Acts

A New Vision of the People of God

Acts Outline

I. The Spirit Empowers	II. The Spirit Empowers
Messianic Israel (1—12)	**World Mission (13—28)**
A. Messianic Renewal (1—5)	**A. Mission Journeys (13—21)**
1. Messianic Beginnings (1)	1. 1MJ: Asia Minor, JC (13—15)
2. Messianic Empowerment (2)	2. 2MJ: Maced., Achaia (16—18)
3. Messianic Witness (3–5)	3. 3MJ: Ephesus, Cor. (19—21)
B. Messianic Hellenists (6—12)	**B. Mission Destiny (21—28)**
1. Hellenist Leaders Emerge (6—7)	1. Denied: Jerusalem (21—23)
2. Hellenist Mission Advances (8—11)	2. Delayed: Caesarea (24—26)
3. Hellenist Center Shifts (11—12)	3. Achieved: Rome (27—28)

Acts 10–11: Cornelius

- Coastal Prelude
- Cornelius Paradigm
- Jerusalem Problem

Acts 9: Prelude

- Two Healing Stories (9:32–43)
  - Lydda: Aeneas (9:32–35)
    - Non-missional
      - Without strategy: "here and there" (9:32)
      - Believers only: "among . . . believers"
    - Healing story
      - Aeneas: paralyzed eight years
      - Healing generates conversions

Acts 9: Prelude

- Two Healing Stories (9:32–43)
  - **Joppa: Tabitha (9:36–43)**
    - Disciple: Tabitha (Dorcas in Greek)
      - Praiseworthy social standing
      - Charity: clothing, tunics
    - Healing story
      - Prepared for burial
      - Peter retrieved from Lydda
      - Healing generates conversions

Acts 9: Prelude

- Significance of Stories
  - **Geography**
    - Coastal towns
    - Increasingly Gentile populations
  - **Prior linkage in tradition**
    - Common features (names, "saints," "arise")
    - Implies already joined in tradition for Luke
      - Usage: raising from dead as "signs"
      - Preaching Jesus as resurrection and life

Acts 9: Prelude

- Signific
  - Geogra
    - Coastal
    - Increasingly Gentile populations
  - Prior linkage in tradition
    - Common features (names, "saints," "arise")
    - Implies already joined in tradition for Luke
      - Usage: raising from dead as "signs"
      - Preaching Jesus as resurrection and life

- use of personal names
- rare use of "saints"
- "arise" command

Acts 9: Prelude

Significance of Stories

- Luke paralleling Jesus and Peter
  - Significant person with untimely death
  - Similarity in central command

Jesus (Luke 8:49–56)	Peter (Acts 9:36–43)
Jairus's daughter	Tabitha
"Talitha, koum!"	"Tabitha, koum!"
"Little girl, arise!"	"Tabitha, arise!"

Acts 9: Prelude

Significance of Stories

Paralleling Jesus and Peter

Luke uses memories of Peter's seacoast ministry to validate Peter as a reflection of Jesus' own ministry before Luke moves on to tell the crucial but controversial story of Cornelius's conversion.

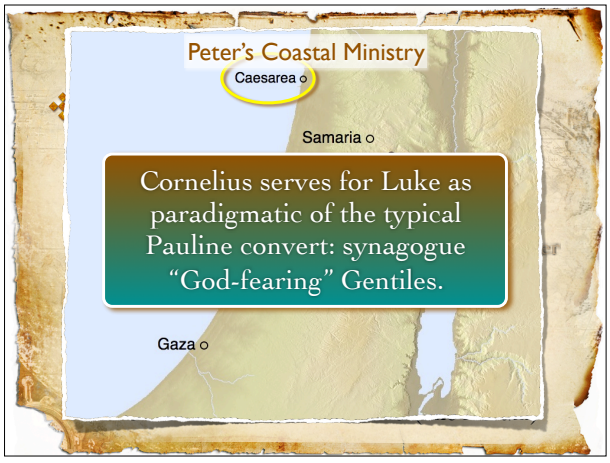
Talitha, koum!	Tabitha, koum!
"Little girl, arise!"	"Tabitha, arise!"

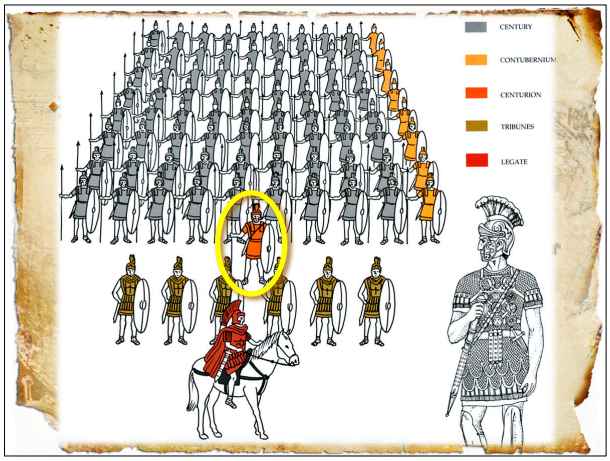
Acts 10–11: Cornelius

- Coastal Prelude
- Cornelius Paradigm
- Jerusalem Problem

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Cornelius's Vision (10:1–8)
  - Paradigmatic Convert (10:1–2)
    - Caesarean centurion of Italian cohort
    - "God-fearer" worshipping in synagogue
      - Devout, feared God, almsgiving and prayer
      - Preeminent marks of Pharisaic piety
  - Paradigmatic Gentile (10:3–8)
    - Receiving life-changing vision from God
    - Fulfilling "God active" theme of St. Speech
    - Obedient to divine command (like Abram)





Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Vision (10:9–16)
  - Conflict with the Mosaic law
    - Heavenly command to eat = God's voice (10:13)
    - Peter's refusal based on Mosaic law (10:14)
    - New law of messianic Israel is given (10:15)
  - Concord with messianic Israel
    - Cleansing = Spirit = Pentecost
      - Eschaton, new vision of the people of God
      - Definitive of messianic Israel's composition
    - Three times = refusal of divine voice

Acts 10: Cornelius

"What God has made clean, you must not call profane."

- Peter's Vision (10:9–16)
  - Conflict with the Mosaic law
    - Heavenly command to eat = God's voice (10:13)
    - Peter's refusal based on Mosaic law (10:14)
    - New law of messianic Israel is given (10:15)
  - Concord with messianic Israel
    - Cleansing = Spirit = Pentecost
      - Eschaton, new vision of the people of God
      - Definitive of messianic Israel's composition
    - Three times = refusal of divine voice

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Vision (10:9–16)
  - Conflict with the Mosaic law
    - Heavenly command to eat = God's voice (10:13)
    - Peter's refusal based on Mosaic law (10:14)
    - New law of messianic Israel is given (10:15)
  - Concord with messianic Israel
    - Cleansing = Spirit = Pentecost
      - Eschaton, new vision of the people of God
      - Definitive of messianic Israel's composition
    - Three times = refusal of divine voice

Stephen Speech themes: God active, God resisted.

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Visitors (10:17–22)
  - Cornelius's delegation arrives (10:17–21)
    - Timing crucial to connection to vision
    - Spirit confirms connection to vision
  - Cornelius's reputation repeated (10:22)
    - Centurion, but synagogue connections
      - "upright, God-fearing" = synagogue
      - "well spoken of by whole Jewish nation"
    - Centurion, but obedient to divine command

Acts 10: Cornelius

"for I have sent them"

- Peter's Visitors (10:17–22)
  - Cornelius's delegation arrives (10:17–21)
    - Timing crucial to connection to vision
    - Spirit confirms connection to vision
  - Cornelius's reputation repeated (10:22)
    - Centurion, but synagogue connections
      - "upright, God-fearing" = synagogue
      - "well spoken of by whole Jewish nation"
    - Centurion, but obedient to divine command

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Visitors (10:17–22)
  - Cornelius's delegation arrives (10:17–21)
    - Timing crucial to connection to vision
    - Spirit confirms connection to vision
  - Cornelius's reputation repeated (10:22)
    - Centurion, but synagogue connections
      - "upright, God-fearing" = synagogue
      - "well spoken of by whole Jewish nation"
    - Centurion, but obedient to divine command

Notice! More obedient than is Peter to the divine voice!

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Reception (10:23–33)
  - Received as divine agent (10:23–27)
    - Due honor and worship like angel from God
      - Indicates receptivity to hear divine word
      - Indicates typical Pauline synagogue convert
    - Peter refuses deference due only to God
  - Connecting the Joppa vision (10:28–29)
    - Peter begins transcending Mosaic regulations
    - Peter comes to Cornelius without objection
    - Peter still unclear of his mission!

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Reception (10:23–33)
  - Received as divine agent (10:23–27)
    - Due honor and worship like angel from God
      - Indicates receptivity to hear divine word
      - Indicates typical Pauline synagogue convert
    - Peter refuses deference due only to God
  - Connecting the Joppa vision (10:28–29)
    - Peter begins transcending Mosaic regulations
    - Peter comes to Cornelius without objection
    - Peter still unclear of his mission!

"I myself am only human" (10:27). Contrast Herod Agrippa I (12:22–23)! Cf. Rev. 19:10; 22:8–9.

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Reception (10:23–33)
  - Received as divine agent (10:23–27)
    - Due honor and worship like angel from God
      - Indicates receptivity to hear divine word
      - Indicates typical Pauline synagogue convert
    - Peter refuses deference due only to God
  - Connecting the Joppa vision (10:28–29)
    - Peter begins transcending Mosaic regulations
    - Peter comes to Cornelius without objection
    - Peter still unclear of his mission!

"unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile"

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Reception (10:23–33)
  - Received as divine agent (10:23–27)
    - Due honor and worship like angel from God
      - Indicates receptivity to hear divine word
      - Indicates typical Pauline synagogue convert
    - Peter refuses deference due only to God
  - Connecting the Joppa vision (10:28–29)
    - Peter begins transcending Mosaic regulations
    - Peter comes to Cornelius without objection
    - Peter still unclear of his mission!

"why you sent for me?"

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Reception (10:23–33)
  - Connecting Caesarea vision (10:30–33)
    - Vision repetition = literary technique
      - Allows emphasis of Cornelius's character
      - Allows emphasis of significance of event
    - Cornelius ready to hear gospel

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Sermon (10:34–44)
  - Follows standard apostolic outline
  - Reception of Spirit = messianic Israel
    - Mosaic regulations fulfilled by Spirit
    - Spirit's manifestation = Mosaic cleansing

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Sermon (10:34–44)
  - Follows standard apostolic outline
  - Reception of Spiri = messianic Israel
    - Mosaic r irit
    - Spi g

John the Baptist, fulfillment, empowerment, death, resurrection, commission

Acts 10: Cornelius

Peter's Sermons

The Church's Movement from Jews to Gentiles

Sermon	Audience	Significance
1. Acts 2	Jerusalem's pilgrims	Church empowered
2. Acts 3	Jerusalem's people	Forgiveness offered
3. Acts 4	Jerusalem's leaders	Forgiveness offered
4. Acts 5	Jerusalem's leaders	Forgiveness rejected
5. Acts 10	Cornelius's house	Gentile plan unfolds
6. Acts 11	Circumcision party	Gentile plan resisted
7. Acts 15	Church leaders	Gentile plan settled

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's Companions (10:45–48)
  - Circumcised surprise (10:45–46)
    - Spirit gift "even on Gentiles"
    - Indicates problem of Jerusalem church
    - Intimates future crisis with Pauline mission
  - Peter's validation of Gentiles (10:47–48)
    - Gentile baptism into messianic Israel
    - Cruciality of Petrine authorization
    - Epoch event for the church
    - Peter lodges with Cornelius = fellowship

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Pet :45–48)
  - Circumci :45–46)
    - Spirit gift "even on entiles"
    - Indicates problem of Jerusalem church
    - Intimates future crisis with Pauline mission
  - Peter's validation of Gentiles (10:47–48)
    - Gentile baptism into messianic Israel
    - Cruciality of Petrine authorization
    - Epoch event for the church
    - Peter lodges with Cornelius = fellowship

Which will show up in very next chapter.

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Peter's C ions (10:45–48)
  - 45–46)
    - Sp entiles"
    - Indicates prob m of Jerusalem church
    - Intimates future crisis with Pauline mission
  - Peter's validation of Gentiles (10:47–48)
    - Gentile baptism into messianic Israel
    - Cruciality of Petrine authorization
    - Epoch event for the church
    - Peter lodges with Cornelius = fellowship

Which will show up in chapter 15 after 1MJ.

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Cornelius Observations
  - Highpoint of Hellenist expansion
    - Repetitious style: importance of event
      - Cornelius's vision: 4 times (Acts 10—11)
      - Peter's vision: 2 times (Acts 10—11)
      - Acts 11:3–17 summarizes all Acts 10 again!
    - Peter's testimony: crucial for later acceptance

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Cornelius Observations
  - Peter's experience
    - Clean/unclean issue: plays out Jesus' own teaching (Mark 7:14–23)
    - Peter's multiple refusals: plays out Stephen Speech theme #2, God resisted
  - Cornelius's piety
    - Prayer, almsgiving: standard Jewish piety learned in synagogues
    - Piety emphasized: readiness for gospel and Saul's most fertile ground

Acts 10: Cornelius

- Cornelius Observations
  - Jerusalem's issues
    - Circumcision: necessary for salvation? (Must become a full Jew before truly saved?)
    - Fellowship: Peter stays? (How to handle Jewish kosher laws?)
  - Spirit's resolution
    - Spirit's blessing: crucial proof of eschatological realities of salvation
    - Peter's lodging: crucial acceptance of table fellowship

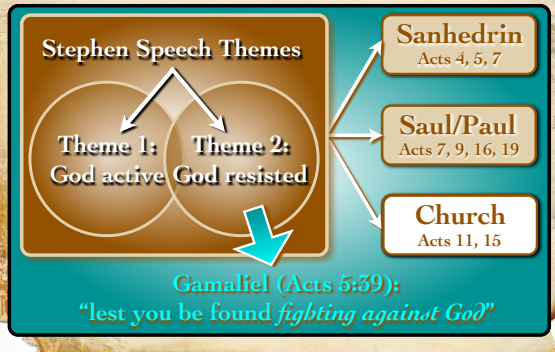
Acts 10–11: Cornelius

- Coastal Prelude
- Cornelius Paradigm
- Jerusalem Problem

Acts 11: Problem

- Jerusalem Challenge (11:1–3)
  - Challenge of circumcised believers (11:1)
    - Cornelius news hits Jerusalem
    - Circumcised believers' two-fold challenge
      - (1) salvation: "uncircumcised men"
      - (2) table fellowship: "ate with them"
    - Stephen Speech, theme #2: God resisted
  - Question of Mosaic law (11:2–3)
    - Jerusalem still troubled how to handle Moses
    - Implications of messianic Israel still unclear

Acts 11: Problem



Acts 11: Problem

- Peter's Defense (11:4–17)
  - Repeated story allows literary emphasis
    - Rehearsal of events (11:4–14)
    - Reality of Spirit's action (11:15–16)
    - Theological deduction (11:17)
  - Conclusion ("that I could *hinder God?*")
    - Ananias and Sapphira: "testing" Spirit (5:9)
    - Gamaliel: "fighting God" (5:39)
    - Stephen: "stiff-necked people" (7:51)
    - Saul: "Jesus, whom are you persecuting" (9:5)

Acts 11: Problem

Cf. Pentecost (Acts 2), Samaritans (Acts 8)

- Repeated story allows literary emphasis
  - Rehearsal of events (11:4–14)
  - Reality of Spirit's action (11:15–16)
  - Theological deduction (11:17)
- Conclusion ("that I could *hinder God?*")
  - Ananias and Sapphira: "testing" Spirit (5:9)
  - Gamaliel: "fighting God" (5:39)
  - Stephen: "stiff-necked people" (7:51)
  - Saul: "Jesus, whom are you persecuting" (9:5)

Acts 11: Problem

- Peter's Defense (11:4–17)
  - Repeated story allows literary emphasis
    - Rehearsal of events (11:4–14)
    - Reality of Spirit's action (11:15–16)

"uncircumcised in heart and ears, you are *forever opposing the Holy Spirit"*

  - Conclusion ("that I could *hinder God?*")
    - Ananias and Sapphira: "testing" Spirit (5:9)
    - Gamaliel: "fighting God" (5:39)
    - Stephen: "stiff-necked people" (7:51)
    - Saul: "Jesus, whom are you persecuting" (9:5)

Acts 11: Problem

Gamaliel → Sanhedrin	Peter → Church
5:39: "you will only find yourselves fighting against God"	11:17: "Who was I to think I could oppose God?"

  - Stephen: "stiff-necked people" (7:51)
    - Saul: "Jesus, whom are you persecuting" (9:5)

Acts 11: Problem

Peter's Sermons

The Church's Movement from Jews to Gentiles

Sermon	Audience	Significance
1. Acts 2	Jerusalem's pilgrims	Church empowered
2. Acts 3	Jerusalem's people	Forgiveness offered
3. Acts 4	Jerusalem's leaders	Forgiveness offered
4. Acts 5	Jerusalem's leaders	Forgiveness rejected
5. Acts 10	Cornelius's house	Gentile plan unfolds
6. Acts 11	Circumcision party	Gentile plan resisted
7. Acts 15	Church leaders	Gentile plan settled

Acts 11: Problem

- Jerusalem's Response (11:18)
  - **Response actually is ambiguous**
    - Luke's meaning must be interpreted carefully
    - *Dual* response indicated (two "they" elements)
      - "they were silenced": circumcision party
      - "they praised God": messianic Israel party
        - God's initiative confessed: "God has given"
        - Gentile salvation agreed: "repentance, life"
        - Leaves open issue of table fellowship
  - **Circumcision issue will reappear!**

Acts 11: Problem

- Jerusalem's Response (11:18)
  - **Response actually is ambiguous**
    - Luke's meaning must be interpreted carefully
    - *Dual* response indicated (two "they" elements)
      - "they were [illegible] party
      - "[illegible]
        - [illegible] given"
        - Gentile salvation agreed: "repentance, life"
        - Leaves open issue of table fellowship
  - **Circumcision issue will reappear!**

The whole issue comes back with a vengeance in Acts 15.

Acts 11: Problem

- Peter's Shifting Roles
  - **Church role: growing marginalization**
    - Though apostle, Jerusalem leadership weakens
      - Probably result of the "Gentile issue"
      - Peter pays the price for Cornelius event
    - Leadership noticeably shifts to James
      - Well-known conservative reputation
      - Clear by the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15)

Acts 11: Problem

- Peter's Shifting Roles
  - Mission role: growing marginalization
    - Mission impetus will shift to Antioch
    - Mission leadership will shift to Saul
      - Barnabas takes lead outside Jerusalem
      - Eventually Barnabas will transition to Saul

(1) Church role: Peter to James
(2) Mission role: Peter to Saul