



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Power of Praying Leaders

JUNE 3-5, 2015

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Acts 10:1-9 *“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, 2) a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. 3) About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, ‘Cornelius!’ 4) And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, ‘What is it, Lord?’ So he said to him, ‘Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. 5) Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. 6) He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do’ 7) And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. 8) So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa. 9) The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.” (NKJV)*

“THE SUBJECT OF HIS CONSTANT PRAYER IS REVEALED BY THIS HISTORY, AND SHOWS THAT HE WAS ONE OF THOSE SEEKERS WHO WERE ‘FEELING AFTER GOD IF HAPLY THEY MIGHT FIND HIM.’ RICHARD RACKHAM

What is the great subject of the next 66 verses of Acts? Why was Cornelius chosen for salvation? What was the significance of Caesarea? Is this another political leader? How was his life characterized by something he was “always” doing? Was there another soldier under his care that was just like him? What was both Cornelius and Peter doing when their received their visions? Why the ninth or sixth hour? In what way does God seem to do everything here in answer to prayer?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- JUNE 17-19: ACTS 10:10-20 *POLITICAL & RACIAL ANIMOSITY OVERCOME BY PRAYER*
- JUNE 24-26: ACTS 10:21-33 *PRAYING LEADERS CROSS ALL BARRIERS TO WIN OTHER LEADERS*

The entire book of Acts has been moving toward this dramatic set of seven scenes introducing the explosive expansion of the Church. The great promise to Abraham that all the families or nations of the earth would be blessed through his seed had not yet been fulfilled (Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18). Peter had reminded the Jews in Jerusalem of that very promise as he preached when the Church grew to 5000 men (Acts 3:25, 4:4). Though the Gospel had been preached in numerous languages on the day of Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit, and it had effectively spread to the next closest national capitol of Samaria, yet all who had received the truth and embraced Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord had been His people, the Jews, or in the case of the Samaritans they were at least half-Jewish and claimed to be Jews. Yet the insurmountable wall between the Jews and the Gentiles had never been approached, except possibly by the Ethiopian eunuch coming to faith in Christ, but he had continued on his way to Ethiopia, far from the nation of Israel. Peter had been given the “keys to the kingdom” (Mt. 16:19), and he had used them to open the door of the Gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem and to the Samaritans in Samaria, and now he would be summoned to the Roman capital of Judea to open the door to the Gentiles through a prayerful Centurion in Caesarea.

“HIS FAITH IN GOD WAS EXPRESSED SUPREMEY IN HIS PRAYER, FOR HE WAS A MAN WHO PRAYED ALWAYS. HERE THEN WAS A MAN OUTSIDE THE ANCIENT ECONOMY ... HIMSELF A ROMAN, A CENTURION, OF THE ROMAN COHORT ... EXPRESSING HIS FAITH IN THE DEVOTION OF HIS LIFE.” G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 AND 11:30AM – WOODBRIDGE – BOB EVANS, 14490 SMOKETOWN ROAD
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT

Virginia

The Power of Praying Leaders

I. A MAN OF PRAYER

ACTS 10:1-2

Cornelius was an ideal man to represent the Roman Empire and thereby the nations of the world. Caesarea had been built by Herod the Great and was the favored seaport to the empire by the Romans occupying Israel. This magnificent port, aqueduct, and capital city needed the protection provided by this centurion and his elite force of sniper archers, enlisted and trained in the mother country, “called the Italian Regiment.” While stationed in Judea, Cornelius had evidently abandoned his artificial Roman gods and in his search for truth, had become devout, leading his entire household in fearing the true God. Though he was never accepted by the Jews as a proselyte to Judaism for lack of circumcision, yet he continually did charitable acts of mercy to the Jews and constantly pleaded with God through all his challenges of life to give him saving truth and was fasting (Acts 10:30).

“ASK, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU; SEEK, AND YOU WILL FIND; KNOCK, AND IT WILL BE OPENED TO YOU. FOR EVERYONE WHO ASKS RECEIVES, AND HE WHO SEEKS FINDS, AND TO HIM WHO KNOCKS IT SHALL BE OPENED. OR WHAT MAN IS THERE AMONG YOU WHO, IF HIS SON ASKS FOR BREAD, WILL GIVE HIM A STONE? OR IF HE ASKS FOR A FISH, WILL HE GIVE HIM A SERPENT? IF YE THEN BEING EVIL, KNOW HOW TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS TO YOUR CHILDREN, HOW MUCH MORE WILL YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN GIVE GOOD THINGS TO THOSE WHO ASK HIM!”

MATTHEW 7:7-11

II. ANSWER TO PRAYER

ACTS 10:3-8

About three o'clock in the afternoon, when the evening sacrifice was being offered in the Temple and devout Jews were praying, Cornelius had joined them in prayer in his own home and suddenly there stood before him, clearly in a vision, a man in bright clothing, entering and saying his name, “Cornelius!” When Cornelius saw him, knowing he was seeing a representative of Deity, he was

terrified and exclaimed, “*What is it, Lord?*” His fear must have turned to excitement when he heard the words, “*Your prayers and your alms have come up as a memorial before God.*” Delighting that his fasting and prayer was being answered, the captain listened carefully to the command, “*Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.*” Understanding his eternal need for salvation, Cornelius does not hesitate, but immediately obeys. For this vital mission he called two of his most trusted household servants and for their protection, the soldier most like himself. After a brief explanation of their assignment, they are sent to Joppa.

“THAT PETER PRAYED MORNING AND EVENING MAY BE ASSUMED, FOR THOSE WERE NORMAL TIMES OF PRAYER. IN ADDITION HE PRAYED AT NOON. PRAYER THREE TIMES A DAY WAS NOT COMMANDED IN THE SCRIPTURES, BUT PETER FOLLOWED THE EXAMPLE OF PIOUS MEN BEFORE HIM (PS. 55:17, DAN. 6:10).” STAN TOUSSAINT

III. ALIGNING PRAYERFUL PETER ACTS 10:9

The men must have travelled swiftly by foot because they arrived around noon the next day after traveling about thirty miles. While they were preparing the noon meal, hungry Peter is faithful to his habit of prayer. Though, as a faithful Jew, he would never have entered the home of a Gentile, God will also answer Peter’s prayers and grant him a greater opportunity to further Christ’s kingdom than he had experienced in Jerusalem, Samaria, or Lydda.

“I SAY TO YOU THAT MANY WILL COME FROM THE EAST AND WEST, AND SIT DOWN WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. BUT THE SONS OF THE KINGDOM WILL BE CAST OUT.” JESUS IN MATTHEW 8:11-12

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Do you seek the Lord for greater light and immediately respond to the light you are given?
- 2) Are you demonstrating faith in the promises of God through faithful prayer, believing that He will answer?
- 3) Is your leadership involved in fearing God, serving others in merciful acts of kindness, and furthering Christ’s kingdom?