

## **Certificate in Children's Ministry - Saturday morning March 25 Peter; Ian White**

This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it!

Acts 10 - Caesarea / Joppa

1-6 Cornelius / Roman soldier...Italian regiment. Stationed in Caesarea - key port, Roman Garrison. Pilate had lived there. Paul's last journey which ended in his imprisonment in Rome was from there. God fearer. Good man. Gave alms...gifts to the poor...and he prayed. An angel appeared. Send for Simon called Peter...down the road. 30 miles away. Staying with a leather worker on the side of the sea. Cornelius sent soldier and two servants to ask Peter to come and visit him.

Meanwhile next day down the road Peter on the roof. Hungry. Vision.....sheet coming down from heaven...all kinds of creatures on it. Voice 'and eat'. No....these creatures are unclean. Voice said 'Don't say what God has made is unclean'. 3x. Puzzled.

At the same time...the delegation from Cornelius arrived outside the house asking if anyone knew of a Simon called Peter. Peter is on the roof, and the voice said '3 men have just arrived for you...go with them'. He comes down, and they told the story of the angel visiting their master. Late in the day....he offers them a bed for the night and promises to return with them next day.

So, with six disciples from Joppa they head off the next day.....takes them 2 days. Simon Peter arrives with his group...finds a Cornelius with a house full of folk all waiting for him. Cornelius crashes down and worships Peter, who says 'I am only mortal....stand up...why have you asked for me, after all I am a Jew, and you are a Gentile, but I have come because God has just shown me something'. Cornelius explains what the Angel message was...and waits for Simon Peter to speak.

"Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all."

Acts 10:34-36 NRSV

As he speaks...the Holy Spirit pours out on Cornelius and everyone in the house. All Jewish believers.....wow...on the Gentiles too! Peter ordered them to be baptised, and stayed with them for several days.

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This is one of the great mission texts of the Bible. Read it...and chapter 11 too. Acts 2 is the Jewish Pentecost...this is the Gentile Pentecost...this is a breakthrough moment.

When I take a group to Israel/Palestine I try to end the trip at Caesarea Maritima. Roman arches, theatre, site of chariot racing and gladiator games (think of Ben Hur), Herod the Great's seaside palace. Pontius Pilate lived there. This is where our story begins...from this moment it crosses the sea...after this Stephen is martyred...after this Saul is converted, after this Saul begins the missionary journeys....after this Barnabas, Silas, Luke, Timothy, Priscilla, Apollos....

Mission - God has no favourites or recognises no borders....the message of Jesus Christ is for all people

Mission - God's mission in the power of the Holy Spirit, visions and voices.

Mission - doing, and being...but also about saying the name

Send us out Lord