Summary of the story of **Cornelius**:

Cornelius was a centurion in the [Cohors II Italica Civium Romanorum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cohors_II_Italica_Civium_Romanorum%22%20%5Co%20%22Cohors%20II%20Italica%20Civium%20Romanorum), mentioned as *Cohors Italica* in the [Vulgate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate). He was stationed in [Caesarea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_centers_of_Christianity#Caesarea), the capital of Roman [Iudaea province](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judea_%28Roman_province%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Judea%20%28Roman%20province%29). He is depicted in the New Testament as a [God-fearing man](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Godfearer) who always prayed and was full of good works and deeds of [alms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alms). Cornelius receives a vision in which an [angel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angel) of God tells him that his prayers have been heard, he understands that he's chosen for a higher alternative. The angel then instructs Cornelius to send the men of his household to [Joppa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaffa%2C_Israel), where they will find [Simon Peter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Peter), who is residing with a [tanner by the name of Simon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_the_Tanner_%28New_Testament%29) ([Acts 10:5ff](http://bible.oremus.org/?passage=Acts+10:5%E2%80%9310:5&version=nrsv)).

The conversion of Cornelius comes after [a separate vision](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter%27s_vision_of_a_sheet_with_animals) given to Simon Peter ([Acts 10:10–16](https://www.biblica.com/bible/?osis=niv:Acts.10:10%E2%80%9316:10)) himself. In the vision, Simon Peter sees all manner of beasts and fowl being lowered from [Heaven](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven) in a sheet. A voice commands Simon Peter to eat. When he objects to eating those animals that are [unclean according to Mosaic Law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kashrut), the voice tells him not to call unclean that which God has cleansed.

When Cornelius' men arrive, Simon Peter understands that through this vision the Lord commanded the Apostle to preach the Word of God to the Gentiles. Peter accompanies Cornelius' men back to Caesarea. When Cornelius meets Simon Peter, he falls at Peter's feet. Simon Peter raises the centurion and the two men share their visions. Simon Peter tells of [Jesus' ministry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Jesus) and the [Resurrection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection_of_Jesus); the [Holy Spirit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Spirit) descends on everyone at the gathering. The [Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jew) among the group (presumably they were all Jews if Cornelius was the first gentile convert) are amazed that Cornelius and other [uncircumcised](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circumcision_controversy_in_early_Christianity) should begin [speaking in tongues](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossolalia), praising God. Thereupon Simon Peter commands that Cornelius and his followers be [baptized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baptism). The controversial aspect of Gentile conversion is taken up later at the [Council of Jerusalem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Jerusalem) ([Acts 15](https://www.biblica.com/bible/?osis=niv:Acts.15%E2%80%9315)), but has its roots in the concept of "[proselytes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proselytes)" in the [Septuagint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint) (the Greek translation of the [Hebrew Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Bible)) and Jewish [Noahide Law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noahide_Law).

Peter later chose not to eat with Gentiles in Antioch after some Jews criticized him. The apostle Paul publicly confronted Peter for being hypocritical as related in [Galatians 2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galatians_2).

Cornelius was one of the first Gentiles converted to Christianity.

The baptism of Cornelius is an important event in the history of the early Christian church, along with the conversion and baptism of the [Ethiopian eunuch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopian_eunuch). The Christian church was first formed around the original disciples and followers of Jesus, all of whom were Jewish. All males in that community were circumcised and observed the [Law of Moses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/613_commandments). The reception of Cornelius sparked a conversation among the Jewish leaders of the new Christian church, culminating in the decision to allow Gentiles to become Christians without conforming to Jewish requirements for circumcision, as recounted in Acts 15 ([Acts 15](https://www.biblica.com/bible/?osis=niv:Acts.15%E2%80%9315)).

Certain traditions hold Cornelius as becoming either the first [bishop of Caesarea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop_of_Caesarea) or the bishop of [Scepsis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scepsis%22%20%5Co%20%22Scepsis) in [Mysia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mysia%22%20%5Co%20%22Mysia).

In this painting by [Gerbrand van den Eeckhout](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerbrand_van_den_Eeckhout%22%20%5Co%20%22Gerbrand%20van%20den%20Eeckhout) an angel appears to the Roman centurion Cornelius. The angel tells him to seek out St. Peter.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelius_the_Centurion#cite_note-7)The Walters Art Museum 

