

PETER in the BOOK of ACTS:

- 1: 15-26 – Peter takes charge in filling the vacancy left by Judas
- 2: 14-42 – Peter speaks at Pentecost – he opens the door to the Gospel for the people of Israel/Judeans. **(Lesson 6)**
- 3: 1-26 – Peter speaks healing to a cripple, speaks in Solomon’s portico
- 4: 1-22 – Peter and John before the Council
- 5: 1-42 – Peter confronts Ananias and Sapphira, heals many, before the High Priest, in prison and flogged along with other apostles
- 8: 4-25 – Peter and John are sent by the apostles in Jerusalem to go to Samaria as a follow up to the ministry of Philip. They prayed for the Holy Spirit to come on the believers there. This is the 2nd “door” which Peter opens: this one is to the Samaritans. **(Lesson 7a)**
- 9: 32-43 – Peter heals a paralyzed man and a prays for a dead woman to be resurrected
- 10: 1-48 – Peter is sent for by Cornelius, a Roman centurion, who has a vision. Peter also has a vision and goes to see Cornelius; he speaks to Gentiles for the first time. This is the 3rd “door” which Peter opens: this one is to the Gentiles. **(Lesson 7b)**
- 11: 1-18 – Peter before the Christian church leaders (Gal 2:11-14 – confronted by Paul). **(Lesson 8)**
- 12: 1-19 – Peter in and out of prison
- 15: 1-21 – The council at Jerusalem

While Peter “opens the door” for the Gospel to the Jews, the Samaritans and then the Gentiles, after those first forays, Peter’s ministry is primarily to the Jews. Paul concentrates almost solely on the bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles and except for Chapter 15, the rest of the book of Acts (ch. 13-28) is primarily the story of Paul and his ministry.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL – Fall 2024 – FBC

The Life of Peter

Lesson #7 – “Beyond ‘Us’”

Texts: Acts 8: 4-6, 14-17 and 25, 10:1-48

Intro: Last week we looked at Acts 2 and the story of the Holy Spirit coming in a special way to the disciples of Jesus in Jerusalem (about 120) as well as the story of Peter and John being brought before the authorities for both healing a crippled man and preaching the resurrection of Jesus. Peter’s message(s) at this event was to the Jewish people.

In Acts 7 we have the story of Stephen’s martyrdom; he also addresses Jewish leaders and while he begins by retelling Jewish history, his final comments are, like Peter’s, pretty hard hitting (see 7:51-53).

Then in Acts 8 Peter and John visit a group of Samaritans who had “accepted the word of God” (through Philip’s ministry) and prayed that they “might receive the Holy Spirit”. The Samaritans are descendants of the 10 tribes of Israel that split from the other 2 tribes back in the days following the reign of King Solomon, so in about 925 BC. This according the Larry Helyer is the 2nd door that Peter opens with the “keys to the kingdom” Jesus gave him (Matthew 16:19). In today’s story Peter opens the door to the Gentiles.

1. This story hinges around two figures (Cornelius and Peter) and their “visions”. Work through the story in Acts 10:1-48, paragraph by paragraph. Note the details about **Cornelius** (what happens to him and what he does as a response), about **Peter** (what happens to him and what he does). There are fascinating **personal details** about these two key figures in the story and details about the choices they make.

Cornelius:

- virtues: vv 1-2 and 22a

- personal characteristics: vv 4, 7, 8, 24, 25, 33 and 48b.

Peter:

- personal characteristics and commitment to OT Law: vv 14, 17, 21, 23, 26, 28 and 46b - 48a. (Re Peter’s vision and objections – (see also Leviticus 11:3, 10 & 13 and Ezekial 4:14).

2. Now go back and look at the vision Cornelius had:

- what did he experience?

- what did the vision include/state?

- what did he do with what he experienced?

3. Do the same with Peter's vision:

- what did he experience?

- what did the vision include/state?

- what did he do with what he experienced?

4. Follow Peter's thinking as he tries to figure out the meaning of this vision: (vs 17-35). What indicates some tentativeness on his part? What "changes his mind"

5. Now look at the "message" Peter gives.

Note the following: Compare/contrast Peter's "message" in the following 2 passages:

- intro

- 2x "you know..."

- 2x "how..."

- 2x "witnesses..."

- 2x "testify..."

6. What is the invitation?

7. What happened and at whose initiative?

8. Peter's conclusion:

9. Is there anything new that you feel like you learned about Peter in this story?

Acts 8:4-6, 14-17 and 25 Title: _____

⁴ Now those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word. ⁵Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. ⁶The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did....

¹⁴ Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. ¹⁵The two went down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit ¹⁶(for as yet the Spirit had not come upon any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). ¹⁷Then Peter and John laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

²⁵ Now after Peter and John had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, proclaiming the good news to many villages of the Samaritans.

Acts 10:1-48 Title: _____

¹At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. ²He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ³One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!" ⁴Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. ⁵Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. ⁶He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea." ⁷When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Title: _____

⁹About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹²It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat." ¹⁴"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean." ¹⁵The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean." ¹⁶This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

Title: _____

¹⁷While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. ¹⁸They called

out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there. ¹⁹While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three^[a] men are looking for you. ²⁰So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

²¹Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" ²²The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say."

²³Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Title: _____

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along. ²⁴The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. ²⁶But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." ²⁷Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. ²⁸He 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. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰Cornelius 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 ³¹and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. ³²Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' ³³So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

Title: _____

³⁴Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism ³⁵but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. ³⁶You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. ³⁷You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— ³⁸how 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.

³⁹"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. ⁴¹He 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. ⁴²He 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. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

Title: _____

⁴⁴While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they heard them speaking in tongues^[b] and praising God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷"Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.