



Why Cornelius? Why a Soldier? (Part I)

Acts 10:22: (NASB) *They said, Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you.*



Sometimes things need to change. When there is a great plan in progress, the need for great change is likely to be a part of that plan. Since Adam's fall from grace, God's plan for man's redemption has been punctuated by changes, including the great Flood which ended the old world, the calling of Abraham which began the age of the Patriarchs, and the death of Jacob which ushered in the age of Jewish favor. Each change had a distinct purpose. Today's story about the conversion of Cornelius signaled that another change was on the horizon - a change that would be played out through the experiences of the Apostle Peter and Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. God's plan was progressing and great change was necessary. But why Cornelius? Why a soldier?

The conversion of Cornelius and the opening up of the Gospel to anyone, Jew and Gentile alike, was an event that would change the world!

Prophecy quietly revealed the coming of this event. Here was a glimpse of the mission of Jesus:

Isaiah 42:5-8: (NASB) ⁵Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it, ⁶I am the LORD, I have called you (Jesus) in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, (not just the chosen people Israel) ⁷To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon (the prison house of sin and death from which all will eventually be released) and those who dwell in darkness (bringing those in disfavor to favor) from the prison. ⁸I am the LORD, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images.

Prophecy more noticeably revealed the coming of this event - this time at the birth of Jesus:

Luke 2:25-32: (NASB) ²⁵And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for him the custom of the Law, ²⁸then he took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; ³⁰For my eyes have seen Your salvation, ³¹which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light of revelation to the Gentiles (non-Jewish individuals will greatly benefit from the coming of Jesus), and the glory of Your people Israel. (Israel will benefit also.)

This would represent a MAJOR change in the pathway of God's plan, and we all know how we feel about change...!

 **Don't just accept it, Embrace Change, Steve Rizzo**

- *I want to tell you something. Change is going to take place in your life in one or two ways, my friends. Change comes into your life in one or two ways. Either by choice or by circumstances beyond your control. Either way, when it happens you have to be able to do more than just accept change. I hear*



people say this all the time, “Accept it.” Accepting is okay but when you say, “I’ll accept it,” what you’re really saying to yourself is, “Okay, I’ll do it but I’m not going to like it.” What I’m asking you to do through any challenge in your life is to embrace the change. This is what I mean when I say, “embrace the change,” you’re going through it with an unshakable faith that somehow, some way some good will come out of even the most intense situation.

Three key observations about what is needed for the coming transition:

1. The right Gentile to receive and accept the invitation
2. The right Jewish/Christian individual to embrace and announce the change
3. The right methods to communicate this monumental transition

Because the Jewish people were told for thousands of years they were to remain separate from other nations, this new arrangement would be difficult to accept. The Jewish thinking might have been, how could Messiah be their king, too?

Was there anything *that* special about Cornelius?

What about Cornelius? Acts 10 gives us four clear descriptive traits:

Acts 10:1-2: (NRSV) ¹In Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian Cohort, as it was called. ²He was a **devout <2152>** man who feared God with all his household; he gave **alms <1654>** generously to the people and prayed constantly to God.

1. A devout man...

Devout: Strongs #2152 eusebes (yoo-seb-ace’); well-reverent, i.e. pious

Here is another use of the word:

Acts 22:12: (KJV) And one Ananias, a **devout <2152>** man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there...

Cornelius had respect for Judaism and its Law. It appears he tried to follow it as best he could, even though he was on the “outside.”

2. ...one that feared (revered) God with all his house...

In that society, the head of the household would have been respected and followed. Cornelius was an upstanding individual who revered God (not the pagan gods of Rome) and his whole household shared that reverence.

Here is an example of that kind of reverence:

Proverbs 9:9-10: (NRSV) ⁹Give instruction to the wise, and they will become wiser still; teach the righteous and they will gain in learning. ¹⁰The fear (reverence) of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

3. ...which gave much **alms <1654>** to the people...

Alms: Strongs #1654 eleemosune (el-eh-ay-mos-oo'-nay); compassionateness, i.e. (as exercised towards the poor) beneficence, or (concretely) a benefaction
Lexicon: 1) mercy, pity 2) especially as exhibited in giving alms, charity

He was a generous giver to the people of Israel, even though he was a captain in the Roman army. His character shines brighter than would be expected. There is something very different about him. If someone is going to pave the




way as the first non-Jewish convert into Christianity, it would have to be a special person.

4. ...and prayed to God always...

This was truly a remarkable trait for a Gentile of that time who was of pagan background.

Psalms 25:5-11: (ASV) ⁵Guide me in thy truth, and teach me; for Thou art the God of my salvation; for thee do I wait all the day. ⁶Remember, O Jehovah, Thy tender mercies and Thy lovingkindness; for they have been ever of old. ⁷Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: According to Thy lovingkindness remember thou me, For thy goodness' sake, O Jehovah. ⁸Good and upright is Jehovah: Therefore will He instruct sinners in the way. ⁹The meek will He guide in justice; And the meek will He teach His way. ¹⁰All the paths of Jehovah are lovingkindness and truth unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. ¹¹For Thy name's sake, O Jehovah, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.

Cornelius lived this way in spite of being in an “out of favor” status.

 **Not why me; instead, this is me, Embrace Change, Steve Rizzo (referencing his brother who was in a serious accident and expected to die)**

- *My brother incorporated a belief system that was absolutely incredible. First of all, he never said, “Why me?” which is what we have a tendency to do when we are confronted with a change in our lives. First thing you do: “Why is this happening?” When you do that, you intensify the negativity. Instead he said, “This is me. This is what happened. This is what I have to deal with. What can I do to turn this around? Who can I go to that can help me turn this around?” He never focused on what was missing in his life. He always concentrated on what he had left. Every time someone would remind him that 21 feet of his intestine were taken out, he would cut them off in the middle of the sentence and say, “No. I have a foot left. Watch what I do with this.” You see the difference with that attitude? You see how that can turn your mindset totally around?*

The change that was about to happen within the context of the Jewish following of Jesus was going to be so dramatic it would require incredibly strong individuals to facilitate that change.

Cornelius' heart, life and discipline were already in the right place. He already lived his faith without any hope of blessing for it; it was just the right way to live. He was ready to receive this incredible privilege. But the right person to give him that privilege had to be equally right for the job.

Why Peter? A prophecy prepares the answer:

Matthew 16:13-19: (NRSV) ¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do people say that the Son of Man is? ¹⁴And they said, some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. ¹⁵He said to them, but who do you say that I am? ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.



Simon's name was changed here to Peter <4074>, which means "little stone." Upon this rock <4073>, which means large stone or boulder; the rock of knowledge that Jesus is the Messiah - Peter just acknowledged this in the previous sentence. Jesus is saying, "You are a little rock upon the rock of my Messiah-ship to build my church."

I will give you the keys of the kingdom - the Apostle Peter was given the great privilege to open the door to the Gentiles.

A sense of what Peter was like at Pentecost:

Acts 2:14: (NASB) *But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.*

Peter was the spokesman for Christianity in the absence of Jesus. He must be the one to open the door for the Gentiles to be invited in. That would be a dramatic change people would have a hard time with.

So we know the "who," but how do you deliver a message that will change the present and the future?

Let us look at Cornelius' part of the experience - he was a Gentile and was therefore outside of the favor of God.

How do you get his attention enough to get him to do something radical?

Acts 10:3-4: (NASB) ³*About the ninth hour of the day he clearly <5320> saw in a vision <3708> an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, Cornelius! ⁴And fixing his gaze on him and being much alarmed <1719>, he said, what is it, Lord? And he said to him, your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial <3422> before God.*

There are four distinct elements:

1. About the ninth hour of the day...

The first element is that of timing. The ninth hour (3pm) was one of the Jewish hours of prayer (See **Acts 3:1**, **Exodus 29:38-42**) and Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, was keeping it holy! What an example of faith and humility! Here was a man on the outside of blessing and favor who was reverencing the Almighty God for the sake of reverence alone.

2. ...he clearly saw in a vision an angel of God who had just come in and said to him, Cornelius!

The second element of this experience is the vision itself.

Vision: Strong's #3708; something gazed at, a spectacle (#3708 is used both for visions within the mind as well as for things that can be seen in a literal sense.)

Clearly/Openly: Strong's #5320; plainly, clearly or publicly

The fact that Cornelius' vision was seen openly seems to indicate that this was an actual visit from an angel.

3. ... being much alarmed, he said, what is it, Lord?

Alarmed: Strong's #1719 *emphobos* (em'-fob-os); in fear, i.e. alarmed





The reaction of Cornelius was typical of those spiritually-minded:

Luke 1:12: (KJV) *And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.*

The angel came to Zacharias because a great change was about to happen - his son would be John the Baptist.

Luke 1:29: (KJV) *And when she (Mary) saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.*

Cornelius' response was evidence of his character. His humble response, *What is it, Lord?* revealed his willingness to listen and be taught.

Dream Learn, Inspiring Future Session, How to Face Change, TedTalk

- *My father shared a few things with me; three things in particular when I was growing up. He said, "Robin, number one, always be a dreamer." Be a dreamer. Take the time to be a visionary of your life. Number two, he said, "Robin always be learning." Learn your way out of the recession. Victims love entertainment. Leaders love education. Victims love leisure. Leaders love learning.*

This is about changing your life and stepping up to a higher level. Where are you going to be in your life when you need to step up? Cornelius had already stepped up but had yet to be tested. He essentially was alone with his family and reverence for God. He had no idea that reverence would produce something much greater. Now comes an angel before him, exactly when he was honoring God.

4. *...He answered; your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.*

Memorial: Strong's #3422 (mnay-mos'-oo-non); a reminder (memorandum), i.e. record

The Angel's message was a very unusual proclamation. Imagine what Cornelius must have thought when he learned his prayers and charity ascended as a memorial to the Lord, accumulating before God as a record!

Memorial is only used one other time in the Scriptures, in the account of Mary anointing Jesus:

Mark 14:8-9: (KJV) *⁸She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. ⁹Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a **memorial** <3422> of her.*

Consequently, the angel's first words gave Cornelius a most unique combination of perspective and encouragement. God had heard, appreciated and remembered the prayers of a humble, pagan man and now they were being answered! Until now, it had not yet been an appropriate time for an answer, so God held them with honor until the Times of the Gentiles were to be established and then, with a swift and mighty response, God answered!

What was God's answer to Cornelius?






We can see how Cornelius was the perfect person to be the first Gentile convert. He had prepared himself for years before this by being devoted to the God of the Jews instead of pagan gods and yet having no apparent gain from such devotion.

He is visited by an angel and informed that God has heard him, and now he is instructed:

Acts 10:5-6: (NASB) ⁵Now dispatch some men to Joppa and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter; ⁶he is staying with a tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea.

Here were simple and mysterious instructions: Send men to Joppa to find Simon Peter. Here is the address. Have them invite Peter back and he will instruct you (Acts 10:32). Then the angel left, as angels always do once their message has been delivered. Why did the angel leave out all of the details?

-  • First, Cornelius was being called to the church. Now his faith, hope and association would need to come through the Lord Jesus and the church - his future brethren in Christ. (*Personal change*)
-  • Second, in order to execute such an important change of age, person-to-person contact would be required to make the change a reality to both Cornelius and his household, as well as to Peter and the brethren. (*Dispensational change - a new stage of development in God's plan from the Jewish Age of favor to the Gospel Age whereby anybody could be invited. For that to happen, both the representative of the past - Peter - and the representative of the opening door - Cornelius - had to meet to bring that change of age into effect.*)
-  • Third, the Apostle Peter had been given the keys to the kingdom of heaven and with them, the instruction to open the way at the time appointed. He needed to open the way.

If Peter was chosen for this important work, why is the Apostle Paul the one recognized as the “Apostle to the Gentiles?” Peter did his job - he opened that door and let in a flood of those with non-Jewish backgrounds. It would be Paul’s privilege to then go out into the world to spread the Gospel and set up churches far from where Jesus physically taught.

Acts 10:7-8: (NASB) ⁷When the angel who was speaking to him (Cornelius) had left, he summoned two of his servants and a devout soldier of those who were his personal attendants, ⁸and after he had explained everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Important principle: God’s angels ALWAYS leave after they deliver their messages! They are not here for our personal profit or gain.



Three (remember this number!) of his household went to find Peter, one of which was a soldier.



There is great similarity to another account of another Centurion:

Matthew 8:8-10: (NASB) ⁸But the centurion said, Lord, I am not worthy for you to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, go! And he goes, and to another, come! And he comes, and to my slave, do this! And he does it. ¹⁰Now when Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who were following, truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.

Could this have been the same Centurion? See the CQ Rewind Bonus Material for a look!

The journey from Caesarea to Joppa is said to be between 28 and 36 miles, which is a journey of about a day and a half.

 **Big Cause, Inspiring Future Session, How to Face Change, TedTalk**

- *Then the third thing my dad said to me, one of the most important things, he said, “Robin, give your life to a cause that’s larger than yourself.” The secret to passion is purpose. The secret to being a great businessperson is devoting yourself for some mission in your business. Steve Jobs didn’t say, “How can I be a billionaire?” Steve jobs said, “People want to be inspired,” so his devotion was to create products so beautiful that it created “wow” for his customers.*

The cause of the Gospel being spread to the Gentiles was a huge cause! Having a big cause makes navigating through the changes of life more focused.

Acts 10:9: (NASB) *On the next day, as they were on their way and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray.*

Peter has NO idea what is coming....!

About the sixth hour - noon; even though the normal hours of prayer were 9am and 3pm, there are examples of a higher devotion reflected in a third time of prayer in Jewish history.

Psalms 55:17: (NASB) *Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur, and He will hear my voice.*

Daniel 6:10: (KJV) *Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.*

Cornelius had an angel visit - would that be good enough for Peter?



“The Vision of Saint Peter and the Angel,”
by Domenico Fetti
Painting – oil on canvas
1619
Kunsthistorisches Museum –
Vienna (Austria)

Acts 10:9-12: (NASB) ⁹...Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. ¹⁰But he became hungry and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a **trance <1611>**; ¹¹and he saw the sky opened up, and an object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, ¹²and there were in it all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air.



Then, as he became hungry, *he fell into a trance.*

Trance: Strongs #1611 ekstasis (ek'-stas-is);
a displacement of the mind, i.e. bewilderment, "ecstasy"

Why this trance? Perhaps it was to completely focus Peter on the very important instruction he was about to receive. Peter was probably in a humbled posture of prayer and stayed in that position throughout his vision experience.

Peter would be called upon to recount this experience, so a visual encounter was needed in order to give his hearers an added degree of understanding. This vision will be the lynchpin for inviting Gentiles into Christianity. The vision itself was VERY significant and attention grabbing. Peter, completely focused on the matter at hand, saw the heavens open and a linen sheet lowered from heaven carrying all manner of birds, animals and creeping things. Peter needed to both be told and to see. How unexpected and mysterious! He was about to be asked to embrace the greatest change in Jewish history.



The city of Jaffa (known biblically as Joppa). The modern city of Tel Aviv was founded on the outskirts of Jaffa in 1909. The church in the distance marks the traditional spot of where Peter received his vision.

 **Seven Reasons We Resist Change, Jason Clark, TedTalk**

- *I'm going to show you the seven classic reasons why people resist change and what to do about them. "I'm too full of emotion and fear to think about what you're talking about," this is a big one. "This has all come as a huge shock," that just means "Thanks for the heads up." No one told me about it and now I am just dealing with horror. "I'm scared of the transition, not the idea." Very often we think they don't like the idea, but what they're really worried about is the journey to the idea.*



Peter would have experienced all of the same reasons we resist change.

Now the message:

Acts 10:13: (NASB) *A voice came to him, get up, Peter, kill and eat!*

A heavenly voice calls Peter by name and gives a simple three-part command.



- *Rise* - indicating his humble posture; a call to action
- *Kill* - an aggressive and unmistakable command
- *Eat* - a command completely contrary to what Peter had ever done

A command of this nature, seemingly without explanation, had never been issued before and evoked a strong response from Peter.

Acts 10:14: (NASB) *But Peter said, by no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.*

Peter's instinctive reaction was one of great integrity. He wanted to protect the sacred commands of the Law, because up to that time, there had never been a reason to disregard it. So, the command was repeated.

Acts 10:15: (NASB) *Again a voice came to him a second time, what God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.*

This would have been a shocking command for Peter, and now he had heard it twice! Remember, God's people were historically focused on cultural stability and separateness and not change.

Perhaps some of the words of Jesus came back to Peter:

Matthew 15:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰*After Jesus called the crowd to him, he said to them, hear and understand. ¹¹It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man. ¹²Then the disciples came and said to him, do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?*

Peter was being tested in a way no one had ever been tested before.

**Did Peter immediately jump on the change?
After all, it was a vision from heaven!**



There must have been a pause between each repetition of the command from heaven - time for Peter to think and struggle:

Acts 10:16: (NRSV) *This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven.*



Seven Reasons We Resist Change, Jason Clark, TedTalk

- *"I don't know how big a deal this change really is." "I don't see how I fit into any of this." "I feel like I have no say in what happens." This is what people really are saying and the one that cracks me up, the big one, is this one: "I'm fed up with phony change. I want the real thing." Very often when people are saying, "No it won't work," they're not saying they don't want change, they're saying they want change that's real. "I want something I can believe in."*



Because the command was given three times, it would have been of particular significance to Peter, since his Christian life was a series of experiences in “threes:”



- His calling to follow Jesus was in three parts. (John 1:40-42, Mark 1:14-20, Luke 5:1-11)
- He fell asleep three times while Jesus prayed in Gethsemane. (Mark 14:37-42)
- His denial of Jesus was in three parts. (Matthew 26:69-75)
- His responsibility to the flock was given to him in three parts. (John 21:15-17)
- And now, a three-part command given three times was used to open the Gospel to Gentiles!

Acts 10:17-18: (NRSV) ¹⁷Now while Peter was **greatly puzzled** <1280> about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon’s house and were standing by the gate. ¹⁸They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there.

Greatly Puzzled: Strongs #1280 diaporeo (dee-ap-or-eh'-o);
to be thoroughly nonplussed (surprised and confused, unsure how to react)

Example of this word - the women at Jesus’ tomb:

Luke 24:4: (KJV) And it came to pass, as they were much **perplexed** <1280> thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

Sometimes things just don’t make any sense at all! Imagine the perplexity - Peter, while having been given a clear message, had no context for it.



Criticism of cause, How to Face Change, TedTalk

- *The very nature of a great gorgeous vision means that people will ridicule you. Criticism is mediocrity’s tribute to genius. I’m not saying I’m any genius, I’m simply saying that when you leave the crowd and you start to dream, and think, and express your best to the world you will be different and people don’t like you if you’re different. So, what they’ll do is they’ll try to tear you down, and they’ll try to mock you. And one of the things you want to do is be so strong in your vision, so strong in your skin, so strong in your values, so strong in your beliefs that no matter if you’re the only person who believes in you, you keep on going.*

The possible musings of Peter with this new information but not having any context as to what it all means: *Okay, so eating unclean animals is no longer forbidden, for God has declared them acceptable... How can this be? Israel has ALWAYS had this rule in place! Is it just me who can do this? What do I tell James and John? Do I call a meeting with the other Apostles? Does this affect everyone? Do I just go to the synagogue and preach this new revelation? They’ll never believe it! What does it mean? What else does this affect? Why?! Why?! Why?!*



As Peter is thinking and no doubt praying about this, the answer arrives, for the representatives of Cornelius were at the gate...!

Acts 10:17-18: (NRSV) ¹⁷Now while Peter was **greatly puzzled <1280>** about what to make of the vision that he had seen, suddenly the men sent by Cornelius appeared. They were asking for Simon's house and were standing by the gate. ¹⁸They called out to ask whether Simon, who was called Peter, was staying there.

Once again the precise timing of God in the unfolding of His plan would bring clarity at the proper time. Peter was allowed to struggle with this revelation to help it sink in - to help him absorb the radical change about to take place. We will see later that all of the Jewish Christians were not able to embrace this change of the Gentiles coming in.

Watch for Part II of this dramatic story of change and acceptance.

**So, why Cornelius? Why a soldier?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!**

**And now even more to think about...
only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!**



A side note/question: Could Cornelius have been the same Centurion as the one in Luke 7 whose servant was healed by Jesus?

Luke 7:1-10: (NRSV) ¹After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. ²A centurion there had a slave whom he valued highly, and who was ill and close to death. ³When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. ⁴When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, he is worthy of having you do this for him, ⁵for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us. ⁶And Jesus went with them, but when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; ⁷therefore I did not presume to come to you. But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. ⁸For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, go, and he goes, and to another, come, and he comes, and to my slave, do this, and the slave does it. ⁹When Jesus heard this he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, he said, I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. ¹⁰When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health.

Points of similarity:

³When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave.

The elders sent were elders of the city, not Scribes or Pharisees, indicating the devout character he must have had to have such a relationship with them.

⁴When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, he is worthy of having you do this for him, ⁵for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us.

This points to his strength in generosity, his giving alms and support to Israel and to the long track record he must have had of such good works.



6...he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof;

This shows his “fear” of God and his respect and knowledge of the Jewish people and traditions, for he did not want Jesus to come into the house of an unclean Gentile.

7...But only speak the word, and let my servant be healed. 8For I also am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, go, and he goes, and to another,

This shows his deep and prayerful faith and respect for Jesus and the power that Jesus had over sin - just say the word - a faith not found in all of Israel!

(Source: Biblical commentary by C.T. Russell) CORNELIUS, noted as the first adopted son of God from amongst the Gentiles, was a Roman soldier, the captain of a company quartered in Caesarea for the better preservation of order and the enforcement of the will of the Roman government which, at that time, controlled Palestine. It may be that he was the very same Centurion mentioned in Luke (7:2-10) as a worthy, noble and generous man of whom Jesus said, "I have not found so great faith no, not in Israel;" and whose servant was healed as a reward of this faith. True, that Centurion was stationed at Capernaum, while Cornelius we find in Caesarea. It is possible, however, that these bands of Roman soldiers were moved about from place to place as a better means of awing the people with a small number of soldiers. It would certainly be very remarkable to find two such Centurions of so remarkable a character residing so near together. And we are to remember that a period of about six years must have elapsed between the time of our Lord's healing the servant at Capernaum and the events we now consider.

Another detail from the Acts 10 account of Peter's vision:

Acts 10:9-10: (KJV) *9On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: 10And he became very hungry, and would have eaten <1089>: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,*

Compared to:

Acts 10:12-13: (KJV) *12Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. 13And there came a voice to him, rise, Peter; kill, and eat <5315>.*

An interesting contrast between *would have eaten in verse 10* and *kill and eat here:*

Eaten: Strongs #1089 *geuomai* (ghyoo'-om-ah-ee); to taste; by implication, to eat; figuratively, to experience (good or ill); to taste, to try the flavor of

Another use of #1089:

John 2:9: (KJV) *When the ruler of the feast had tasted <1089> the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom...*

Eat: Strongs #5315 *phago* (fag'-o); to eat (literally or figuratively), to eat (consume) a thing; (metaphor) to devour, consume

Matthew 14:20: (KJV) *And they did all eat <5315>, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.*

The implication here would be that Peter, having been in the attitude of humility and prayer, would have “touched lightly’ or just “tasted” the food offered, following Jesus’ example of *my meat is to do the will of my Father*. The command in the vision offered him a fully satisfying meal - a large feast from the Lord.