



Bonus Lesson: *Peter and Cornelius* (Condensed Version)

Objectives: To explain that:

*God commanded Peter through a vision to share the good news of Jesus with the Gentiles. *In Peter's vision, God declared that no-one is to be considered unclean or unworthy to worship with the Jewish believers. *The Holy Spirit was given to the Gentiles in the same way as the Jews. The first Gentile believers were baptized.

Scripture reference: Acts 10

"I Wonder": *What do you see in this picture? (Two men talking, sheet filled with animals etc.)

*Is there anything you wonder about? * I wonder who the two men are. *I wonder why one of the men is thinking about a sheet filled with animals. *I wonder what the men are talking about. Let's find out more in our story...

Lesson Summary: In today's story we will hear how the good news of Jesus spread from the Jews to the Gentiles. A man named Cornelius was a commander in the Roman army. Cornelius was not a Jew, he was a Gentile, but he and his family were faithful and worshiped God. He prayed and gave to the poor, but he could not worship with the Jews, because God's law commanded the Jews to be separate from everyone else. One day Cornelius had a vision of an angel who told him that God had heard his prayers. The angel told him to send men to go and bring a man named Peter to his house. Cornelius did as the angel said. Peter was one of the disciples of Jesus. The next day, while Peter was praying, he also had a vision. Peter saw the sky open and a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. In the sheet were all kinds of animals, reptiles and birds that the Jews considered impure and unclean. In the Old Testament, God had commanded the Jewish people not to eat these types of animals. But now Peter heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." Peter said, "No, Lord! I will not! I have never eaten anything that is not pure and 'clean.'" The voice spoke to him a second time and said, "Do not say anything is not pure that God has made 'clean.'" This happened three times. As Peter was wondering what the vision meant, the Holy Spirit spoke to him and told him to go with the men to the house of Cornelius. Peter realized that through the vision, God was calling him to go and share the good news of Jesus with the Gentiles. In this vision God was showing Peter that he should not look upon the Gentiles as unclean or less worthy than the Jewish people. Earlier, the Jews had been separated from the Gentiles, but now, God was calling people from all the nations of the world to worship him through his Son, Jesus. The new people that God was calling together would be called the Church! Because God had shown Peter that he should no longer think of anyone as impure or unclean, he went to the house of Cornelius and shared with him and his family and friends, the good news that Jesus is God the Son who came to earth to save us. He shared that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, and then rose from the grave. As Peter was telling them these things and that everyone who believes in Jesus will have their sins forgiven, the Holy Spirit fell upon them. Cornelius, his family and friends, believed and were baptized. They started following Jesus, the Lord of All.

Suggested Questions: What does this story tell us about God? (God loves people from all nations equally. He wants people from every nation to worship him together. Jesus died for all people's sins.) *What did God tell Peter about the unclean animals in his vision? (That he could kill and eat them, because God now declared them to be clean) *What did God want to tell Peter about the Gentiles through this vision? (That God was calling him to share the good news of Jesus with the Gentiles. That he should go to the house of Cornelius to share with them about Jesus. That in the Church, the Gentiles were no longer separated from the Jews.) *What happened when Peter shared the good news of Jesus with Cornelius and his family and friends? (They believed and were filled with the Holy Spirit and were baptized.) *What does our memory verse tell us about those who receive Jesus and believe in him? (God gave them the right to become children of God.)

Bible Memory Verse:

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12 - ESV)