

## Peter and Cornelius Become Friends

**Bible Story:** Peter and Cornelius Become Friends

**Bible Text:** Acts 10:1-48

**God's Unfolding Story Element:** Jesus Began the Church.

### Story Summary:

Cornelius was a Roman Centurion who loved God, but he couldn't worship with Jews because he was a Gentile. One day as he was praying an angel appeared to Cornelius. The angel told him to send men to Joppa to get Peter, one of Christ's disciples and a leader in the young church. When the two men met, Peter told Cornelius that God had shown him that He shows no partiality, but anyone who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to Him.

Then Peter shared about Jesus. While he was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on all who were listening. The Jews, who had come with Peter, were amazed that even the Gentiles, or non-Jews, could receive the Holy Spirit and be saved. Now followers of God weren't just Jews. The death and resurrection of Jesus had broken the barriers that separated all people and gave everyone access to God.

Peter's words were like water to Cornelius's thirsty soul. As he heard about Jesus, he was filled with a new hope. When Peter explained that baptism was a sign of belief, Cornelius and the others were baptized in the name of Jesus. They were so excited to learn about Jesus that they asked Peter to stay and teach them more about their new faith. Cornelius and Peter became forever friends.

### Highlights:

- This story represents a significant turning point in the early church as it revealed that ALL people could be part of the church regardless of race.
- The next chapter in Acts tells about how the church leaders in Jerusalem met to discuss what happened. This was a difficult decision for some because of prejudice against the Gentiles.

### Point(s) of Interest:

- The early church continued to struggle with prejudice between the Jews and Gentiles. As the church expanded through the Roman Empire, Paul often addressed the problem in his ministry and writings.
- One of Luke's purposes in writing the Book of Acts was to show how the church went from being entirely Jewish to being predominately Gentile.

### Approximate Date:

The events recorded by Luke in the Book of Acts begin immediately after Jesus' resurrection in approximately 33 A.D. The book concludes with Paul under house arrest in Rome, probably sometime between 60 and 70 A.D.