

First Gentile Believers ~ Part 3

In my last post, we began to examine **Kefa's** vision as he was napping before lunch. In this post, we will continue to examine the **First Gentile Believers'** actual conversion.

¹⁷ Now while Kefa was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate ¹⁸ and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Kefa was lodging there. ¹⁹ And while Kefa was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. ²⁰ Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." ²¹ And Kefa went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" ²² And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." ²³ So he invited them in to be his guests. ~ Acts 10: 17-23a (CJB).

At this point, **Kefa** was still in the dark about the meaning of his vision. ***Kefa was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean... Kefa was pondering the vision.*** We began to explore the vision in my last post, but what else could it possibly mean? Would God, who established His covenant with the **Jewish** people and gave them an eternal **Torah** at **Mount Sinai**, and who is Himself unchangeable (Malachi 3:6), change His **Torah** to make unclean animals **kosher**? This is the apparent meaning, and many Christian commentators assert that this is the meaning. But they ignore the explicit statement a few verses later, which at last resolves **Kefa's** puzzlement, *"God has shown me not to call any person unclean or impure"* (10:28). So, the vision is about people and not about food.

Now the **Ruach** spoke to him directly. With **Cornelius**, it had been an angel, with **Kefa's** vision, a voice from heaven. The **Ruach** directed **Kefa** to the three messengers standing at the gate and identified them as men he had sent. Following the **Ruach's** direction, **Kefa** descended the outside staircase that led from the roof to the courtyard below, identified himself, and eagerly inquired why they were seeking him. By now, he had a good notion that they were a key piece in his vision puzzle.

Notice that **God** works on both sides. He spoke to **Cornelius** through an angel and to **Kefa** through a vision. When these three men showed up at **Kefa's** gate, it was confirmed that both **Cornelius** and **Kefa** had heard God correctly. The messengers informed **Kefa** that **Cornelius** wanted *to hear what you have to say*. **Kefa** began to see the ramifications of his vision. He was to witness to this **centurion**¹ whom God had directed to him. That **Kefa** was beginning to understand is exemplified by his inviting them to spend the evening as guests. Already he was beginning to have fellowship with **Gentiles** he formerly considered unclean.

P'rushim and other pietists were concerned about impure table fellowship, lodging **Gentiles** overnight, no matter how exhausted the guests may have been, contradicted strict **Jewish** piety. Eating with them was forbidden on the principle that they were an evil company. Perhaps **Simon**, being a tanner, is less concerned with strict rules; although most of his customers were probably **Jewish**, **Yafo** was a mixed town, and he was in a profession despised by strict pietists anyway. But **Kefa's** vision probably has something to do with the treatment the guests receive.²

In my next post, we will continue to examine **Kefa's** encounter with **Cornelius** in **First Gentile Believers ~ Part 4.**

¹ I have always wondered if this is the same **centurion** who executed **Yeshua** and then declared that **Truly this was the Son of God!** ~ Matt. 27:54 (ESV).

² Bible Background Commentary.