

Acts 10:1–11:18

The Breaking Ground of the Holy Spirit

A frequent question to those in pastoral ministry is often phrased in this way, “How do I know God is at work in my life?” It really is not an inappropriate question. But I often reply with my own question, “How do you know God is not at work in your life?” My reply often creates awareness that, too often, we base our concept of “God at work” on feelings or emotions, rather than on the world around us. Too often we have “spiritualized” God entirely out of the world in which we live.

Today’s passage causes us to consider how God actually works within our sphere of existence. The passage can be misconstrued if we only focus on the “miraculous events” and ignore the human activities in which God is at work.

Read Passage as we Go

The Text

A. *The Spirit at Work in Caesarea (Acts 10:1–8)*

1. Philip the Deacon

- A. What Did Philip Do in Caesarea? = Acts 8:40
- B. How long did Philip stay in Caesarea? = Acts 21:8

2. Cornelius the Centurion

- A. How is Cornelius Described? (10:2)
- B. The Angel speaks instructions (10:5–6)
 - A. Cornelius is “alarmed” - He became terrified

B. *The Spirit at Work in Joppa (Acts 10:9 ff.)*

1. Peter in Lydda (Acts 9:32–35)

- A. Heals Aeneas

2. Peter in Joppa (Acts 9:36–43)

- A. Heals Tabitha/Dorcas

3. Peter in Joppa (Acts 10:9–16)

- A. Repeated Vision at noon
 - A. Peter is “perplexed” - He was at a total loss
- B. The Spirit speaks instructions - 10:19

4. More to the Spirit’s work than the miraculous

C. *The Spirit at Work in Caesarea (Acts 10:34–48)*

1. At work in Peter

- A. God is no respecter of persons (10:34—35)
- B. We are witnesses of the Holy Spirit at work in Jesus (10:38)

2. At work in Cornelius' household (10:44—46)

- A. The Holy Spirit fell upon them
 - A. Pentecost Acts 2:4
 - B. Samaria Acts 8:14–17

D. The Spirit at Work in Jerusalem (Acts 11:1—18)

1. Apostles and Brethren in Judea heard - 11:1

- A. Distinguishing by Jew and Gentile - 11:2–3
- B. Still following thought process that dominated their lives as Jews

2. They heard - 11:18

- A. Recognizing the working of God to bring life- 11:18
- B. Starting to realize the work of God beyond their previously held notions

The People

E. The Breaking Ground Work of the Spirit Among Us

- A. Like with Philip, God is breaking ground before you ever enter the story**
- B. Like with Cornelius, God is breaking ground in someone else before they join your story**
- C. Like with Peter, God is breaking ground in preparing you to fully embrace your story**
- D. Like those in Judea, we need to tell our story so others can understand God more fully**

**The Holy Spirit is at Work
in Ways We Often Cannot Conceive
Because of Limitations We Place on God**

Application

- 1. How would you know God's Spirit is at work in Towanda?**
- 2. How would you address any previously held notion of what group of people God must work with?**
- 3. How do you respond to the testimony of someone who sees God's work in person?**
- 4. What type of activity would be necessary for God to get your attention that He is working in your story so you can tell others?**