

WEEK 9: GOD OPENED THE WAY FOR THE GENTILES
DAY 1: MIRACLES BROUGHT NEW BELIEVERS
Acts 9:32-43

1. Last week we saw how Saul met Christ. He stopped persecuting the Christians. He started obeying Christ. Ananias healed his eyes, helped him receive the Holy Spirit, and baptised him. Saul began to preach that Jesus is the Son of God. Barnabas helped him be received by the church in Jerusalem. We too should help new Christians.

From Acts 9:31, in what two ways was the church growing?

(1) _____

(2) _____

2. The church was growing stronger and bigger. Now God had a new lesson to teach the church. He taught this lesson through Peter. In today's lesson, Peter was going around the country of Judea preaching. This is what we will learn.



When God healed Aeneas and raised Dorcas from the dead through Peter, many people believed in Christ.



Take your Bible now and read about this in Acts 9:32-43. Read verse 35 again. What did the people of Lydda and Sharon do when they saw the healed man?

3. They turned to the Lord. It was wonderful that this man was healed. He had been in bed for eight years. We are happy to think of his joy. And something important happened because of this. Many people believed in Christ. This is why God shows his power in miracles.

Acts 9:34:

And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed." And immediately he rose.

Whom did God heal through Peter to help many people believe?

4. God healed Aeneas. In his preaching journey, Peter came to the believers in Lydda. This is where Aeneas lived. Perhaps he was one of the believers. Aeneas could not walk. It seems he could not even move his arms. Peter told Aeneas that Jesus was healing him. He told him to get up. Aeneas obeyed and was healed!

This helped many people to believe in whom? _____

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5. This helped them believe in Christ. One man was able to walk. But many were able to believe in Christ and follow him. God helps us in our bodies. But he also wants to reach our hearts and lives for him.

Whom did God use to heal Aeneas and help many to believe in Christ?

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6. God used Peter. People are the tools God uses. He wants us to do acts of kindness for others. He sometimes wants to do miracles through us.

Acts 9:35:

And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw it and they turned to the Lord.

Did the people know whose power had worked through Peter to heal Aeneas?

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7. They knew whose power did it. And they believed in Christ. Just 14 kilometers from Lydda was the town of Joppa. In Joppa there were more believers. One was a woman called Tabith or Dorcas. She had a heart of love and care for others. But she died. The people were very sad and sent for Peter.

Acts 9:39:

So Peter rose and went with them. And when he had come, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping, and showing tunics and other garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.

Whom did God raise from the dead, causing many people to believe in Christ?

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8. He did this to Dorcas. Dorcas is an example to us of a loving helpful woman. She was not selfish. She gave much time for others. She was truly following Christ.

Acts 9:40:

But Peter put them all outside and knelt down and prayed; then turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, rise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.

What did God do to Dorcas through Peter which helped many people believe?

9. God raised her from the dead. Peter did not have power himself to do this. No person on earth has this power. It was God's power working. He did not raise Dorcas just so she could make more clothes. He did it to show his power to give life.

Acts 9:42:

And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.

What happened when people heard that God had raised Dorcas from the dead?

10. Many people believed. They believed in Christ. God does not often bring dead people back to life. He does not always heal people who cannot walk. When he does this he has reasons for doing it. He wants to help those people. But more than that, he wants to help people believe in Christ.

Why do you think we do not see more miracles like this today?

11. We will talk about your answer in class. Perhaps we do not have enough faith. Perhaps we do not need these miracles so much today. Perhaps we do not expect God to work in this way and this hinders him.

From Acts 9, what happened when God healed Aeneas and raised Dorcas from the dead through Peter?

12. Many people believed in Christ. This must be our reason for wanting miracles. Some who pray for miracles want power themselves. They want to be known by the people. They want to be thought great leaders in the church. 'If we ask God for power, it must not be for ourselves.

Whom must we want people to praise if we ask God for special power?

13. We must want people to praise God.

From Acts 9, what happened when God healed Aeneas and raised Dorcas from the dead through Peter?

WEEK 9: GOD OPENED THE WAY FOR THE GENTILES

DAY 2: CORNELIUS BELIEVED IN JESUS

Acts 10:1-8, 43

1. We hope you enjoy learning the great things God did through Peter. Today we will go on to Acts 10. God did something wonderful!

From Acts 9, what happened when God healed Aeneas and raised Dorcas from the dead through Peter?

2. Many people believed in Christ. But these people were Jews or part Jews. They were all people of Israel and Samaria. Anyone who is not a Jew is a Gentile. No Gentiles had yet received Christ. Acts 10 tells how God opened the way for the Gentiles. We will learn it this way.

- (1) The first Gentile who received Christ through the preaching of the apostles was Cornelius.
- (2) Peter told Cornelius that he and every one could be forgiven of sin by believing in Jesus.

Take your Bible now and read Acts 10:1-8. Did Cornelius do what God told him to do?

3. Cornelius obeyed God. But Cornelius was a Roman. He was living in Israel as a soldier. He was head of a part of the Roman army which stayed in Caesarea.

Acts 10:1:

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion (or head) of what was known as the Italian Cohort (or the part from Italy).

Was Cornelius a Jew or a Gentile? _____

4. Cornelius was a Gentile. He was not a Jew. Anyone who is not a Jew is a Gentile. Near the beginning of the Old Testament God chose Abraham to start a new people. God promised that he and his people would be blessed by God. They would also bring blessing to the rest of the world. Those people were called people of Israel, or Jews. All through the Old Testament God worked with them. Jesus and the apostles also worked with them. But today we see that God opened the way for the Gentiles.

With whom did God work first? _____

5. God worked first with the Jews. In some of the cities of Israel a few Gentiles lived. Some heard of the God of Israel. They were tired of their old gods and spirits. They saw that they did not help. They no longer wanted to pray and give sacrifices to the spirits. Instead they wanted to learn of the God of the Jews.

Acts 10:1-2:

there was a man named Cornelius ... a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms liberally to (or freely helped) the people, and prayed constantly to God.

Was Cornelius following the gods of the Romans or the God of Israel?

6. Cornelius was following the God of Israel. But he did not know about Christ. God heard his prayers. He wanted Cornelius to receive Christ. So God sent an angel to tell Cornelius to call for Peter. Peter told him about Christ, and Cornelius received Christ.

Was Cornelius the first Gentile whom the apostles led to Christ, or were there many other Gentile Christians?

7. This man was the first one the apostles preached to. A few Gentiles had seen Jesus and heard him preach. But we are not told that they believed and followed him. The apostles were not yet preaching to Gentiles. They were only preaching in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee to Jews and part Jews. They did not yet understand that the Gentiles should hear the good news too. Tomorrow we will see how Peter became willing to preach to Gentiles.

Who was the first Gentile who received Christ through the preaching of the apostles?

8. The first Gentile to do this was Cornelius. We see that Cornelius feared God and prayed. He also gave much money to needy people in the city. Perhaps you know people who try to have peace with God in this way. They do many god things to try to please God. But this is not enough. We can only have peace with God by believing in his Son, Jesus.

Whom did God send to Cornelius to help him understand this?

9. God sent Peter to him. God will help us understand too if we really want to follow him. Many people think they can please God by doing good. They try to keep laws. But the Bible says this is not the way to be saved.

Ephesians 2:8-9:

For it is by God's grace that you have been saved, through faith. It is not your own doing, but God's gift. There is nothing here to boast in, since it is not the result of your own efforts.

Who was the first Gentile who received Christ through the preaching of the apostles?

10. This was Cornelius. He needed to know that he must believe in Christ. This is what Peter said to him.

Acts 10:43:

To him (Jesus) all the prophets bear witness that every one who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

From what Peter said, what will everyone who believes in Jesus receive?

11. He will receive forgiveness of sins. This does not come through doing good things. We cannot become Christians by our own work, no matter how hard we try. Cornelius did many good things. God saw that he wanted to serve him. But Cornelius needed something more in order to be made right with God.

Galatians 2:16:

We ... know that a man is not justified (or made right with God) by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ.

Through what could Cornelius be forgiven of his sins and made right with God?

12. He could be forgiven through faith in Jesus. He needed to hear about Jesus. He needed to believe in him. He needed to receive what Jesus had done for him on the cross. Peter told him what he needed.

Acts 10:38-39, 43:

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power ... They put him to death by hanging him on a tree ... To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins.

It was not only Cornelius who could be forgiven. From this verse, who else can receive forgiveness of sins?

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13. Every one who believes can receive this. It is a gift. It is not something we can get by working. Think of your own church for a moment. Perhaps some people are trying very hard to save themselves by doing good. They think they can make themselves good enough to have peace with God.

But how did Peter say Cornelius and every one could be forgiven of their sins?

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14. He said they can be forgiven of their sins by believing in Jesus.

Who was the first Gentile who received Christ through the preaching of the apostles?

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15. This was Cornelius. Cornelius tried to serve God. He gave many gifts to needy people. He prayed much of the time. But we cannot become Christians by what we do ourselves.

How did Peter say that this Gentile and every one could be forgiven of their sins?

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16. We can be forgiven of sin by believing in Jesus. Let us say there are some people in your church who try to be Christians by being good. They keep many laws. They give big offerings. They come to church. They even pray. But they see that they do not have peace with God. They have not received forgiveness for their sins. Let us say that they come to you. They want to know how to become real Christians.

What will you tell them? _____

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17. Be ready to give your answer in class.

Who was the first Gentile who received Christ through the preaching of the apostles?

How did Peter say this Gentile and every one could be forgiven of their sins?

WEEK 9: GOD OPENED THE WAY FOR THE GENTILES
DAY 3: CHRIST DIED FOR ALL MEN
Acts 10:9-23

1. Yesterday we learned how the first Gentile became a Christian.

Who was the first Gentile who received Christ through the preaching of the apostles?

How did Peter say this Gentile and every one could be forgiven of their sins?

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2. The first Gentile who received Christ was Cornelius. Peter told him that every one could be forgiven of their sins by believing in Christ. Up to this time Peter had preached only to Jews. It was the Jews who had received the law of Moses. It was among the Jews that Christ came. But now God wanted all men to know that Christ died for them. Let us learn the lesson God taught.

- (1) At first Peter thought Christ died only for the Jews.
- (2) From Peter's lesson of the blanket let down from heaven, Christ died for all men.

Take your Bible now and read Acts 10:9-20. In these verses, who needed to learn that Christ died for more than the Jews?

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3. Peter needed to learn this. Peter was a Jew. He followed the law of Moses very carefully. God had said that, for a time, the Jews should not mix with other people. The Jews thought God's word was only for them. They thought God's way of salvation was only for Jews. They thought God had no place for Gentiles. It seems Peter did not understand some of the words of the prophets.

In the beginning did Peter think Christ died for Gentiles?

4. He did not think so. He knew God loved the Jews. He did not know that God loves all the other people too. He did not know God loves Gentiles. God had to teach Peter a special lesson. Stop and think of the groups of people who live around you. Think of those who live in other countries. Perhaps some of these tribes live very bad lives. Perhaps they have customs which are very different from yours. Do you sometimes find it hard to think that God loves such people?

Write the name of a tribe that is very different from yours.

5. Perhaps you have felt like Peter. Perhaps you sometimes think God cannot love people from another tribe. But God taught Peter a lesson. And he wants to teach each of us.

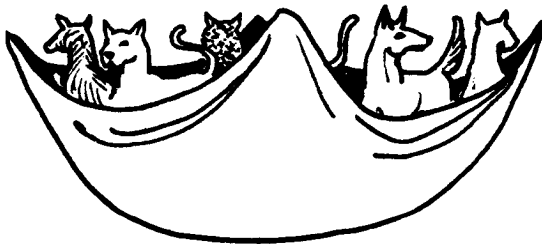
At first Peter thought Christ died only for whom? _____

6. At first Peter thought Christ died only for the Jews. But God taught him a lesson. Peter was resting on the roof of a house. The house was different from some of ours. The roof was flat and hard. Peter was very hungry.

Acts 10:11-12:

(he) saw the heaven opened, and something descending like a great sheet (or blanket), let down by four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air.

Write one thing God showed Peter to teach him this lesson?



7. God showed him a blanket full of animals. Peter was hungry. He was thinking about food. God showed him some animals and told him to get up and eat. But Peter would not do it. The law of the Jews said he could not eat these things. These animals and birds were unclean. They were not fit to eat.

Leviticus 11:4:

Nevertheless among those (animals) that chew the cud or part the hoof, you shall not eat these.

At first, Peter thought Christ died only for whom? _____

8. Peter thought the death of Christ was only for Jews. He knew the Jews had the law of God. Peter would not eat things which were unclean by that law. He thought certain animals were unclean. He also thought Gentiles were unclean.

Acts 10:15-16:

And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has cleansed, you must not call common." This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

Who was teaching Peter that Christ died not only for Jews but for all men?

9. God was teaching Peter. He thought Gentiles were unclean and Christ could not die for them. But God was saying that Gentiles are also loved by God. God sent Christ for them too.

From whom did Christ die? Was it only for the Jews or for all men?

10. Christ did this for all men. Later the apostles understood this. Paul wrote about it.

2 Corinthians 5:15:

He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

What did Christ do for all men? _____

11. He died for all men. He did not die for just a few. This lesson helped Peter. It helped the other apostles. It should help us. We see that Christ died for all men. We also see that God wants all men to be saved.

I Timothy 2:3-4:

This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Does this verse help you when you think of other tribes and people who are different from you?

12. I hope it helps you. It helps me. It shows me that all men are loved by God. He wants every person to be his child. He wants every person to follow Christ.

From Peter's lesson of the blanket let down from heaven, for whom did Christ die?

13. Christ died for all men. But the apostles did not understand this at first.

Acts 10:17:

Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed (or troubled) as to what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius ... stood before the gate.

In the beginning, Peter thought Christ died only for whom? _____

14. Peter thought Christ died only for Jews. But God taught Peter an important lesson.

Acts 10:19-20:

And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. Rise and go down, and accompany them without hesitation (or waiting); for I have sent them."

From Peter's lesson of the blanket let down from heaven, for whom did Christ die?

15. Christ died for all men. He died for you. He died for the people who are like you and close to you. He also died for those who are different from you. He died for those who are far away from you.

Are you willing to take the good news to people of other tribes if God calls you to do this?

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16. We need to be ready for this. Other tribes and peoples are waiting to hear.

At first, Peter thought Christ died only for whom? _____

From Peter's lesson of the blanket let down from heaven, for whom did Christ die?

WEEK 9: GOD OPENED THE WAY FOR THE GENTILES
DAY 4: HE RECEIVES PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONS
Acts 10:24-35

1. We have seen how God talked to Cornelius, a Gentile. We have seen how God prepared Peter, a Jew, to go to him.

At first, Peter thought Christ died only for whom? _____

From Peter's lesson of the blanket let down from heaven, for whom did Christ die?

2. At first Peter thought Christ died only for Jews. But from Peter's lesson, we know Christ died for all men. Today we will read how Peter and Cornelius met together. We will learn what Peter said. We will learn these verses:

Acts 10:34-35: And Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

Take your Bible now and read Acts 10:24-35. Do you think it was easy for Peter to go to Cornelius' house?

3. In some ways it was easy. Peter was sure God wanted him to go. He knew God would help him. But in some ways it was hard. Peter had never gone into the house of a Gentile. He had always thought this was wrong. But Peter went. And Cornelius wanted to honour Peter.

Acts 10:25-26:

When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man."

Did Peter want Cornelius to think he was someone very great? _____

4. Peter did not want this. He told Cornelius to stand up. Peter was not a god or a king. He did not think Cornelius should bow to him. He knew he was just a man like other men. Peter had learned that all men are equal before God.

Did Peter think that he as a leader should be treated as someone special, or as one equal with others?

5. Peter thought he should be treated as one equal with others. But what about us? As leaders we sometimes think we are very important. We like to rule over others in the church. Peter is teaching us something here. He is showing us that in Christ all men are equal. It does not matter what tribe we are in. It does not matter what position we have. This is what he later wrote to church leaders.

I Peter 5:2-3:

Tend the flock of God ... not as domineering over (or putting down) those in your charge but being examples to the flock.

Amos has just been made pastor of a church in Nigeria. He wants people to obey him. He gives them many hard things to do. He tells them they should respect him. If you could talk to Amos, what would you say?

6. We will talk about this together in class. Peter said leaders should not rule over the people in the church. They should be an example for them to follow. Peter was sent by God to Cornelius. He did not put himself higher than Cornelius. He told Cornelius not to bow to him.

Does God make a difference between people and tribes? _____

7. God does not make a difference. He does not love some and hate others. He does not judge some more easily than others. Peter had learned this lesson well.

Acts 10:28:

and he (Peter) said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit any one of another nation; but God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

From this verse, what did God show Peter? _____

8. God showed him that he should not call anyone common. He should not call anyone unclean because of his tribe. He must not think of anyone as unloved by God. So Peter came to see Cornelius.

Acts 10:34-35:

And Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality (or loves no one more than another), but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

In which nations is God ready to receive those who fear him?

9. He is ready to do this in every nation. This is what Peter learned. Paul learned this lesson too. Later he understood what the prophets had written. This is what Paul wrote about it.

Romans 10:11-12:

The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction (or difference) between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows (or gives) his riches upon all who call upon him.

As we learned earlier, how could Cornelius and every one be forgiven of their sins?

10. They could be forgiven by believing in Christ. Being saved does not depend on your tribe or your position in life. It depends on your faith. Read the verses again.

Acts 10:34-35:

And Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

Memorise these verses now. When you can say them by yourself, hide them with your hand. Write Acts 10:34-35 to show the great truth Peter learned when he went to Cornelius' house.

11. This does not mean that we are saved by doing good. If we fear God we want to do right. We come to God. He receives us as we believe in Christ. Look at this verse again.

I Timothy 2:3-4:

This is good and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

What does God want? _____

12. God wants all men to be saved. He wants all of them to know the truth. He wants them to know that Christ died for them. He also wants them to know that God will come to judge men.

Romans 2:6,11:

For he will render to (or judge) every man according to his works ... For God shows no partiality (or he judges all in the same way).

I Peter 1:17:

And if you invoke (or call upon) as Father him who judges each one impartially according to his deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile (or time of living on earth).

From these verses, what do we learn about the way God judges men?

13. He judges all in the same way. He judges all equally. Think of your village chief. He sometimes has to judge matters. Think of yourself as leader in the church. Sometimes we have to judge things in the church. Sometimes we are tempted to judge lightly those who praise us. We are tempted to judge heavily those who are different from us. But God judges everyone in the same way.

Say Acts 10:34-35 to yourself to show the great truth Peter learned by going to Cornelius' house.

14. God does not treat one tribe differently from another. He does not treat the chief or pastor differently from the farmer or herdsman. This is the great truth Peter learned. God wants to save all men whatever their race or position. Christ came to die for all men. He is coming again to judge all men.

Write one thing you as a leader can do to show this to your people.

15. What is the great truth Peter learned by going to Cornelius' house?
Answer by writing Acts 10:34-35:



WEEK 9: GOD OPENED THE WAY FOR THE GENTILES .
DAY 5: HE OPENED THE WAY FOR US TO HEAR THE GOSPEL
Acts 10:36-48

1. This week we have learned how God sent Peter to Cornelius.

What is the great truth Peter learned by going to Cornelius' house?
Answer by saying Acts 10:34-35 to yourself.

2. Find these verses in your Bible to see if you said them right. Peter obeyed God. He went to the house of a Gentile. Today we see what happened as Peter obeyed. Up to this time the disciples did not understand. They were working only with Jews. Now the Holy Spirit would be poured out on the Gentiles in Cornelius' house. This is important for us.

The visit of Peter to Cornelius is important to us today because it opened the way for us to hear about Jesus.

Take your Bible now and read Acts 10:36 to 48. Read verse 38 again. Whom did Peter preach about in the house of Cornelius?

3. Peter preached about Jesus. Jesus was the one they needed to believe in. Jesus had been crucified and had risen again. Just before he went back to heaven he told the disciples something. He said they should go to Jerusalem and wait. They did this. They were praying and waiting together on the Day of Pentecost.

As we have learned, what happened to cause wonderful things on the Day of Pentecost?

4. God's Spirit was poured out. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in other tongues and to praise God. They began to preach. They preached first to the Jews. But now God wanted them to preach to others. It seems this was his plan.

Romans 1:16:

I have complete confidence in the gospel; it is God's power to save all who believe, first the Jews and also the Gentiles.

Of what group or race of people was Cornelius? _____

5. Cornelius was of the Gentiles. Peter obeyed God and went to his house. He told him about Christ. He explained that God is ready to receive people of every nation. Cornelius listened and believed all that Peter said.

Acts 10:44:

While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the words.

Whom did God give to these Gentiles to show that they were part of the church?

6. God gave them the Holy Spirit. This showed that the Gentiles too believed in Christ. They too were saved by his death. They too were baptised with the Holy Spirit. Think how important this is for us. If the gospel was preached only to Jews we might never have heard it.

Acts 10:45:

And the believers from among the circumcised (or the Jews) who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling (or praising) God.

Think about yourself. Are you a Jew or a Gentile? _____

7. Do not be confused. If you are of the people of Israel and Abraham, you are a Jew. If you are not of the people of Israel, you are a Gentile. The Jews were circumcised, but not everyone who is circumcised is a Jew. Most of the people of the world are Gentiles. Most of us are Gentiles. Think what would have happened if Peter had refused to go to the house of Cornelius.

Would the way have been open for us to hear about Jesus? _____

8. The way would not have been open. If the Christian Jews had not preached to the Gentiles, we would never have heard. We would not have understood that Christ died to save us. Peter's meeting with Cornelius was very important. It was an important part of the growth of the church.

To whom is it especially important that Peter visited Cornelius and told him about Jesus?

9. It is especially important to the Gentiles. It is important to us. It opened the way for the good news of Jesus to be preached to us. Other apostles soon began to preach to Gentiles. We will see that Paul took the good news into Europe. From Europe the gospel went to America. From these lands God raised up missionaries to come to Africa. They brought the same good news of Christ.

What happened that first opened the way for Gentiles to hear about Jesus?

10. Peter went to visit Cornelius. He preached to him and the other Gentiles in his house. If Peter had refused to do this, the other disciples might not have understood. They might have gone on preaching only to Jews.

Why is Peter's visit to Cornelius important to us today? _____

11. This visit opened the way for us to hear about Jesus. This is what God wanted. He wanted the whole world to hear. But one person had to begin. It was hard for him to do this. He had never visited a Gentile before. Later many people spoke evil of him for doing this.

Who made the first visit that opened the way for us to hear about Jesus?

12. It was Peter. By God's help Peter was no longer afraid as he once was. Think about yourself. A few days ago we talked about other tribes around you who need to hear. Perhaps through these lessons God is telling you to go to them. He told Peter to go to Cornelius. He wants all men to be saved. Perhaps God wants you to tell another tribe about Jesus.

What might happen to such a tribe if you do not learn the lesson and go to them?

13. They may never hear the good news.

Why is Peter's visit to Cornelius important to us today?
