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Acts 10 is an amazing chapter where God expands the understanding of Grace over Law. God Himself had written the law and given it through Moses to Israel as a perpetual Law.

In the Old Covenant, all Jews had to abide by the extensive Law including dietary and separation rules from non-Jews. There were a number of types of animals that God had declared as “unclean” or “common”. The reason I am going into this is that some religions have taken this and other verses out of context and made doctrines that lead people a bit astray, some to damnable heresy others to misunderstandings but still saved. We need to examine the whole council of God as we rightly divide His Word.

Leviticus 11: 1And the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, 2Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. 3Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat. 4Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 5And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 6And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. 7And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean

to you. 8Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they are unclean to you.

Paul is going to be given a vision of some unclean or common animals that God had legally declared were not fit for human consumption according to the Law. God is going to change that understanding of a perpetual Law. The new understanding is far more reaching than just food it also involves we the gentiles that were consider unclean by Jewish Law.

Acts 10

Cornelius Sends for Peter

1There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*,

“Italian band” were soldiers brought into Palestine from Italy and placed in this case by 100 under Cornelius. Cornelius is a common Roman name of that day, indicating that a Roman commander was over the “Italian band”.

2A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

From Strong's Concordance, Greek: Devout

“Transliteration: eusebés

Phonetic Spelling: (yoo-seb-ace')

Definition: pious

Usage: pious, God-fearing, devout”.

The implication is that Cornelius insisted that his household be reverent and respectful of the God of Israel as Cornelius himself believed in God. We do not know if Cornelius became a Jew or not, what we know is that God declared Him to be “a devout man.”

3He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

The 9th hour is about 3 PM the time for evening sacrifices at that time. God thought it was fitting to send His angel at this hour perhaps due to the content of what He was going to enlighten not only Cornelius but also Simon Peter. It was a sacred hour.

4And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

Those heat driven prayers we all say that seem at times unanswered and the things of the Spirit that we do are a sweet aroma to God. They are called in various verses “Prayers of the Saints” and a “Sweet Aroma”. “A memorial before God”, means that God remembers the offering and prayers of Cornelius.

5And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter:

Joppa is on the coast of Israel just northwest of Jerusalem about 40 miles and is today called Jaffa. Cornelius was in Caesarea which is northeast of Joppa by about 31 miles.

6He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

Just as a note, tanners were usually located next to streams, lakes, or oceans due to the residue that was generated by their work, it would drift away on the water. There was also the issue of the smell of a tanner, so they were not allowed in city proper but had to be a certain distance away from others dwellings.

7And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

There were no gentiles allowed even into the early church proper. They had to convert to Judaism which included circumcision and following all Jews laws. So, to be declared a devout man, it is likely that both had converted to Judaism. The small band Cornelius was sending consisted of a devout soldier and two household staff.

8And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

Cornelius told his servants what had happened and why he was sending them on this 62-mile journey.

Peter's Vision

(Leviticus 11:1-47; Deuteronomy 14:1-21)

9On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

The following day from when Cornelius received the vision his men set out on their journey.

Another holy hour is mentioned here, the “sixth hour” in Judaism times or hours are dependent upon the season and location. We are so used to clocks that everything revolves around a specific set time that is calculated down to the second in our time regardless of sunrise or sunset.

The Jewish days were and still are in a religious sense divided into 1/12ths depending on the sunrise and sunset. The next verse may give us a clue as to the relative time as being around a meal. It was Jewish tradition to fast during certain times and this may be the case that this “sixth hour” may have been a mid-day mealtime and Simon Peter was not fasting as it says in the next verse that “and would have eaten”. In the next verse we are also told that

Simon Peter became very hungry, so to presume that this was during a mealtime and likely mid-day is reasonable.

10And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

Simon Peter was on the house top praying waiting for a meal to be prepared. While there he fell into a trance.

11And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

A vision of a large sheet, “knit at the four corners”. Strong’s Concordance as to what a “knit” would be.

deo deh'-o: to bind (in various applications, literally or figuratively) -- bind, be in bonds, knit, tie, wind.

Indicating that it was being help up at the corners by some unseen force from heaven, letting it down into our 3-dimensional world so to speak so it could be seen.

12Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

The implication was that this was a really big sheet to contain all these various manners of animals.

13And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

The Law forbid Peter from eating any of these represented animals.

14But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

Peter references the Law in simply saying I follow the Law and the Law forbids me from eating anything in that display.

15And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

We are not told if this is God speaking or an Angel, however, it carries the power of the Word of God changing a pinocle Law, that of what God's Law had previously declared as clean and unclean relative to animals. This voice now declares a change in that Law declaring whatever God "cleanses" in other words when God declares something as clean it is no longer common or unclean and you are not to dispute about it. He is God and can dictate what is Law and what is not Law.

16This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

We will see the number 3 used repeatedly in these verses. As we had previously discovered when God says something three times

it is a red alert to the listener. God is usually speaking something emphatic or revealing a completeness of a thing, event, or person.

In this verse it seems to be used as completing something. The voice said it three times and then withdrew the visible example that was shown Simon Peter, as the message was completed. It does not necessarily mean the message was understood by the hearer, it just means the end of the message in this case. However, the understanding comes at a later point in this instance. The Bible is the best interpreter of the Bible. Aside from the Bible our interpretation is often speculation. In this case God gave a clear understanding of the vision to Simon Peter.

Peter Summoned to Caesarea

17Now 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,

Simon Peter verifies to us that he did not understand the message yet. He was questioning in his mind and heart what he saw, evaluating it against what He knew of God's Word from the Law and Prophets.

The small troop had arrived at where Simon Peter was staying and asked if he was there.

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

19While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

Now begins the answer to the vision that Simon Peter was wrestling with. He had been told to do something that was against the Jewish Law; to kill and eat something that was unclean or common? Curious, why would God tell him to touch let alone kill and eat something that was unclean and legally forbidden?

Now this same Spirit Voice was telling him there were “**three men seek thee**”. There is that 3 again, coincidence?

20Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Simon Peter is told by this Spirit to go down stairs to the men from Cornelius, don't doubt Me on this, because I sent them infers the Spirit from God.

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

We all have a curious nature; it is just a human thing. Especially when a Spirit of God has spoken to us, and He is telling us to do something out of the ordinary. Simon Peter being of that nature inquired as to what this was about. The answer is plain and simple.

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

A Centurion whom we serve is a God-fearing man, whom all of the Jews that know him admire him as an honest and trustworthy man. Our commander was “warned”. This word “warned” seems out of place, according to Strong’s Concordance in the Greek it means:

Transliteration: chrématizó

Phonetic Spelling: (khray-mat-id'-zo)

Definition: to transact business, to make answer

Usage: (originally: I transact business), (a) act. of God: I warn; pass: I am warned by God (probably in response to an inquiry as to one's duty), (b) (I take a name from my public business, hence) I receive a name, am publicly called.

So, the idea is that this word “warned” in this case means that it was a divine warning or suggestion to Cornelius to follow God’s directions precisely. God’s reason was that He wanted to see

Cornelius and his household saved and this was the way God chose to do it. God will open doors that lead to more open doors which is the way the Church has grown over the past several thousand years. So, a divine warning is not a threat it is a means to an end, to bring about God's Will if carried out as God says to.

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

We are not told who accompanied Simon Peter with the three soldiers, we are just told that some of the "brethren from Joppa accompanied him", the next day for the 31 mile trip back to Joppa.

Peter at Caesarea

24And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

Remember this is a bit of hike. Today covering 30 miles would take at speed limit of 60 MPH about 30 minutes. This was an all-day journey to walk 30 miles through hills. Cornelius had no way of communicating with his men so he calculated that they would be there on this day. So, in preparation of the arrival of this Godly messenger Cornelius invited his family and friends to be present. Not knowing the exact time of arrival, they probably waited several hours.

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

We have seen this error in other scriptures but usually involving angels. As with the angels Simon Peter knew his place in the hierarchy of God's Kingdom and he like Cornelius was a servant not to be worshiped.

26But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. 27And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

This additional fulfillment of the New Covenant allowed for Jews and Gentiles to partake of the Glory of God together. It seems like such a major shift in God's approach for the Jews and is covered in just a few sentences. As we study the Acts of the Apostles, we find that it was no small deal for many of the Jewish Believers to accept non-Jews into the Church. There were those especially in Jerusalem that believed for some time after Jesus' resurrection that for a non-Jew to become saved they first had to become Jews through circumcision. That debate is covered in another part of Acts.

28And he said unto them, Ye 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 hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. 29Therefore came I *unto you* without

gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

“Gainsaying” means to contradict something that was said. Peter’s response to being asked to come into a non-Jewish household is that he did not object but immediately came to them. The reason being given is that God had told him to and that was enough. God also showed him that there was no difference between a Jew and a Gentile in God’s eyes. It is why we have God’s declaration of the Church and Heaven as:

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

God has the authority as the Law giver to alter, or abolish anything He chooses.

30And 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,
31And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.
32Send 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 cometh, shall speak unto thee. 33Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

Now in the presence of Simon Peter the Centurion retells the events that led him to send his men to find Simon Peter.

Undoubtedly the Centurions men told Simon of the encounter their commander had with the Spirit but coming directly from the one who had the encounter is always more emotional. The specifics are given and the hearer can see the intensity of what the speaker is saying happened.

Peter now gets the connection between what was said to the Centurion and what was shown him in the vision. It is a declaration that would have a profound effect on the growth of the Church worldwide.

The Gentiles Hear the Good News

34Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: 35But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

This understanding by an Apostle would open doors, slowly at first but open doors to the gentile world. Remember how Jesus was chastised by the ruling religious leaders when he went to Samaria. Even his Apostles were appalled when He spoke to the woman at the well. Little did they know, and Simon Peter was there that a whole new parameter of God's Love was being revealed, one that encompassed the whole world and was not

dependent on race, sex, lineage or any other physical attribute. It would be solely based on Belief.

This group of people present in the Centurions home only knew of the Jewish laws that kept them at a distance. Now this new knowledge that Peter had been given about God's love of all mankind was going to start to take shape as God would move Peter and the other disciples to share the Good News with all men.

36The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)
37That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; 38How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.

Simon Peter declares what he knew from personal experience.

39And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: 40Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; 41Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

Peter describes the pivotal point of the Life and death of Jesus and the key moment of Him being raised from the dead. It is what

all of humanity longs to hear deep in their hearts. But intellect and Satan do all they can to keep man from hearing the life saving eternal words of the Creator God. We are loved and He showed us His love by allowing His Only Son to die in our place, that we could be saved. That is the message Peter was giving these gentiles.

42And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. 43To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

The Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit

(Joel 2:28-32; John 14:15-26; John 16:5-16; Acts 2:1-13; Acts 19:1-7)

44While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

Jesus told us that unless He was to go to the Father that the Comforter would not come. So, just as Jesus said, when you believe, you receive the Holy Spirit the “paraclete” the “comforter”.

45And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

God not only speaks but He acts and the fulfilling of the Holy Spirit on Jews and non-Jews was yet another sign of His Power and Authority to save all mankind.

46For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, 47Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? 48And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

This is one of those verse I mentioned at the beginning that has perhaps led some astray from the absolute truth. That is that the only sign of receiving the Holy Spirit is to speak in tongs. In this case that was an outward event that happened but is not the only manner in which the Holy Spirit is evident in the lives of Believers. More on that later.

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