



Acts 10:17-33 | Session 27 | The Meeting in Caesarea, Part 1

In Acts 10:1-16, Cornelius, in Caesarea, and Peter in Joppa, have nearly simultaneous visions. Cornelius's vision was to send men to Joppa to find Peter, and Peter's vision was of a sheet, tied at four corners and holding all sorts of animals, being lowered to earth and the Lord telling Peter, in the vision, to *kill and eat*. The animals were unclean (not kosher) to the Jew. Peter was repulsed by the Lord's command and resisted the message at least three times.

Verses 17,18—

Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision...should mean. The word **doubted** in Greek is *diaporeo*, *dia* = *through* and *aporeo* = *perplexed*. The NIV translation uses "Peter was wondering" but it was more than wondering. He's confused, or baffled. It wasn't that he **doubted** what the Lord had shown him was true, but that he was thoroughly perplexed by this new revelation. This was eight years after the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles. For those who claim the dispensation of grace began then, they will have to answer why Peter for eight years has not been living by grace, but rather is still bound to the Law (see vs. 14). What is the new revelation God has shown Peter in the vision? That for the Jew, there was now freedom from the *kosher laws*. Peter has not received any other revelation than that. It will be the apostle Paul who receives the revelation that justification will be offered through Jesus Christ to those who simply believe (Acts 13:38,39).

Verses 19,20—

While Peter thought on the vision. The word "on" is the Greek word *peri*. We get words like *perimeter* and *periodical*, etc. It implies "around." Peter was *turning around, or turning over the thought of the vision in his mind*. As he was doing this, the **three men** (Acts 10:7) showed up. The Lord spoke again to Peter: **Arise...get thee down and go with them**. At this point Peter doesn't have a clue who the men are or where he is supposed to go, but is told **doubting nothing: for I have sent them**. The word **doubting** is *diakrino*. That is, don't spend time questioning (*krino*) them over and over (*dia*).

Verses 21,22,23—

Peter asks a typical question of the men, **what is the cause wherefore ye are come?** The men give a clear response in accordance with the vision Cornelius received (Acts 3:3-6). Peter appears to not be resisting anymore and is obedient to the voice of the Lord, **he called them in, and lodged them**, as he prepared for the departure. **On the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him**.

Verse 24—

The next day they entered **Caesarea and Cornelius waited for them**. He was sure they would arrive for he **had called together his kinsmen and near friends**. This was a big event. An apostle was coming to town!

Verse 25,26—

Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. Cornelius, who had a vision from an angel must have believed Peter had some sort of divine power, so he bowed to him in worship. We should never keep company with anyone who demands (or allows) our worship. Cult leaders are notorious for this, as is the pope in Rome who believes he holds the same apostolic office as Peter! We are to worship only God, not man. And this is an indication that Cornelius was not a Jew. He did not fully understand the

Law of Moses, in particular the first commandment “Ye shall have no other gods before Me (Ex. 20:3). Peter would have none of that and instructed Cornelius to **Stand up; I myself also am a man.**

Verses 27,28—

Found many that were come together. Peter still does not know the reason he has been summoned, but now as he walks into the room, he finds a crowd of **many** Gentiles **that were come together.** It would have been surprising to him, and maybe a bit shocking to see all Gentiles gathered and waiting for him. At this point, according to Acts 11:19, the witness of Jesus as Messiah had only been delivered to the Jews.

Peter’s statement about it being **unlawful...for a Jew to keep company** with Gentiles is not directly *in the Law of Moses* (and Peter doesn’t say it is). It is more of a rabbinical teaching that came along later; according to some rabbis, the homes of Gentiles were unclean.¹ And it was evident even in John 18:28, where the officers of the Jews would not enter into *Pilate’s house, lest they should be defiled...* Peter was certainly a devout Jew who followed not only the Law of Moses, but the rabbinical laws and traditions. He was not living under grace.

What does Peter mean **God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean**? He is probably referring to verse 20 where the Lord told him to go **without doubting**. In fact, he seems to clarify what he means in verse 29, **I came unto you without gainsaying**, that is *I came with the attitude that I would not speak against you.*

And now the question; **what intent have ye sent for me**? Peter is a curious to know why he is there as Cornelius and his family and friends are about what Peter is going to tell them.

Peter was an apostle to the circumcision (the Jews). The kingdom was promised to the Jews, and Peter was specifically instructed by Jesus eight to ten years earlier to “*Go not into the way of the Gentiles.*” (See also Matthew 10.5; 15:24; 15:26). Peter didn’t have a message for the Gentiles.

Verse 29—

Peter came to meet Cornelius **without gainsaying** is *without doubting the reason, or without objection* (see verse 20). Yet, he undoubtedly does not understand why he is meeting with Cornelius, **I ask therefore what intent ye have sent for me?**

Verses 30-33—

Cornelius is in the dark as well as to why Peter is there. All he did was obey the message that was in the vision. So, he waits, along with all those in the house with him **present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.** Go for it Peter!

What will Peter say? We will find out next week.

¹ *The Mishnah, Ohalot 18:7*