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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

Lesson for Jan. 29
Golden Text.—Go ye therefore, and
teach all nations, baptizing them in
the name of the Father, and of the
Son, and of the Holy Ghosts:
teaching them to observe all things
whatsoever I have commanded
you: and, lo, I am with you always,
even unto the end of the world.
—Matt. 28: 19, 20

Approach to the Lesson
After Peter's great confession of
Jesus as the Son of the living God,
our Lord gave to him the keys of the
Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 16: 19).
The Kingdom of Heaven is
not Heaven itself, but that sphere
on earth where Heaven's authority
is outwardly acknowledged; in
other words, that which is com-
monly called Christendom. We
have seen already in our study of
Acts 2 how Peter used the keys (a
rabbinical expression referring to
teaching) to open the doors of the
Kingdom to the Jews. In the
present lesson we see him opening
the doors of the Kingdom to the
Gentiles. It seems strange that it
took the apostles so long a time to
carry out that part of the great
commission which bade them go
into the world and preach the
Gospel to every creature. Up to the
end of chapter 7 their ministry
was confined entirely to Jerusalem
and Judea. In chapter 8 we learn
of the mission of Philip, one of the
seven deacons, to Samaria. As a
result of his work there, many of
the Samaritans believed the
Gospel, and tidings of this having
reached the apostles, Peter and
John went down from Jerusalem
to see what God had wrought and
to identify themselves with the
work begun by Philip. It was not,
however, until the Lord gave a
special vision to Peter that he
went down to Caesarea-Philippi
and preached the Gospel for the
first time to a Gentile audience,
which was gathered together in
the house of a Roman centurion,
Cornelius. This man was a devout
seeker after truth, and to him God
had spoken in a vision, command-
ing him to send messengers to
Peter at Joppa, asking him to come
immediately to tell him words
whereby he might be saved. Assured
that this was of God, Peter hastened
to obey, but was cautious
enough to take several well-known
brethren with him in order that
they might bear witness to the
churches in Judea of what they
had seen and heard. Thus the door
of faith was opened to the Gentiles
and so the work of world evange-
lization actually began. In the
meantime, the young persecutor,
Saul of Tarsus, had been convert-
ed, and he soon became the pre-
dominant messenger to the Gentile
world.

The Historical Setting
In the year A.D. 4, according to
the generally accepted chronology,
Peter preached to Cornelius and
his friends and won them for
Christ. This was nearly eight years
after Pentecost. In the intervening
period, the Church had grown by
leaps and bounds in Jerusalem and
Judea and other cities and dis-
tricts where the message had been
carried to the scattered Jews. In
Samaria, too, great victories had
been gained for Christ, but in these
early years we do not know of any
Gentiles reached and saved until
Peter's special visit to Cornelius.
Verse by Verse
Acts 10: 17.—"What this vision
which he had seen should mean."
Peter had seen a vision a great
sheet, or tarpaulin, let down from
Heaven, suspended by the four
corners, in which was a vast
collection of wild and domestic
animals, birds, and creeping things.
A voice had commanded him to
kill and eat. To this he had
demurred, as he had never eaten
any unclean thing. The voice that
spoke to him said, "What God hath
cleansed, that call not thou com-
mon"—thus indicating the sancti-
fication of the Gentiles as a result
of the work of the cross (Rom.
15: 16).

Verse 18.—"Asked whether
Simon.....were lodged there."
While Peter was meditating on the
possible meaning of the vision, the
messengers arrived from Caesarea
inquiring for him.
Verses 19, 20.—"The Spirit said
unto him, Behold, three men seek
thee." To make assurance doubly
sure, the Spirit of God definitely

informed Peter of the coming of
the three messengers and bade him
go with them, without reserve.

Verse 21.—"Cornelius waited for
them." Upon arrival at the home
of the centurion, Peter found quite
a company gathered together, con-
sisting of Cornelius and a number
of his kinsmen and friends, all
eager to hear the Word of the
Lord.

Verse 31.—"I perceive that God
is no respecter of persons." After
mutual salutations and explana-
tions, Peter realized that God
Himself had brought about this
meeting. His Jewish reserve dis-
appeared as he recognized the
evidence of the divine interest in
men of all nations.

Verse 35.—"In every nation he
that feareth him, and worketh
righteousness, is accepted with
him." This is not to say that men
are ever saved by meritorious be-
havior, but wherever there is an
earnest desire to know God, this
will be accompanied by righteous
conduct and reverence toward
Him. When such conditions pre-
vail, God can always be depended
upon to reveal Himself to seeking
souls.

Verse 36.—"Preaching peace by
Jesus Christ." This is the kernel
of the Gospel message—Christ has
made peace by the blood of His
cross. All who believe in Him are
justified by faith and have peace
with God.

Verse 37.—"That word.....ye
know." It is evident that Cornelius
had heard already of the life and
works of the Lord Jesus, but he
had not yet learned that through
His death and resurrection salva-
tion is offered freely to all men
everywhere.

Verse 38.—"God anointed Jesus
of Nazareth." In His humiliation
as man on earth, the Lord Jesus
was in all things subject to the
controlling power of the Holy
Spirit, who descended upon Him
visibly after His baptism, thus
anointing Him for the three offices
of prophet, priest, and king.

Verse 39.—"We are witnesses of
.....(Him) whom they slew and
hanged on a tree." As an eye-
witness of the sufferings of Christ,
Peter could speak with confidence
of His shameful death, wherein
He took the sinner's place and was
made a curse for us: "Cursed is
every one that hangeth on a tree"
(Gal. 3: 13).

Verse 40, 41.—"Him God raised
up..... and shewed him openly."
He who was numbered with the
transgressors and died in the sin-
ner's stead was raised from the
dead by God the Father as His
own testimony to His satisfaction
in the work His Son had accom-
plished. Indisputable evidence of
His resurrection was given by His
appearance on many occasions, not
to an unbelieving world, but to
those who had known Him well
and recognized Him as the risen
Lord, even eating and drinking
with Him.

Verse 42.—"It is he which was
ordained of God to be the Judge
of quick and dead." This command-
ment and declaration by Jesus,
after His resurrection from the
dead, is in itself positive proof that
He meant His disciples to under-
stand that He is God, who was
manifested in flesh, for it is God
alone who is to be the Judge both
of the living and the dead.

Verse 43.—"To him give all the
prophets witness." The holy men
of old who wrote the prophetic
Scriptures all looked forward to
the coming into the world of the
promised One, who alone could
save and redeem lost men. All who
believe in Him may be assured, on
the authority of the Word of God,
that their sins are put away fore-
ever. If this verse is linked with
our Lord's words to His apostles as
recorded in John 20: 23, "Whoso-
ever sins ye remit, they are
remitted unto them," there will be
no difficulty in understanding what
the Saviour meant. Peter did not
tell Cornelius that he was there to
grant remission of sins on the
ground of confession to himself, or
penance he might impose, but he
declared full remission of all sins
to those who believe on Jesus.

The Heart of the Lesson
It is always interesting to note
how God brings the anxious
inquirer into contact with the one
who can open up the truth.
Cornelius was seeking earnestly
after God. He manifested his sin-
cere concern by a devout life and
kindly consideration for others,
but he needed to hear words
whereby he might be saved. God
Himself arranged the meeting be-
tween this anxious soul and the
Apostle Peter, who could tell him
about the Lord Jesus Christ and
the work He had accomplished,
whereby guilty sinners might be
reconciled to God. As soon as he
heard the message, Cornelius
received it in faith, and not only
he, but all who were with him in
the house immediately believed.

This incident should be an
encouragement to all who are
seeking to win others to Christ.
The Holy Spirit sealed the Word
and baptized these new believers
into the body of Christ, so that
Jew and Gentile were now one in
Him, their risen Head.

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**Ted Croxall New
President of County
Junior Farmers**
On Tuesday night, Jan. 17th,
approximately 140 Junior Farmers
attended the annual meeting of the
Ontario County Junior Farmer
Association, in the Uxbridge High
School. Each of the Ontario County
Junior Farmer Clubs was well
represented.
The president, Mary Boyes of
Pickering, opened the meeting. She
briefly reviewed the Ontario
County Junior Farmer activities of
the past year. The trophies for the
field day events were presented.
After the election of officers, the
newly elected president for 1950
took over the meeting. The 1950
county executive is as follows:
president, Ted Croxall, R.R.3 Ux-
bridge; vice-pres., Everton Norton,
R.R.1 Locust Hill; sec-treas., Doris
Risebrough, Uxbridge.
Jack Pearson of Uxbridge led
group singing and gave an interest-
ing talk on his trip to the 4-H Club
Congress at Chicago. This trip is
sponsored by the Ontario County
Council and was won by Jack for
his interest and participation in
Junior Farmer activities and his
achievement at the County Judg-
ing Competitions. Anyone who
knows Jack will know that he well
deserved this trip. Jack was seen
later in the evening as one of the
main actors in the Junior Farmer
Film "Farmers for the Future."
This motion picture outlines
phases of Junior Farmer activity
in Ontario and is being shown to
numerous audiences throughout
the Province.
The meeting was brought to a
close by a short period of round
and square dancing, followed by
lunch.

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