

# Acts 10:30-33

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## *Cornelius Asks Peter About God's Message*

*Cornelius recounts the moment where the angel visited him, telling him that God had heard his prayers, and that he should summon a man named Simon Peter from Joppa to come to him, that God had commanded Simon Peter to give a message to Cornelius.*

*Cornelius* explains why Peter was summoned, summarizing his experience in v. 1-8: *Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, (v. 30).* We are informed that *four days* have passed over the course of this chapter. *Cornelius* describes the angelic visitation, a *man* appearing before him *in shining garments* while he was praying to God *during the ninth hour* (three o'clock in the afternoon). In nearly every instance of angelic appearances, they are dressed in *shining garments* (Daniel 10:6, Acts 12:7, Luke 2:9). They seem to reflect the glory of God which is ever-present in Heaven, bringing down a glimpse of God's presence with them as they reveal themselves on earth. At His transfiguration, when Jesus put on His glorified form in front of Peter, John, and James, He too shined with dazzling white light (Matthew 17:2).

*Cornelius* reports what the angel told him: *Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God (v. 31).* Earlier in verse 4, the angel's message was phrased, "Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before God." We aren't told whether this means *Cornelius* was specifically praying for something which God would answer, or if his general devotion to God, his prayers and charitable givings to the Jewish people, were being specially noticed by God and rewarded.

It is possible that *Cornelius*, as a devout man, was always seeking greater knowledge and nearness to God through his prayers, and God was rewarding the desire of his heart. In this manner *Cornelius* would be like King David, who expressed a desire to know God more in many of his psalms,

"O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly;  
My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You,  
In a dry and weary land where there is no water.  
Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary,  
To see Your power and Your glory.  
Because Your lovingkindness is better than life,  
My lips will praise You.  
So I will bless You as long as I live;  
I will lift up my hands in Your name."  
(Psalm 63:1-4)

In doing this, both Cornelius and David are following the words of Jesus to gain the greatest benefit from life, as Jesus asserted that the path to “eternal life” (the greatest fulfillment of life) comes through knowing God (John 17:3).

Cornelius continues recounting his story, where the angel was speaking to him. Then the angel gave him instructions: *Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.* (v. 32)

Cornelius obeyed, *So I sent for you immediately.* He acknowledges to Peter that he knows it is a special honor that a Jew would visit his house, *and you have been kind enough to come.*

Here, both men are up to speed on what brought them together. Cornelius has told all that he knows to tell. He turns the question back to Peter, *Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.* Cornelius expects to *hear* God’s word from this man *Simon, who is also called Peter.*

Whatever the *Lord* has *commanded* Peter to preach, Cornelius is eager to know it, so much so that he has gathered friends and relatives to be *present* for God’s word (v. 33).

In the following chapter, when Peter retells this experience to fellow believers in Jerusalem, he specifies something else the angel had apparently told Cornelius to expect from Peter when first sending for him, “and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household” (Acts 11:14). So the expected message from Peter was in regards to salvation, to being saved.

Peter will share with them what God *commanded* him to share, the very gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of salvation, how to become right in God’s eyes, to be forgiven of all sins, and to live life in obedience to Him as sons and heirs of the Lord. This is the message that the Son of God, the King of the World, *commanded* Peter to tell all the peoples of the earth (Matthew 28:18-20).

## **Biblical Text**

**<sup>30</sup> Cornelius said, “Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments,<sup>31</sup> and he \*said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God.<sup>32</sup> Therefore send to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea.’<sup>33</sup> So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”**