



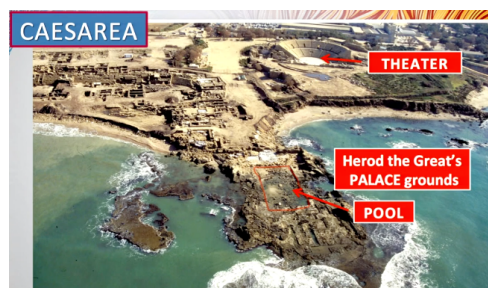
February 3, 2016  
Acts 10:1-48  
Pastor Gary Hamrick

### Exegetical Study

1. **Acts 10:1-8** - *“At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, ‘Cornelius!’ Cornelius stared at him in fear. ‘What is it, Lord?’ he asked. The angel answered, ‘Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon, the tanner, whose house is by the sea.’ When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.”*
  - a. Caesarea
    - i. Caesarea was a port city on the Mediterranean Sea, located about thirty miles from Joppa.
    - ii. Today Joppa is located just outside of Tel Aviv.
    - iii. Caesarea was founded by King Herod the Great, who developed the city over a period of about twelve years (25 B.C. to 13 B.C.).
    - iv. Caesarea was Herod’s primary residence.
    - v. At this point in history, Caesarea was the primary city of this province in the Roman Empire.
    - vi. All of the governors or prefects who succeeded Herod the Great will also make Caesarea their headquarters, including Pontius Pilate.
      1. Pastor Gary said, “Up until 1961, there was no archeological record of Pontius Pilate, and many skeptics of the Bible said Pontius Pilate [was just a figment of] history’s imagination... But in 1961 [a plaque was discovered with these words written on it]:

‘Tiberiev̄m Pontius Pilatus Praefectus Judaeae.’ ... [It means that this was dedicated to Pontius Pilate, prefect of Judea.]”

2. Pilate ruled from 26 A.D. to 36 A.D.



b. Cornelius

- i. He was a Gentile.
- ii. He was a Roman centurion.
- iii. He was devout and God-fearing.
- iv. He gave generously.
- v. He prayed regularly.
- vi. Pastor Gary said, “There are a lot of decent, devout, religious people who are not believers in Jesus. Cornelius is an example of [many] people who go to church regularly. They are devout, they are God-fearing, and they might even pray a lot, but we are going to see [that no one] has helped Cornelius connect the dots as to what it means to have a personal relationship with God and what it means to be saved. [He didn't] understand the truth of Jesus and how the truth of Jesus relates to that relationship with God. [Being devout, and giving a lot, and praying a lot] will not get someone into heaven! One of the biggest deceptions that has penetrated the hearts and minds of a lot of good, honest, decent people is that if they just remain good, and honest, and decent people, they'll get to heaven. The Bible makes it clear that we are saved by grace, through faith... It is not by human effort that we gain entrance into heaven or have sins forgiven. It is only by what Christ has done for us, and we must put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ! I have a real heart for people who are good, god-fearing, devout,

praying people, but you and I need to help them understand that being good is not good enough. ... What I love so much about this story is that God [loved] this [specific man and that God sent ] an angel to speak to him. ... It isn't as [though] the good things people do go unnoticed; God noticed, and the angel said so, but those good things aren't enough.

1. **Ephesians 2:8–9** - *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”*
2. **Romans 3:10** - *“As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one...’”*

c. Peter and Simon

- i. Peter was staying at the home of a Jewish man named Simon, which was very unusual because of his profession as a Jew.
- ii. It's worth noting that as a tanner, Simon had to be in contact with dead animals, which was strictly forbidden for godly Jews.
- iii. Simon the tanner would have been considered unclean, and, therefore, he had to live outside of town.
- iv. Pastor Gary said, “There are some things that we do because it's simply tradition. ... Tradition would have taught Peter [that he should never go near much less into the house of an unclean person! Peter didn't seem to be concerned with traditions that weren't in the Scriptures.] There's a lot of traditions that we embrace, and we believe and that we think are right, and they may not be biblical. [Peter was] going to have his heart stretched [to] accept something or someone or a group of people who up until this point, he would never have accepted.”

2. **Acts 10:9 – 23a** - *About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. Then a voice told him, ‘Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.’ ‘Surely not, Lord!’ Peter replied. ‘I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.’ The voice spoke to him a second time, ‘Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.’ This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven. While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Simon, three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.’ Peter went down and said to the men, ‘I'm the one*

*you're looking for. Why have you come?' The men replied, 'We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.' Then Peter invited them into the house to be his guests."*

a. Peter

- i. Concerning Peter's statement that he had never eaten anything unclean, Pastor Gary said, "[Do you know] what I like about this [scene] and what I find a little humorous and somewhat hypocritical [is those] people who pride themselves on stuff they've never done, [but] they've done other stuff that's even more terrible? ... Peter [was] that kind of guy; [he made] bold promises and [he didn't] always deliver, but you know, maybe [that] was true [and maybe not]. But here's the hypocrisy... he was living in the house of Simon the tanner, a man who made his living being around dead animals]!"
- ii. The animals Peter saw in the vision were unclean animals.
  1. **Deuteronomy 14:3-21a** *"Do not eat any detestable thing. These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep. You may eat any animal that has a split hoof divided in two and that chews the cud. However, of those that chew the cud or that have a split hoof completely divided you may not eat the camel, the rabbit or the coney. Although they chew the cud, they do not have a split hoof; they are ceremonially unclean for you. The pig is also unclean; although it has a split hoof, it does not chew the cud. You are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses. Of all the creatures living in the water, you may eat any that has fins and scales. But anything that does not have fins and scales you may not eat; for you it is unclean. You may eat any clean bird. But these you may not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, the red kite, the black kite, any kind of falcon, any kind of raven, the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, the little owl, the great owl, the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, the cormorant, the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat. All flying insects that swarm are unclean to you; do not eat them. But any winged creature that is clean you may eat. Do not eat anything you find already dead. You may give it to an alien living in any of your towns, and he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner. But you are a people holy to the LORD your God."*
  2. God was trying to teach the people hygiene so they would not get sick.

3. The primary thing God was trying to teach the people was the difference between clean and unclean.
4. Pastor Gary said, “[God] wanted them to understand things about holiness, and his character, and that there are things in life that are clean and unclean, and that he is a holy God and he calls us to a holy life. ... He was teaching the people through a list of rules so that they would understand what is right and what is wrong, holy and unholy, clean and unclean. They had to follow that regimen to know that God is a holy God, and they had to follow certain rules so that they could please that holy God. Now, fast-forward to the New Testament... our holiness [and] righteousness is gained through [Jesus Christ] and his finished work; it doesn’t come because we obey a system of rules. So, the dietary commandments of the Old Testament have been done away with [and] Jesus said so. ... The Old Covenant was rules and regulations, [which made people holy]. [In the New Covenant, through Jesus we are made holy and righteous by faith in what Jesus Christ has done for us]; therefore, the dietary system is [no longer needed].”

- a. **Mark 7:18–19** – “*‘Are you so dull?’ he asked. ‘Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him “unclean”? For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.’ (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods ‘clean.’)*”

- iii. Jews considered Gentiles to be unclean and unholy, and contact with Gentiles was forbidden, and certainly to go into the home of a Gentile was beyond unthinkable.
- iv. Pastor Gary said, “God stretched [Peter’s] understanding of humanity, and Peter [was] going to come to an awareness, and this is important for all of us to understand, Jesus Christ died for all, not just people who look like you [or me].
  1. **Revelation 5:9** – “*... because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.*”
- v. It must have been a huge surprise to Peter that the men who were asking for him were Gentiles!
- vi. Peter seems to have had a better sense of what was going on because he invited the men to come so they could share all that Cornelius had experienced.

3. **Acts 10:23b–48** – “*The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. The following day he arrived in Caesarea.*”

*Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. 'Stand up,' he said, 'I am only a man myself.' Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: 'You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?' Cornelius answered: 'Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.' Then Peter began to speak: 'I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached – how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. 'We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen – by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 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. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.' While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. 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."*

- a. Peter rejected Cornelius' "worshipful" greeting.
  - i. Pastor Gary said, "[In] St. Peter's Basilica, there's a bronze [life-size statue] of Peter that was made in the thirteenth century, and the toes on the [right foot the statue] are completely [rubbed off]! ... All of the people who have made pilgrimage, [who stop] and kiss Peter's feet have literally rubbed [the statue's] toes away. [They are] gone! ...

People venerate [Peter, but that's not what Peter wanted in any part of this account].”

- b. Peter shared a simple message about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- c. Everyone in Cornelius' household heard, received, and believed the truth about Jesus, and they were saved.
- d. The Holy Spirit came in response to their faith in Jesus, and they were baptized in the Spirit.
  - i. The gift of tongues is a gift of the Holy Spirit.
    - 1. In [Acts 2](#) and [Acts 10](#), we read that people who believed spoke in tongues when the Holy Spirit came upon them.
    - 2. In [Acts 8](#) those who believed didn't speak in tongues, and in [Acts 19](#), those who believed didn't even know about the Holy Spirit.
  - ii. Today, the Holy Spirit baptizes believers and distributes gifts as he wills.
  - iii. The evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is found in [1 Corinthians 13:1](#), and that evidence is love.
    - 1. [1 Corinthians 13:1](#) - *“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.”*
- e. Cornelius and his household believed in Jesus, they were baptized by the Holy Spirit, and then baptized with water.
  - i. Baptism with water is an external sign of an internal work; it is not required for salvation.
  - ii. Baptism with water identifies a Believer with the finished work of Christ.
  - iii. Going under the water symbolizes Jesus' death and burial, and coming up out of the water symbolizes Jesus' resurrection.
  - iv. This account tells the story of the first Gentiles who believed in Jesus.

#### 4. Peter

- a. In 49 A.D., Paul charged Peter with hypocrisy.
  - i. [Galatians 2:11-13](#) - *“When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.”*
  - ii. Paul wrote to Peter and challenged him because he was okay eating with Gentiles, but when his Jewish friends were around, he avoided Gentiles altogether.
- b. Pastor Gary said, “This happened seven years after the events of Acts 10,

which took place in 42 A.D., so we see that old habits are sometimes hard to break. ... Our misperceptions and our prejudice towards people are sometimes the most terribly deep-rooted problems and sins that we have. ... We need to always be examining our hearts for any deep-rooted prejudice or anything in our hearts that [make us think less of someone because they aren't like us]. We need to recognize that as sin because [it's the sin of hypocrisy]. ... So, even the most seasoned of saints, if they look deep in their heart, might have to uproot some prideful, sinful prejudice of their own."

- i. **Galatians 3:28** - *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the 1984 New International Version (NIV)