

Acts 11:4 told them exactly what had happened.
[in verses 5-14 he repeated what we have previously studied.]

Peter continued: Acts 11:15-18 "As I began to speak . . . the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as he fell on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I thought of the Lord's words when he said, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁷ And since God gave these Gentiles the same gift he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to stand in God's way?"

¹⁸ When the others heard this, they stopped objecting and began praising God. They said, "We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life."

9. Discussion: (a) What do you think convinced the apostles and other believers to stop criticizing Peter for his ministry among the Gentiles? (b) Why is this story so important to all Gentile believers today? (c) What implication does this story have for our own acquaintances from other ethnicities and social classes?

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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 15

1. Background: In lesson 14 we learned that an angel led Cornelius, a Roman officer, to send messengers to invite Peter to come and teach him more about the Lord. Meanwhile, Peter received a vision, repeated three times, that prepared him to go with those Roman messengers.

2. Peter visits the home of Cornelius, the Gentile.

Acts 10:24-33 [Peter and the messengers] arrived in Caesarea the following day. Cornelius was waiting for them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵ As Peter entered his home, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶ But Peter pulled him up and said, "Stand up! I'm a human being just like you!" ²⁷ So they talked together and went inside, where many others were assembled.

²⁸ Peter told them, "You know it is against our laws for a Jewish man to enter a Gentile home like this or to associate with you. But God has shown me that I should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean. ²⁹ So I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. Now tell me why you sent for me."

³⁰ Cornelius replied, "Four days ago I was praying in my house about this same time, three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly, a man in dazzling clothes was standing in front of me. ³¹ He told me, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your gifts to the poor have been noticed by God! ³² Now send messengers to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. He is staying in the home of Simon, a tanner who lives near the seashore.' ³³ So I sent for you at once, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here, waiting before God to hear the message the Lord has given you."

3. Discussion: (a) Why do you think Cornelius called together his relatives and close friends? (b) Why do you think Cornelius worshipped Peter at first? (c) Explain the huge change in Peter's attitude toward fellowship with Gentiles? (d) How did the attitude Cornelius had toward the poor have an effect on Peter's visit?

4. The Gentiles Hear the Good News.

Acts 10:34-43 Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism. ³⁵ In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶ This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee, after John began preaching his message of baptism. ³⁸ And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

³⁹ "And we apostles are witnesses of all he did throughout Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a cross, ⁴⁰ but God raised him to life on the third day. Then God allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to the general public, but to us whom God had chosen in advance to be his witnesses. We were those who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴² And he ordered us to preach everywhere and to testify that Jesus is the one appointed by God to be the judge of all—the living and the dead. ⁴³ He is the one all the prophets testified about, saying that everyone who believes in him will have their sins forgiven through his name."

5. Discussion: (a) Why was the statement, "God shows no favoritism," such a radical new thought for Peter? (b) Why do you think the world has taken so long to learn the equal value of all people? (c) What is the simple Good News that

was given first to Israel and then to all people? (See v.35-36) (d) In verses 37-43 Peter gave a short summary of the earthly life of Jesus and the fact that the apostles were eye witnesses to all of those events. Why do you think Peter began this summary by telling Cornelius, "You know what happened, and you know that God appointed Jesus? (v. 37-38) (e) What did Jesus order the eye witnesses to his resurrection to preach and testify everywhere? (v. 42-43) (f) Who do you think is responsible to spread the message today? Why does the message still have authority?

6. The Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit

Acts 10:44-48 Even as Peter was saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who were listening to the message. ⁴⁵ The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles, too. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter asked, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone object to their being baptized, now that they have received the Holy Spirit just as we did?" ⁴⁸ So he gave orders for them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterward Cornelius asked him to stay with them for several days.

7. Discussion: (a) Why were the Jewish believers so amazed that the Gentiles also received the gift of the Holy Spirit? (b) What was the first thing Peter did after the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit? Why was that important?

8. Peter Explains His Actions. (Acts 11)

Acts 11:1-4 Soon the news reached the apostles and other believers in Judea that the Gentiles had received the word of God. ² But when Peter arrived back in Jerusalem, the Jewish believers criticized him. ³ "You entered the home of Gentiles and even ate with them!" they said. ⁴ Then Peter