

"VISION OF THE GENTILE WORLD"

Acts 10

INTRODUCTION:

The scene of our story takes place in Caesarea. You can visit the ruins of that magnificent Roman city. And view what is left of the wide streets and the columned palaces. *When I visited C - rain falling as I might, wind blowing from sea.*

When we visited there, we were told that the city was built in 25 BC by Herod the great. Who had slain the babies at the time of the birth of Jesus. It was named after Augustus Caesar. It was a metropolitan center. With a population of Jews, Greeks, Syrians, etc. The main thing that took place in Caesarea was the center of administration, for the empire world. The Roman Empire held its administration offices in that part of the world - in Caesarea. And it was right there that we have the story of the beginning of the Gospel being offered to the Gentiles.

The Apostles had received the commission to teach all nations. God cannot work without an instrument. And from the country towns of Judea - the scene of the book of Acts now changes abruptly. And goes to the Gentile city. And this is to be one of the most significant facts. This seaport, built by Herod the great, was large enough to serve sea going vessels - even now you can stand on the shore and see the extensive harbor construction. It is visible. The port city became the Roman capital of Palestine. And it enjoyed a cultural advantage as a Roman city. Here the Roman governor lived in the palace built by Herod. And from Caesarea, the ruler journeyed to Jerusalem. Where at the festive seasons, he asserted his authority. By his presence. And since the population of Caesarea was Gentile, the relation between Jew and Gentile was not always smooth. Caesarea also appears to be the center of emperor worship. Although there may have been the presence of many Jews, would have insured a synagogue there.

In this story, possibly Cornelius was not the first Gentile convert. However, we could not prove it. But his conversion was the first recorded. And here an Apostle, under divine guidance, goes to preach to a Roman officer. And here Gentiles are formally welcomed into the church.

Keep in mind, at first, Jews were only evangelized. But the aim of God's ministers is to reach all of the people. And we find his promise to Abraham and his seed, broadening his foundations.

Now the miracle that happened here, and the lesson that we are going to learn, was a lesson that Peter had to learn. And the church had to learn.

Remember in the closing chapter, Peter had gone down to Joppa and he was living or staying with Simon the tanner. Accepting the hospitality of this man.

When I visited Joppa - rain falling as tonight - wind from sea -

Now we will want to use about four words tonight - the man, the missionary, the meeting, and the message.

I. THE MAN - V. 1-8

V.1 The Gentile man - Cornelius by name, was a centurion. V. 1. Of a military company stationed at Caesarea. He had a hundred men in his command. Who formed part of the body guard for the emperor. He is a prominent man, a soldier, a captain. Which at that time ruled the world. This man was not just one of a hundred - but he was of a group called the Italian band. And special palace guard group made up and stationed there at the administrative center there in Caesarea.

He was a man of high character. And the Bible tells us in the first two verses something about it.

V. 2 1- First, he was a devout man. That means that he had religious feelings and he had deep interest in the things of God. Cornelius did not know all that he wanted to know about God. But he tells us here that he was devout. Even though the Jews classified him as a heathen, he was a devout worshipper. This means that while he was in Palestine, he took advantage of the spiritual opportunities. He no doubt tried to learn something of the will of God.

2- Second, he feared God with all his house. Now this means that he recognized God's place and power and he tried to lead his family to be a God fearing family.

3- The Bible says that he gave much alms to all people. He was not a stingy man. He did not make money his God. He did not look down on a mass fortune. He saw their plight and he tried to help them. And out of his abundance, he tried to help those who had needs. He was a liberal giver. Poverty was among the people where Cornelius ruled. And he had numbers of opportunities to do good.

V. 2 4- Now the fourth thing it says, he prayed to God always. He knew his own strength, was not sufficient. And he must have observed a regular period which was subscribed for the Jews. At 9, 12, and 3 daily. He was seeking God, through prayer. Now this was a responsible Roman soldier - a high-ranking military officer. And the strength rest upon his shoulders. He had been attracted as many of the Gentiles, in their worship of one God and his ideals. Hence, when the scene opens in Caesarea, Cornelius is at prayer. This shows us the spiritual influence of the Jewish teaching - it was strong. And as a generous giver, he had further revelations of God. He wants to know what else the Gentile might do to approach the God of Israel.

Now this is one of the best men that you will ever read about in the Bible. He was devoted to God, he feared God, he helped the poor, he prayed to God. Some Christians today do not do as much. Surely this man doesn't need to be born again. He was alright as he is. Again, I would have you remember, that he is not saved. We are not saved by our goodness or by righteousness. We can be the finest person, and still be on our way to Hell.

There are two ideas in religion in the world today. There is one which says, do this and that, and the other. You go through that form and that ceremony, and you will be saved. Now the other group says, it is not a case of what we do - Christ has done it all, for us on the cross. We are dead men - dead in sin. We need to see that Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe. Sin has left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow.

If Cornelius would have presented himself for membership in most churches today, they would have gladly received him and considered themselves fortunate to have this captain of the Caesarean Army to join their church. But we discover that Cornelius was a lost man. He was longing, seeking. He had morality. But the Gospel is on the assumption that all men are lost. Wicked men, good men, moral men - and that we are unable to save ourselves.

Now V. 3 - Cornelius had a vision. It is about the ninth hour and the angel spoke to him. He was visited by an angel, encourage by an angel, directed by an angel. V. 3, 7, 8. I think God speaks to us today by his spirit in the same way.

V. 4 - His prayers and gifts have come up as a memorial before God. What he had done had not been overlooked by the Heavenly Father.

V. 5 - He is instructed to send for Peter and Joppa.

V. 6 - He locates Peter at Simon's - the tanner's house.

V. 7, 8 - Servants are sent to Joppa. This Gentile received in person what he is to do.

Why did not the angel tell Cornelius how to be saved. He was there on the spot and Peter was a day and a half away. By the time the men sent on that trip, it would be three days. Well, the angel knew the story of redeeming love. But never do we find a place in the New Testament where an angel was permitted to preach. All he did was to tell Cornelius where he could find the preacher, and get the message.

Cornelius (lost no time), he was eager to see Peter. And hear God's message. I wish that men today were as eager to hear the same message. I wish that lost men today would crowd the churches and cry out to preachers - what must I do to be saved. Instead of going into places of amusements and sports on the Lord's Day and pass Jesus by. They forget the one who has blessed them all the week. Who has given them the day of rest. I imagine, in judgement they are going to cry out, oh God, give me back some of the time that I have wasted. Give me another chance that I might make good. Cornelius did not delay. He did not say that I will attend to this next week. But he got his servants and a soldier to go down and find the preacher.

II. THE MISSIONARY - V. 9-23

Peter was a chosen missionary - and like all other Jews, he moved to have his prejudices removed. V. 9. As the gulf between the Jew and the Gentile was great. The Gentile was in abomination. Even to touch him was to be defiled. And the Gentile's religion was blasphemy.

Now we find the Gentile was praying and what God instructed him to do - he obeyed. Now we find the Jew at prayer - Peter was praying. He was also a man of spiritual habit, and waited in faith for direction from the Lord as he waited at Joppa. We might note here in passing, that staying with this tanner is something unheard of because he was considered unclean - and he had to deal with dead bodies of animals and no rigid Jew would dream of accepting hospitality from a tanner, by the seashore outside the city. No doubt the tanner was a Christian.

It was mid-day and Peter went up on the roof. And was there for a season of prayer.

10 While he prayed about noontime, he became hungry. And he had a vision concerning food. He might have been looking out over the waters. And saw a ship with a big sail. The word for sheep - comes from the word that is often used as a ship's sail.

11 And the vision concerned food. But it was unclean food. And the Jewish law was given in detail. Between the clean and unclean. (Lev. 11:1-45). There were certain animals accepted and certain unacceptable. Lev. 17:10-14. Now the Gentiles on the other hand, delighted in rare cuts of meat. The Jew would never dream of eating such unclean meat. It was absurd. There was trouble by this vision.

Now some scholars believe that the Gospel of Mark represents Peter's memory of Jesus' ministry. Mark 7:14-23. That God had intended from the beginning that there were things that he had made clean - and he was making it clearer to Peter.

In other words, it was like a great ark - it was like Noah's ark. It was coming down out of Heaven, and Peter looked into it and he saw every kind of animal. Bird, beast, elephant, lion, tiger, the eagle, the humming bird, the horse, the rabbit, the dove. It was certainly a sight - for Peter never saw anything before to compare to it.

Generally Jews only ate animals that chewed their cud and whose hoofs were cloven. All others were unclean and forbidden.

This happened three times, and there could be no mistake of Peter dodging the message, as it came to him. While he waited for dinner, he no doubt could smell the odors from the kitchen. He was hungry, and thinking about eating in a few minutes. But while he was in prayer, and the waves were lapping on the shore, Peter did not get far in his prayer before he was in this trance or vision. And God sent this vision to him. The Heavens opened - the sheep was let down. And he was able to look in. And God said to him, rise Peter, kill and eat. V. 13.

V. 14 - Peter said, not so, Lord.

And then God said to him, for God has cleansed. Do not call common.

What did God teach Peter? Well, he thought that everybody but the Jews were outcasts. Surely God did not love outsiders. And these Gentiles wanted to come in and be spiritually blessed. How marvelous it was that Peter received this vision. And God told him that afternoon what to do.

Each of the three times, the vessel appeared before him. V. 11-15. Peter is bidden to eat, and each time Peter refuses. And each time Peter is rebuked.

V. 21-23 - Just then the invitation comes. He had just learned not to shrink back and contact other nations. So while at prayer, both Cornelius and Peter had sensed God's will. And the three men sent by Cornelius - the meaning was clear. For the messengers of the Gentiles stood at his gates.

Now the same truth, Jonah had to learn. Cornelius had some light of the Lord - but he needed more.

What is God's medium - to win the world to Jesus Christ today. It has not changed his way of proclaiming the Gospel. God is dependent upon you and me. Another man, a believer, a Christian to take the word of life to the person who is seeking and searching. God will not send his angels. The only way that God is going to win the city of Chesapeake, to Jesus Christ, is through the medium of Christian people in Chesapeake during the witness of God. And if we are not his medium, this city will not be won to Christ.

There is a poem that goes --

God has no hands but our hands
To do his work today
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in his way
He has no lips but our lips
To tell men how he died

This is absolutely the truth. There is no way in the world - on one side is the lost ones. On the other, is the seeking man - the searching man. And then you look - there is a medium. A man who is willing to go tell the lost, who wants to hear the Gospel.

This is world missions. A comprehensiveness of the Gospel. The four corners reaches out to all the globe. And here is a supernatural revelation, of a natural event.

V. 19 - He gets a vision of the task. The power of these men standing, wanting to know the truth. Now it is a terrible thing to have a vision - to be wrapped up in the contemplation of it, and hear the knock of needy hands upon the door - and do nothing to help. To do nothing to help save the lost. May none of us go through life so poor, never to have known that happiness of sharing what we know about Jesus Christ, with those who are lost.

17 18-19 When that knock came to the door - Peter woke up puzzled. And a man called out - is Simon Peter, the preacher here. The Holy Spirit said to Peter, God has sent these men to you. Do not question the matter at all - just go with them. I think Peter said, alright Lord, I do not understand but I will go. I think that is the attitude we ought to take when we are doing God's work in the church. Many people say, well, I don't know what to say or what to do - but if you will go, you are not going alone. God is going with you. Peter went downstairs and approached the men. And he told them that he was Simon Peter. And I think he asked what he could do for them.

23 V. 24 - We read that Peter, the Jew, had had no dealings with the Gentile dogs but he invited these men to spend the night. The next morning, they got up early, and they go on their way. And what a wonderful thing is going to happen as they go on their way.

III. THE MEETING - V. 25

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him. Fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. Cornelius was waiting with his friends. But Peter took Cornelius by the hand and said, stand up. I am a man, just like you are. I think the true servant of God today does not take the glory to himself but gives it to the Lord. Because after all, the preacher is just a man.

It is no greater place than others. Except in his dedication and in his willingness to serve.

Now many years ago, before Jonah had heard the Lord's call at Joppa too - and he understood his mission. And Joppa was the scene of his disobedience. He rejected the concept of God's love for the Gentiles and the non-Israelites. He refused to be the arm of God's outreach to the world beyond.

Now Joppa might well have been the sight of Peter's disobedience too.

And quite often, Joppa is the place where the church refuses to reach out. But fortified with prayer Peter accompanied his visitors and he knew that the church of Jerusalem would frown upon his mission, as he went to the Gentile household.

Had not Jesus admonished his Disciples to be as wise as serpents, harmless as doves. Matt. 10:16. Now before Pentecost, such a mission would have been unthinkable.

Now the friendly tour of Judean towns and the healing of a few sick is all being changed in direction and the main action - where the church is ready to reach the Gentile. And Peter responded to the church.

27
I think the foresight of both Peter and Cornelius here - Peter arranged the Jews of Joppa to accompany him. And Cornelius invited Gentile friends into hear Peter.

They were 30 miles apart. When a soul is seeking and a missionary is willing, a meeting is certain to be arranged by the spirit.

Cornelius invited his friends. Peter invited six people to go along with him. Now this meeting unfolds two great truths.

1 - First, the effort of each one to secure an audience. For Christ's messenger.

V. 24-27 - We know that the Gospel is to be preached and we know what time and hour in our city, and it is possible for us to bring our friends in.

2 - The second thing, we note here is, when they were present and in a place of worship, they were all prepared to say - we are not here to be seen, but we are here to hear the things of the Lord. Now why do you come to church? Is it because to be seen. Or is it for prayer, for help.

33 - V. 33 - It was earnest. The whole household - it was solemn before God. It was inquiring to hear all the things.

1 - V. 33 - I think Cornelius is saying, if it is good for me - it is good for my wife, and children, and servants. I have gathered all my household to see you. And hear you tell the words whereby we can be saved. I would like for these people to hear what you have to say. What a wonderful, wonderful gathering and spirit that must have been as they came together. Waiting, eager, hungry, audience. Wouldn't that be wonderful setting in a mighty service with a spirit-filled man of God with a message. I wish somehow preachers today could always have that kind of audience. Now if you come to church saying, oh, what's the use? Or if you come to church just to criticize and find fault. No one can help you. The preacher's message will not help you. And God cannot really do anything for you.

Now the sun draws water from every little pool and every little flower is blessed as it is poured back through the rain and the dew. The preacher draws his power from the hearts of the listeners. The book of God. He may be a poor preacher - he may not always preach a good sermon. When people are praying and when their hearts are ready to receive the word, they will be blessed by God's Word.

IV. THE MESSAGE

V34
This marvelous story, the man, Cornelius. The missionary, Peter. The meeting in Caesarea. And the message begins V. 34-48. And what a message it is. Peter discovered all things were ready and he began his preaching. He, from an Old Testament, mission concept Deut. 10:17, 2 Chron. 19:7. Peter took his text. Look at V. 34.

"God is not respecter of persons."

→ Now the Greek phrase translated means God does not receive a man's face. God does not take man at his face value. God is concerned with the inner man. And not the outer appearance. Now this is the logical outgrowth of Christ's own mission.

Keep in mind, Peter opened his mouth and preached to them Jesus Christ. He preached Jesus Christ on the cross.

Peter did not say to Cornelius, what we need today is a new form of worship. I know that you are dissatisfied with your old forms, of paganism, they are so empty. And I have come today to bring you a new form.

Now you know in our modern day, that is the tone of things. You have to have something new in the way of form. Some folks come along and say - we need the touch and tell type of services. This sort of group dynamic service. Where the people gather together in their homes or somewhere else. And they hold hands, and they form a circle, and then they confess their sins to each other. And they tell every-thing they know about themselves to everyone else in the circle. They exercise faith, as one by one, they get in the middle of the circle and fall backwards towards another person saying - I have faith that you are going to accept me. Faith that you are going to forgive me.

And those folks say, this is the Christian Gospel. This is Christianity.

Well, the only good thing I can say about that - it is probably good group therapy. Good psychology in it in the way of function. But I want to say the other thing - it is not the Christian Gospel. And that is not the central theme of the Christian church. Just because you join hands. And that is not the way to get the Christian mission around the world. Peter opened his mouth and preached. He proclaimed. He declared. Do you see the uniqueness here. Judiasm said bring your sacrifice to the altar. And through that sacrifice you will gain an audience with God. And through that shed blood - you will gain remission of your sins. But Christianity says, this has been taken care of in Jesus Christ. The sacrifice on the cross. He died for men's souls. He bled, for the remission of sins of this world. The altar is now the cross. And the sacrifice is now Jesus Christ.

Peter did not begin his sermon by complimenting Cornelius. And slapping him on the back as being a good and generous giver. He did not exhort him publicly. No, he preached Christ to him. He told him about the birth, life, and death of Jesus. And about the resurrection. And salvation.

There is another thing that is absent here - Peter did not even say an amusing, entertaining thing to Cornelius. He didn't put on any kind of show or circus for Cornelius. He told him what he needed to know.

If your house was on fire and the fire company came to the front door and put on a dress parade. And sought to entertain, and show you how far they could throw a stream of water in another direction, you would say - my house is burning down. I don't care for any display. Put the water on the house. If your child was ill with some desperate disease, and the Doctor came and said, well now, we have made so much progress in the past 25 years and give you a lecture on the disease. You would tell him, now let's get on with the business.

So it is with lost souls. I think the preacher must not spend his time dealing with pious gratitudes but tell men of his sin, and point him to the lamb of God. And

the crowd of Caesarea.

Unforgettable day in history - Denial ^{memory}

Peter Satan has desire of thee, strengthen myself & help the brethren - how Betray - Rooster Crowed 3 times that was 7

Unforgettable Day of Betrayal - Denial Jesus - Practical Threat - Disciples Slept - Jesus Pray - Disciples Slept -

This is 7 but 5 - your sword alone - Dear Father etc - 7 - 5 only

Day of Betrayal

Judas - Kissed - not live with - Harry on 7 - 3 we sell him back - egg trip etc

Unforgettable Calvary

Great time face - love - Prophecy - Stopped - Person - Position - no fault - Guilt - Pilate Hand sole mock Bartholomew id - Christ Crucify him! 7 B's

Unforgettable Death

World more to get peck child, 18 - what happened - Tan - snout - Love one unforgettable moment - ones day of Resurrection - 5 that is merge his body! Victory 5 coming - Where we have our lots - good 7 - good only because of 5 - whatever befalls us - 5

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T. Campolo Head Black Preacher Friday But Sunday's omin' God. He looks at each

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So it is with lost souls. I think the preacher must not spend his time dealing with pious gratitudes but tell men of his sin, and point him to the lamb of God. And Peter did not waste anytime. He gave God's message to the crowd of Caesarea.

Peter made a confession - God is no respecter of persons. V. 34. It was high time that he was learning that and wherever the heart hungers after union with God, reconciliation with God. God is ready to save.

V. 36 - Peter said, for the first time, I have seen this as never before. And he was convinced of it. Peter was saying, I am catching on to the fact. Judge not a man by his face. To be saved, a Gentile must first become a Jew in his religion - no! We often hear the question, will heathens be lost? If we do not tell him of Jesus, the answer of the Bible is, yes! But you ask, if the heathen does the best he knows how - will he be saved. Again the answer of the Bible is yes! Now the best that he can do - and if he does the best that he knows he can do, it is because of a sinful nature.

37 V. 34-35 - Peter speaks of the work of God. And Christ's own mission. He talks of his own insight in the Old Testament - and he gives an example - Isaiah 49:5-6.

11 V. 38 - Peter summarizes the ministry of Jesus with a beautiful statement. He went about doing good.

39 He talked about the passion of Jesus Christ - V. 39. And of the resurrection -

V. 41. *It's Friday But Sunday is coming - Dr. Campolo Head Black Preacher [It's Friday But Sunday's coming]*

V. 34 - Peter preached the absolute impartiality of God. He looks at each individual. Second, he preached the necessary element of moral goodness. And third, he preached of Jesus Christ - that he gave his death on the cross. And the redemptive purpose was universal. And must be accepted.

43 V. 43 - Peter came and gave an invitation that was simply tremendous. He threw

the doors wide open to the Gentiles. And he says to him, at his name, everyone that believeth on Him, shall receive the remission of sin. That was his final message. And it sounds like Revelation - "whosoever will, let him come." In the heart of Cornelius, he laid hold of Christ. He repeated toward God. He received the remission of his sins. And then he received the Holy Spirit.

And then he was baptized.

44-46
Whosoever was the wide gate that the Jew on the day of Pentecost - here we see the gate, the whosoever is for the Gentile also.

8
V. 47 - Even while Peter preached, Cornelius broke forth saying, I am saved - I am saved.

Dr. DeHonney was preaching in Hong Kong through an interpreter. Some of the people left their seats and walked up front. They did not go out of the door - they came on to the alter. He turned to the interpreter and said, what is happening here? What do they want? And the interpreter said, they are being saved. They are not waiting for the invitation. They are coming now. They are responding even while the sermon is being preached. That is exactly what happened to Cornelius. And in his house. Cornelius did not need someone to tell him how to be more religious, or to pray more. But he needed somebody to tell him that Christ would save him. He believed and received remission of his sins. And you can have the same vital experience - will you respond to the Gospel and give your heart, even as this man.

✓ V. 48 - They asked Peter to stay and tarry with them for a few days. Why? I think that they might learn more - that he might teach them more about Christ. And that is why every Christian should be faithful to his church. When you become a Christian and are saved, it is not the end of the road. It is the beginning of a

wonderful experience. And you ought to go deeper everyday in the unsearchable riches.

Mission or Omission Band.

Horace Bushnell - Let - Exposed eyes to Miss -

1. If you believe Jesus made mistake when said "go ye into all the world & preach the gospel -
2. If " do not believe Jesus is the power of God & cannot save the heathen .
3. Those who wish that missionaries had never come to our nation
4. " " believe that it is every man for himself .

Those who want share in the final victory -

" " know accountable to God -

do you belong to the mission or Omission Band?