

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

9 Topic: “Peter’s vision and work” -- with commentary

**Acts 9: 32- 43, “Aeneas and Dorcas; Acts 10: 1 – 8, “Cornelius Calls for Peter;”
Acts 10: 9 – 23, “Peter’s Vision;” Acts 10: 23b – 48, “Peter at Cornelius’ House;”
Acts. 11: 1 – 18, “Peter explains his actions.”**

The purpose of the Book of Acts is to record the activity of the Holy Spirit in the Vision and Ministry of Peter and Paul. **Today’s study is the 9th of 20 lessons.**

A contextual statement:

Interestingly, *The Interpreter’s Bible* makes the following observation. In the book of Acts, “The Lord is not returned, but in the meantime the word of God is being carried on by the church. The Gentile mission is itself the eschatological action of God.” (*The Interpreter’s One-Volume Commentary on the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1971. p. 730.)

This I want to affirm as our perspective. **We will study this book from the perspective of the in-breaking of the Holy Spirit.** This puts us out on the cusp of a deep and foreboding spiritual hole that is eternally deep. The Holy Spirit is that intuited presence within us that urges us to “Jump.” “Jump!” To take this leap of faith means to surrender ourselves to the eternal deeps. The discovery, to which I can personally testify, is that this deep, dark, mysterious hole is the place where God lives within us. As we lose control of everything— our-selves, our relationships to neighbor and to God— then we can discover that God really does sustain us. But the experience is like falling, and it is not entirely comfortable. But it works.

Read the assigned scripture.

I. Acts 9: 32- 43, “Aeneas and Dorcas;

A. These two passages concern remarkable experiences of healing. In light of how Gut Trip Analysis understands miracles, reflect on these two events using the principles of Gut Trip Analysis. For this purpose, it may be helpful to review the previous sessions of # 4, #5, # 6, # 7, and # 8. If you have time for only one of these, an extended conversation on miracles understood as supernaturalism or as deeply spiritual event is reported in session # 5.

WS: A Head Trip Analysis focuses on the event to which various points of view can be argued. By using Gut Trip Analysis, we are entirely different questions, all of which can be explored but not debated. Consequently, the first thing to do is to assume these events actually took place the way in which they are presented; assume potentiality.

The first question is “Like Dorcas, if you were the one who died and was resurrected, what would be your feelings? The IHOP responses concluded that some responses would be awe and wonder, overwhelming joy, and/or complete disappointment since an eternal rest was anticipated.

The second question is, “To the observers of the healing of Aeneas and the raising of Dorcas, what would be their feelings? Again, the IHOP responses included awe and wonder, confusion about what had taken place, and skepticism.

The third question is “What is Luke’s purpose in putting these two events in his book at this point?” The IHOP answers explored the fact that those experiencing these

miracles were gentile believers or God-Fearers; Gentiles who believed in God and were attracted to the Jewish synagogue because of their rituals, moral life-style and their work on justice issues.

Peter plays the role of healer. Jesus was the healer of the Jews. Peter is the healer of the Gentiles. This is the first instance that sets the stage of the Mission to the Gentiles.

Vs. 10: 35 was explored, “Turned to the Lord.”

WS: My summary of our conversation is in the following: This phrase can be transliterated as “Turning to live humanely in the presence of Perfect At-One-Ment.”

II. Acts 10: 1 – 11: 18

There four periscope are tied together to illustrate Peter’s vision.

A. What is going on in Acts 10: 1 – 8, “Cornelius Calls for Peter.”

WS: Cornelius is a *Gentile Centurion*, a military officer in charge of 100, 600 or 1,000 men. It is unclear if he is retired and living with his family, but it is noted that he still commands some Roman Italian military, at least he has a “devoted” servant. Because of his generosity, he has a vision in which God recognizes his generosity and requests that he visit with Peter.

B. Carefully read Acts 10: 9 – 23, “Peter’s Vision.” Do some research in a Bible Commentary to see what is going on here.

WS: First, it is noted that the “6th hour” is not a usual hour for prayer, as is the 9th hour. However, in Psalm 55 it is mentioned. One approach to understanding what takes place here is from a psychological point of view. Perhaps, Peter was brooding and praying about the inclusion of *Gentiles* in this mission of God, and this vision is in response to this deep concern.

C. Write an analysis of the significance of Peter’s vision.

WS: The vision is repeated three times which support Luke’s method of emphasizing things to make his point. Obviously, the meaning of the vision is that *Gentiles* are to be included in the mission. This supports Isaiah’s purpose as well, of which Jesus takes up the mantle of Isaiah early in his ministry.

III. Acts 10: 23b – 48, “Peter at Cornelius’ House”

A. Who is the “man in shining clothes? Vs. 30b

WS: Obviously, this is an angel. The question is presented here to help each of us to do a Gut Trip Analysis on this term. What is the “experience” of being an angel, or of being confronted by one? The traditional answer may suffice. Angels are messengers of God.

B. Acts 10: 34 – 43. Examine Peter’s sermon and identify its main points.

WS: The following is the outline:

I. God shows no partiality

A. You know the message of the Good News of Peace.

- B. Jesus Christ is Lord of all.
- II. Beginning in Galilee
 - A. Baptism of John
 - B. God anoints Jesus of Nazareth with Holy Spirit and power
 - C. Doing good and healing
 - D. God is with him
- III. We are witnesses
 - A. Actions for Jews and Jerusalem
 - B. Killed by hanging
 - C. Raised on 3rd day
- IV. Disciples are assigned as witnesses
 - A. Testified by the Prophets
 - B. Everyone who believes received the forgiveness of sins (separation is overcome.)
- C. **Acts 10: 44 – 48. Do a Gut Trip Analysis on what is happening in this section?**

WS: The circumcised Jews were astounded that this power also came on the Gentiles. The sign that power also was given to them is the presence of the Holy Spirit, just as the converted Jews were given.

Vs. 47 and 48. A curious note is found in these verses. These people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit before they were baptized by water.

- E. **Vs. 47b. What is the experience of being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ?**

WS: In the symbol of baptism we take on a death like Jesus and a resurrection like Jesus. That is, we die to the things of this world that prevent us from awakening to our spiritual reality. **In this event there is the transition between being just human and becoming more humane. There is a transition between living our human existence as living on vacation (in the human desert), and living out of our spiritual resources (in the spiritual oasis).**

- IV. **Acts. 11: 1 – 18, “Peter explains his actions.”**

WS: Word travels fast! The rumors concerning Peter's work with the Gentiles spreads quickly, and he is called to Jerusalem to account for his actions. Peter recounts the events of the visions of Cornelius and himself, the coincidence of the three men representing Cornelius at the conclusion of his vision, and then reports how the Holy Spirit came on them.

Vs. 14 and 15 seems to be the crux of the story. In vs. 14, Peter's message brings salvation to the Gentile house. In vs. 15, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit assures those who first receive it that it comes to Gentiles as well.

Alright folks, talk to me.