

¹⁹ Meanwhile, as Peter was puzzling over the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, "Three men have come looking for you. ²⁰ Get up, go downstairs, and go with them without hesitation. Don't worry, for I have sent them."

²¹ So Peter went down and said, "I'm the man you are looking for. Why have you come?"

²² They said, "We were sent by Cornelius, a Roman officer. He is a devout and God-fearing man, well respected by all the Jews. A holy angel instructed him to summon you to his house so that he can hear your message." ²³ So Peter invited the men to stay for the night. The next day he went with them, accompanied by some of the brothers from Joppa.

9. Discussion: (a) Describe the background of Peter's trance. (b) What purpose did God have in sending Peter the vision, and why was it repeated three times? (c) What word of knowledge did the Holy Spirit give to Peter after the vision ended? (d) If Peter had not received the vision and the word of knowledge, how do you think he would have reacted to the Gentile visitors? (e) How do you think you might react if God were to call you to go and speak about Jesus to people in a mosque? (f) If Cornelius was already a God-fearing man, why was Peter needed?

Scripture taken from the
Holy Bible, New Living Translation (NLT)
copyright © 1996, 2004 by Tyndale Charitable Trust.
Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers.

Study Guide Copyright © 2011 David B. Fenwick
Published and Distributed by **Yeshua Glow, Inc.**
5718 Monterey Road, Los Angeles, CA 90042

An Interactive Life Application Bible Study of the Acts of the Apostles for Small Groups

Key: Blue = New Testament Red = Words of Jesus

Green = Old Testament Quotes

Lesson 14

1. Background Information: Lesson 13 described how Saul was transformed from a persecutor against the *followers of the Way* and became one of them. Saul himself soon became a target of persecution. We learned how Saul received his training by means of miraculous revelations. This led to his becoming a powerful messenger of the Good News about Jesus, the Messiah. However, those very revelations tempted Saul (also called Paul). He became proud. However, God humbled him by sending a *thorn in his flesh*, accompanied by a special promise: "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness."

2. A Season of Peace in the Church

Acts 9:31 The church then had peace throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, and it became stronger as the believers lived in the fear of the Lord. And with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers.

3. Discussion: What effect does this combination of peace, fear and encouragement have on church growth?

4. Peter Heals Aeneas and Raises Dorcas

Acts 9:32-43 Meanwhile, Peter traveled from place to place, and he came down to visit the believers in the town of Lydda. ³³ There he met a man named Aeneas, who had been paralyzed and bedridden for eight years. ³⁴ Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you! Get up, and roll up your sleeping mat!" And he was healed instantly. ³⁵ Then the whole population of Lydda and Sharon saw Aeneas walking around, and they turned to the Lord.

³⁶ There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in

Greek is Dorcas. She was always doing kind things for others and helping the poor.³⁷ About this time she became ill and died. Her body was washed for burial and laid in an upstairs room.³⁸ But the believers had heard that Peter was nearby at Lydda, so they sent two men to beg him, "Please come as soon as possible!"

³⁹ So Peter returned with them; and as soon as he arrived, they took him to the upstairs room. The room was filled with widows who were weeping and showing him the coats and other clothes Dorcas had made for them.⁴⁰ But Peter asked them all to leave the room; then he knelt and prayed. Turning to the body he said, "Get up, Tabitha." And she opened her eyes! When she saw Peter, she sat up!⁴¹ He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then he called in the widows and all the believers, and he presented her to them alive.

⁴² The news spread through the whole town, and many believed in the Lord.⁴³ And Peter stayed a long time in Joppa, living with Simon, a tanner of hides.

5. Discussion: (a) Why do you think Peter sent everyone out of the room when Dorcas was raised? (b) Do you think Dorcas was raised because of her worthiness, or because of God's mercy? Explain. (c) What might God do through the church today to cause many to believe? (v.42)

6. Cornelius Calls for Peter.

Acts 10:1-8 In Caesarea there lived a Roman army officer^[1] named Cornelius, who was a captain of the Italian Regiment.² He was a devout, God-fearing man, as was everyone in his household. He gave generously to the poor and prayed regularly to God.³ One afternoon about three o'clock, he had a vision in which he saw an angel of God coming toward him. "Cornelius!" the angel said.

⁴ Cornelius stared at him in terror. "What is it, sir?" he asked the angel.

And the angel replied, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have been received by God as an offering!"⁵ Now send some men to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter.⁶ He is staying with Simon, a tanner who lives near the seashore."

⁷ As soon as the angel was gone, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier, one of his personal attendants.⁸ He told them what had happened and sent them off to Joppa.

7. Discussion: (a) When the Church was almost entirely made up of Jews who believed that Jesus was the Messiah, what does the angel's appearance to Cornelius show us about God's concern for Gentiles? (b) What especially drew God's attention toward Cornelius? (c) Where was Cornelius and where was Peter at the time the angel appeared?

8. Peter Visits Cornelius.

Acts 10:9-23 The next day as Cornelius's messengers were nearing the town, Peter went up on the flat roof to pray. It was about noon,¹⁰ and he was hungry. But while a meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.¹¹ He saw the sky open, and something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners.¹² In the sheet were all sorts of animals, reptiles, and birds.¹³ Then a voice said to him, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat them."

¹⁴ "No, Lord," Peter declared. "I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure and unclean.

¹⁵ But the voice spoke again: "Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean."¹⁶ The same vision was repeated three times. Then the sheet was suddenly pulled up to heaven.

¹⁷ Peter was very perplexed. What could the vision mean? Just then the men sent by Cornelius found Simon's house. Standing outside the gate,¹⁸ they asked if a man named Simon Peter was staying there.