

“Welcome” to the Gentiles (Acts 10:1-11:18)

I. Prelude: Keys to Understanding the Story of Cornelius

A. The ABCD Theory of Perception: The role of one’s belief system in governing attitudes and behavior.

Activating *Event* → **Belief System** (*Meaning*) → *Consequent Emotion* → **Decisive Action**

The appropriateness of one’s emotional reaction and volitional response to some episode is determined by the degree to which one’s belief system is in harmony with _____.

B. The Jewish Belief System

1. Summary: Pious Jews regarded Gentiles as morally defiled to such a degree that to eat with one would cause spiritual _____. Therefore, they practiced rigid _____.

2. History

a. In the OT, God called Israel to be a _____ nation to reflect his glory to the rest of the world. When Israel was constituted as a nation (Sinai), God gave certain “food laws” to help them make distinctions between “clean” (holy) and “unclean” (common) (Lev. 11:43-47; 20:22-26).

b. Sinful Israel corrupted God’s intentions and provisions

- They came to view separateness as _____.
- They came to think of _____ purity as the essence of religion. External compliance became a basis for _____.
- They made up _____ for how to obey God’s laws and made them binding on all Jews.
- They viewed Gentiles as unclean, and avoided _____ with them.

c. Jesus challenged this perspective and revoked the “rules”

- By his _____ – he didn’t observe all the man-made rules; and he fellowshiped with “sinners.”
- By his _____ – He rebuked religious leaders for externalizing religion and corrected their interpretation of “clean” and “unclean” (Mark 7).
- By his death and resurrection, he instituted a New Covenant based not on religious performance but on _____ (Eph 2).

II. The “Conversion” of Peter (10:1-33)

A. The Vision of *Cornelius* (10:1-8)

1. The man

- A Roman Centurian
- A “God-fearer” – generous to the poor, regular in prayer
- Approved by God

2. The vision: send for Peter in Joppa (10:5-6; 11:14)

B. The Vision of *Peter* (10:9-16)

1. The occasion: Prayer + Hunger
2. The Aspects of the Vision
 - An image: A sheet filled with animals (both “clean” and “unclean”) descending from heaven.
 - A message: “Rise, Peter, kill and eat.”
 - A protest: “By no means, Lord.”
 - An explanation: “What God has made clean, do not call common.” (1 Tim. 4:3-5)
 - A repetition: 3x

C. Peter’s meeting with the messengers (10:17-23): The first step across the “divide”

D. Peter’s meeting with Cornelius (10:25-33): The second step across the “divide”

III. **The Conversion of Cornelius** (10:34-43)

A. Peter’s Message: The Gospel

1. Preface: God has no favorites. All men are _____ candidates for salvation.
2. Content: _____

B. The Spirit’s “Interruption” – The “Gentile _____”

1. The Event: The Spirit came upon the listeners and they began speaking in other tongues.
2. The Reaction of Jewish believers: Amazed.
3. The Response of Peter: Offer of Water Baptism
4. The Sequence of Events:
 - Proclamation: the _____ for receiving salvation (Romans 10:9-15)
 - Faith: The _____ of receiving salvation
 - Spirit baptism: The _____ of salvation
 - Water baptism: The _____ of salvation

C. The Significance of Cornelius’s Conversion (11:1-18) – “Tear Down This Wall”

1. The Divine _____ (11:4-10)
2. The Divine _____ (11:11-12)
3. The Divine _____ (11:13-14)
4. The Divine _____ (11:15-17)

Conclusion: “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

IV. **Concluding Reflections**

- A. Luke’s Point: The gospel is to be proclaimed to _____ people without _____.
Gentiles do not have to become _____ in order to become Christians.
- B. A Clue to a perplexing question: What is the status before God of those who have never heard the gospel?
 - Revelation demands a response (Heb. 11:6)
 - Faith will be rewarded by further revelation (Heb. 11:6)
 - The NT indicates no other means of salvation apart from faith in Christ (Acts 4:12; 11:14)
 - God will supply the genuine “seeker” with the message of the Gospel
 - Even the inclination to seek after God comes from Him (Rom. 3:11; 2 Cor. 4:4)
- C. While initial faith results in the forgiveness of sins at the time of conversion, being set free from the effects of sin is usually a _____ that takes place over time (see Mark 8:22-25).