. Peter refused.

How many times did the voice command Peter to eat the unclean animals?

And how many "unclean" Gentile men suddenly appeared at Peter's house? The Spirit told Peter not to hesitate to go with the Gentile men because \_\_\_\_\_ had sent the men to Peter.

OKAY, LET'S PRESS ON

LET'S READ the next section.

### Acts 10:23-48

<sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. <sup>25</sup>When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. <sup>26</sup>But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." <sup>27</sup>And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. <sup>28</sup>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. <sup>29</sup>So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me." <sup>30</sup>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 <sup>31</sup>nice and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. <sup>32</sup> 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.' <sup>33</sup> 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." <sup>34</sup>So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup>As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), <sup>37</sup>you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: <sup>38</sup>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. <sup>39</sup>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, <sup>40</sup>but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, <sup>41</sup>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. <sup>42</sup>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. <sup>43</sup>To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." <sup>44</sup>While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. <sup>45</sup>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. <sup>46</sup>For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, <sup>47</sup>"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" <sup>48</sup>And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

Peter and his believing friends arrived at Cornelius' house. Cornelius had invited many people, family, and friends, to be there to meet and hear the man mentioned by the angel in the vision (Simon Peter).

Why do you think Cornelius invited his family/friends to be there when Peter arrived (verses 22, 24)?

Why do you think Cornelius fell at Peter's feet (verses 25-26)?

What did Peter admit in verses 27-28?

Peter asked Cornelius why he had invited him to his house and Cornelius explained about the angel's visit. For what reason did Cornelius say that he had invited Peter to come to his home (verses 30-33)?

What lesson/revelation from God did Peter learn (verses 34-36)?

With Cornelius and all his friends and family surrounding him, Peter shared the truth of Jesus' life, His miracles of healing, and His death and resurrection. Peter declared that Jesus of Nazareth had been anointed with the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 38) and that he did good and healed all who were \_\_\_\_\_.

What did Peter say that God had commanded him and others to do (verses 39-42)?

All the prophets testify that if you believe in Jesus Christ, you receive \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 43)?

As Peter was speaking, the gift of the \_\_\_\_\_ came down on all the \_\_\_\_\_ who heard Peter's message (verses 44-46).

What people were astonished that the Holy Spirit had been poured out onto Gentiles (verse 45)?

What were the signs that the Holy Spirit had been poured out onto the people (verse 46)?

Why did Peter baptize the people (verses 46-48)?

**SO, LET'S SUMMARIZE**

Peter arrived at Cornelius' home. He mentioned to all the gathered people that for him to associate with them went against \_\_\_\_\_ law. However, God had now shown him that he shouldn't call anything impure or unclean.

Cornelius shared his own visit from the angel. Peter again stated that God shows no \_\_\_\_\_ among people and accepts people from every \_\_\_\_\_ who fear and do what is right.

As Peter shared the truth of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the \_\_\_\_\_ came upon the non-Jews, the \_\_\_\_\_. And seeing that God had poured out His Spirit onto the Gentiles, Peter baptized each person.

*OKAY, LET'S PRESS ON*

LET'S READ the fourth and final section.

**Acts 11:1-18**

*Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.*

<sup>2</sup>So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, <sup>3</sup>"You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them." <sup>4</sup>But Peter began and explained it to them in order: <sup>5</sup>"I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision, something like a great sheet descending, being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to me.

<sup>6</sup>Looking at it closely, I observed animals and beasts of prey

*and reptiles and birds of the air. <sup>7</sup>And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' <sup>8</sup>But I said, 'By no means, Lord; for nothing common or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' <sup>9</sup>But the voice answered a second time from heaven, 'What God has made clean, do not call common.' <sup>10</sup>This happened three times, and all was drawn up again into heaven. <sup>11</sup>And behold, at that very moment three men arrived at the house in which we were, sent to me from Caesarea. <sup>12</sup>And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no distinction. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. <sup>13</sup>And he told us how he had seen the angel stand in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon who is called Peter; <sup>14</sup> he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' <sup>15</sup>As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning. <sup>16</sup>And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>17</sup>If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?" <sup>18</sup>When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, "Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."*

Peter was criticized by whom (verses 1-3)? Why?

Peter told the Jews (who were Jesus' followers) the entire story—that as he began speaking to the Gentiles (who are unclean to Jews), the Holy Spirit came on them just like He had come on \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 15). God had given the Gentiles the same \_\_\_\_\_ He had given to the Jews who believe in Jesus Christ (verse 17).

The Holy Spirit is a \_\_\_\_\_ (verse 17).

Peter's Jesus-following, Jewish friends came to what realization (verse 18)?

Application:

Was Cornelius a follower of Jesus in verses 10:1-5?

According to this passage, can an unsaved person receive a vision from an angel of God?

As told in this account, if unsaved individuals can receive visions from God, what is the need for a

Christian to go to them?

Was Peter wrong (or was he obedient) in being resolved to not associate with unclean people? (See Leviticus 11:27-28).

Think about it! Peter had walked with Christ. He witnessed his death and resurrection. But God was still revealing something to him. The lightbulb came on—ding! Peter realized that the entire time God’s plan was to ultimately baptize, with the Holy Spirit, any people who believed—not just God’s chosen people, the Jews.

What is the mystery of the Gospel as stated in Ephesians 3:4-6?

The Gentiles in this story experienced two baptisms. One by \_\_\_\_\_ and one by the \_\_\_\_\_ (verses 10:48 and 11:16). What does this signify about water baptism?

#### **WHOM GOD VISITED | ABOUT THE MEN**

In traits and habits, what similarities do we see in Cornelius and Peter?

In this passage, what type of men did God visit?  
In what form did God speak to Cornelius (verses 10:30-31).

In what form did God speak to Peter (verses 10:9-13)?

Does your life reflect the same habits and devotion Cornelius and Peter exhibited? If not, note here how you’ll commit to improve your disciplines/habits so that you, too, can clearly hear from God when He speaks.

*REMEMBER THIS!* Before Peter visited Cornelius’ home, God had already prepared the way by speaking to Cornelius. When we, too, are on the evangelistic/mission field, both at home and abroad, God has already planted people to whom we’ll minister (verse 10:30). You can count on that! Name a time in your life when you’ve witnessed this. *W*

#### **PRAYER**

Ask God to send you to the places where he has prepared persons to hear the Good News. Ask Him to send you to the nations. I know He will be true to answer.

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,” (Revelation 7:9).

***To what people group is God calling you?***  
*The fact that 3.4 billion persons on planet earth have never ever heard the Good News is staggering and convicting. Most live overseas.*

*Some live in the United States.*

*Some live in your state.*

***Is God calling you to share with them?***

#### **WAYS TO ENGAGE THE NATIONS**

##### **VOLUNTEER AT A FOOD PANTRY FOR INTERNATIONALS**

Honestly, you could volunteer one time and make a friend for life. It’s so enjoyable helping and interacting with the different people groups. **DON’T BE SHY; INVITE ‘EM!** The rest of the world is accustomed to inviting total strangers over for lunch or dinner. Don’t be the one who never invites an international acquaint-





tance over for a meal. The dinner table is one of the best spots to form a lasting friendship.

#### **HAVE A UNIVERSITY NEARBY?**

Many universities have ministries that offer English classes and conversational English sessions. Drop by sometime and speak with the international students. They'll love your involvement in their lives and your authentic American accent.

#### **EAT ETHNICALLY**

Try a new ethnic restaurant. Then visit it weekly and form a friendship with the employees. Ask them how they say "Hello, how are you?" in their language. Invite them to hike a waterfall with you.

#### **PRAY WITH THE LIKE-MINDED**

Find a prayer group concentrated on praying for the unreached in your community....and join them! It will fuel your fire even further and keep you on focus.

#### **TEACH ENGLISH**

ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers are always needed. And you don't have to be a vocational teacher. Search the internet for local churches proving ESL classes to internationals. Or consider starting a program at your own church. Here is an example of teacher volunteers being trained in Virginia: <https://www.sbcv.org/esl/>

#### **SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS REACHING THE UNREACHED**

TWR (Trans World Radio) has a radio program reaching women in unreached countries. <https://give.twr.org/woh22.html>

#### **DAILY HIGHLIGHT FOR PRAYER**

To learn more and pray informatively, sign up to receive a quick blurb about the "Unreached People Group of the Day." <https://joshuaproject.net/> (Share it with your Sunday school class or prayer group.)

#### **HOW IS YOUR CHURCH SPENDING ITS MONEY?**

Encourage your church to budget monies to "unreached people groups" (UPGs), those who have no witness of Jesus whatsoever.

#### **RESOURCES**

Joshua Project has great statistics on the world's unreached: <https://joshuaproject.net>

***There is much work left to do. Let's engage!***

#### ***About the Author***

*Tracy has been involved in Information Technology for over 30 years. Also, God has given her a love for his peoples, "ethne", worldwide. She was privileged to live and walk among one such group in the Middle East and has traveled to 20+ countries, experiencing the wonderful cultures of the world. Domestically, she involves herself in ESL, friendship/hospitality, international food pantries, leading summer high school missions among our nation's immigrant populations, and sharing God's love and amazing forgiveness through all things. She enjoys gardening, hiking, and cooking the world's cuisines.*