
Book of Acts – Course A

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If you have not already done so, save this lesson to your computer using the "save" feature of your browser or PDF reader. Then print out the lesson (or at least open it in your browser or PDF reader **offline** – not on the Internet). Read the lesson and **study in your Bible the passages indicated >>> Scripture <<<**. Following each passage, study each question that has a number enclosed in asterisks (*1*, *2*, etc.), and **write down your answers on paper**. Some questions include more than one number because they have more than one blank to fill in. ("Think" questions should be carefully considered for your own benefit, but your answers will not be submitted to us.) Please take your time, study each passage carefully, answer the questions honestly, and consider the applications to your own life (John 12:48; 2 Tim. 2:15).

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Thank you for your interest, and God bless your study of His word.

To Judea and Beyond – Acts 9:32–11:26

Lesson 7

Introduction:

Jesus had said that, after being preached in Jerusalem, the gospel would go to Judea and Samaria (Acts 1:8). Acts 8 described the preaching of the gospel in Samaria. Now we will see it spread in Judea and beyond.

I. Healing of Aeneas and Dorcas – Acts 9:32–43

The Healing of Aeneas

>>> Please read Acts 9:32–35. <<<

1&2 What problem did Aeneas have, and how long had he had it? Answer: Aeneas was _____ and had been bed-ridden for (give a number) _____ years.

3 When Peter told him to arise, what happened? Answer: Aeneas immediately _____.

Comments: Note again the characteristics of true Bible miracles. The man had an obvious ailment. He had been bed-ridden for eight years. His cure was equally obvious, for he immediately got out of bed! The cure was instantaneous and complete. Even if a bed-ridden man was cured, it would normally take time to regain the strength to walk, but Aeneas could get up immediately. Like all miracles, this was clearly impossible by natural law, yet it occurred by God's supernatural intervention. The purpose was to confirm Peter's message, so people would believe it. This is exactly what happened (v35).

The Raising of Dorcas

>>> Please read Acts 9:36–43. <<<

4 What kind of woman was Dorcas? (a) full of good works and charitable deeds, (b) lazy and indifferent, (c) a career business woman, (d) all of the preceding. Answer: _____.

5 What did Dorcas receive through Peter? (a) a new house, (b) a college education, (c) resurrection from the dead, (d) a financial gift. Answer: _____.

Comment: Godly women sometimes wonder what work they can do for the Lord. Dorcas' example shows there is plenty for women to do. Among many other responsibilities, such as caring for her husband and children (Titus 2:4,5; 1 Tim. 5:14), a woman should look for opportunities to help widows, orphans, and other people in need.

Dorcas' case also again demonstrates the nature of true miracles. She was clearly dead. Friends had gathered to mourn her. Yet Peter raised her. The problem was obvious, but was immediately and completely removed. The result was impossible by natural law and gave people reason to believe in God and His message. If, as they claim, modern "faith healers" have the same power the apostles had, why don't they do miracles like these Peter did? If they make such claims but cannot do such miracles, then they are not from God but are frauds.

II. Revelations to Cornelius and Peter – Acts 10:1–22

The Appearance of an Angel to Cornelius

>>> Please read Acts 10:1–8. <<<

6 What kind of man was Cornelius? (a) a centurion, (b) devout, (c) generous, (d) diligent in prayer, (e) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

7 What did an angel tell him to do? Answer: He should send for _____.

Comments: A centurion was a leader of a hundred soldiers. Cornelius was a devout religious man; but of special importance is the fact he was a Gentile (11:1–3). Jews believed that Gentiles were unfit for Jews to associate with (10:28). To this point, the gospel had been preached only to Jews. Jewish Christians apparently believed the gospel was only for their own nation, like the Old Testament had been. Conversion of a Gentile would be a major turning point. Special revelations were needed to convince Peter to preach the gospel to Gentiles.

The first revelation came to Cornelius. An angel told him to send for Peter to tell him words by which he could be saved (11:14). Note again, as in the case of Saul and the Ethiopian, that religious devotion by itself will not save. One must learn the true gospel and obey it. Further, though direct revelation occurred in all three cases, God refused to directly tell the sinner how to be saved. The angel spoke to Cornelius, but only to get him together with the inspired teacher. The gospel today is revealed to sinners through inspired teachers (the Scriptures), not by direct revelations.

Peter's Vision

>>> Please read Acts 10:9–22. <<<

8 When he saw the vision, what did Peter not want to eat? Answer: He did not want to eat _____ animals.

9 When Peter objected, what did God say? Answer: Peter was not to call unclean that which God had _____.

10 While Peter thought about this, messengers arrived from whom? Answer: Messengers came from _____ to find Peter.

11. What did the Holy Spirit then tell Peter to do? (a) go with the men, (b) pray some more, (c) stay where he was, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Comments: In that climate, housetops were often used for daily activities (like balconies). Peter was praying there, when God sent a revelation by way of a trance (v10) or a vision (v17; 11:5).

In the vision, Peter saw various animals that were forbidden as unclean according to the Old Testament, yet God said to eat them. When Peter objected, God told him not to condemn as unclean that which God had cleansed. This was done three times for emphasis.

Peter pondered the meaning of the vision, showing that the meaning had not yet been made clear. But two obvious facts are: (1) The Old Testament law (which included the law of meats) had been removed and was no longer in effect (see Heb. 10:1–10; 7:11–14; 8:6–13; 9:1–4; Gal. 3:24,25; 5:1–6; Rom. 7:1–7; Col. 2:13–17). And (2) specifically, God no longer forbids the eating of meats of any type (see Mark 7:18,19; 1 Timothy 4:1–5; Colossians 2:14–17). But the main lesson to Peter is yet to be stated.

As the messengers from Cornelius arrived, Peter received yet another revelation. The Holy Spirit told him to go with these messengers, without expressing doubts. When the men explained their purpose, Peter learned that an angel had directed Cornelius to send for him.

Peter now had three revelations to consider: (1) A vision told Peter not to oppose as unclean anything that God had cleansed. (2) The Holy Spirit had told him to go to Cornelius as the messengers requested. (3) An angel had told Cornelius that Peter would preach the gospel to him.

III. Peter's Sermon to Cornelius – Acts 10:23–43

The Gathering at Cornelius' House

>>> Please read Acts 10:23–33. <<<

12&13 What did Peter find at Cornelius' house? Answer: Cornelius had gathered his _____ and _____.

14 When Cornelius bowed to him, what did Peter do? (a) thanked him, (b) accepted it because he was Pope, (c) ignored it, (d) forbade it, (e) all of these? Answer: _____.

15 What did Peter say he had learned (v28)? Answer: We should not call any man _____.

Comments: Peter took six Jewish Christians with him to witness the event (v23; 10:45,46; 11:12). When they arrived, Cornelius had gathered together his friends and relatives to hear the message. This demonstrates the zeal we should have that all our loved ones learn the truth.

Cornelius bowed as an act of religious honor to Peter, but Peter refused saying he was just a man. Some churches encourage people to bow religiously to a Pope or a statue of Mary or a saint. They claim Peter was the first Pope, yet Peter himself clearly forbade all such acts.

Peter then explained what he had learned from the inspired revelations he had received. Jews refused to associate with people of other nations (Gentiles). They considered such people to be unclean. But Peter had learned not to consider any man to be unclean (v28). This was the lesson the revelations were intended to teach. No one is unfit for our association simply because of race or nationality. And above all, people of all nations are fit subjects to receive the gospel (vv 34,35). Unlike the Old Testament, the gospel is for people of all nations.

The Sermon

>>> Please read Acts 10:34–43. <<<

16&17 What had Peter learned about those whom God accepts? Answer: He accepts those who _____ God and _____.

18&19 What did people do to Jesus, and what did God do (v38–41)? Answer: People _____ Jesus, but God _____ Him the third day.

20 What evidence did Peter offer that Jesus was from God? (a) miracles, (b) the resurrection, (c) fulfilled prophecy, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Comments: Peter began his sermon by stating the spiritual consequences of what he had learned about Gentiles. Not only may we associate with people of other nations (v28), but God willingly accepts them without partiality or respect of persons (v34,35; cf. Rom. 2:11). Our standing before God is not determined by race, nationality, or other physical conditions for which we are not responsible. What matters is our faith and conduct toward God. Note that we are not saved by "faith only" as some claim. Proper works of obedience are also necessary (cf. Matt. 7:21–27; Rom. 2:6–10; 6:17,18; Heb. 5:9; 10:39; 11:8,30).

Peter then preached a sermon briefly describing Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. This was similar to his sermons in Acts 2 and 3, but here Peter preached to Gentiles, because Jesus is "Lord of all" (v36 – i.e., other nations too, not just Jews). Again, Jesus' claim to be from God was confirmed by His miracles (v43), by His resurrection and appearances (vv 39–41), and by fulfilled prophecy (v43).

IV. The Coming of the Spirit – Acts 10:44–48

>>> Please read Acts 10:44–48. <<<

21 What happened to the Gentiles as Peter preached? Answer: The _____ fell on them as Peter spoke.

22 What did the Gentiles do as a result? Answer: They spoke in _____ and magnified God.

23 What did Peter command them? (a) to pray for forgiveness, (b) to be baptized in water, (c) to honor him as Pope, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Comments: At this point, Peter was already aware of three revelations showing that the Gentiles were subject to the gospel. Here we read of one last proof. The Spirit Himself came upon the Gentiles, enabling them to speak in tongues (restudy Acts 2 to review what tongues were).

This gift amazed the Jewish Christians who had come with Peter. Having already considered the other three revelations, Peter realized that God was willing for these Gentiles to be converted. So he commanded them to be baptized in water (vv 47,48).

Note that Peter was supposed to tell Cornelius words whereby he could be saved (11:14), and those words included the command to be baptized in water. Furthermore, baptism in the name of the Lord is water baptism (10:47,48), and this is the baptism that is necessary for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Hence, water baptism is included in what people must do to be saved from sin. See again Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3,4; Galatians 3:27; 1 Peter 3:21.

V. Peter's Defense – Acts 11:1–18

>>> Please read Acts 11:1–14. <<<

24 What issue was raised when Peter went to Jerusalem? Answer: Jewish Christians said he ate with _____.

25 What events did Peter retell? (a) the vision about animals, (b) the Spirit's message, (c) the angel's message to Cornelius, (d) all of these. Answer: _____.

Comments: The preaching of the gospel to Gentiles was big news to Jewish Christians. In Jerusalem, they confronted Peter about it. This shows how strongly Jewish Christians felt. It also shows why God had used such strong evidence to change people's thinking.

Peter responded by summarizing the evidence that God wanted the Gentiles to be taught. This helps us also to learn what God's purpose was. Peter told about: (1) the vision of unclean animals, (2) the message of the Spirit that he should go with Cornelius' messengers, and (3) the angel's message telling Cornelius to send for Peter to tell him how to be saved.

Note that the six Jewish brethren who had accompanied Peter served as witnesses of what had happened. Peter expected his conduct to be questioned. Further, note again that people who are lost in sin must be told by inspired men what to do to be saved. Teaching from the inspired message is essential to salvation (cf. John 6:44,45; 8:31,32; Rom. 1:16; 10:13,14,17; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:26,29,35; 9:6; 11:14; 18:8).

>>> Please read Acts 11:15–18. <<<

26 What event did Peter tell next? Answer: The _____ fell on Cornelius' household.

27 What promise from God did this remind Peter of? Answer: The promise of _____ in the Holy Spirit.

28 What conclusion was reached? (a) baptism is not necessary, (b) we are saved by faith only, (c) Gentiles can repent and be saved. Answer: _____.

Comments: The fourth and final event Peter retold was the coming of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius' household. He said this reminded him of the promise made through John about Holy Spirit baptism (see on Acts 1:3–8). What had happened to Cornelius was like what came "on us at the beginning." This clearly refers to the apostles who received Holy Spirit baptism and spoke in tongues in Acts 2.

So Cornelius' household had received the Holy Spirit in a way similar to Pentecost. In all the Bible at most two events are described as Holy Spirit baptism: the coming of the Spirit on the apostles in Acts 2 on the occasion of the first Jewish converts, and the coming of the Spirit on Cornelius' household on the occasion of the first Gentile converts.

Clearly the coming of the Spirit was a special circumstance to convince Jewish Christians that Gentiles could obey the gospel. Like Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2, this was a unique circumstance that does not need to be repeated today. Holy Spirit baptism was a rare event, intended to provide special confirmation for certain unique situations. It was never intended to be needed or to continue throughout history.

Cornelius' household, therefore, received two baptisms: Holy Spirit baptism (10:44–46; 11:15,16) and water baptism (10:47,48). Ephesians 4:4–6 shows that today there is "one baptism," just like there is just one God, etc. Other baptisms had occurred before, but by the time Ephesians 4 was written, these other baptisms had ceased. The "one baptism" that continues is water baptism for the remission of sins. We summarize:

The Conversion of Cornelius' Household – Acts 10 and 11

Hearing	Belief	Repentance	Confession	Baptism	Result
11:14	10:43	11:18		10:47,48	saved (11:14)

In Acts 8, disciples had been scattered from Jerusalem. We have read of their work in Samaria and Judea. Now the message goes further.

VI. The Gospel In Antioch – Acts 11:19–26

>>> Please read Acts 11:19–26. <<<

29,30&31 In what areas was the gospel preached next (v19)? Answer (list in order): Disciples preached in _____, _____, and _____.

32 Who went to encourage the disciples in Antioch (v22)? Answer: The church in Jerusalem sent _____ to Antioch.

33 Whom did he seek to help in the work of teaching (v25)? Answer: He went to Tarsus to seek for _____.

34 What special name was first given to the disciples here? (a) Baptists, (b) Lutherans, (c) Catholics, (d) Christians, (e) all of these. Answer: _____.

Comments: A significant change occurs in these verses. Here for the first time the gospel goes beyond Judea and Samaria into areas north of there (cf. Acts 1:8). Disciples from Jerusalem made converts as far away as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch.

Hearing this, the Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to exhort and encourage them (cf. Acts 4:36,37). His diligent work led to many conversions. He in turn brought Saul to help, and many more were taught.

For the first time the term "Christian" was used to refer to followers of Christ. This term is also used in Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16. Note that denominational labels were not used, for the simple reason that denominations did not exist! Jesus had one universal church, and all saved people were in it (Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4–6; 5:23–25). It was Jesus' church (Matt. 16:18), bought with His blood (Acts 20:28), and He is Head of it (Eph. 1:22,23). Whose name should it wear but His (Rom. 16:16)? Paul rebuked those who began wearing names to honor men (1 Cor. 1:10–13).

Note also that the church was a spiritual body focusing its work on man's relationship with God. The church taught the word to save lost souls and to exhort saved people to remain faithful (v23,26). The early church grew by teaching God's word and worshiping Him. Never did the church attract people by carnivals, parties, theatrics, banquets, or fun and games. It never involved itself in modern Social Gospel promotions.

The first lesson of our next course will also emphasize the independence of local churches of Christ. They accomplished their work without forming centralized organizations or governing bodies of any kind.

The beginning of the Antioch church marks a major turning point. In Acts 13, this church began sending preachers throughout the Roman Empire. Indeed, the gospel was about to go throughout the world (Acts 1:8). And it was all accomplished by individual Christians and local churches relying on the power of God's word (Rom. 1:16).

Personal application questions:

35 Are you concerned like Cornelius for the salvation of your loved ones? _____

36 What does the preaching of the gospel to Gentiles mean to you? _____

37 Can you find any event in the Bible that is called "Holy Spirit baptism" other than Acts 2 (the apostles) and Acts 10&11 (Cornelius' household)? _____

Note: We would be glad to help in your attempt to learn the truth of God's word about salvation or about Jesus' church. If you would like to make contact with Christians in your area to personally discuss the Scriptures with you or to help you find a faithful local church, please let us know when you complete your answer form.

When you have carefully studied this lesson and written down answers to all the questions, [click on this link to submit your answers.](#)

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