

## **Peter and Cornelius: What About Water Baptism? Acts 10**

### **Introduction:**

1. Acts 10 tells the story of a Gentile man by the name of Cornelius who, along with his entire household, trusts Christ.
2. This is a very significant event in God's Word and will provide a bridge from the apostle Peter to the apostle Paul. It will also provide a bridge from God's kingdom program for the nation of Israel to the dispensation of grace today.
  - Paul is sent home to Tarsus in Acts 9:30, but then shows up again in Acts 11:25.
  - Peter dominates the early part of Acts. Acts 1-12
  - Paul dominates the middle and latter part of Acts. Acts 13-28
  - Wedged in between the time that Paul was sent home and the time he showed up again is this event that involves Peter and Cornelius.
3. God knew that the apostle Paul would be the apostle to the Gentiles, but the church at Jerusalem would never have accepted this change in program if initiated by Paul.
4. God used Peter to open the door for Paul's great ministry to the Gentiles. This is why this is such a significant event in the Bible. We examined this story on the surface in a previous message.
5. It is so crucial to our understanding of God's Word that we need to delve into this text a bit deeper and answer several key questions.

**First, was Cornelius a lost Gentile or a saved Jewish proselyte?**

**Second, did Peter understand the revelation of the mystery and dispensation of grace when he went to meet Cornelius?**

**Third, was it because of Peter's rebellion and disobedience that he did not want to go to Cornelius house?**

**Fourth, why was Peter so vehemently opposed to eating the meats that God told him to eat?**

**Fifth, why did Peter consider it unlawful for him to keep company with Gentiles?**

**Sixth, did Peter continue to reach out and evangelize Gentiles after this event?**

**Seventh, why did God interrupt Peter's sermon to Cornelius?**

### **Eighth, why did the Gentiles speak in tongues when they received the Holy Spirit?**

### **Ninth, why did Peter command these Gentiles to be baptized?**

1. Peter didn't know what to do at this point, so he looked around at those with him and asked the question, "*Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?*" 10:47
2. Peter then commanded them to be baptized. Water had been an integral part of Peter's message and ministry from the beginning, going all the way back to John the Baptist.
3. Christ had told Peter, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16). But this was different. They believed, were immediately saved, and then were baptized.
  - Could this be why Peter did not use the baptismal mode that Christ gave him in Matthew 28:19? He baptized these Gentiles in the name of the Lord, not in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
4. It is interesting that we don't see this emphasis on water with Paul as we do with Peter. There is not one mention of any water baptisms on Paul's entire first missionary journey. Never do we see Paul commanding a Gentile to be baptized.
5. Paul later wrote (after his second journey) that he baptized a few, but was glad he hadn't baptized very many. Then he said that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. 1 Corinthians 1:14, 17
6. This event with Peter and Cornelius was setting the stage for the new dispensation of grace. This was something different that had never happened before.
  - Acts 2 – Jews must repent and be baptized, and then they will receive the Holy Spirit.
  - Acts 8 – Samaritans must believe on Christ, be baptized, have the apostles lay hands on them, and then they receive the Holy Spirit.
  - Acts 10 – Gentiles simply believe on Christ and immediately receive the Holy Spirit. Water baptism came after their salvation.