

Acts 10:24 - 48

A Dramatic Development

Two People – One Family of Believers

Peter's previous experience of the vision prepares him (to some degree) for what comes next

This section is more about Peter's 'conversion' than Cornelius'

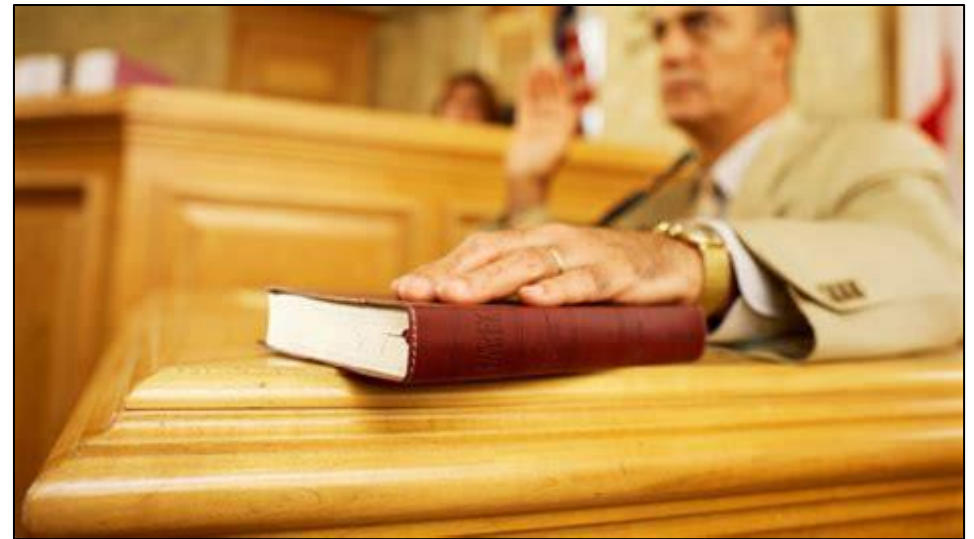


The Adventure begins

The next day Peter started out with them,
and some of the brothers from Joppa went along.

After an overnight stay the visitors return to Caesarea
accompanied by Peter and his (six) Jewish believer friends.

To be witnesses of what happens



Destination

The following day he arrived in Caesarea.

Another over-night stay for a 30 mile journey by foot!



Anticipation!



Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

He is expecting them on that day – he knows the timing

He gets family and friends together – is something exciting coming?

He is a welcoming ‘evangelist’ even before he is ‘saved’

Respect

As Peter entered (*was entering*) the house,
Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence.

Cornelius must have thought he was someone special since the angel had told him about Peter. This isn't worship. Cornelius knows enough about God to know the difference.



Temptation for Peter?
A misunderstanding for Cornelius

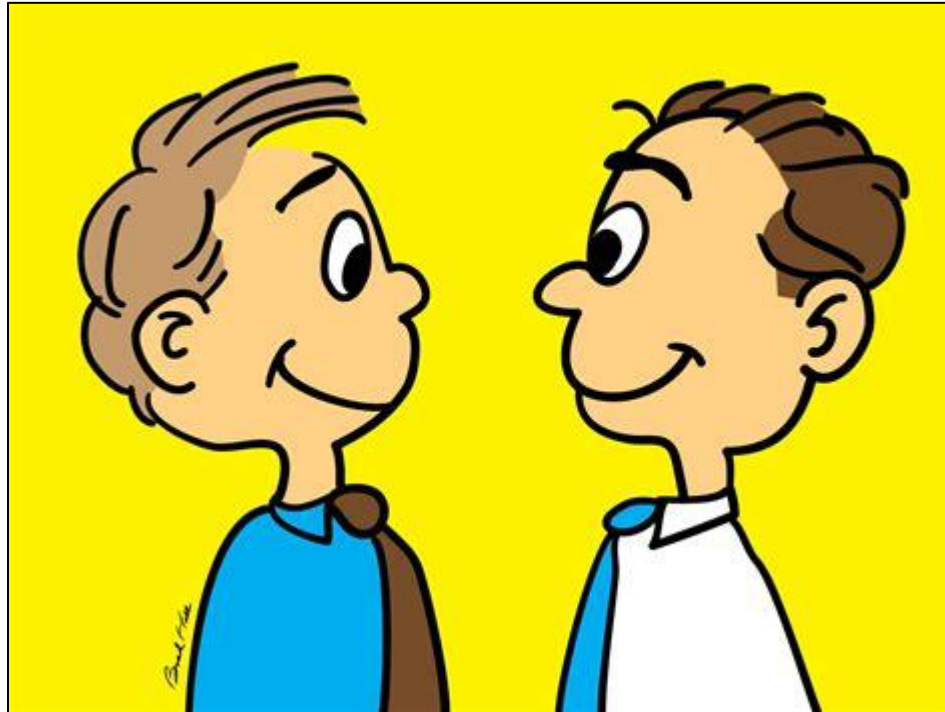
Respect vs. over the top .

Equality

But Peter made him get up.
"Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

No difference – we're just the same

They may have different roles but people are still people.

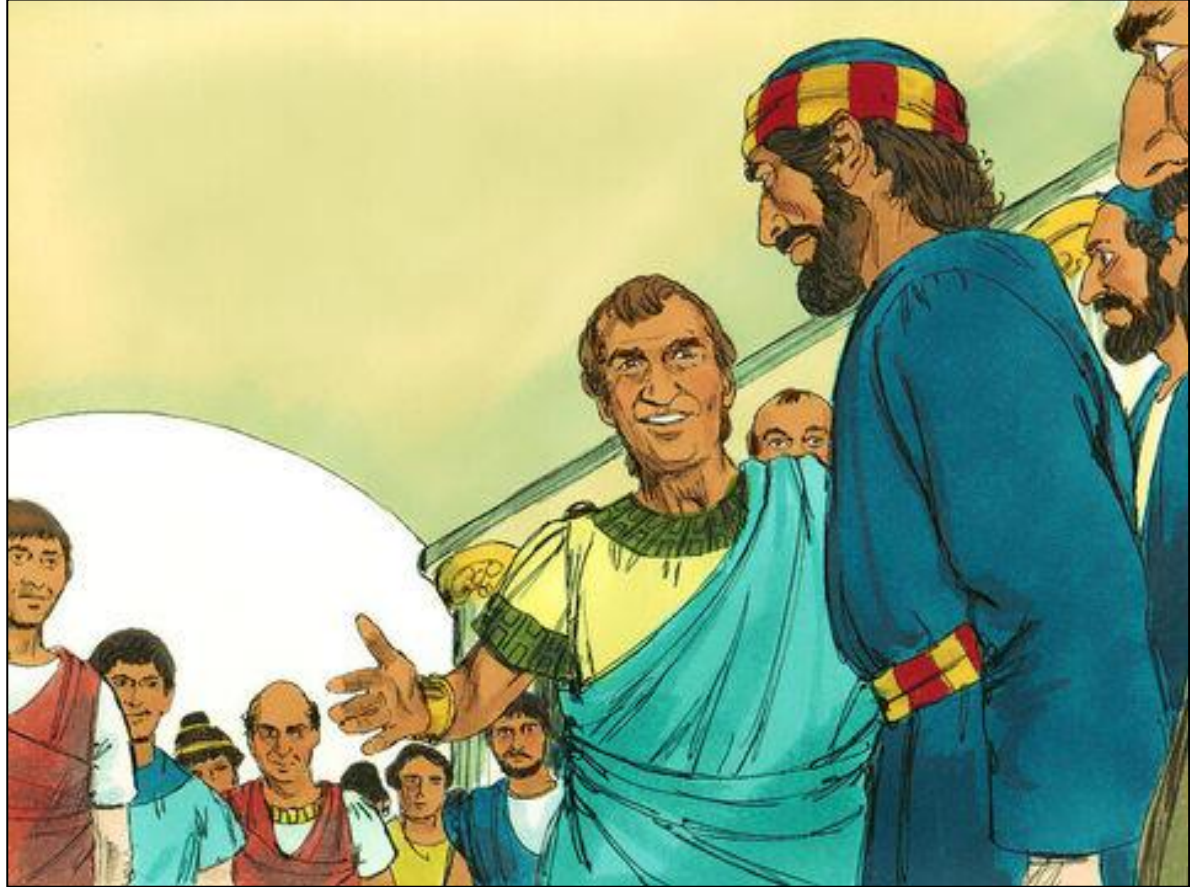


Introductions etc..

Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.

What was Peter expecting?
We walk by faith ...

Cornelius used his spacious
home.



Not the 'done-thing'

He said to them.. "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him.

Law or tradition?

The Bible doesn't explicitly state these rules – but they had become standard Jewish practice.

These Gentiles living in Israel know the rules.

Cf. John 4:9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)



BUT GOD

He said to them.. "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.

When you see the words 'BUT GOD'
expect a radical change!



God's view should be my view
– humans made in God's image (Genesis 1:27)

No 'ifs' or 'buts'

So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection.
May I ask why you sent for me?"

God told me to come – I had no objections

But what is this all about?



How it all started

Cornelius answered.. "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me

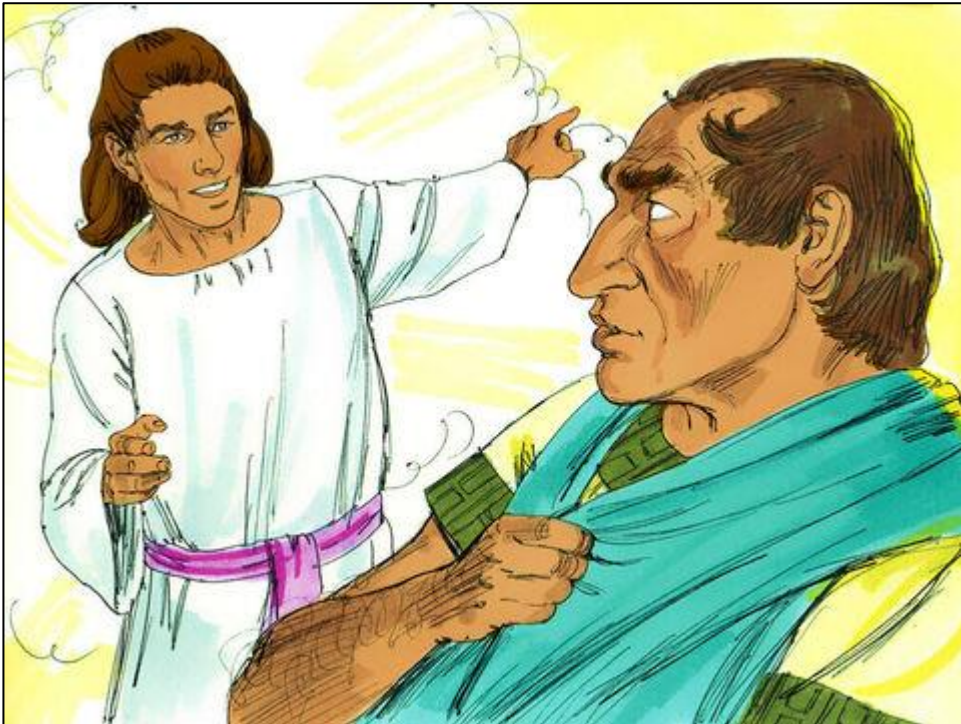


Probably most have already heard the story but here it is from the man himself.

Manuscript variant
'Praying/fasting'?

Warm greetings

and he said, `Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.`



God's angel came with this message

*God has seen

*Send for Peter

* (implied)God has got more for you

Thank you

So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come.

No delay in responding to God's call:

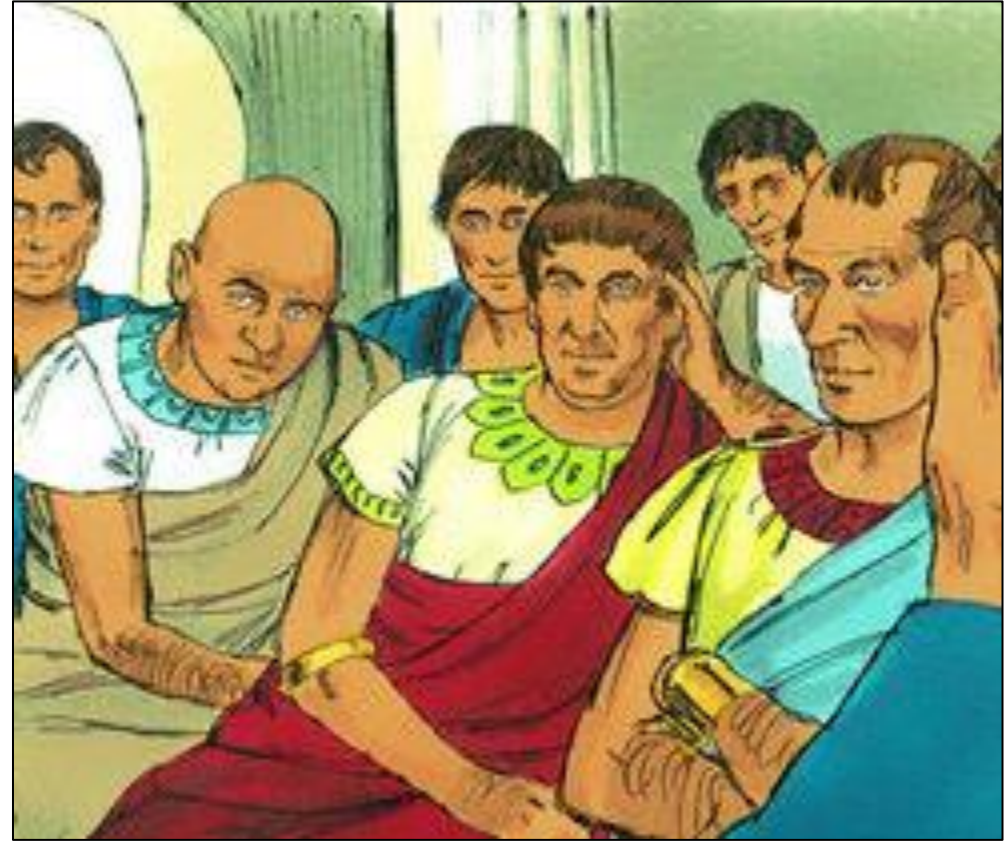
Cornelius is polite – Thank you. We appreciate your willingness to come even though you don't know what is all about (neither do we!)



Ready to hear (=to obey)

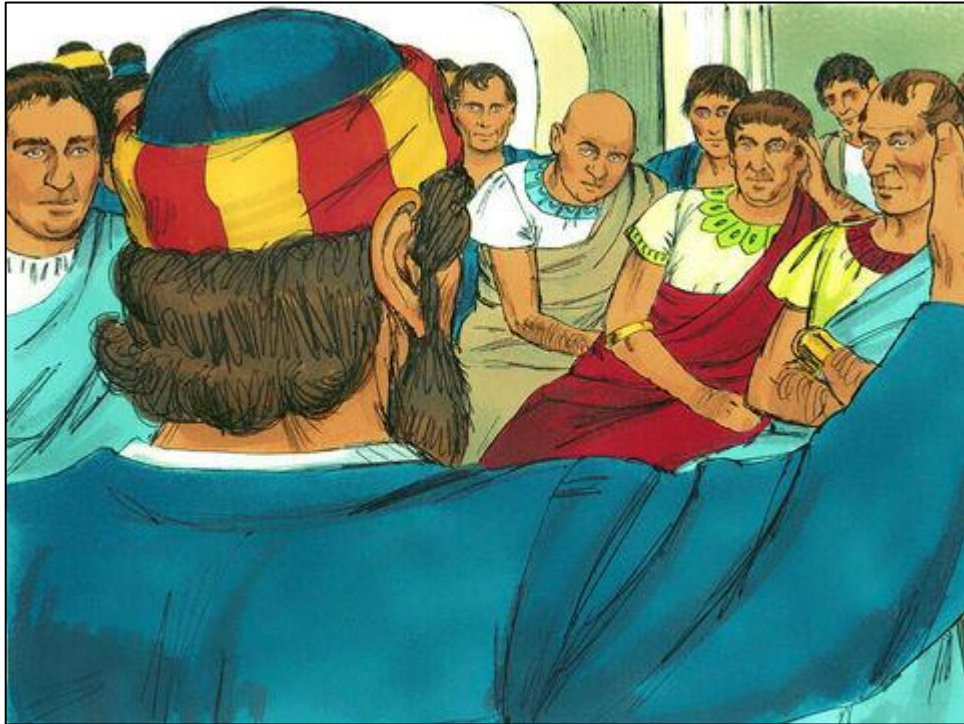
Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

We are here in God's presence.
We are listening.
What has God given you to say to us?



Isn't God amazing!

Then Peter began to speak.. "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.



Wow – the vision realised in front of his eyes.

A bigger view of the God we worship
God's heart revealed

God will accept anybody WHO

- 1, fears him
- 2, does what is right

Grace at work....

How much do you know about Jesus?

You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.



How much was public knowledge?
A few years have passed since the early events.

God's message to the people of Israel

Good news of peace (with God, your conscience and with others)

Through Jesus the Messiah
(the promised one)

He is Lord of all - not just a man
'All' includes all people.

A brief biography - God's witness.

You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached-- how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.



He is known as Jesus of Nazareth
Baptised in Galilee
Anointed with the Holy Spirit
Ministered in Galilee and in Judea
Did good (both spoken and actions)
Healed people from the devil's grip
This was proof that God was with him

Our Witness

"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

We were with him there in Judea (=country of the Jews)



and in the capital – where the next events occurred.

He died

They killed him by hanging him on a tree,



This is a description of crucifixion – cursed – they thought
– He was but for a different reason.

BUT GOD

but God raised him from the dead on the third day
and caused him to be seen.



Chosen Witnesses

He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.



A selected group chosen by God (Us) really saw him alive and we ate and drank with him after he had died !

He is alive today

The Judge

He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

He is Lord – he gave us orders

Tell people – he is the ultimate judge of ALL - ultimately at his return.



Biblical Prophecy

All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

It's in the Bible – all the prophets from Moses to Malachi

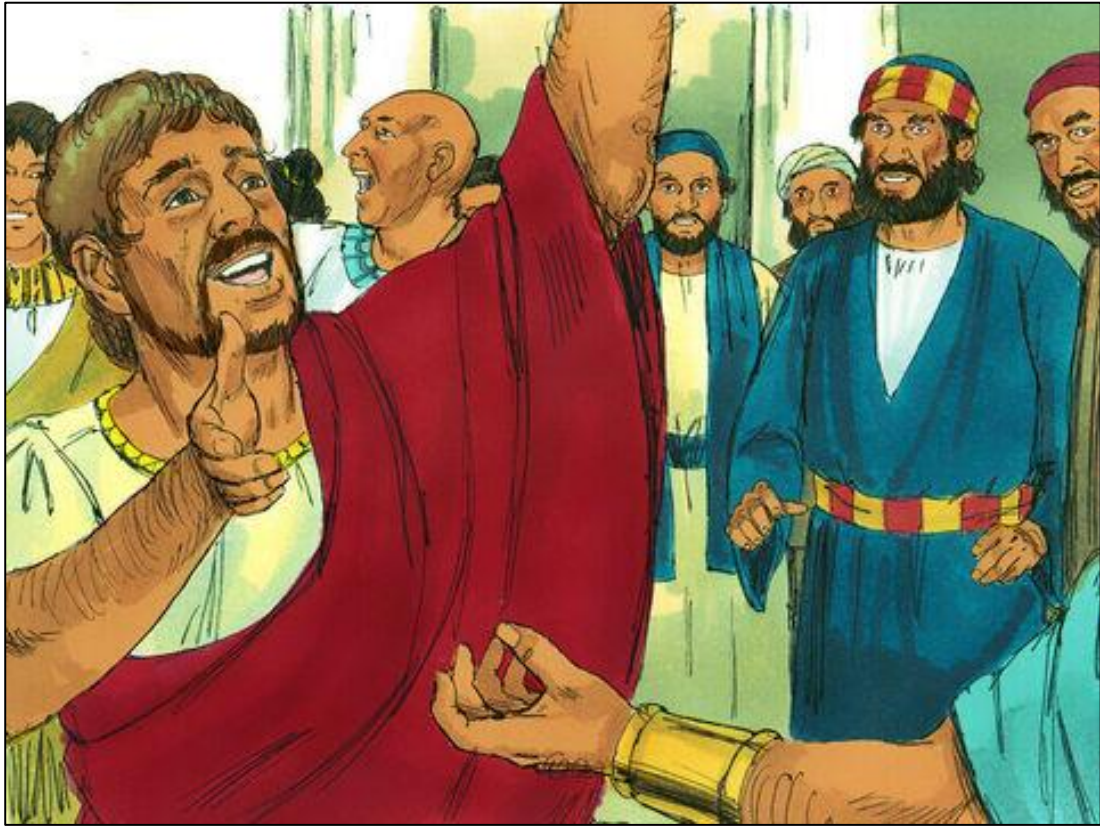
The message of salvation in the Messiah

For EVERYONE who believes and trusts in HIM
God's gift of forgiveness of sins – by means of
his atoning sacrifice.



A Divine Interruption

While Peter was still speaking these words,
the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.



Peter didn't need to say any more – they had heard all they needed to hear to be saved. They responded in their hearts and the Spirit came upon them all.

Astonishing

The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

The Jewish believers couldn't believe their eyes and ears.

GENTILES had become CHRISTIANS without becoming Jews first!

God had received and blessed EVEN the gentiles.

The Proof – evidences of the Spirit

- they had seen this before

Pentecost was the start not just a one-off.

God did it the 'wrong' way round

Cf. Acts 2 believe – be baptised and you will receive ...

Tongues weren't messages but were personal expressions of worship.



Inevitable logic

Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."



They are the same as US.
God has given them the Spirit
At Pentecost – those who
believed were baptised.
These should be too.

Any objections?

Believer's Baptized

So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Peter made an executive decision
– although God had prompted him.

In the name (Trinitarian)
but showing that they had become
disciples of Jesus.



INVITATION

Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

What did he do while he/his Jewish friends were there?

The First
FAB
meeting

Fellowship
Teaching
Eating and drinking

Fellowship
of
All
Believers

A picture of the new order – the church of Jesus Christ

God's man for the task - Peter

Why did God choose Peter to be the first to open the door to the gentiles since ... 'Peter had been entrusted with the gospel to the circumcised' ?

Galatians 2:7



As one of the prominent leaders among 'the Twelve', his involvement would have been seen as a fulfilment of Jesus promise ...

John 10:16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

The Mystery/Secret is out now

Ephesians 3:4-6 When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. **This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.**



The NIV translates this as 'heirs together with Israel' which is not strictly accurate since the word 'Israel' is not in the text.

Where do we go now?

What happened raised new questions for the Leadership. These are some of the subjects that Paul had to deal with in his letters to the Roman and Galatian churches.

Where does Israel, the Jews and Jewish law fit in now?
Has God's unique purposes for the Jews fulfilled its purpose in the coming of Jesus and the formation of the church?

What relevance does the 'Old Testament' have for believers?

Answer: read the New Testament!

Isn't God amazing!

"I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

The vision realised in front of Peter's eyes.

A bigger view of the God we worship

God's heart revealed

God will accept anybody who

1, fears him

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His Grace is at work to bring men and women to Jesus.