

# **CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY**

## **BIBLE STUDY**

### **Acts Chapter 10 — The Gospel Comes to the Gentiles**

#### **A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible**

##### **Introduction**

Acts Chapter 10 is one of the most important turning points in the entire book of Acts.

The gospel had already moved:

From Jerusalem.

Into Judea.

Into Samaria.

Now God makes unmistakably clear that the good news of Jesus Christ is also for the Gentiles.

The chapter centers on two men.

The first is:

##### **Cornelius.**

Cornelius was a Roman centurion living in Caesarea.

He was not Jewish.

Yet he is described as:

##### **Devout.**

##### **God-fearing.**

##### **Generous.**

##### **Prayerful.**

God sees his prayers and acts of generosity.

An angel tells him to send for Peter.

The second man is:

## **Peter.**

Peter still carried cultural and religious assumptions concerning Gentiles.

Before Peter could enter Cornelius' house, God had to prepare Peter's heart.

While Peter prayed on a rooftop, he saw a vision of a large sheet containing all kinds of animals.

A voice told him:

**“Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”**

Peter refused because he had never eaten anything ceremonially unclean.

Then the voice declared:

**“Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”**

Peter would soon understand that the vision concerned far more than food.

God was teaching him:

**“Do not call anyone impure or unclean.”**

When Peter arrives at Cornelius' house, he finds a room filled with people ready to hear God's Word.

Peter begins with a confession:

**“I now realize that God does not show favoritism.”**

Then he preaches Jesus Christ.

He proclaims:

- Jesus was anointed by God.
- Jesus went about doing good.
- Jesus healed those oppressed by the devil.
- Jesus was crucified.
- God raised Him from the dead.
- Jesus appeared to chosen witnesses.
- Jesus is Judge of the living and the dead.
- Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.

Then something extraordinary happens.

Before Peter finishes speaking:

The Holy Spirit falls upon the Gentiles.

The Jewish believers who came with Peter are amazed.

God gives Gentile believers the same Holy Spirit.

There is no second-class church.

No separate Gentile gospel.

No inferior salvation.

Peter then asks:

“Surely no one can refuse water for these people to be baptized.”

Acts 10 therefore teaches one of the great truths of the gospel:

Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or cultural background.

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# **I. CORNELIUS THE CENTURION**

## **Acts 10:1**

“In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Regiment.”

Cornelius was a Roman military officer.

A centurion traditionally commanded approximately one hundred soldiers, though actual numbers could vary.

He belonged to the Roman military establishment.

## **Cross References**

Matthew 8:5

When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him asking for help.

Luke 7:2

A Roman centurion had a servant he valued greatly who was sick and near death.

Acts 27:1

When Paul was later sent to Rome, he was placed under the authority of a centurion named Julius.

## **Spiritual Principle**

God’s grace reaches people in every occupation and social position.

Roman soldier.

Jewish fisherman.

Ethiopian official.

Samaritan villager.

The gospel is not restricted by profession or nationality.

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## II. A DEVOUT AND PRAYERFUL MAN

### Acts 10:2

“He was a devout man who feared God, along with his whole household. He gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.”

Cornelius possessed several admirable qualities.

#### **He Feared God**

He respected and sought the true God.

#### **His Household Was Influenced**

His devotion affected those around him.

#### **He Was Generous**

His faith produced compassion.

#### **He Prayed Regularly**

He sincerely sought God.

#### **Cross References**

Acts 10:22

Cornelius was described as righteous, God-fearing, and respected among the Jewish people.

Proverbs 19:17

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and the Lord will remember that kindness.

Acts 16:14

Lydia was a worshiper of God whose heart the Lord opened so she responded to the gospel.

#### **Important Truth**

Cornelius was sincere, religious, generous, and prayerful.

Yet he still needed to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Good works may demonstrate spiritual hunger, but they cannot replace salvation through Jesus Christ.

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# III. CORNELIUS RECEIVES A VISION

## Acts 10:3

“One afternoon about three o’clock, he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God who came to him and said, ‘Cornelius!’”

God responds to Cornelius’ seeking heart by directing him toward the gospel.

## Cross References

Luke 1:11

An angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah while he was serving in the temple.

Daniel 9:21

While Daniel was praying, the angel Gabriel came to him with a message.

Acts 9:10

The Lord spoke to Ananias in Damascus through a vision.

## Spiritual Principle

God knows how to bring truth to those who sincerely seek Him.

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# IV. GOD HAS NOTICED HIS PRAYERS

## Acts 10:4

“Cornelius stared at him in fear and asked, ‘What is it, Lord?’ The angel replied, ‘Your prayers and gifts to the poor have been noticed by God.’”

God had seen what Cornelius was doing.

## Cross References

Philippians 4:18

Paul described faithful giving as a fragrant offering, acceptable and pleasing to God.

Hebrews 6:10

God is not unjust. He will not forget the work and love shown in service to His people.

Psalms 141:2

Let my prayer rise before You like incense and my lifted hands like an evening sacrifice.

## Spiritual Principle

Faithfulness unnoticed by people is still noticed by God.

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## V. SEND FOR PETER

### Acts 10:5–6

“Now send men to Joppa to bring back Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.”

God could have explained the gospel directly through the angel.

Instead, He sends Cornelius to Peter.

### Cross References

Acts 9:43

Peter had remained in Joppa with Simon the tanner.

Acts 10:32

Cornelius later repeated the instruction to send for Peter in Joppa.

Acts 11:13

Cornelius later explained that an angel told him to send for Peter.

### Crawford Bible Study Principle

God ordinarily uses human witnesses to proclaim the gospel to other human beings.

Angels can give directions.

But believers have been commissioned to preach Christ.

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## VI. CORNELIUS OBEYS

### Acts 10:7–8

“When the angel left, Cornelius called two servants and a devout soldier who attended him. After explaining everything, he sent them to Joppa.”

Cornelius responds immediately.

### Cross References

Acts 10:22

Cornelius’ messengers explained that he had been instructed to send for Peter.

Matthew 8:9

A centurion explained that he understood authority because he gave commands and expected obedience.

Acts 27:1

Roman centurions repeatedly appear in Acts as military authorities.

Luke 9:52

Jesus sent messengers ahead to prepare the way for Him.

### **Spiritual Principle**

When God gives clear direction, obedience should not be unnecessarily delayed.

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## **VII. PETER GOES TO PRAY**

### **Acts 10:9**

“The next day, as they approached the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray around noon.”

God is working simultaneously.

Cornelius is sending men.

Peter is praying.

### **Cross References**

Psalm 55:17

Evening, morning, and noon I cry out to God, and He hears my voice.

Daniel 6:10

Daniel prayed three times each day, giving thanks to God.

Acts 3:1

Peter and John had gone to the temple at the regular time of prayer.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Prayer often places believers in a position to receive God’s direction.

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## **VIII. PETER FALLS INTO A TRANCE**

### **Acts 10:10**

“He became very hungry and wanted to eat, but while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.”

Peter's physical hunger becomes part of the setting through which God teaches him.

### **Cross References**

Numbers 12:6

God said He could reveal Himself to prophets through visions and dreams.

Acts 22:17

Paul later described falling into a trance while praying in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel 1:1

Ezekiel saw visions of God when the heavens were opened.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God can use ordinary circumstances as the setting for extraordinary instruction.

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## **IX. HEAVEN OPENS**

### **Acts 10:11**

“He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.”

### **Cross References**

Ezekiel 1:1

Ezekiel said the heavens opened and he saw visions of God.

Revelation 4:1

John saw an open door in heaven and received revelation.

Acts 7:56

Stephen declared that he saw heaven open and the Son of Man standing at God's right hand.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Peter is about to receive instruction that will radically expand his understanding of God's mission.

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## **X. ALL KINDS OF ANIMALS**

### **Acts 10:12**

“Inside were all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds.”

The sheet contained animals representing categories Peter had learned to distinguish under Old Testament dietary laws.

### **Cross References**

Genesis 1:24

God commanded the earth to produce different kinds of living creatures.

Leviticus 11:4

Israel was given specific distinctions concerning animals that were considered clean or unclean for food.

Genesis 7:14

Noah's ark included different kinds of animals, livestock, creatures, and birds.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God was preparing Peter to rethink distinctions that had shaped his life from childhood.

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## **XI. “KILL AND EAT”**

### **Acts 10:13**

“Then a voice said, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’”

Peter receives a command that conflicts with his accustomed dietary practice.

### **Cross References**

Genesis 9:3

God told Noah that living creatures could be used as food, just as plants had been given.

Romans 14:14

Paul later explained that nothing is ceremonially unclean in itself for the believer.

Mark 7:19

Jesus' teaching removed ceremonial food distinctions as a basis for spiritual purity.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God sometimes must challenge deeply rooted assumptions before He can expand a servant's ministry.

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## **XII. PETER OBJECTS**

### **Acts 10:14**

“Peter replied, ‘No, Lord! I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.’”

Peter’s response sounds contradictory:

“No.”

And:

“Lord.”

If Jesus is Lord, His command must ultimately govern.

### **Cross References**

Ezekiel 4:14

Ezekiel protested that he had never knowingly defiled himself through ceremonially unclean food.

Leviticus 11:47

Israel was commanded to distinguish between clean and unclean animals.

Daniel 1:8

Daniel determined not to defile himself with the king’s food.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Sometimes obedience requires allowing God’s Word to correct even long-held religious assumptions.

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## **XIII. “DO NOT CALL IMPURE WHAT GOD HAS MADE CLEAN”**

### **Acts 10:15**

“The voice spoke again, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’”

This becomes the central message of the vision.

### **Cross References**

Mark 7:19

Jesus taught that food does not spiritually defile the heart.

Romans 14:14

Paul said he was convinced in the Lord Jesus that no food was inherently unclean.

1 Timothy 4:4

Everything God created is good and should not be rejected when received with thanksgiving.

### **Important Truth**

Peter will soon understand that the vision is ultimately about:

People.

Acts 10:28 gives Peter's interpretation:

"God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean."

### **Spiritual Principle**

God was removing a barrier that would hinder Peter from carrying the gospel to Gentiles.

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## **XIV. THE VISION IS REPEATED THREE TIMES**

### **Acts 10:16**

"This happened three times, and then the sheet was taken back into heaven."

Repetition emphasizes certainty and importance.

### **Cross References**

Genesis 41:32

Joseph explained that Pharaoh's dream was repeated because the matter had been firmly established by God.

2 Corinthians 12:8

Paul said he pleaded with the Lord three times concerning his affliction.

John 21:17

Jesus asked Peter three times whether he loved Him, pressing the lesson deeply into Peter's heart.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God sometimes repeats a lesson because our old thinking is difficult to change.

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## **XV. GOD’S TIMING BECOMES VISIBLE**

### **Acts 10:17–18**

While Peter is wondering about the vision:

Cornelius’ men arrive.

#### **Cross References**

Daniel 8:15

Daniel pondered the meaning of a vision and sought understanding.

Luke 24:4

The women at the tomb were confused by what they had encountered until heavenly explanation came.

John 16:13

Jesus promised that the Spirit of truth would guide His followers into truth.

Acts 10:5

Cornelius had been specifically instructed to send for Peter.

Acts 9:43

Peter was staying at Simon the tanner’s house.

Acts 11:13

Cornelius later repeated the angel’s instruction.

#### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

God can prepare the preacher and the hearer at the same time.

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## **XVI. THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKS TO PETER**

### **Acts 10:19–20**

“While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit told him, ‘Three men are looking for you. Get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitation, for I have sent them.’”

The Holy Spirit makes the next step clear.

#### **Cross References**

Acts 8:29

The Spirit told Philip to go near the Ethiopian’s chariot.

Acts 13:2

The Holy Spirit directed the church to set apart Barnabas and Saul for missionary work.

Acts 11:12

Peter later explained that the Spirit told him to go with the Gentile messengers without hesitation.

Matthew 28:19

Jesus commanded His followers to make disciples among all nations.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The Holy Spirit not only empowers mission; He directs mission.

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## **XVII. PETER MEETS THE MESSENGERS**

### **Acts 10:21–22**

The messengers explain Cornelius' character and vision.

### **Cross References**

Acts 11:12

Peter later described traveling with the men as the Spirit directed.

John 18:5

People seeking Jesus identified whom they were looking for, and Jesus responded openly.

John 1:38

Jesus asked those following Him, "What are you looking for?"

Acts 10:2

Cornelius was already described as devout and God-fearing.

Luke 7:5

Another Roman centurion had been respected by Jewish elders because of his generosity and concern.

Acts 22:12

Ananias was described as a devout man respected by the Jewish community.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God had prepared a Gentile household to receive apostolic gospel preaching.

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# **XVIII. PETER INVITES GENTILES INTO THE HOUSE**

## **Acts 10:23**

“Peter invited them in as his guests.”

This small action is significant.

Peter begins crossing the barrier before he even arrives at Cornelius’ house.

### **Cross References**

Acts 11:12

Six Jewish believers later accompanied Peter to Cornelius’ house.

Genesis 24:31

Hospitality was extended to a traveler who had arrived on an important mission.

3 John 1:8

Believers are encouraged to show hospitality to those serving the truth.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Changed theology should produce changed behavior.

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# **XIX. CORNELIUS GATHERS OTHERS**

## **Acts 10:24**

“Cornelius was expecting them and had gathered his relatives and close friends.”

Cornelius did not want the message only for himself.

He brought others.

### **Cross References**

Luke 15:6

The man who found his lost sheep called friends and neighbors to rejoice with him.

Acts 16:15

Lydia’s household became involved in the gospel response and Christian hospitality.

John 4:53

A royal official believed, and his household also responded.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

A person who expects God to speak should want others to hear too.

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# **XX. CORNELIUS FALLS AT PETER'S FEET**

## **Acts 10:25**

“When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence.”

Cornelius gives Peter more honor than Peter is willing to accept.

## **Cross References**

Revelation 19:10

John fell before an angel, but the angel said, “Do not do that. Worship God.”

Revelation 22:8

John again fell before an angel in reverence and was corrected.

Acts 14:13

People later attempted to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas after a miracle.

## **Spiritual Principle**

Faithful servants refuse worship that belongs only to God.

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# **XXI. “I AM ONLY A MAN”**

## **Acts 10:26**

“But Peter lifted him up, saying, ‘Stand up; I am only a man myself.’”

Peter immediately rejects exaltation.

## **Cross References**

Acts 14:15

Paul and Barnabas said, “We are human beings just like you.”

Revelation 19:10

The angel told John to worship God rather than a created servant.

Revelation 22:9

Again the angel said, “Do not do that. I am a fellow servant. Worship God.”

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The true servant of God points people upward, not toward himself.

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# **XXII. PETER FINDS A HOUSE FULL OF PEOPLE**

## **Acts 10:27**

“While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.”

God had prepared an audience.

## **Cross References**

Acts 10:24

Cornelius had gathered relatives and close friends.

Luke 14:23

Jesus told of inviting people so the house would be filled.

Acts 16:32

Paul and Silas preached the Word of the Lord to a jailer and everyone in his household.

## **Spiritual Principle**

When God opens a gospel door, He may already have people gathered on the other side.

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# **XXIII. PETER UNDERSTANDS THE VISION**

## **Acts 10:28**

“God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.”

This verse interprets the vision.

The ultimate issue was not merely dietary law.

It was Peter’s attitude toward Gentiles.

## **Cross References**

Acts 10:15

God had told Peter not to call unclean what He had made clean.

Galatians 2:12

Peter later still struggled with social pressure concerning fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers.

John 4:9

The Samaritan woman recognized that Jews ordinarily avoided close social interaction with Samaritans.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The gospel confronts prejudice wherever prejudice treats people as spiritually unreachable because of ethnicity or background.

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## **XXIV. PETER COMES WITHOUT OBJECTION**

### **Acts 10:29**

“That is why I came without objection when I was sent for. May I ask why you sent for me?”

Peter obeyed what he understood.

### **Cross References**

Acts 10:8

Cornelius sent his servants after receiving the angel’s instruction.

Romans 3:29

God is not the God of Jews only but also of Gentiles.

Acts 10:33

Cornelius explains that everyone is gathered to hear everything God commanded Peter to say.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Revelation must lead to obedience.

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## **XXV. CORNELIUS EXPLAINS THE VISION**

### **Acts 10:30–32**

Cornelius recounts the angelic message and God’s recognition of his prayer.

## **Cross References**

Luke 24:4

Heavenly messengers appeared in shining clothing at Jesus' tomb.

Acts 1:10

Two men in white clothing appeared when Jesus ascended.

Daniel 10:5

Daniel saw a heavenly messenger clothed in remarkable appearance.

Philippians 4:18

Generous giving offered sincerely to God is described as pleasing to Him.

Psalms 116:1

The psalmist loves the Lord because He hears prayer.

Hebrews 6:10

God remembers faithful service.

Acts 9:43

Peter was indeed staying with Simon the tanner.

Acts 10:6

The angel gave Cornelius exact directions.

Acts 11:13

Cornelius later repeated this testimony.

## **Spiritual Principle**

God's providence was unmistakably coordinating the meeting between Cornelius and Peter.

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# **XXVI. "WE ARE ALL HERE TO LISTEN"**

## **Acts 10:33**

"Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

This is one of the finest descriptions of a teachable congregation in Scripture.

They are:

Present.

Expectant.

Attentive.

Ready to hear everything.

### **Cross References**

Acts 10:22

Cornelius had been instructed to hear Peter's message.

James 1:19

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.

Nehemiah 8:3

The people listened attentively as God's Word was read.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The best hearer does not ask the preacher to say what he wants to hear, but what God has commanded him to say.

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## **XXVII. GOD DOES NOT SHOW FAVORITISM**

### **Acts 10:34**

"Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize that God does not show favoritism.'"

Peter is learning something profound.

### **Cross References**

Romans 2:11

There is no favoritism with God.

Deuteronomy 10:17

The Lord is the great and mighty God who shows no partiality.

Galatians 2:6

God does not judge people according to worldly status.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God does not value one ethnicity as inherently more worthy of salvation than another.

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# XXVIII. PEOPLE FROM EVERY NATION

## Acts 10:35

“But accepts from every nation those who fear Him and do what is right.”

Peter is not teaching salvation by good works.

His sermon will soon make clear that forgiveness comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Rather, he is recognizing that God is not restricted to one nationality and that sincere seekers are not excluded because of ethnicity.

### Cross References

Micah 6:8

God calls people to act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him.

Romans 10:12

There is no distinction between Jew and Gentile because the same Lord is Lord of all.

Revelation 7:9

John saw a great multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before God.

### Key Truth

God’s saving invitation extends across every national and ethnic boundary.

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# XXIX. JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL

## Acts 10:36

“This is the message God sent to Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.”

Peter now begins preaching Christ.

### Cross References

Isaiah 52:7

How beautiful are the feet of the messenger who announces good news, peace, salvation, and God’s reign.

Ephesians 2:17

Christ came and preached peace to those who were far away and those who were near.

Romans 10:12

The same Lord is Lord of everyone and richly blesses all who call upon Him.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The gospel crosses every boundary because Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

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## **XXX. THE MINISTRY OF JESUS WAS PUBLICLY KNOWN**

### **Acts 10:37**

“You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism John preached.”

Peter grounds the gospel in historical events.

### **Cross References**

Luke 4:14

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit and news about Him spread.

Mark 1:14

After John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee preaching the good news of God.

Matthew 3:13

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Christian faith is rooted in events God accomplished in history, not merely abstract religious ideas.

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## **XXXI. JESUS WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD**

### **Acts 10:38**

“How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.”

Peter summarizes Jesus’ earthly ministry.

### **Cross References**

Luke 4:18

Jesus declared that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him to preach good news, freedom, recovery, and deliverance.

Isaiah 61:1

The prophet foretold the Spirit-anointed Servant who would bring good news and liberty.

Matthew 4:23

Jesus traveled throughout Galilee teaching, preaching the kingdom, and healing disease and sickness.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Jesus' power was expressed through holiness, truth, compassion, and deliverance.

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## **XXXII. JESUS WAS KILLED ON THE CROSS**

### **Acts 10:39**

“We are witnesses of everything He did in Judea and Jerusalem. They killed Him by hanging Him on a cross.”

Peter does not avoid the cross.

### **Cross References**

Acts 5:30

Peter had previously declared that Jesus was killed by being hung on a tree.

1 Peter 2:24

Christ carried our sins in His body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness.

Deuteronomy 21:23

A person hung upon a tree was associated with being under a curse.

### **Key Truth**

The gospel includes the death of Jesus Christ.

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## **XXXIII. GOD RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD**

### **Acts 10:40**

“But God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen.”

The cross was not the end.

### **Cross References**

1 Corinthians 15:4

Christ was buried and raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

Luke 24:34

The disciples declared that the Lord had truly risen.

Matthew 28:6

The angel said, “He is not here. He has risen, just as He said.”

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The gospel is not merely that Jesus died—it is that the crucified Jesus rose.

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## **XXXIV. CHOSEN WITNESSES SAW THE RISEN CHRIST**

### **Acts 10:41**

“He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead.”

Jesus’ resurrection appearances were real and physical.

The apostles ate and drank with Him.

### **Cross References**

Luke 24:43

Jesus ate food in the disciples’ presence after His resurrection.

John 21:13

Jesus gave bread and fish to His disciples after rising from the dead.

Acts 1:3

Jesus presented Himself alive after His suffering through many convincing proofs over forty days.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The resurrection was not presented as a private feeling but as witnessed reality.

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# XXXV. JESUS IS JUDGE OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

## Acts 10:42

“He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one whom God appointed as Judge of the living and the dead.”

Jesus is not merely Savior.

He is Judge.

## Cross References

2 Timothy 4:1

Christ Jesus will judge the living and the dead.

John 5:22

The Father has entrusted judgment to the Son.

Matthew 28:19

Jesus commands His followers to make disciples among all nations.

## Spiritual Principle

The One who offers salvation is also the One before whom every person will ultimately stand.

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# XXXVI. EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES RECEIVES FORGIVENESS

## Acts 10:43

“All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.”

This is the heart of Peter’s gospel invitation.

## Everyone

Jew.

Gentile.

Roman.

Samaritan.

Every nation.

### **Who Believes**

Forgiveness is received through faith.

### **In Him**

Jesus Christ is the object of saving faith.

### **Receives Forgiveness**

The sinner's guilt is removed.

### **Cross References**

Isaiah 53:5

The suffering Servant was wounded for our rebellion and crushed for our sins, and through His suffering peace and healing are provided.

Jeremiah 31:34

God promised a covenant in which He would forgive wickedness and remember sin no more.

Acts 13:38

Paul later proclaimed that forgiveness of sins is announced through Jesus Christ.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The gospel does not say that one nationality receives forgiveness—it says everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness.

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## **XXXVII. THE HOLY SPIRIT FALLS WHILE PETER IS PREACHING**

### **Acts 10:44**

“While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.”

Peter had not finished.

God interrupted the sermon.

### **Cross References**

Acts 2:4

At Pentecost the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 4:31

The believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke God's Word boldly.

Acts 19:6

The Holy Spirit later came upon believers when Paul laid hands upon them.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God Himself confirmed that Gentile believers were accepted through faith in Christ.

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## **XXXVIII. THE JEWISH BELIEVERS ARE AMAZED**

### **Acts 10:45**

"The Jewish believers who had come with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles."

The word:

"Even"

reveals how surprising this was to them.

### **Cross References**

Acts 11:18

When the Jerusalem believers heard Peter's explanation, they glorified God and acknowledged that God had granted repentance leading to life to the Gentiles also.

Joel 2:28

God promised to pour out His Spirit upon all kinds of people.

Galatians 3:14

Through Christ, the promised Spirit comes to the nations through faith.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God's grace is often broader than our traditions expect.

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# XXXIX. THE GENTILES SPEAK AND PRAISE GOD

## Acts 10:46

“For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”

This provided visible evidence paralleling the Pentecost experience.

### Cross References

Acts 2:11

At Pentecost people heard believers declaring the great works of God in different languages.

Acts 19:6

Certain believers later spoke in tongues and prophesied when the Holy Spirit came upon them.

1 Corinthians 14:2

Paul discusses the spiritual gift of tongues in the Corinthian church.

### Key Truth

God gave clear evidence that Gentile believers had received the same Holy Spirit.

---

# XL. “CAN ANYONE REFUSE WATER?”

## Acts 10:47

“Surely no one can refuse water for these people to be baptized. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.”

Peter sees the conclusion clearly.

If God has accepted them:

Who can exclude them?

### Cross References

Acts 8:36

The Ethiopian asked, “Look, here is water. What would stop me from being baptized?”

Acts 11:17

Peter later said, “If God gave them the same gift He gave us, who was I to stand in God’s way?”

Galatians 3:27

Those baptized into Christ publicly identify themselves with Christ.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The church must not exclude people whom God has clearly accepted through faith in Christ.

---

## **XLI. THE GENTILES ARE BAPTIZED**

### **Acts 10:48**

“So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.”

The Gentile believers are publicly identified with Jesus.

### **Cross References**

Acts 2:38

Peter called believers to repent and be baptized in connection with Jesus Christ.

Acts 19:5

Believers were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 16:15

Lydia and her household were baptized after responding to the gospel.

### **Spiritual Principle**

Baptism publicly confirms identification with the same Lord and the same gospel.

---

## **XLII. SEVEN GREAT LESSONS FROM ACTS 10**

### **1. God Hears Sincere Prayer**

Cornelius prayed.

God noticed.

### **Principle:**

God sees the person sincerely seeking Him.

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## **2. Religious Devotion Is Not a Substitute for the Gospel**

Cornelius was devout, generous, and prayerful.

He still needed Christ.

### **Principle:**

Good works cannot replace saving faith in Jesus.

---

## **3. God Must Sometimes Change the Messenger Before He Uses the Messenger**

Peter needed his own assumptions challenged.

### **Principle:**

God may prepare our hearts before He opens the next ministry door.

---

## **4. God Does Not Show Ethnic Favoritism**

Peter learned:

“God does not show favoritism.”

### **Principle:**

No nationality possesses greater intrinsic access to salvation.

---

## **5. Jesus Is Lord of All**

Not Lord of Jews only.

Not Lord of Gentiles only.

### **Principle:**

The universal mission of the gospel rests on the universal lordship of Christ.

---

## **6. Forgiveness Comes Through Faith in Jesus**

Peter declared:

“Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

**Principle:**

Salvation is by faith in Christ, not by ethnic identity or religious heritage.

---

## **7. The Holy Spirit Confirms One Church**

Gentiles received the same Spirit.

**Principle:**

There is not one Spirit for Jewish believers and another for Gentile believers. Christ has one redeemed people.

---

## **XLIII. CORNELIUS — GOOD BUT STILL NEEDING THE GOSPEL**

Cornelius is one of the strongest biblical examples showing why morality and religious devotion cannot replace Christ.

He:

Prayed.

Gave.

Feared God.

Led his household well.

Had a good reputation.

Yet God still sent Peter.

Why?

Because Cornelius needed the gospel.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The gospel is not merely for obviously wicked people; it is also for respectable religious people who still need forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

---

## **XLIV. GOD PREPARED BOTH SIDES OF THE MEETING**

Before Peter met Cornelius:

God spoke to Cornelius.

God spoke to Peter.

Cornelius was prepared to hear.

Peter was prepared to go.

### **Spiritual Principle**

God is often working on both ends of a gospel conversation before the conversation begins.

This should encourage us to witness.

---

## **XLV. THE VISION WAS ABOUT PEOPLE**

Peter initially saw animals.

But Peter himself interprets the meaning in verse 28:

“God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.”

### **Key Truth**

The vision had implications for food.

But its central narrative purpose in Acts 10 concerns Gentile inclusion.

### **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Never use religious tradition to exclude people God commands you to reach.

---

## **XLVI. THE GOSPEL DESTROYS SPIRITUAL SUPERIORITY**

Peter could no longer think:

We are spiritually superior because we are Jewish.

Cornelius could not think:

My devotion earns salvation.

Both men had something to learn.

Peter learned:

God shows no favoritism.

Cornelius learned:

Forgiveness comes through faith in Jesus.

## **Spiritual Principle**

At the foot of the cross, human boasting disappears.

---

# **XLVII. WHAT PETER PREACHED**

Peter's sermon provides an excellent gospel outline.

## **Jesus Christ Is Lord of All**

Verse 36.

## **Jesus Was Anointed by God**

Verse 38.

## **Jesus Went About Doing Good**

Verse 38.

## **Jesus Was Crucified**

Verse 39.

## **Jesus Rose on the Third Day**

Verse 40.

## **Jesus Appeared to Witnesses**

Verse 41.

## **Jesus Will Judge the Living and the Dead**

Verse 42.

## **Everyone Who Believes Receives Forgiveness**

Verse 43.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

Biblical evangelism explains who Jesus is, what Jesus did, and how sinners must respond to Him.

---

# XLVIII. THE HOUSE THAT WAS READY TO HEAR

Cornelius says:

“We are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.”

What a congregation.

No entertainment required.

No persuasion to pay attention.

They were ready.

## **Spiritual Principle**

A prepared heart can turn an ordinary sermon into a life-changing encounter with truth.

---

# XLIX. “JESUS CHRIST — LORD OF ALL”

Acts 10:36 summarizes the entire chapter.

Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

If He is Lord of all:

The gospel must go to all.

Forgiveness may be offered to all.

The church must welcome all who truly believe.

## **Crawford Bible Study Principle**

The lordship of Christ destroys every artificial boundary we try to place around the gospel.

---

# L. WHAT ACTS 10 TEACHES ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is active throughout the chapter.

## **The Spirit Directs Peter**

He tells Peter to go.

## **The Spirit Confirms Gentile Salvation**

He comes upon Cornelius' household.

## **The Spirit Creates Unity**

Jewish believers see Gentiles receive the same gift.

### **Spiritual Principle**

The Holy Spirit advances the mission of Jesus across human boundaries.

---

## **LI. WHAT ACTS 10 TEACHES ABOUT PREJUDICE**

Peter says:

“God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.”

This is not permission to ignore sin.

Peter still preaches judgment, repentance, faith, and forgiveness.

The point is that no ethnic group should be rejected as inherently beyond God’s saving grace.

### **Principle**

The gospel condemns sin without condemning a race, nation, or ethnicity as spiritually unreachable.

---

## **LII. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY**

### **Question 1**

Who was Cornelius?

Cornelius was a Roman centurion stationed in Caesarea.

He was a Gentile who feared God, prayed regularly, gave generously, and influenced his household toward reverence for God.

---

### **Question 2**

Was Cornelius already saved simply because he was devout and generous?

Acts 10 presents Cornelius as sincere and responsive to God, but God still arranged for Peter to preach Jesus Christ to him.

Peter explicitly teaches that forgiveness comes through believing in Jesus.

Therefore religious devotion and good works did not replace the gospel.

---

## Question 3

Why did God give Peter the vision of the animals?

God was challenging Peter's understanding of ceremonial uncleanness and preparing him to enter a Gentile home.

Peter himself explains the central lesson:

"God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean."

---

## Question 4

What did the voice mean by saying, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean"?

In the immediate vision it addressed ceremonial food distinctions.

In the narrative of Acts 10, Peter understands it as preparing him not to reject Gentiles whom God intended to receive through the gospel.

---

## Question 5

Why did Peter refuse Cornelius' act of reverence?

Peter understood that he was only a man.

He would not accept worship or exaltation that belonged to God.

Faithful servants point people toward God rather than receiving divine honor themselves.

---

## Question 6

What did Peter learn about God?

Peter said:

"God does not show favoritism."

He learned that nationality does not determine a person's eligibility to hear and receive the gospel.

---

## Question 7

What did Peter preach about Jesus?

Peter proclaimed that:

- Jesus is Lord of all.

- God anointed Him.
  - He did good and healed.
  - He was crucified.
  - God raised Him from the dead.
  - He appeared to witnesses.
  - He is Judge of the living and dead.
  - Everyone who believes receives forgiveness through His name.
- 

## Question 8

How is a person forgiven according to Acts 10:43?

Peter says:

“Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.”

Forgiveness comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

---

## Question 9

What happened while Peter was still preaching?

The Holy Spirit came upon everyone who heard the message.

This visibly demonstrated God’s acceptance of Gentile believers.

---

## Question 10

Why were the Jewish believers amazed?

They had not expected Gentiles to receive the Holy Spirit in the same manner.

God showed them unmistakably that His saving grace included Gentiles.

---

## Question 11

Why were the Gentiles baptized?

Peter recognized that they had received the Holy Spirit just as Jewish believers had.

Therefore there was no biblical reason to deny them baptism.

---

## Question 12

What is the main lesson of Acts 10?

The gospel of Jesus Christ is for every nation, and everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins and belongs among God's redeemed people.

---

## **LIII. PERSONAL APPLICATION**

Acts 10 asks several important questions.

### **Am I Seeking God Sincerely?**

Cornelius prayed and sought God.

### **Am I Depending on Good Works Instead of Christ?**

Generosity and morality cannot replace the gospel.

### **Is There Someone I Have Decided God Could Never Reach?**

Peter had to learn not to call people unclean.

### **Do I Have Prejudices God Needs to Correct?**

Cultural habits can become spiritual barriers.

### **Am I Willing to Go When the Spirit Says Go?**

Peter was told:

“Go with them without hesitation.”

### **Am I Ready to Hear Everything God Says?**

Cornelius' household was ready to listen.

### **Is My Gospel Centered on Jesus?**

Peter preached Christ's life, death, resurrection, lordship, judgment, and forgiveness.

### **Do I Welcome Believers God Has Welcomed?**

Peter could not deny baptism to those God had clearly accepted.

---

## **LIV. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

### **“Never Build a Wall Around Grace Where God Has Opened a Door”**

Peter had inherited generations of separation between Jews and Gentiles.

Yet God told him:

“Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

Then God sent Gentile messengers.

Then Peter entered a Gentile home.

Then Peter preached Christ.

Then God poured out the Holy Spirit.

The message could not have been clearer.

### **Principle**

When God opens the gospel door to people, the church must not close it because of prejudice, tradition, ethnicity, or social distinction.

---

## **LV. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

### **“The Sincere Seeker Still Needs Jesus”**

Cornelius was one of the finest moral men introduced in Acts.

Yet God did not tell him:

“Your prayers are enough.”

He sent Peter.

Why?

Because salvation is found in Christ.

### **Principle**

Religious sincerity should lead a person toward Jesus, not become a substitute for Jesus.

---

## **LVI. ANOTHER CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE**

### **“God May Need to Prepare the Evangelist Before He Reaches the Lost”**

Cornelius was ready.

Peter was not.

Before Peter could preach to Cornelius:

Peter needed a vision.

Peter needed correction.

Peter needed his assumptions challenged.

Peter needed to obey.

### **Principle**

Sometimes the greatest obstacle to the next mission field is not the lost person's unwillingness but the believer's unwillingness to cross the boundary.

---

## **LVII. FINAL APPLICATION**

Acts Chapter 10 begins with a Gentile praying.

It ends with Gentiles baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Between those two moments:

God prepares a seeker.

God prepares a preacher.

God breaks a barrier.

God opens a home.

God proclaims the gospel.

God gives the Holy Spirit.

God creates unmistakable unity.

Peter entered the chapter still thinking in categories shaped by separation.

He leaves the encounter declaring:

“God does not show favoritism.”

Cornelius entered the chapter as a sincere seeker.

He ends hearing:

“Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins.”

That is the heart of Acts 10.

No one is saved because of:

Race.

Nationality.

Religious heritage.

Military position.

Morality.

Generosity.

Family background.

Human reputation.

People are forgiven through:

Faith in Jesus Christ.

And the Jesus Peter preaches is not a tribal Savior.

He is:

“Lord of all.”

That changes everything.

If Jesus is Lord of all:

The church must preach to all.

The gospel must be offered to all.

Believers must reject ethnic superiority.

Mission must cross cultural boundaries.

And everyone who believes must be welcomed as part of Christ’s people.

Acts 10 therefore calls the church to ask:

Who have we assumed would never listen?

Who have we treated as too different?

What boundaries have we mistaken for biblical barriers?

God may already be preparing them.

The Cornelius may already be praying.

The household may already be gathered.

The door may already be open.

The question is:

Will Peter go?

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# Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You that You do not show favoritism.

Thank You that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

Thank You that the gospel reaches people from every nation, ethnicity, culture, and background.

Search our hearts.

Expose prejudice.

Expose pride.

Expose any attitude that causes us to think some people are more worthy of salvation than others.

Teach us the lesson You taught Peter:

Do not call anyone impure or unclean whom You are calling through the gospel.

Thank You for Cornelius.

Thank You for his sincere desire to know You.

But also remind us that sincerity alone cannot save.

Keep Jesus Christ at the center.

Thank You that He went about doing good.

Thank You that He was crucified.

Thank You that You raised Him from the dead.

Thank You that He appeared to witnesses.

Thank You that He is Judge of the living and the dead.

And thank You that:

Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.

Make us ready messengers.

When Your Spirit says:

“Go,”

help us go.

When You challenge our assumptions, give us humility to change.

When You open a door, give us courage to walk through it.

Give us congregations like Cornelius' household—people ready to hear everything You have commanded.

Pour out Your Spirit upon Your people.

Break down sinful barriers.

Build unity around Jesus Christ.

And send the gospel from our churches, homes, communities, and lives to people everywhere.

May every nation hear.

May sinners believe.

May sins be forgiven.

May believers be baptized.

And may Jesus Christ be honored as:

Lord of all.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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## Key Verse

“All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins through His name.” — Acts 10:43

## Central Truth

God shows no favoritism, Jesus Christ is Lord of all, and everyone from every nation who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins and is welcomed into the one Spirit-filled people of God.

## Acts 10 in One Sentence

God prepares both Cornelius and Peter to cross the Jew-Gentile barrier, Peter proclaims the crucified and risen Jesus as Lord of all, and the Holy Spirit falls upon the believing Gentiles, proving that forgiveness and full inclusion in God's people come through faith in Christ rather than nationality or religious tradition.