

Lesson IV.

GENTILES RECEIVED INTO THE CHURCH April 27, 1902

Acts 11: 4-15. Study Acts 11: 1-18—Memory Verses, 7-9.

Golden Text—Whosoever believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.—Acts 10: 43.

4 But Pe'ter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

5 I was in the city of Jop'pa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Pe'ter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsare'a unto me.

12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Jop'pa, and call for Si'mon, whose surname is Pe'ter,

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

THE LESSON RETOLD

Until the day that Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius, those who believed on Christ had all belonged to the Jewish nation. Now the Jews were forbidden by their law to eat certain animals and would on no account go to visit or take dinner with a man who was a Gentile.

When the apostles and the Jewish believers heard that Peter had not only preached the gospel to Cornelius, but had gone to his house and taken meals with him, they were much displeased, and when Peter came back to Jerusalem they began to blame him for what he had done.

Then Peter stood up to explain how God had showed him in a vision that the time had come when the gospel must be preached to those outside the Jewish nation as well as to the Jews. This is what Peter said:

"One day while I was staying at Simon's

house in Joppa, I went up on the housetop to pray. While there I became very hungry, and looking up, I saw beside me something that looked like a great sheet of sail-cloth let down by its four corners from the sky. It was full of all kinds of strange animals, such as wild birds, and four-footed beasts, turtles and frogs, and lizards. And I heard a voice saying, 'Arise, Peter, kill something and eat it.' But I answered, 'Sir, I cannot, for I am a Jew, and all these are common creatures and are forbidden by us to be used as food.' But the voice replied, 'What God looks upon as pure you must not call common.'

"When this had happened three times in all, the sheet was drawn back into the sky and I was left alone.

"Then I got up and found three strangers waiting to take me to Cæsarea and the