

I. ONE MAN

A. Cornelius was a good man

1. He was a Military man (vs. 1)
 - a. A centurion – meaning that he had charge over 100 men
 - b. Therefore, he was at least a captain in modern rankings
 - c. However, he may have ranked higher
 - i. He may have commanded a double centuria – major
 - ii. Or commanded the first centuria of a cohort – Lt. col.
 - iii. Or commanded the first centuria of the FIRST cohort
 - iv. Perhaps as high as a modern colonel with 1000 men
 - v. Each legion may contain as many as 10 cohorts
 - vi. Each cohort may contain as many as 6 centuria
 - d. The Bible does not tell his rank, but he is of a well-known band
2. He was a Devout man (vs. 2)
 - a. He had the character traits of consistency and faithfulness
 - b. WEBSTERS 1828 – “Yielding a solemn and reverential attention to God in religious exercises, particularly in prayer.”
 - i. Devout men carried Stephen to his burial – ACTS 8:2
 - ii. We should be devout – known particularly by PRAYER
 - c. He prayed to God always (vs. 2)
 - i. 1 THESS. 5:17 – “Pray without ceasing.”
 - ii. LUKE 18:1 – “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;”
 - iii. Ask ourselves: Is this lost man more in prayer than I am?
3. He was an Inspiring man
 - a. His entire household followed him to seek God
 - i. Not just his family
 - ii. But his servants (vs. 7)
 - iii. And at least one of his soldiers
 - b. Not just by dictate but by choice (vs. 44)
 - c. Nobody can force ANYONE to get Saved – his leadership inspired!
4. He was a Religious man
 - a. He gave alms to the people – he cared about others
 - b. JAMES 1:27 – “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.”
 - c. Helping others who cannot help themselves
5. He was an Obedient man
 - a. As soon as he saw the vision, he acted!

- b. He called his servants and sent to Joppa – as INSTRUCTED! (vs. 8)
 - B. And yet he was a LOST man
 - 1. He was all those things: Military, Devout, Inspiring, Religious, Obedient
 - 2. But still LOST
 - a. Undone without Christ in his life
 - b. A life without LIGHT (living in darkness, like exploring a cave)
 - C. But God heard his prayers!
 - 1. Some preach that God does not listen to the prayers of the lost
 - a. PSA. 66:18 – “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:”
 - b. ISA. 59:1-2 – “Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: (2) But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”
 - c. These verses are to SAVED people (separated from YOUR God)
 - 2. But God is not obligated to answer the prayers of the devil’s children
 - a. I know that God proved to me many times that He was there!
 - b. Some might say it was a coincidence, but I KNEW
 - c. He does that, I believe, so we can have NO excuse
 - 3. So, because of ONE MAN, God sent TWO VISIONS
 - a. Cornelius sent THREE SERVANTS
 - b. And Peter saw a sheet with FOUR COUNTERS

II. TWO VISIONS

- A. Cornelius had a vision, God sent him a messenger
 - 1. God had very specific instructions for Cornelius (vs. 4-6)
 - a. He heard every detail and executed his orders expeditiously!
 - b. I used to get annoyed with my father repeating instructions
 - c. I know now why he did that! I wasn’t LISTENING!
 - 2. Cornelius LISTENED!
 - a. He listened to hear
 - b. Then he hastened to HEED!
 - 3. We also have simple instructions from God
 - a. He doesn’t have to send us a messenger to tell us
 - b. We already have his perfect Word
 - c. 1 COR. 13:10 – “But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”
- B. Peter had a vision, God sent him a message
 - 1. Peter also had a vision, but he had a different “hunger”
 - a. While Cornelius was hungry to know God
 - b. Peter was hungry to get his lunch
 - c. So, God got his UNDIVIDED attention with a trance (vs. 10)
 - 2. The heavens were opened (vs. 11-12) and a vessel, a sheet was lowered

- a. On it were things that Jews could not eat nor associate with
 - b. And God tells him to KILL and EAT
 - c. But Peter refuses! (vs. 14)
- 3. God gives Peter a clear instruction (vs. 15)
- 4. 1 TIM. 4:4-5 – “For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: (5) For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”
- C. Cornelius only had to hear it once, but Peter three times!
 - 1. God had to repeat Himself (vs. 16)
 - a. Peter denied the Lord three times in MATT. 26
 - b. Peter confessed his love for the Lord three times in JOHN 21
 - c. Here God repeats Himself three times so Peter will listen
 - 2. Don’t make God repeat His clear instructions
 - 3. Or He might decide He doesn’t have your attention.
 - 4. (God can GET your attention)

III. THREE SERVANTS

- A. Two servants
 - 1. These were trusted emissaries. Two gentiles going to visit one Jew.
 - 2. An unheard-of mission – To the Romans, the Jews were “lesser” people
 - 3. Yet these were naturally devout men from Cornelius’ household
 - 4. They ALSO sought God – this was the entreaty to come
- B. One soldier
 - 1. Even more unusual, a SOLDIER who sought after God
 - 2. The Roman Legionaries were not known for their meek and quiet spirits
 - 3. Yet this soldier ALSO sought after God – this was the authority to go
- C. Twenty-four miles between Caesarea and Joppa
 - 1. That is at least a 5 or 6 hour walk – essentially a day’s journey
 - 2. But not one of them balked at the effort, they all wanted to find God
 - 3. Would we seek after God if we had to walk a day?

IV. FOUR CORNERS

- A. The vision was to Peter the Jew
 - 1. The fringes on a Jewish garment are called the “tzitzit” or “tzitzis”
 - 2. You can see them in airports or around larger cities
 - 3. Source of the tassels today
 - a. NUM. 15:38-40 – “Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: (39) And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not

after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: (40) That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.”

- b. Now it becomes a show, who can have the longest tassels
- c. It wasn't for others, but for the wearer's heart!

B. Evidence that God has changed their tradition

- 1. God puts the unclean animals on the symbol of Judaism (vs. 11 &12)
- 2. Subtle details like that are often missed by us, but not by Peter
 - a. Why else would such pains be taken to describe the vessel?
 - b. God is changing Peter's mind about what a Christian should be
- 3. GAL. 6:15 – “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

C. God changed MY tradition when I got Saved

- 1. Children's Song: The things I used to do, don't do them anymore
- 2. That's my testimony
- 3. 2 COR. 5:17 – “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

V. FIVE MILES PER HOUR

A. The average walking speed of a human (5 MPH)

- 1. Those three had only just arrived – 24 miles in one day (vs. 9)
- 2. And on the morrow, they went back! (vs. 23-24)
- 3. No complaining, in fact, I imagine EXCITEMENT and IMPATIENCE!

B. They had the GOSPEL finally!

- 1. MARK 16:15 – “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”
- 2. And that is truly GOOD NEWS, that's what Gospel means
 - a. Peter had something to say that no one there had heard before
 - b. They had been devout, even religious, but didn't know God
 - c. Now they are getting a personal introduction to the KING!
- 3. If you have been trying to be religious or be “good enough” for God
 - a. I have to tell you that you can't be...
 - b. ROM. 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”
 - c. I've got GOOD NEWS for you!
 - d. ROM 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death; but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
 - e. Won't you accept His free gift?

C. Be Saved Today!