

PETER'S EXPERIENCES IN JOPPA

BIBLE TEXT : Acts 9:32-43; 10:1-23

LESSON 302 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Romans 10:12).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Acts 9:32-43

³² And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

³³ And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

³⁴ And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

³⁵ And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

³⁶ Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

³⁷ And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in an upper chamber.

³⁸ And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not delay to come to them.

³⁹ Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Peter's Visitations Among the Disciples

1. At Lydda, Peter was mightily used by God, Acts 9:32-35;

Acts 4:7-12

⁷ And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

⁸ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

⁹ If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

¹⁰ Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

¹¹ This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

¹² Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Acts 1:8

⁸ But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

1 Peter 2:9

⁹ But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

2. At Joppa, Peter and the saints saw God's power manifested, Acts 9:36-43;

John 14:12-14

¹² Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

¹³ And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

¹⁴ If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*.

John 1:16

¹⁶ And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

II The Call of Peter to Joppa

1. Cornelius, a godly man, received an assuring message from God, Acts 10:1-8;

1 Thessalonians 5:17

¹⁷ Pray without ceasing.

1 John 3:14

¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

1 John 3:17

¹⁷ But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

Ecclesiastes 12:13

¹³ Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man.

Matthew 19:21

²¹ Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

⁴⁰ But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning *him* to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

⁴¹ And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

⁴² And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

⁴³ And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

Acts 10:1-23

¹ There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,

² A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

³ He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

⁴ And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

⁵ And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter:

⁶ He lodgeth with one Simon

Matthew 22:36-40

³⁶ Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?

³⁷ Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

³⁹ And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Psalms 18:6

⁶ In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, *even* into his ears.

Psalms 34:17

¹⁷ *The righteous* cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

Micah 7:7

⁷ Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

Daniel 10:1-12

¹ In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing *was* true, but the time appointed *was* long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.

² In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.

³ I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

⁴ And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, which *is* Hiddekel;

⁵ Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins *were* girded with fine gold of Uphaz:

⁶ His body also *was* like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.

⁷ And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.

⁸ Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.

⁹ Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

¹⁰ And, behold, an hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and *upon* the palms of my hands.

¹¹ And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

¹² Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.

Luke 1:13

¹³ But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

2. Peter, moved by God at the appropriate time, went to prayer, Acts 10:9;

Romans 8:26

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Romans 8:27

²⁷ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according

a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

⁷ And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

⁸ And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

⁹ On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

¹⁰ And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

¹¹ And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

¹² Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

¹³ And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

¹⁴ But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

¹⁵ And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

¹⁶ This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

¹⁷ Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision

to *the will* of God.

3. Peter saw a vision of great importance, which was not given to take the place of the Word of God but to reveal its message, Acts 10:10-16;

Ephesians 1:9-10

⁹ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:

Genesis 1:1-6

¹ In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

⁴ And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

Genesis 46:1-4

¹ And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

² And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here *am* I.

³ And he said, I *am* God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:

⁴ I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up *again*: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

Ezekiel 37:1-14

¹ The hand of the LORD was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley which *was* full of bones,

² And caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and, lo, *they were* very dry.

³ And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest.

⁴ Again he said unto me, Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD.

⁵ Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live:

⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.

⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

⁸ And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but *there was* no breath in them.

⁹ Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.

¹¹ Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts.

¹² Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

¹³ And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened

which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

¹⁸ And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

¹⁹ While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

²⁰ Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

²¹ Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what *is* the cause wherefore ye are come?

²² And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

²³ Then called he them in, and lodged *them*. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves,
¹⁴ And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD.

Acts 9:10

¹⁰ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord.

Hebrews 1:1-2

¹ God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

² Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Galatians 1:8

⁸ But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Galatians 1:9

⁹ As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

4. Peter was quickly obedient to the message from God when it was confirmed to him in every way, Acts 10:17-23;

John 16:13

¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

1 John 4:1

¹ Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

²¹ Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Ephesians 1:10

¹⁰ That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:

NOTES:

In Peter's first epistle to the churches throughout Asia Minor — churches founded by Paul the Apostle — he advised the elders of these groups to "feed the flock of God" and take the oversight thereof, "not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:2, 3). And in the text of our lesson, we see Peter, in the earlier days of the Christian Church, doing that which he later write as advice to others.

Peter had been called by Christ to discipleship, appointed to Apostleship, and given opportunities for great insight into the dispensation-shaping events, which took place during Christ's life on earth. Peter saw Christ in His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration. He saw miracles performed in his own family, as well as on the many who came to Jesus for healing and salvation. The Day of Pentecost saw Peter in the midst of the disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, obeying the commission given him by Jesus. Peter had left that Upper Room with new, vital power in his spiritual being and he was being used to bring the message of salvation to many.

Eight years had passed since Pentecost. Peter was travel-ling, visiting the Churches and groups of believers, strengthening them, encouraging them, feeding them with spiritual food, and taking oversight of them. Since "the husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits" (II Timothy 2:6), Peter was doing all this in the same spirit and manner which he later told the elders in Asia Minor was the right way. He was not doing his service for God as a lord "over God's heritage." He was not seeking for "filthy lucre" as his reward or compensation. He had a "ready mind" and visited these people, not because

of "constraint, but willingly." He was an example to the flock and he knew that a reward would be given him when the "chief Shepherd" would appear. He then would "receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

The Honour Given Christ at Lydda

At the town of Lydda, a group of Christ's followers lived. Peter went to visit them. We do not know much about this small group, for only a very little has been written about them in the Scriptures. But they were called saints. And we know that the faith they possessed, as well as the faith that surged in the breast of the Apostle Peter, was strengthened by the fellowship that resulted from his visit.

Lydda was situated in the seacoast area known as Saron, or Sharon, and apparently there was a certain influence exerted over the inhabitants of this particular area by the saints of Lydda, for the news of the miracle that was performed there spread and reached even to Joppa. The influence of the Holy Spirit was felt even as far as Caesarea, about 30 miles from Joppa, and possibly more than 40 miles from Lydda, for the ever-faithful Spirit of God Himself carried that influence over that area which apparently had not been previously visited by these men of God.

Peter found a man in Lydda who had been bedfast for eight years from palsy. There was, in the heart of this man, Æneas, the necessary spiritual hunger and desire that brought the Spirit-directed Apostle to his bedside. There was also the necessary faith in the heart of Æneas that prompted him to obey the command of the Apostle to arise from his bed.

It takes spiritual desire and hunger in the heart of an individual to cause the Holy Spirit to direct the Gospel message and blessings to that heart. That quality is found in heathen hearts as a longing for something they cannot describe, something that is not to be found in their inherited worship of idols, or in their lives of superstition and misery.

That spiritual desire in the heart of Abraham caused him to respond to the call of God. Others in the land of Ur were not sensitive to the voice of the Spirit, but Abraham heard it and obeyed. So it has been in all the ages of this world's history, and it is positively the same today. The spiritually hungry are led to the Found of all blessing. Those whose eyes are set on "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10), will be brought to that city by the God who is no respecter of persons.

The people of Lydda and the plains of Sharon saw a miracle because of the faith of Æneas and the faithfulness of Peter. Peter directed the attention of all to Jesus, taking no glory to himself. "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," was the announcement that was made to the ailing man; and because of Peter's honour of Christ in all that he did, the whole city was stirred "and turned to the Lord." The people of the city did not turn to Peter. They did not see him as a great individual possessing supernatural powers or gifts. They were turned to the Lord, and in Him they found salvation; for it is through His name, and through faith in His name that salvation is given and divine healing is performed.

Nowhere in the sacred account do we find a true man of God directing the attention of those under his influence away from God, His Son Jesus Christ, or the faithful Holy Spirit. All men of God see themselves as nothing but instruments to be used by God. They see God as the performer of the miracle, the saver of the soul, and the sustainer of the spirit of man. When glory is taken by man and not given to God, the Holy Spirit no longer works through that man. Pride in the heart will surely and completely stop the God of Heaven from working as He would work if the honour and glory for His workings were directed to the proper place. This is God's way. There is no other way. And how wonderful is that way!

The Honour Given Christ at Joppa

The news of the miracle and subsequent revival at Lydda spread to Joppa, about 12 miles away. Joppa was, and is today, a seacoast town where, no doubt, there were both poverty and wealth among its cosmopolitan inhabitants. But there in that thriving city we find another group of believers.

One of the disciples in Joppa was stricken with a fatal illness; and in spite of the best efforts to help her, she died. Dorcas had occupied a very important place in the disciples' fellowship. She was filled with good works as well as good grace. She was a disciple and she was not careless of her responsibilities toward God and man. Her fingers were busy helping others who were less fortunate than she. The needy widows were among her benefactors. She

exhibited the true spirit of the people of God who have the love of God in them and who do not forget the physical and temporal needs of their brethren. (1 John 3:16-18 ¹⁶ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ¹⁷ But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? ¹⁸ My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.) But Dorcas passed from among them, and they saw how greatly they were going to miss her ministrations to them. They sent for Peter, knowing that God was with him and, no doubt, hoping that in some way he could pray for them and that perhaps God would have mercy on them in their time of great loss.

God is ever mindful of those who are bereaved. He looks down in mercy and pity on all His people, and comfort those who sorrow, and sustains them in their time of need. Jesus saw the tears of the widow of Nain and restored her son to her. He comforted Mary and Martha and then raised their brother from the grave. The Prophet of God, Elijah, saw the anguish in the face of the woman of the house where he stayed, and he prayed that God would restore life to her young son. Elisha, also, saw the sorrow, and the faith in the Shunammite mother; and through the prayer of faith that mother's son also was restored to life.

God had a plan and purpose in every one of these incidents. Beyond the obvious comfort and encouragement that was given to each one of the bereaved, through the resurrection of the loved one, there was a particularly thing accomplished by God for His cause through each such manifestation of His power. The deity of Christ was established, and His power over death demonstrated, in the incidents when He restored life to those who were dead. Elijah and Elisha were both men of God in a nation of idolaters and God-rejecters. God was dealing with Israel, attempting to bring them back to Himself, and He chose to use these means to show His power and show who was His Prophet, that His message might be received by Israel. Dorcas was raised from the dead for an obvious purpose, and a work was accomplished for God through it that would not always be the case if others were brought back to life again. We are told that, "it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord." Here, God raised His disciple that He might receive honour and glory and that, men and women might be saved.

But, unfortunately, the depraved hearts of men will not always respond to the workings of the Spirit of God, even in miracles of this magnitude. The rich man in hell was told, concerning his brothers: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:31). God performed a miracle where it would further His cause, and he is able to do the same today, and will do so when and where it will bring the desired results.

Peter's Call to Joppa

The universality of God's call is shown once again in the account of Cornelius, a centurion of a choice band of soldiers at Caesarea. Philip, the evangelist, lived in this city for many years after meeting the Ethiopian eunuch in the desert southwest of Jerusalem. Philip was one of the seven deacons who were chosen to assist the Apostles in the work of the early Church (Acts 6:5 ⁵ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Acts 8:40 ⁴⁰ But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea. Acts 21:8 ⁸ And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him). There is no doubt but that his godly influence was felt in that city even if he was not personally known to all who lived there, and that the Holy Spirit had begun His work in the heart of even this Gentile soldier.

Cornelius feared God and prayed to God always. He was always in the spirit of prayer and frequently in the act of prayer. He was a devout man and was "of good report among all the nation of the Jews." His almsgiving was in the proper manner, as were his prayers, for they had ascended "for a memorial before God." God never established memorials to hypocrisy or insincerity. Therefore we know that this man was godly. We will see in a future lesson how he was

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the locations of Lydda, Joppa, and Caesarea and their approximate distances from each other and from Jerusalem.
2. How was the name of Jesus Christ honoured at Lydda?
3. How was the name of Jesus Christ honoured in the circle of disciples at Joppa?
4. How do we know that Dorcas was a Christian?
5. Who did Peter say performed these miracles?
6. What were the results in Lydda and Joppa of the miracles performed?
7. What great evangelist lived in Caesarea? Name some of the things that took place in the life of this evangelist.
8. Tell how we know that Cornelius was a godly man.
9. Tell how God prepared Peter for the work He had for him in Caesarea.
10. When Cornelius sent the messengers to Joppa, he included in that number a devout soldier. What does this indicate as to the habits and character of Cornelius?

baptized with the Holy Ghost; and in a still later chapter we can read that this godly man was justified and sanctified previous to the time of Peter's visit to his house. (Acts 15:7-9 ⁷ And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. ⁸ And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us; ⁹ And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.)

The means God used to bring Peter to the home of this godly soldier are certainly instructive to us all. God prepares the hungry **heart** for the reception of His Word; then He prepares the **person** who is to carry the Word to that individual. At the same time, God will be preparing the **way**; and will be doing so in such a manner that when it is His time, all things will be supplied and all things will be in order for the carrying out of His will. If men and women could only learn to subject themselves to the perfect will of God and await God's time in all things, they would see the fulfilment of their spiritual desires in much less time.

Many people have prayed desperately and long for the salvation of loved ones, or for sinners under their influence, and then have spoiled the very thing they so earnestly desired to see accomplished by rushing ahead of God and stopping all that He was doing for the welfare of the ones who were so near to salvation. How much more would be accomplished for God if we would let Him have His way and let Him work as He, in His infinite wisdom, sees is best for us.

God prepared Cornelius in every way for the light that He was soon to give him. Cornelius had spiritual hunger and had been praying diligently for more of God's love and grace. How much he knew from observation we do not know, but we know that he was a sanctified man and that his spiritual eye had caught a glimpse of blessings in store for him, which were even greater than justification and entire sanctification. He actually was hungering for the Promise of the Father, the Comforter, and God was preparing the way for him to receive that great blessing.

But God had to prepare His instrument for this important mission as well as prepare the man, Cornelius. How wonderful that in Peter God had an instrument whom He could prepare for this important spiritual mission. How many are qualified with certain natural gifts who fail to do exploits for God because they are not willing to be prepared by God in spiritual abilities that are necessary for the carrying out of God's will concerning them. Peter was no longer impetuous to the degree that prevented God from working out His purpose in him. He was no teachable and willing to follow the command of the Lord.

God spoke to Peter in a remarkable way, showing him a vision that was made fully clear to him when the men arrived from Cornelius. Through the vision, Peter saw the universality of God's call. Peter clearly saw, for the first time, that salvation was not to be reserved to the chosen nation alone but that "God is no respecter of persons" and that "in every nation he that feareth him [God], and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35).

Peter did not hesitate to obey God; for he knew that where God has begun a work, the end is sure; where God makes the way, the destination will be reached; and where God is calling, there is to be found a hungry heart that is reaching out for the message of the Gospel. In a future lesson we shall learn how God carried out His plan to call the Gentiles to Himself, and thus brought the Gospel to the whole world through the work of the early Church in those years immediately following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.