Acts 9 – Gentiles Are Included

CHARACTERS: Aenas, Peter, Widows 1, 2, 3, (Tabitha – non-speaking), Leader, chorus, Cornelius, VOG (voice of God offstage), Man 1, 2, 3
COSTUMES: Biblical
PROPS: none specified
SETTING: bare stage
RUN TIME: 7 minutes
SCRIPTURE/BASED ON: Acts 9
FK reading level: 5.0

Scene 1 - Aeneas and Dorcas

At rise: AENAS is lying downstage, midway between center and stage left. A crowd of people are upstage of him, watching for PETER who enters from stage left and goes to AENAS. TABITHA and others are midway between stage right and center. Lights up stage left only.

PETER: Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat. *AENAS gets up and walks, praising God. Crowd people are amazed. Some fall to their knees in thankfulness. AENAS hugs PETER. A & B step forward.*

A: Peter, a disciple named Tabitha has become sick and died.

B: Joppa is not far from here. Please, come at once with us.

PETER, A & B move stage right while all others exit stage left. Lights off stage left, up stage right. TABITHA crowd begins to mourn softly.

WIDOW 1: Peter, please help her. Dorcas was always doing good and helping the poor.

WIDOW 2: She made this robe for me.

WIDOW 3: She made my cloak.

PETER: Please, everyone leave. *PETER kneels in prayer.*

PETER: Tabitha, get up. *TABITHA arises with PETER's help. PETER motions for the crowd off stage to enter. They do, hugging TABITHA and praising God. CORNELIUS and ANGEL take their places stage left. CORNELIUS kneels in prayer. CROWD leaves and PETER kneels in prayer. Lights off stage right and up stage left.*

LEADER: Because of this

ALL: many people believed in the Lord.

LEADER: Peter stayed in Joppa

ALL: with a tanner named Simon.

Scene 2 - Cornelius Calls for Peter

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AT RISE: Split stage. Peter praying stage right, CORNELIUS stage left ANGEL enters.

ANGEL: Cornelius!

CORNELIUS: What is it, Lord?

ANGEL: Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea.

CORNELIUS rises, motions for THREE MEN to enter, points and sends them toward stage right. Lights off stage left, up stage right.

VOG: *(Voice of God from off stage)* Get up, Peter. Kill and eat. *PETER stands and pantomimes catching a sheet being lowered. He looks into it and scowls.*

PETER: Surely not, Lord! I have never eaten anything impure or unclean.

VOG: Do not call anything impure that God has made clean. *(optional – do this three times) MAN 1, 2 and 3 enter stage left and cross to center. MAN 1 calls to PETER.*

MAN 1: We are looking for Simon who is known as Peter.

VOG: Simon, three men are looking for you. Get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.

PETER: *(to MEN)* I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?

MAN 2: We have come from Cornelius the centurion. *CORNELIUS and relatives enter from stage left and all but CORNELIUS sit.*

MAN 3: He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people.

MAN 1: A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.

PETER and MEN cross to stage left. Lights up stage left, off stage right. When PETER stands before him, CORNELIUS kneels before him.

PETER: *(helping CORNELIUS to his feet)* Stand up; I am only a man myself. You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?

CORNELIUS: Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me **and** said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us. *CORNELIUS sits.*

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PETER: I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism **but** accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. *(CORNELIUS and his relatives nod in agreement)*

PETER: We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

CORNELIUS and relatives begin praising God in two or more languages. CORNELIUS and two others stand in joy and amazement.

PETER: *(amazed and overjoyed)* Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. Arise, all of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: Communication involves speaker and recipient. Especially with long speeches on stage in an age where TV changes shots every 7 seconds or less, the facial expressions and body language of CORNELIUS and his relatives are crucial to maintain audience attention. They must be ever reacting to PETER's words, with hope, encouragement, amazement, doubt, pain and with each other.

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