



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A2088 ~ Cornelius Sends for Peter.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

The Old Testament Bible book of Leviticus isn't read very much by non-Jewish Christians. This book was written by Moses to teach the newly escaped Israelites from Egypt how God wanted them to live in the desert of the Sinai Peninsula. God had just delivered them from harsh slavery and taken them out of Egypt. Now He was preparing to take Egyptian customs and slavery to sin out of them.

Leviticus is best explained as a guidebook for teaching God's people about holy living and worship. Everything from sexual conduct to the handling of food, including instructions for worship and religious celebrations are covered in detail in this book. This is because every aspect of our lives – moral, physical and spiritual – is of great importance to God. There are three significant themes in the book of Leviticus:

**First, the Holiness of God:** Holiness is spoken of 152 times in the book of Leviticus. It is mentioned in here more than any other book of the Bible. God was teaching His people that they were to be set apart or 'separated' for holiness. Just like the Israelites, Christians are to be different from the world around us. We're to devote every area of our lives to God. But how can we as sinful people worship and obey our holy God? Our sin must be dealt with first. For this reason, Leviticus opens with instructions for offerings and sacrifices.

**Second, the Way to Deal with Sin:** The sacrifices and offerings detailed in Leviticus were a means of atonement, and symbols of repentance from sin and obedience to God. Sin required a sacrifice. The sacrificial offerings had to be perfect, spotless and without defect. These were a picture of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who gave his life as the perfect sacrifice for all our sin, so we wouldn't have to suffer eternal separation from God.

**And thirdly, Worship:** God showed his people in the book of Leviticus that the way into God's presence and the path into worship, was opened through the sacrifices and offerings made by the priests. Worship then, is about our relationship with God and letting Him into every part of our lives. This is why Leviticus carefully detailed rules of conduct for practical daily living. Today, Christians know that true worship begins with accepting Christ's sacrifice for sin. Worship for a Christian involves our relationship with God and how we relate with people.

The word 'Leviticus' means matters relating to the Levites and the priests, and their service in the Tabernacle. In Chapter 11, the instructions about clean and unclean animals were given. Why you might ask? These rules may have been given to test the people's obedience and to teach them self-denial and control of their appetites. The Israelites were being taught to make distinctions between what was holy or what was not.

These food laws were able to keep the Israelites distinct from other nations. Many of those forbidden animals were held by pagan nations to be sacred and worshipped as gods. In today's *Bible Adventure*, the apostle Peter struggled personally with the breaking down of a dividing wall between Jewish and Gentile Christians. It took considerable time for him to grasp that Jesus Christ is Lord of both groups. The Gentile, Cornelius, although appearing to be righteous among the other people, still needed a Saviour.

The events of Acts, Chapter 10, recount a Gentile man named Cornelius who was a centurion in the Italian Regiment of the Roman army. The regiment at the time was based at Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea, about 30 miles north of Joppa. Cornelius and his family were God-fearing. Although they weren't Jews, they believed in the one true God of Israel.

Cornelius gave gifts of charity generously to the people and prayed to God often. One day when he was praying, he had a vision of an angel of God coming and speaking to him by name. The angel said that Cornelius's gifts and prayers had been remembered by God and that Cornelius was to send to Joppa for a man named Simon Peter who was staying with Simon the tanner.

When the angel departed, Cornelius sent two of his house servants with a devout soldier to Joppa to see if they could find Peter. But before a meeting between Cornelius and Peter could take place, Peter received a vision from God as well. Peter was a Jew and Jews in New Testament times didn't associate with Gentiles. According to Jewish tradition, Jews were not allowed to enter a Gentile's house and they were especially forbidden to eat with Gentiles.

As Peter thought about the meaning of this vision, he may have recalled Jesus' words in Mark, Chapter 7: "Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean'." Mark then added: "In saying this, Jesus declared all foods 'clean'." The vision meant that just as there is no 'unclean' meat, so there were no 'unclean' people. In God's sight, both Jews and Gentiles were equally 'clean'.

God prepared both Peter and Cornelius to meet each other. He spoke to Cornelius while he was praying and Peter while he was relaxing. You never know when He might have a word for you, so keep your thoughts focused on Him.

Cornelius had a life of prayer. Can we have one too? A medical doctor and a Christian in the United States, named Walter Wilson, despaired over his fruitless efforts at witnessing. One day in 1913, a missionary visiting his home asked him: “Who is the Holy Spirit to you?”

Wilson replied: “One of the Persons of the Godhead ...teacher, guide, third person of the Trinity.” The missionary challenged him: “You haven’t answered my question.” To which Wilson replied sadly: “He is nothing to me. I have no contact with Him and could get along quite well without Him.”

The next year, Wilson heard a sermon from Romans, Chapter 12, Verse 1. The preacher leaned over the pulpit and said: “Have you noticed that this verse does not tell us to whom we should give our bodies! It is not the Lord Jesus. He has His own body. It is not the Father. He remains on His throne. Another has come to earth without a body. God gives you the indescribable honour of presenting your bodies to the Holy Spirit, to be His dwelling place on earth.”

Wilson returned home and fell on the carpet. There he prayed: “My Lord, I have treated You like a servant. When I wanted You, I called for You. Now I give You this body from head to feet. I give you my hands, my limbs, my eyes and lips, my brain. You may send this body to Africa, or lay it on a bed with cancer. It is your body from this moment on.”

The next day, Wilson led two women to Christ and this was the beginning of a life of evangelistic fruitfulness. Wilson later founded a church, a mission and a Bible College. He wrote: “With regard to my own experience with the Holy Spirit, the transformation in my life in 1914 was much greater than the change that took place when I was saved 18 years ago.”

Another praying American was named Robert Sheffey. Born in 1820, Sheffey became a preacher who moved from place to place. When troubles and difficulties surrounded him, his often repeated statement was, "I'll go and talk to the Lord about it." Sheffey went to the Lord about everything he did, even about small things. This sometimes brought him ridicule but it didn't deter him.

Sheffey lived out the verse of Scripture in 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 5, Verse 17, to pray continually. And any believer in Christ can do the same, by constantly sharing our thoughts and our feelings with our Lord. And in return, we wait quietly on the Holy Spirit to reveal God's directions to us.

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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