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a ***Grace Notes*** course

ACTS 200

## **The Acts of the Apostles**

an expositional study  
by Warren Doud

Lesson 208: **Acts 10:17 to 33**

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## ACTS, Lesson 208, Acts 10:17-33

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**Acts 10:17-33****Acts 10:17**

**Acts 10:17** Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

Acts 10:17 ¶ Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simons house, appeared at the gate; [NASB]

**Peter doubted: dihporei** “perplexed; completely at a loss” It is **dia + a + poro~** (way), which means to be completely as a loss as to what road to take. When he began to think normally after his vision, Peter was more puzzled that ever.

**this vision**

**ojana**, “vision; something seen” This word can be used to refer simply to something that a person sees; and it’s used that way in Acts 7:31 to describe the “sight” of the burning bush.

Acts 7:13, “When Moses saw it, he wondered at the **sight (ojana)**...”

**what this vision should mean**

Peter had a lot to think about. What did the vessel, or four-cornered sheets signify? Why did God command him to rise up, kill, and eat these animals? Why did God now state that the forbidden animals were now clean?

The Lord now begins providing Peter with the answer to these questions.

The men **made inquiry**. The home of the Tanner would not have been hard to find. Anyone would have known where it was; residents of Joppa would probably have said “follow your nose”.

**stood before the gate**

Or, “appeared at the gate; approached or came up to the gate”. The gate was the **pulwna**, a sort of front door, or folding doors opening into the

passage which led from the street to the inner part of the house.

**Acts 10:18**

**Acts 10:18** And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

Acts 10:18 and calling out, they were asking whether Simon, who was also called Peter, was staying there. [NASB]

Here, Cornelius’ two servants and the soldier were standing at the front door of the house, speaking to Simon the tanner, or to his wife, or someone of the household, asking for Peter.

**Acts 10:19**

**Acts 10:19** While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek you.

Acts 10:19 And while Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you.” [NASB]

It was the Holy Spirit who informed Peter that the men were looking for him. Peter apparently had not yet asked God for an answer, but God often answers before we ask.

Isaiah 65:24, “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”

**Acts 10:20**

**Acts 10:20** Arise therefore, and get you down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Acts 10:20 “But arise, go downstairs, and accompany them without misgivings; for I have sent them Myself.” [NASB]

**Go with them, doubting nothing**

Note that the NASB says “without misgivings”.

This passage of Scripture describes one of the most dramatic steps of faith that anyone has ever had to take. Considering the extreme prejudice which Jewish people had against Gentiles in those days, it simply goes against reason to think that Peter, in just a few hours time, so relaxes his own

personal biases that he is willing to converse with, then to travel with, these three Gentile men. Yet that is exactly what happens, by the grace of God and the divine enablement through the Holy Spirit.

**Topic: Jewish Attitude toward Gentiles (in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century)**

In the plan of God, the Jewish nation was responsible for the evangelization of Gentile nations, and had been for all of their history. However, far from carrying out the Lord's directives concerning bringing God's Word to all people, throughout their history they systematically isolated themselves from Gentiles, setting up impenetrable barriers to any social interaction, and thoroughly alienating any other race of people with whom they came in contact.

As the Church Age begins, we see here the first major reversal of this trend, not in the Jewish nation *per se*, but among the Christian Jews who had been saved through the love and grace of God, and who had the great desire to share Christ with all people.

**Acts 10:21**

**Acts 10:21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent to him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom you seek: what is the cause for which you are come?**

Acts 10:21 And Peter went down to the men and said, "Behold, I am the one you are looking for; what is the reason for which you have come?" [NASB]

The Lord had not told Peter why the men had come, only that they were there. In fact, Peter had no idea yet what the plan was. He only knew that there were three men looking for him.

**Acts 10:22**

**Acts 10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that fears God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by a holy angel to send for you into his house, and to hear words of you.**

Acts 10:22 And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you." [NASB]

The men gave Peter a simple report; in fact, they knew no more than they were telling him, the bare facts that their master had given them. There was nothing to motivate Peter either to entertain these men or to go with them, except that the Lord had prepared him for something extraordinary.

**Acts 10:23**

**Acts 10:23 Then he called them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.**

Acts 10:23 And so he invited them in and gave them lodging. ¶ And on the next day he arose and went away with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. [NASB]

So here are the people who begin a two-day's walk from Joppa to Caesarea, a distance of about 30 miles:

1. Two servants of Cornelius
2. A soldier who reports to Cornelius
3. Peter the apostle
4. Six Christian men from Joppa (Acts 11:12)

**he called them in and lodged them**

It was extraordinary for a Jew to host Gentiles. Here Peter is inviting these Gentiles into Simon's home, which implies that Simon the tanner was gracious himself and hospitable.

Imagine, under ordinary circumstances in a Jewish community, how much ceremonial cleansing would usually have been required after such intimate contact with Gentiles, feeding and lodging them.

**Titus 1:8, But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate.**

“a lover of hospitality” literally, “having a love for strangers”

This word carries the connotation of hospitality, of doing something for someone who does not earn or deserve the good treatment, because there has been no previous acquaintance. This word reflects a Grace attitude toward people who have not yet earned your consideration.

This is a word of impersonal love - the type of attitude that is free of arrogance, envy, hatred, or even disdain for other people, even if there is sharp disagreement about doctrine or practice. This is the type of love that permits a Christian to love even his enemies or people that he doesn't like.

This is the type of love that is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. It does not come from emotion, although it may cause emotion. This is the “professional” love of the mature Christian believer, analogous to the Love of God, the quality of which does not depend on the behavior or character of the one being loved, but on the character of the one who loves.

The Lord has already begun to build Peter up in the fruit of the Holy Spirit, as shown in Peter's consideration for the ones he wants to win to Christ.

#### Acts 10:24

**Acts 10:24 And the next day they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.**

Acts 10:24 And on the following day he entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. [NASB]

#### Topic: Caesarea Palestine

#### the next day

They arrived on the following day, indicating that they walked hard for two days.

Cornelius was very confident that his men would be successful in persuading Peter to come to Caesarea, so he made sure that all his family and friends were available to meet Peter when he got to town.

#### Acts 10:25

**Acts 10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.**

Acts 10:25 And when it came about that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshipped him. [NASB]

#### and worshipped him

This is the aorist active indicative of **proskunew**, “to make obeisance; to do reverence or homage, sometimes by kissing the hand.

Now, was Cornelius actually trying to worship Peter as some kind of divine being, or merely showing honor to someone for whom he had great respect? In verse 26, Peter tells him “Stand up; I myself also am a man” shows that an act of actual worship is meant here.

Robertson says, “The word probably here means reverence, like the old English usage, and not actual worship, though Peter took it that way.”

But ...

From *Knights* of Aristophanes.

#### Dhmosqenh~

**age dhvsvkatayou prwta tavskeuh camaiyepaita thn ghn proskuson kai tou~ Qeou~.**

“First put down all your gear, then worship the earth and the gods.”

And, the fact that Peter “took it that way” is a good indication that the word is used in the sense of the actual worship of a God.

Furneaux says, “Cornelius was not an idolater and would not have honored Peter as a god.”

However, Cornelius had just been visited by an angel of the Lord, so he could easily have thought that Peter was the same sort of messenger. It would not have been idolatry to bow in honor of God's angelic messenger.

READ Acts 14:6-18. Notice here that when Paul and Barnabas healed a man in Lystra who had never been able to walk, the people wanted to worship them and offer sacrifices to them. The

apostles had a hard time setting these people straight.

Roman Catholicism would have taken a much different direction in its early history if there had been a proper regard for Acts 10:25 and 26, and those in Acts 14.

### Acts 10:26

**Acts 10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.**

Acts 10:26 But Peter raised him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am just a man.” [NASB]

Why does Peter have to correct Cornelius on this point? Why is it not good for Cornelius to give so much honor to Peter?

1. Giving honor to Peter distorts the message. The focus must always be kept on the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. An apostle is a messenger, a **keirux**, one who communicates the message for another person.
3. It’s the message that is important, not the messenger.

### Acts 10:27,28

**Acts 10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.**

**Acts 10:28 And he said unto them, You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.**

Acts 10:27 And as he talked with him, he entered, and found many people assembled. [NASB]

Acts 10:28 And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a man who is a Jew to associate with a foreigner or to visit him; and yet God has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. [NASB]

Robertson<sup>1</sup>: There is no Old Testament regulation against fraternization with Gentiles. It was the Jewish rabbis who took Deut. 7:1-3 and extrapolated it to extend to all relations with all Gentiles.

Deut. 7:1-3, When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them:

Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

### Acts 10:29

**Acts 10:29 Therefore I came unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent you have sent for me?**

Acts 10:29 “That is why I came without even raising any objection when I was sent for. And so I ask for what reason you have sent for me.” [NASB]

### without gainsaying

Here only in the NT, **ajantirhtw-**, “without answering back; without complaint; without objections”. I couldn’t find any uses of this word in Greek literature.

See in Acts 19:36, this word used in Alexander’s speech to the Ephesian mob.

As soon as Peter had understood that he was expected to go to visit Cornelius, he raised no further objections. The Holy Spirit had directed Peter to go with the three men from Cornelius. Now Peter was stepping over the line of Jewish custom.

<sup>1</sup> Robertson, Acts 10:28

**with what intent**

Correctly, in the NASB, “for what reason”. Peter had some information from the messenger (Acts 10:22), that Cornelius had been visited by an angel and that Peter was to be asked to go to Caesarea to meet with Cornelius.

**Acts 10:30**

**Acts 10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,**

Acts 10:30 And Cornelius said, “Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments, [NASB]

**Four days ago**

Reckoning backwards from this day. And we see that the round trip travel time was about four days, walking from Joppa to Caesarea and back.

**in bright clothing (“shining garments”)**

The angel who appeared to Cornelius appeared as a man dressed in white, perhaps shining, clothing.

**Acts 10:31-33**

**Acts 10:31 And said, Cornelius, your prayer is heard, and your alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.**

**Acts 10:32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he comes, shall speak unto you.**

**Acts 10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to you; and you have well done that you are come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded you of God.**

Acts 10:31 and he said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. [NASB]

Acts 10:32 Send therefore to Joppa and invite Simon, who is also called Peter, to come to

you; he is staying at the house of Simon the tanner by the sea. [NASB]

Acts 10:33 “And so I sent to you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.” [NASB]

**Immediately therefore I sent to you**

Cornelius wants Peter to know that he responded immediately to the Lord’s message that he had received, notwithstanding that he understood very little of what was going on. And, he is explaining that he is not acting in his role as a military leader, but as a humble servant of God who is seeking answers.

**you have well done that you are come**

Cornelius is undoubtedly aware that Peter is making an extraordinary effort to break away from Jewish custom. The fact that Cornelius was so well known among the Jews makes it certain that he was thoroughly familiar with the social barriers between Jews and Gentiles.

Remember that, socially, there was disdain on both sides, Jew and Gentile. But Cornelius shows his gracious spirit in offering Peter a warm and free welcome to his home.

**commanded you**

Cornelius uses a military term, **prostetagnena soi**, from **prostassow**, an old military term meaning “to command.”

Mark 1:44, “Which Moses commanded (**prostassow**).

Acts 17:26-28, And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined (**prostassow**) the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

This word is used extensively in Greek literature, so I will just give one illustration. In August 479 BC, the Greeks defeated the Persians at Mycale, in Ionia near Miletus, in one of the last battles of the Greco-Persian wars.

Now, this period of history is very interesting, because the Persian king at this time was Xerxes I, whom many historians believe to be the King Ahasuerus mentioned in the books of Ezra and Esther, the king whom Esther married. It is said that Xerxes had led his troops to Greece and that he had observed the naval battle of Salamis from a cliff overlooking the scene of that battle. The Athenians had won that battle in September of 480 BC, just a year before the battle of Mycale.

When the Greeks landed on the Ionian mainland, near the island of Samos, they pursued the Persians because they thought they were retreating. However, when the Greeks came upon the Persians, they found them ready for battle. Herodotus (History 9.104) states that the Persians had already subdued the Greek allies in the area, and they had *stationed* (**prostassow**) the Milesians (citizens of Miletus) in a narrow mountain pass to guard it so that the Persians could retreat through it if necessary.

Herodotus lived during the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, but he was too young to have participated in the Persian wars. Nevertheless, he would have had good access to first person accounts in order to compile his histories. He lived most of his life on Samos, the island nearest where the mainland battle of Mycale had taken place.

The Greeks attacked and drove the Persians back into a fortified area. Finding themselves in danger, the Persians decided to retreat through the pass. However, the Milesians revolted against the Persians, decoyed them in another direction, and then began killing the Persian soldiers. Very few Persian soldiers were left alive to go home.

As a further aside, the Greco-Persian wars had begun with a battle in Ephesus, so we see that our famous Bible locations of Ephesus, Miletus, and Ionia had a considerable history.

Other battles in that war: Lade – Marathon – Thermopylae – Artemiseum – Salamis – Plataea – Mycale – Eurymedon – Cyprus (Salamis)

### **Jews and Gentiles in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century**

In conjunction with the study of several New Testament epistles, such as the Epistle to Titus, this paper will give some insight into some of the difficulties facing local church congregations of the early church as they tried to come to grips with the great cultural differences between Jews and Gentiles.

The first section is a quotation from Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.

"And then, as the proud Roman passed on the Sabbath through the streets, Judaism would obtrude itself upon his notice, by the shops that were shut, and by the strange figures that idly moved about in holiday attire. They were strangers in a strange land, not only without sympathy with what passed around, but with marked contempt and abhorrence of it, while there was that about their whole bearing, which expressed the unspoken feeling, that the time of Rome's fall, and of their own supremacy, was at hand.

"To put the general feeling in the words of Tacitus, the Jews kept close together, and were ever most liberal to one another; but they were filled with bitter hatred of all others. They would neither eat nor sleep with strangers; and the first thing which they taught their proselytes was to despise the gods, to renounce their own country, and to rend the bonds which had bound them to parents, children or kindred..."

"To begin with, every Gentile child, so soon as born, was to be regarded as unclean. Those [Gentiles] who actually worshipped mountains, hills, bushes, etc, idolaters, should be cut down with the sword. But as it was impossible to exterminate heathenism, Rabbinic legislation kept certain definite objects in view, which may be summarized:

- To prevent Jews from being inadvertently led into idolatry



- To avoid all participation in idolatry
- Not to do anything which might aid the heathen in their worship; and, beyond all this...
- Not to give pleasure, or even help, to heathens. The latter involved a most dangerous principle, capable of almost indefinite application by fanaticism."

From the Talmudic Tractate Abhodah Zarah, on the subject of idolatry, paraphrased - "Even the Mishnah goes so far as to forbid aid to a mother in the hour of her need, or nourishment to her babe, in order not to bring up a child for idolatry. But this is not all. Heathens were, indeed, not to be forced into danger, but yet not to be delivered from it. "The best among the Gentiles, Kill; the best among serpents, crush its head."

Still more terrible was the fanaticism which directed that heretics and those who had left the Jewish faith should be thrown into actual danger, or, if they were already in it, to remove any chance for them to escape. No contact of any kind was to be had with such - not even to call medical aid in case of danger to life, since it was deemed, that he who had to do with heretics was in imminent peril of becoming one himself, and that, if a heretic returned to the true faith, he should die at once - partly to pay for his sin, and partly from fear of relapse.

The Jew had a low estimate of the Gentile's character. The most vile and unnatural crimes were imputed to Gentiles. They considered it not safe to leave cattle in their charge, to allow their women to nurse infants, or their physicians to attend the sick, nor to walk in their company, without taking precautions against sudden attacks.

The Gentiles should, as far as possible, be altogether avoided, except in cases of necessity or for the sake of business. They and theirs were defiled; their houses unclean, as containing idols or things dedicated to idols. Their feasts and their joyous occasions were polluted by idolatry. You could not leave the room if a Gentile was in it because he might, carelessly or on purpose, defile the wine or food on the table, or the oil and wheat in the cupboard.

Under such circumstances, everything must be regarded as unclean. Three days before a heathen festival, and three days after, all business or contact with heathen was avoided, for fear of giving help or pleasure. Jews were to avoid passing through a city where there was an idolatrous feast - nay, they were not even to sit down within the shadow of a tree dedicated to idol-worship. Such a tree's wood was polluted; if it was used in cooking, the bread was unclean; if a shuttle of a loom had been made from it, all the cloth woven on it was forbidden. In addition, if such cloth had been mixed with other pieces of cloth, or if a garment made with it had been placed with other garments, all of the garments became unclean.

Jewish workmen were not to help in building basilicas, stadiums, or places where judicial sentences were pronounced by the heathen. It was not lawful to rent houses or sell cattle to Gentiles. Milk drawn by a heathen, if a Jew had not been present to watch it, bread and oil prepared by them, were unlawful. Their wine was wholly forbidden; the mere touch of a heathen polluted a whole cask of wine. Even to smell of heathen wine was forbidden! If wine had been dedicated to an idol, it defiled a man to carry on a stick even an olive's weight of it. Other wine, if prepared by a heathen, was prohibited for personal use and for trading. Wine prepared by a Jew, however, which had been deposited in the custody of a Gentile, was prohibited for personal use, but it was permitted to sell it.

### Caesarea Palestine

#### from the Thompson Chain Reference Bible

Caesarea, the Roman capital of Judea in the time of Christ and Paul, was located by the sea, thirty-two miles north of Joppa, and some sixty miles northwest of Jerusalem. Herod the Great began to build the city in 25 BC, and completed it in 13 BC. At the dedication on 12 BC, he named it Caesarea, in honor of Caesar Augustus, and made it the Roman capital of Judea.

It soon became a busy seaport and a great commercial center. It was one of the most attractive cities of its day. It was constructed so

well, and on such a magnificent plan, that it was frequently called "Little Rome." Here lived Philip the Evangelist, and here Paul was imprisoned for two years, during which time he appeared before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa.

The city stood, with varying fortunes, until 1256 AD, when Sultan Bibars of Egypt captured the city and destroyed its walls and most of its buildings. During succeeding centuries it lay in ruins, with only broken pottery, portions of gates and castles, and fragments of granite and marble columns protruding from the sands and lying half-submerged in the shallow waters of the nearby sea.

The Department of Antiquity of the Government of Israel has undertaken the excavation of Caesarea. Their larger finds, thus far, have included a very splendid Crusader castle, the theater, the amphitheater, the hippodrome, and the pavement of a Jewish synagogue, possibly the very one, or the successor of the one, in which Cornelius once worshipped, and which Philip, Peter, and Paul visited. In the theater they found an inscribed stone which bore the names of Pilate and Tiberius. This was the first time Pilate's name has been found on a stone inscription. A large temple dedicated to Caesar of Rome was uncovered, which contained an unusually large statue of the emperor.

In 1960 the Link Expedition to Israel explored and charted the extensive harbor built by Herod the Great. Only the tops of the elaborate stone breakwater protruded here and there above the waters, but undersea explorations went far in confirming Josephus' description of Caesarea's massive and extensive harbor.

#### From the Encyclopedia Britannica

<<http://www.britannica.com>>

#### Caesarea

Hebrew HORBAT QESARI ("Ruins of Caesarea"), ancient port and administrative city of Palestine, on the Mediterranean coast of present-day Israel south of Haifa. It is often referred to as Caesarea Palaestinae, or Caesarea Maritima, to distinguish it from Caesarea Philippi near the headwaters of the Jordan River. Originally an ancient Phoenician settlement known as Straton's

(Strato's) Tower, it was rebuilt and enlarged in 22-10 BC by Herod the Great, king of Judaea under the Romans, and renamed for his patron, the emperor Caesar Augustus. It served as a port for Herod's newly built city at Sebaste (Greek: Augusta), the ancient Samaria of central Palestine. Caesarea had an artificial harbor of large concrete blocks and typical Hellenistic-Roman public buildings. An aqueduct brought water from springs located almost 10 miles (16 km) to the northeast. Caesarea served as a base for the Herodian navy, which operated in aid of the Romans as far as the Black Sea.

The city became the capital of the Roman province of Judaea in AD 6. Subsequently, it was an important centre of early Christianity; in the New Testament it is mentioned in Acts in connection with Peter, Philip the Apostle, and, especially, Paul, who was imprisoned there before being sent to Rome for trial. According to the 1st-century AD historian Flavius Josephus, the Jewish revolt against Rome, which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70, was touched off by an incident at Caesarea in AD 66. During the Bar Kokhba revolt of AD 132-135, the Romans tortured and killed the 10 greatest leaders and sages of Palestinian Jewry, including Rabbi Akiba. Caesarea was almost certainly the place of execution of Rabbi Akiba and the others according to tradition (c. AD 135). The death of these Ten Martyrs is still commemorated in the liturgy for Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).

After this Caesarea became the capital of the province renamed Syria-Palaestina by the emperor Hadrian. Under the Byzantine Empire it was capital of the province of Palaestina Prima. The church historian and biblical topographer Eusebius (c. 260/264-c. 340) served as bishop of Caesarea. The city declined under later Byzantine and Arab rule. Its port and part of the ancient citadel were rebuilt by the crusaders; the city was successively taken and retaken by Muslim and crusader forces, until finally it was captured and razed by the Mamluk Sultan Baybars I in 1265. Between 1884 and 1948 Bosnian Muslims had a settlement there. In 1940 the fishing kibbutz of Sedot Yam was founded just south of the ancient site; this settlement has built a jetty over the Roman and

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crusader breakwater. It also engages in agriculture and operates a resort hotel.

Excavations undertaken since 1950 have uncovered a Roman temple, amphitheater, hippodrome (which seated 20,000), the aqueduct, and other ruins of Roman and later times. Of particular interest is a Roman inscription, found in 1961, which mentions Pontius Pilate, Roman procurator of Judaea at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. This is the first mention of Pilate ever found that can be accurately dated within his lifetime.

Further excavations in the 1970s and '80s, both on land and underwater, gave a clearer picture of the artificial harbor built by Herod the Great. It was probably the first harbor ever constructed entirely in the open sea (i.e., without the benefit of any protective fringing bay or peninsula) and was protected from the sea primarily by two huge breakwaters built of concrete blocks and filled with stone rubble. This spacious harbor, which Josephus compared favorably with that of Athens at Piraeus, was one of the technological marvels of the ancient world and helped make Caesarea a major port for trade between the Roman Empire and Asia.

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