

ACTS 10 NIV

THINKING OUT OF THE BOX



ACTS 10:1-2

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

ACTS:10:3-4

3 One 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!”⁴ Cornelius stared at him in fear. “What is it, Lord?” he asked.

ACTS 10:5-6

The angel answered, “Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.

ACTS 10:7-8

”7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. 8 He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

ACTS 10:9-10

- 9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

ACTS 10:11-13

- 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, “Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.”

ACTS 10:14-15

14 “Surely not, Lord!” Peter replied. “I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.” 15 The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” 16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

ACTS 10:16-18

17 While 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. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

ACTS 10:19-21

While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.” 21 Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”

ACTS 10:22-23

- 22 The 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 ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Christ is inviting us to think outside the box

If we want to experience and see the work that is being done by the Holy spirit in the mission field, we must think **outside the box.**

Spiritual Boxes

- Our views on spirituality differ from one group to another, for example:

1) Theological commitments *diverse, multiple and include*

a) Atheism (*Implicit, Explicit, Humanisms, Agnostic.....*).

b) Buddhism (*Mahayana, Theravada, Vajrayana.....*).

c) Christianity (*Orthodox, Catholic, protestant, Pentecostal, Non-Denominational...*).

d) Hinduism (*Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism, Smartism...*).

e) Islamism (*Sufi, Sunni, Shiite...*).

f) Sikhism (*Udasi, Nirmala, Nanakpanthi, Khalsa, Sahajdhari, Namdhari Kuka...*).

g) Judaism (*Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots ...*)

I will focus a bit on Judaism, for us to see why it was hard for Peter.

One of the central beliefs of Judaism is that ‘The one true God chose Israel to be His servant to bring all persons to true knowledge of God’

- **Yahweh**, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it was not easy for one to convert to Judaism.
- Those that worshiped Yahweh, were only reduced to ‘God fearers’ but were never allowed to convert to Judaism.

- The Bible is states that in this City, **Caesarea** , a predominately Roman city on the shores of the Mediterranean in Judea, was the headquarters of the Roman governor of the province of Judea.

Churches



**In this City, there was a man named
Cornelius, he was an officer in the Roman
Army, he was a devout man; a man who
feared God, who prayed to God always and
who gave donations generously to those
who were in need.**

Cornelius was in the category of what the Jews called God-fearers (one who feared God). These were Gentiles who loved the God of Israel; they were sympathetic to and supportive of the Jewish faith. Yet they stopped short of becoming full Jews in lifestyle and in circumcision.

Jewish people of that time respected and appreciated these God-fearing Gentiles, but they could not really share their life and homes and food with them, because they were still, in fact, Gentiles and not full Jewish converts.

The Bible says that Cornelius was praying, in the **ninth hour** (3:00 in the afternoon). This was a customary time of prayer for Jews. As Cornelius was praying, he saw a vision. This man ticked all the boxes any Christian is looking for.

- ✓ **a man who feared God.**
- ✓ **A man who prayed to God always.**
- ✓ **A man who gave donations generously to those who were in need.**
- ✓ **A man who saw visions from God.**

- According to Peter, this man was not Christian enough.
- Peter had put God in a box of limitations, and now God was going to shake Peter up to change his thinking. He is doing the same to us.

Just because under the law of Moses,
Jews were forbidden to eat animals that
were designated as common or unclean.
(*Leviticus 11*). But who decides what is
clean anyway? We want to show God
who to love based on our boxes

You cannot limit the work of the Holy Spirit in box, this was demonstrated on the day of Pentecost. Peter had forgotten that all the barriers were broken on the day of Pentecost.

Acts 2:5-8

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment.

because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language. (*Acts 2:5-8*)

John 4:23-26

²³ Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. ²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

*25 The woman said, “I know that Messiah”
(called Christ) “is coming. When he comes,
he will explain everything to us.”*

*26 Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking
to you—I am he.” (John 4:23-26)*

Peter's confession

34 Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism 35 but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right