

# STUDY NOTES

## *The Acts of the Apostles*

### A MESSAGE SERIES AT NEW CITY CHURCH (Spring 2016)

[WWW.NEWCIITYPHX.COM/SERMONS](http://WWW.NEWCIITYPHX.COM/SERMONS) - BRIAN KRUCKENBERG

The following content is based on the message “What God has Made Clean” spoken on 04/24/16 by Brian Kruckenberg at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis of the message but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective communities.

## THE SCRIPTURE

*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 <sup>1</sup>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.*

*<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 <sup>2</sup>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, <sup>3</sup>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. 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, <sup>4</sup>and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing <sup>31</sup>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.*

**Acts 10:1-48**

## BACKGROUND

One of the main characters in this story is named Cornelius. He was a centurion over the Italian Cohort. This meant he was in charge of one hundred soldiers. Much like in other areas of Acts, he was a prominent figure in his city. Luke makes particular mention that Cornelius lived in Caesarea, a coastal city on the Mediterranean Sea.

**Cities matter. By 2050 it is estimated that 7.6 billion people will live in cities, and as the city goes so goes culture.**

- *Why does it matter that New City Church is at the very center of our city?*
- *How can we as a Community Group engage in our part of the city?*

## CONVERSION COMES TO THE "GOOD" AND THE "BAD"

Throughout Luke's account, he makes it clear that Cornelius was a good man. His piety is admired. Sometimes we think that being "born again" is a call to traditional moral values. However, Cornelius places his faith in Jesus and repents. Truly being "born again" is actually a challenge to religion and morality.

There are two ways to run from God. In doing so, we put ourselves in the place of God.

1. Doing all the **right** things. Someone might say, "I have done good so therefore God includes me"
2. Doing all the **wrong** things. Someone might say, "I can do what I want and I don't need God."

If the Gospel is true, then the ones who think they are "good" are in the most trouble.

- *How can your own righteousness (religion) keep you from God?*
- *How is placing faith in Jesus a challenge to religion?*
- *Why could someone like the prodigal son (someone who does all the wrong things) be closer to God?*

## CONVERSION COMES THROUGH THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit fell on them, and they began to speak in their own tongues and to praise God. These are two marks of those who are converted.

### Praising God

In verse 25, Cornelius tries to worship Peter, but Peter quickly stops him. By verse 46, they began praising God. They changed their worship (subscribing ultimate value to something).

**All changes in your life are superficial unless, and until, you change what you worship. - Tim Keller**

We all worship something/someone because we are all controlled by what our heart most adores.

- *What do you worship? Peoples approval? Power (status/money)?*

People who "convert" to Christianity and are still judgmental or controlling of others should consider if they've really converted. For instance, maybe it was obvious that we tried to control others prior to placing their faith in Jesus but now we may just be attempting to control others in different ways that is less obvious.

- *Think about some ways that you may be trying to control others or gain power.*

### Speaking in Tongues\*\*

Peter received a vision from God that commanded him to eat food that he considered religiously unclean. In verse 17, Luke says that Peter was inwardly perplexed. He was confused and questioned God, because as a Jewish person, it was unlawful for Peter to associate with people of other nations (Gentiles).

God had a plan to reach the world, and people would have to interact with it, and become a part of it, in order to speak the Gospel to them. **It wouldn't be possible without table witness.** We see that Peter stays with them, which means that he ATE AND DRANK with them!

- *Who is is someone that you can share a meal with?*
- *How can you be ready to share your story of the Gospel in your own life?*
- *What might God be calling you to do that doesn't make sense?*

Peter recognized God's plan and shared the gospel these Gentiles, and just like at pentecost, the Holy Spirit fell on these people. It was the Gentile pentecost. The people began to praise God in their own language.

**God's message is for everyone of all languages.** This means racial superiority must end.

**When the Gospel has its way in your life, you'll understand there is no place for racial and moral superiority.**

- *How does the gospel break racial superiority?*
- *In what ways have you felt morally superior to others?*

*\*\*Speaking in tongues was an evidence of conversion, but just because someone has not spoken in tongues does not mean they have not been converted. There were several places where people were converted and they didn't speak in tongues (Ethiopian eunuch, Paul, end of Acts 4)\*\**

## CONVERSION COMES THROUGH THE PREACHING OF THE WORD

Even though Peter had already been talking, Luke makes note that Peter opened his mouth and began speaking the gospel to those who were with Cornelius. People are converted when the Gospel is told, however **both the evangelist and the one being converted are radically changed**. When they speak the good news, evangelists know that they need to be converted in all parts of their lives.

- *How has sharing the good news changed you?*
- *Who can we share the gospel with?*

**Maybe you feel unclean all the time. Verse 15 says, "What God has made clean, don't call common."**

- *How do you need to be reminded of the Gospel?*
- *What is the Gospel?*
- *Pray and thank God for the good news that he has given you, and ask him to show you who you can share that good news with this week.*