

ST. ARMANDS KEY LUTHERAN CHURCH
SARASOTA, FLORIDA

COME, JOIN THE CONVERSATION!
ON
THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Lesson Plan for Thursday – March 7, 2013
Resource Book – Kerygma Series – *“into the world”*
Chapter 8 – *“Into All the World”*
Acts 10:1-11:18

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To carry on our conversation about the Book of Acts while continuing growth in fellowship with other participants.
2. To summarize the visions of Cornelius and Peter in Acts 10.
3. To cite several examples of kosher dietary laws and explains why they would be so important to Peter.
4. To describe the basis on which Peter and the Jerusalem church decided the new faith community would be open to the Gentiles.
5. To relate the story of Peter’s ministry with Cornelius to SAKLC’s welcoming of new members.

OPENING PRAYER OF PRAISE – PSALM 98

O sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory.

The Lord has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.

He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.

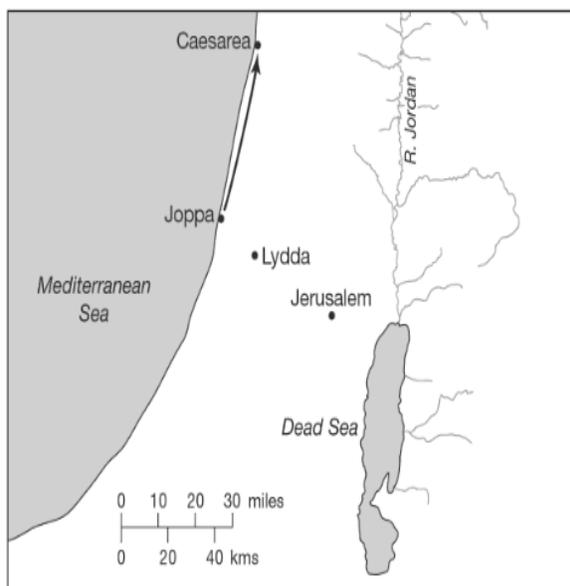
With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.

Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.

Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy at the presence of the Lord, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

(All): Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

EXPLORING THE SCRIPTURE



Acts 10.1-16

Acts 10:1-8 – Cornelius' Vision

In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. ²He was a devout man who feared God with all his household; he gave alms generously to the people and prayed constantly to God. ³One afternoon at about three o'clock he had a vision in which he clearly saw an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius." ⁴He stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" He answered, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God." ⁵Now send men to Joppa for a certain Simon who is called Peter; ⁶he is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside." ⁷When the

angel who spoke to him had left, he called two of his slaves and a devout soldier from the ranks of those who served him, ⁸and after telling them everything, he sent them to Joppa.

REPORT ON CORNELIUS' VISION

1. What is the message of Cornelius' vision?
2. The Roman Empire was built on relentless military power. Cornelius was a centurion. A centurion is a middle-ranking Roman military officer with anywhere between fifty and one hundred men under him. Cornelius was posted to Cesarea, a key port in a key strategic zone. How does Cornelius, this first Roman we meet in the book of Acts, depart from the stereotype of a Roman officer?

KOSHER DIETARY LAWS

As you read the following passages from Leviticus, note the various creatures that Jews are not to eat.

Leviticus 11:1-8

The Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them: ²Speak to the people of Israel, saying: From among all the land animals, these are the creatures that you may eat. ³Any animal that has divided hoofs and is cleft-footed and chews the cud—such you may eat. ⁴But among those that chew the cud or have divided hoofs, you shall not eat the following: the camel, for even though it chews the cud, it does not have divided hoofs; it is unclean for you. ⁵The rock badger, for even though it chews the cud, it does not have divided hoofs; it is unclean for you. ⁶The hare, for even though it chews the cud, it does not have divided hoofs; it is unclean for you. ⁷The pig, for even though it has divided hoofs and is cleft-footed, it does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. ⁸Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch; they are unclean for you.

Leviticus 11:9-12

⁹These you may eat, of all that are in the waters. Everything in the waters that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the streams—such you may eat. ¹⁰But anything in the seas or the streams that does not have fins and scales, of the swarming creatures in the waters and among all the other living creatures that are in the waters—they are detestable to you ¹¹and detestable they shall remain. Of their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall regard as detestable. ¹²Everything in the waters that does not have fins and scales is detestable to you.

Leviticus 11:13-19

¹³These you shall regard as detestable among the birds. They shall not be eaten; they are an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the osprey, ¹⁴the buzzard, the kite of any kind; ¹⁵every raven of any kind; ¹⁶the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind; ¹⁷the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, ¹⁸the water hen, the desert owl, the carrion vulture, ¹⁹the stork, the heron of any kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

Leviticus 11:20-23

²⁰All winged insects that walk upon all fours are detestable to you. ²¹But among the winged insects that walk on all fours you may eat those that have jointed legs above their feet, with which to leap on the ground. ²²Of them you may eat: the locust according to its kind, the bald locust according to its kind, the cricket according to its kind, and the grasshopper according to its kind. ²³But all other winged insects that have four feet are detestable to you.

Leviticus 11:41-43

⁴¹All creatures that swarm upon the earth are detestable; they shall not be eaten. ⁴²Whatever moves on its belly, and whatever moves on all fours, or whatever has many feet, all the creatures that swarm upon the earth, you shall not eat; for they are detestable. ⁴³You shall not make yourselves detestable with any creature that swarms; you shall not defile yourselves with them, and so become unclean.

Leviticus 11:44-45: Observing Dietary Laws

⁴⁴For I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming creature that moves on the earth. ⁴⁵For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall be holy, for I am holy.

1. Considering Leviticus 11:44-45, what are the reasons for observing the dietary laws?

Acts 10:9-16 –Peter’s Dream

⁹About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹²In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³Then he heard a voice saying, “Get up,

Peter; kill and eat.” ¹⁴But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean.” ¹⁵The voice said to him again, a second time, “What God has made clean, you must not call profane.” ¹⁶This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.

REPORT ON PETER’S DREAM

Acts 10:17-23 – Peter begins to understand his vision

¹⁷Now while Peter was greatly puzzled about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon’s house and were standing by the gate. ¹⁸They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there.

¹⁹While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Look, three men are searching for you. ²⁰Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them.” ²¹So Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for your coming?” ²²They answered, “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.” ²³So Peter invited them in and gave them lodging. The next day he got up and went with them, and some of the believers from Joppa accompanied him.

1. What kind of emotions is Peter experiencing during this dream?
2. What did Peter learn from his dream that prepares him to meet Cornelius?
3. God could have communicated the gospel to Cornelius directly. Why do you think he had Peter and others travel from Joppa to Caesarea to meet with Cornelius and a houseful of other people face to face?
4. Some believe this story suggests that “all religions lead to God” or even that all religions are basically the same. What evidence is there in this episode that neither Cornelius nor Peter would agree with such a viewpoint?

Acts 10:24-43

²⁴The following day they came to Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵On Peter's arrival Cornelius met him, and falling at his feet, worshiped him. ²⁶But Peter made him get up, saying, "Stand up; I am only a mortal." ²⁷And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled; ²⁸and he said to them, "You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without objection. Now may I ask why you sent for me?" ³⁰Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this very hour, at three o'clock, I was praying in my house when suddenly a man in dazzling clothes stood before me. ³¹He said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. ³²Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon, who is called Peter; he is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' ³³Therefore I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. So now all of us are here in the presence of God to listen to all that the Lord has commanded you to say."

Acts 10:34-43 – Telling the Gentiles About Jesus

³⁴Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

1. What are the major points of Peter's remarks?

Acts 10:44-48 – Peter’s Speech

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷“Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

1. Why did Peter change his mind?
2. On what authority did Peter declare that the Gentiles were welcome in the church?
3. Peter frames his message about Jesus and the story of Israel with two wider declarations – Jesus is Lord of all (10:36) and everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name (10:43). How have you seen the power of these messages at work?

Acts 11:1-18

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. ²So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, ³saying, “Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?” ⁴Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, ⁵“I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. ⁶As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷I also heard a voice saying to me, ‘Get up, Peter; kill and eat.’ ⁸But I replied, ‘By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’ ⁹But a second time the voice answered from heaven, ‘What God has made clean, you must not call profane.’ ¹⁰This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. ¹¹At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. ¹²The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man’s house. ¹³He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, ‘Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; ¹⁴he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.’ ¹⁵And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷If then God gave them the

same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?" ¹⁸When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

1. What controversy awaits Peter when he travels from Joppa to Jerusalem?
2. Why do you think the leaders of the church in Jerusalem were convinced that Peter's experience at Caesarea was not an aberration of "special case"?
3. Have you ever been criticized for something you did in ministry? How did you respond?
4. How does Peter respond to the objections? What does Peter's experience say to how we deal with the issue of "insider" mentality?
5. In what ways might our community need to experience humility for the sake of the gospel – forgoing certain privileges or giving greater honor to others?
6. Why do you think Peter's critics came to agree with him?

CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT SESSION IN TWO WEEKS – THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2013 – 10:30 AM OGRAM HALL

1. Read Resource Book – Chapter 9 – "*Antioch and Jerusalem*"
2. In Scripture read: Acts 11:19-12:25