

THE MYSTERY OF CORNELIUS THE CENTURION : PART 1

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Published On : November 23, 1997

Last Updated : December 31, 2012

Some Interesting Ideas Regarding The Discipleship Of Cornelius, A Look At Peter's Call For Salvation To The Gentiles, And More Thoughts On Christian Discipleship

Amidst all of the evil and violent deeds perpetrated by the Roman occupiers of Israel during the First Century can be found one shining example of a devout man who feared the Lord. His name is Cornelius, and his story is told in Acts chapter ten. Upon reading the opening verses of the chapter, we discover that Cornelius is a centurion, that is, the captain of a band of one hundred Roman soldiers. This group of soldiers was called the "Italian Band" which may indicate that they originated from Rome itself:

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,"
Acts 10:1, KJV

At the time of our story, Cornelius and the Italian Band are stationed in the town of Caesarea northwest of Jerusalem. Caesarea was built on the Mediterranean coast by Herod the Great on the site of Strato's Tower, between the towns of Joppa and Dora. It had an excellent harbor and was given the name of Caesarea in honour of Caesar Augustus who ruled the Roman Empire at that time. Caesarea was also the residence of the Roman procurators, or governors, of Palestine such as Felix and Festus. The majority of its inhabitants were Greeks:

"And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night; And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor."
Acts 23:23-24, KJV

"But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound. Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem. Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him, And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him. But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither. Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him. And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought."
Acts 24:27-25:6, KJV

Given the time and setting of the Book of Acts, plus Cornelius' level of responsibility, it might be safe to assume that he was probably in his thirties or forties, or maybe even older. If this assumption is correct, then it is probable that he was a career military man, and was already a part of the Roman military machine at the time of Jesus' revelation to Israel. The reason I am making this point is to validate the possibility that Cornelius' decision to become a military man was made before he came to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. In other words, the implication is that, had he come to know Jesus before his induction into the Roman forces, he might have decided against it. One thing we do know is that he was a very devout man who believed in God:

"A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always."
Acts 10:2, KJV

I found this point to be very interesting due to the simple fact that the Romans were pagans. They had a whole pantheon of gods and goddesses; yet in writing this account, the author of Acts, believed to be Luke, points out to us that this man Cornelius was different. Not only he, but his entire house believed in the one true God of Israel. I was curious as to what might cause him to break with Roman tradition and embrace the God of Israel. While I cannot prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt, I suspect that this may not be the first account we have of Cornelius in the New Testament. In his Gospel, Luke relates a similar story of a centurion who was stationed in Capernaum during the early part of Jesus' ministry:

"Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."
Luke 7:1-10, KJV

Notice the similarities between these two accounts. In both we find a Roman centurion who believes in the God of Israel. In Luke's account in his Gospel, we are told that this

centurion has servants. In his account in the Book of Acts, he tells us the same thing:

"And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;"
Acts 10:7, KJV

From Luke's account in Acts, we also know that Cornelius led a comfortable life in Caesarea. Being on the Emperor's payroll, he must have been rather well off financially, and thus was able to help out the poor considerably. In the Gospel account, Luke tells us that this unnamed centurion also went as far as to build a synagogue for the Jews. It also appears that in both stories, this centurion is not alone in his worship of the God of Israel. His household servants seem to be of the same persuasion. This does not necessarily mean that he or they believed in Jesus yet. Remember, many people believed in God at the time, but not all had met Jesus personally during His three year ministry.

One thing we do know is that this centurion in the Gospel of Luke had apparently heard of Jesus at least by word of mouth, which is why he sent for Him in the first place. But notice; because of this man's own humility, Luke tells us that he doesn't come out to meet Jesus face to face; he merely sends his servants to petition that Jesus heal his sick servant. If this unnamed centurion is indeed Cornelius who was later stationed in Caesarea further down on the coast, it is apparent that the Lord was already working in his life and preparing him for the events which would occur to him in Acts chapter ten. What is also interesting about this account in Luke is that we are not told what happens after Jesus heals his servant. It seems to me that the natural thing to do would be for the centurion to at least go out to thank Jesus, if not invite Him into his house for a meal, or to spend the night so he could hear Him speak more. Regardless of what actually happened, considering how devout he was, it seems to me that after this miracle, this man must have become a believer in Jesus as the Messiah. There is some possible evidence of this in Acts chapter ten which I will explain in a minute. It is also noteworthy that this account of the unidentified centurion is also mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew. The primary difference is that in Matthew's account, the centurion came to Jesus directly, and Jesus marvelled at his faith when He said of him:

". . . Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."
Matthew 8:10, KJV

In thinking about these different aspects of Cornelius' life, perhaps we can compare him to a modern-day pious family man with a long career in the military. While he was a worldly man, he did have faith in God. However, as other chapters in the book of Acts clearly demonstrate, and as I have shown in such articles as "Where Are the First Century Churches?", being a full-time Disciple of Christ means much more than just having a superficial faith. As the following verses show, true Discipleship meant forsaking all and following Jesus one hundred per cent everyday. It meant selling everything one possessed and giving the money to the

Apostles for distribution according to each person's need:

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."
Acts 2:44-45, KJV

"Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet."
Acts 4:34-37, KJV

This financial plan for the Early Church was first laid down by Jesus Himself when He said such things as:

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."
Matthew 19:29, KJV

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."
Luke 14:33, KJV

One thing which is apparent from Acts chapter ten, is that Cornelius was a man well-loved by God. It is for this very reason that He sent an angel to prepare Cornelius for Peter's visit:

"He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:"
Acts 10:3-5, KJV

It is in this same chapter while the servants of Cornelius are on their way to Joppa to find Peter, that the Lord reveals to Peter the true depth of His Sacrifice on the Cross. As Jesus said in the Gospel of John:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."
John 12:32, KJV

Up until the time of his vision, Peter and the other Disciples had not yet fully understood that Salvation was meant for all men, regardless of their ethnic heritage; and this is why the Lord had to give Peter a special revelation in order to teach him this valuable lesson:

"On 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: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven." Acts 10:9-16, KJV

In speaking of his miraculous vision on the following day after arriving at the house of Cornelius, Peter said in part:

". . . Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean . . . Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts 10:28b, 34b-35, KJV

During the course of witnessing to Cornelius and his household, Peter says something which makes clear that they already know about Jesus Christ and the Salvation He brings. This could be an indication that Cornelius was indeed the unnamed centurion mentioned by both Matthew and Luke in their Gospels:

"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;" Acts 10:36-37, KJV

Notice Peter specifically says, "ye know". In other words, Cornelius and his family are not ignorant of who Jesus is; after all, not only did the word of His miracles travel throughout all of Judea, but it began in Galilee. This point is very interesting because it is exactly in Capernaum of Galilee where the story of the unnamed centurion took place. This may merely be a coincidence, but I am not convinced that it is so. It may very well be that Cornelius was stationed in Capernaum at the time. But that is not all. While Peter was witnessing to Cornelius and all of his household, much to the surprise of the believing Jewish Disciples of the circumcision who accompanied Peter, the Holy Ghost fell upon Cornelius and his household, and they begin to magnify the Lord and speak in tongues:

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God . . ."

Acts 10:44-46, KJV

Notice that there is no talk here of Cornelius and his family getting saved first. There is no talk of them first acknowledging the Lord as their Saviour. Peter is simply witnessing to them, and the next thing they know, these Gentiles are filled with the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues! It is after this occurs that the chapter ends with Cornelius and his family being water baptized, and Peter and his companions remaining with them for a few days:

"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
Acts 10:47-48, KJV

So the question that arises in my mind is this: Was their Salvation and being filled with the Holy Ghost a simultaneous occurrence, or could it be that Cornelius and his family were already saved since Matthew's and Luke's first accounts in their Gospels when Jesus healed the servant of the unnamed centurion? This seems highly possible to me, but again, I cannot prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt. Furthermore, it doesn't seem to me that they would be filled with the Holy Ghost, and then be saved afterwards through water baptism. My understanding of the Scriptures is that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is usually, but not always, a secondary event following Salvation.

Notice that this particular water baptism was simply a symbolic act of the true baptism of the Holy Spirit which had already occurred. As I have made clear in other articles such as "Roman Catholicism, Water Baptism and the Holy Trinity", I personally do not believe that water baptism is necessary for Salvation. Our Salvation is based upon our faith in the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and NOT upon a physical act. As Paul clearly teaches, Salvation which is based on anything other than simple faith in the Blood of Jesus Christ, is not a Salvation of Grace, but rather a Salvation of Works:

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."
Romans 11:6, KJV

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
Ephesians 2:8-9, KJV

One other interesting point worth mentioning is that this whole incident was a total act of faith on both the parts of Peter and Cornelius. Cornelius had no idea why he was told to send for Peter. He simply obeyed what had been shown to him in his vision. In like manner, for Peter to even consider ministering to Gentiles was a great step of faith which the Lord had to first confirm to him by the heavenly vision of the sheet full of unclean animals. This whole event was so out of the ordinary, that after Peter had returned to Jerusalem, the legalistic Jewish Disciples who

still believed that circumcision was necessary for Salvation, confronted him regarding the events in Caesarea:

"And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

Acts 11:1-3, KJV

After relating the entire incident to them, Peter summed up his words with the following:

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Acts 11:15-18, KJV

Peter was basically saying, "Hey look fellows; I was as surprised as you are now; but who am I to question the workings of the Lord?" Beyond the events described in Acts chapter ten, I cannot say with any degree of certainty what happened to Cornelius and the rest of his household in Caesarea after they had received the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are silent on this matter. Upon reading the account of Acts chapter ten, my initial impression was that due to his position of wealth, status and comfortable living, it probably would have been very difficult for Cornelius to forsake all; much like the young rich man who went away grieved after Jesus told him to forsake all and follow Him. However, I was reminded again of a few verses I have often quoted before:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Isaiah 55:8-9, KJV

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

Romans 8:28, KJV

If there is one thing I have learned over the years, it is that God does not make mistakes. Everything which happens in the life of a Christian is for a reason. God is trying to teach us something, or to move us in a specific direction, or to get us to do something for Him. The fact that the unidentified centurion is mentioned in two of the Gospels is significant. Out of the many people which Jesus healed during His short Earthly ministry, why was this centurion mentioned, while other miracles were overlooked? My feeling is that perhaps Jesus wanted to leave this man with a strong impression because He knew that some time later in his life, this centurion would become a faithful witness and Disciple

after he had received the Holy Ghost. We need to remember that Jesus had a long-term vision. This is clearly evident in the signs of the Endtime which He shared with His Disciples in such chapters as Matthew twenty-four and Luke twenty-one. But as far as planting the seed of the Word of God is concerned, in the Book of Isaiah we are told:

"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

Isaiah 55:11, KJV

We are not given any clear indication of how much time passed between the story of the unidentified centurion in the Gospels, and the story of Cornelius in the Book of Acts. Considering that the first story occurred in Capernaum during the early part of Jesus' ministry, and the second story occurred after the Day of Pentecost following Jesus' Ascension into Heaven, I think that it is reasonable to assume that some three years or more may have lapsed. Sometimes it takes time for the Word of the Lord to produce the fruit that He desires of it. Could the story of Cornelius be one such case?

Putting all of these different pieces of the puzzle together, I personally feel that the Lord must have had something very special for Cornelius to do. I don't think that He would allow a man of such great faith, which He clearly recognized by His own comment, to simply slip out of His hands, particularly when the number of laborers at that time were so few:

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

Luke 10:2, KJV

It is obvious to me that Cornelius was called by the Lord for some task. If we accept that Matthew and Luke were indeed referring to Cornelius in their Gospels before this event in the Book of Acts, then this is even more evidence that the Lord had been working in the life of Cornelius for some time. I have even considered the possibility that had the unidentified centurion gone out to meet Jesus face to face that day, perhaps he would have made a serious decision to follow the Lord right then and there. Personally, I can't imagine anyone so full of faith as Jesus said this man was, who witnessed a miracle by the hand of the Master, who would not want to dedicate his life to preaching His message in humble gratitude for having healed his servant.

In thinking about the amazing events in Acts chapter ten, we need to ask ourselves: How often is it that people receive a heavenly visitation? The Scriptures seem to indicate that such events are reserved for those who have a very special calling from the Lord such as Moses, Gideon, Joseph and Mary, Zechariah, John the Baptist, Paul, etc. Another point worth considering is that Peter was the chief of the Apostles, yet the Lord didn't think him too big or too busy, or too important to send to these lowly Gentile believers.

In fact, the Lord specifically gave Peter his vision to convince him of the importance of his mission to Caesarea. The Lord knew that Cornelius and his family were an important part of His overall plans. Another fact to consider is that this family received the gift of the Holy Ghost. This is very important. What is the whole purpose of the Holy Ghost? Is it to continue in our regular dull existence living selfishly? Of course not! We find a very clear answer in the first chapter of the Book of Acts:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
Acts 1:8, KJV

The whole purpose of receiving the Holy Spirit is to give us the power to be witnesses for Christ. It is to give us the power to go into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature. Based on the importance of Peter's mission to Caesarea, and the fact that the Lord had to convince him of its importance by giving him a special vision, plus the unique way in which the Lord prepared Cornelius for this visit by the leader of the Early Church, I prefer to believe that after having received the Holy Spirit, Cornelius made the right choice to follow the Lord all the way. In fact, I would venture to say that, following the pattern of the First Century Church, he probably began a church in his own home beginning with his own family and servants. As I point out in "Where Are the First Century Churches?", this is where the first churches were located, in the private homes of the followers. Granted, the idea that Cornelius may have started a church in his home is only conjecture on my part, but to think otherwise is to suggest that God wasted His time in setting things up the way He did if Cornelius just went back to his same old lifestyle. As I have stated before, when we accept the Lord and His Holy Spirit, we become a new man, a new creature in Christ Jesus, with new goals and new aspirations:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."
2 Corinthians 5:17, KJV

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
Romans 6:4, KJV

This "newness of life" is not just something which begins after we have been resurrected into our new glorified bodies; but rather it is something which can and should begin here in this life the minute that we accept the Lord as our personal Saviour. If we accept the Lord and then continue living our same selfish lives business as usual, then something must be wrong somewhere, in my view. As is made clear in the Epistles, the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. In other words, no one is ever going to be sorry for having chosen to follow the Lord. Likewise, faith without works is dead. If we truly believe, then there

will be a notable change in our lives as we try our best to follow the Lord:

"For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

Romans 11:29, KJV

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

James 2:26, KJV

Once we become Christians, the Lord wants us to become fruitful branches that bear new fruit for the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus spoke about this on many occasions such as in the Gospel of John when He said:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

John 15:1-8, KJV

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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Copyright 1994 - 2012 Endtime Prophecy Net

Published On : November 23, 1997

Last Updated : December 31, 2012

Some Interesting Ideas Regarding The Discipleship Of Cornelius, A Look At Peter's Call For Salvation To The Gentiles, And More Thoughts On Christian Discipleship

The idea for this article came about as a result of someone challenging my view in which I stated that one cannot serve in the Lord's Army and man's army at the same time. One cannot follow Jesus' commandment to save lives while at the same time he destroys lives through the mandates of some Earthly government or military force. To refute my

statements, the example of Cornelius was offered to show that one can serve in the military and still serve the Lord. The purpose of this article then has been to show that it is quite possible that after being filled with the Holy Spirit, Cornelius may very well have chosen to leave his old military life behind, in order to embark on a new life of winning souls into the Lord's Kingdom. When Jesus called Simon and Andrew, this is exactly what they did:

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him."
Matthew 4:18-20, KJV

When the Lord came upon James and John, who were also fishermen, and called them to follow Him, they likewise dropped everything on the spot to do exactly that:

"And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him."
Matthew 4:21-22, KJV

Matthew the tax collector also did not hesitate when it came time for him to make his decision:

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him."
Matthew 9:9, KJV

In some cases, the Lord had to use more drastic measures. Such was the case with Saul of Tarsus whom the Lord not only knocked off of his horse, but blinded him for three days as well. This is more fully discussed in the article "Biblical Cafeteria or the Whole Course?". Considering these examples, I don't see how Cornelius could have done otherwise after the Lord had sent an angel to him, plus given Peter his heavenly vision. What other signs than those could he have possibly needed to realize that the Lord was calling him into special service?

For those who continue to challenge my speculations, I return the challenge and ask you to prove otherwise. Prove to me through the Scriptures that Cornelius retained his position as a centurion. After such a miraculous in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit which resulted from two supernatural events, how could he even think about continuing to partake of the sins of the evil Roman Empire by serving in its army? As a Christian, how could Cornelius possibly participate in the slaughter of thousands of Jews and Christian Jews in Jerusalem which occurred some years later? From my perspective, there is no way that Cornelius could have continued in his same occupation afterwards. He must have left his old life behind in obedience to the Lord's commandment:

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach

the gospel to every creature."
Mark 16:15, KJV

While my conclusion is based partially on conjecture, the scriptural evidence seems to support this view. God does not make mistakes. He had a plan for Cornelius, and I believe He fulfilled it in him. Looking at my own life, and the lives of many others I have known who have been truly touched by God's Spirit, I know how the Lord works. It is very difficult for devout Christians to resist God's Spirit working in their lives. Based on the description of Cornelius in Acts chapter ten, and possible links to him in the Gospels, I believe he was one such faithful man who heard the Lord's calling and followed it without giving it second thought. I believe he hung up his Roman sword and took the Sword of the Spirit and began fighting the good Fight of Faith. He forsook his profession as a soldier of Rome, and entered a new profession as a soldier in the army of Jesus Christ preaching the Gospel of the Good News of Salvation:

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
1 Timothy 6:12, KJV

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
Hebrews 4:12, KJV

Can you prove otherwise? To those young Christians who are considering joining the military service, I present this challenge to you: Instead of giving your life to Satan and man's armies, won't you please consider giving your life and your body to Christ so that He can use you to bring new life and new hope to the lost?:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
Romans 12:1-2, KJV

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."
1 Corinthians 3:17, KJV

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."
1 Corinthians 6:19-20, KJV

With these thoughts I will bring this article to a close. I trust that you have enjoyed it, learned something from it, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life. The choice is yours. What will you do? If you have an account

with Facebook, Twitter or Google+, I would really appreciate if you would take the time to click on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thank you so very much! May God bless you abundantly!

For additional information, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were also mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Endtime Prophecy Net web server:

Biblical Cafeteria or the Whole Course?
Roman Catholicism, Water Baptism and the Holy Trinity
Where Are the First Century Churches?

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