



Decade of Availability When God Speaks

Peter had been drawn by the Spirit's guidance from one human need to another until he ended up in a village on the Mediterranean Coast called Joppa.

Introduction: There are times the Lord allows us to stumble onto what He's prepared. Other times He details His guidance in undeniable clear ways. In this case He gave Cornelius a longing for Him and instructions to call for Peter; and to Peter He gave a vision which became clear to the apostle through Cornelius's call.

The Lord knew how to deal with a soldier who would respond to orders and a spiritually sensitive saint for whom a vision would reveal God's perfect will.

A. Cornelius: The Soldier Servant vv. 1-8

1. **Soldier:** v. 1 He commanded the Italian Regiment—about 100 men who were a mix of conscripted soldiers and volunteers. He knew the 'order' of military 'chain of command' and discipline. He knew how to be under authority and exercise authority.
2. **Servant:** v. 2 A Gentile who worshiped the God of the Jews in the outer court (*court of the Gentiles*). He was a most 'righteous' man who gave to others and followed the Jewish customs.
3. **The Vision:** vv. 3-8 So why did he need this vision? Because his great leadership and character was NOT enough to be saved. The angel DOES NOT preach to him. Angels do not preach. Instead he is to ask Peter to come to him as Peter will be able to tell what he must do to be saved.

B. Peter: The Servant Soldier vv. 9-16

1. **Servant:** (2 Peter 1:1) The Greek word translated 'servant' is *doulos*. Its basic meaning was 'slave', someone who was subject to a master. Peter willingly bowed to his Lord as a slave, as one lovingly committed to worship and work for the Saviour who had done so much for him.
2. **Soldier:** Peter fought the fight of faith. From denying the Lord to giving his life for His Lord—he fought the good fight.
3. **The Vision:** vv. 9-16 Peter went to the roof to pray and was hungry and—dreamed of food! But it was the kind of food he could not eat.

What is behind this vision: Peter held the 'keys to the Kingdom' (Mat 16:16-20) and one of those keys was the way of salvation being opened up to the Gentiles. God gave him the vision three times to confirm its authenticity and then spoke directly to him.

Do you have a vision?

- What is God leading you to do?
- Has he told you more than once?
- Have you ever said, "Not so" to God?
- Are you open to a vision through prayer?
- This week ask God to show you a vision of His will!

Acts 10:1-16 (NKJV)

Cornelius

1 There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, 2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

3 About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!" 4 And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?" So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. 6 He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do." 7 And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. 8 So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter

9 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. 10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance 11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. 12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." 15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." 16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

