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Acts 10 is an amazing chapter where God expands the understanding of layering Grace over Law. The Law does not disappear or go away because under the New Covenant the Law continues to exist to show us how far we fall short of God's Righteousness if we were without His Grace. God Himself had written the law and given it through Moses to Israel as a perpetual Law for that exact reason.

As all good humans do when given clear direction, we add clarification to the point of absurdity and confusion. The Jewish leaders did this as well, taking what God had said and expounding on it in ways God never intended but sure sounded good to the religious elites. Usually crafted for all the other people but seldom for the elites themselves. This is what God told Israel when He chose them.

Deuteronomy 7: [7](#)The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: [8](#)But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of

Egypt. [9](#)Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; [10](#)And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face. [11](#)Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day, to do them.

In the Old Covenant, all Jews had to abide by the precise Law including dietary and separation rules from Jews who were unclean and from non-Jews or quasi-Jews in general, both considered ceremonially unclean.

There were some conditions God set for Israel as to those who were unclean but nowhere in the Bible is there a legal reason for a caste system or putting the Jews above all others of God's Creation. They were indeed chosen for a mission from God, the Jews were to be a beacon of light showing the world how the Loving God of Creation wanted all mankind to live. Jesus amplified this path in His Sermon on the Mount and by His Love of all people He met.

Matthew 5: [43](#)Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. [44](#)But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; [45](#)That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. [46](#)For if ye love

them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? [47](#)And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? [48](#)Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

The Law did not stop being the Law for those who chose to live under it after Jesus's Resurrection. The Law is still there for anyone to read and carries out its design to show us how short we fall from God's Glory. If you reject Christ and His Mercy, then you by default will live and be judged by the Law. The Law is Death, Jesus is Life the Choice belongs to each person individually.

But God in His Omnipotence created a New Covenant, one that He had told us was coming years in advance through His Son Jesus the Messiah. Those who had lived under the law had a difficult time readjusting their thinking considering the New Covenant. The Law was the Law to the Jewish religious hierarchy. It is where they got their power over others. To change that ideal was almost intolerable for some. But God chose Mercy over the Law putting the full weight of the Law, "death" on His Son for our benefit! The dedicated Jews, even many Christian Jews could not fathom God saving the Gentiles as they were in their opinion "common" or "unclean".

Peter Reports to the Church at Jerusalem

1And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

Meaning, the Apostles in Jerusalem proper and nearby areas got word that the gentiles had received salvation, or at least that was the claim. The problem in their eyes and will be addressed by Simon Peter and later by Paul is: did they get circumcised; did they convert to Judaism? Did they comply with the Law? Additional religious legal issues were at hand as well besides circumcision and the law was the religious leaders hammer and the people were the nail. Even in this new Christianity, the Jewish leadership even though becoming saved were still convicted by the Law of their youth.

2And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

No good deed goes unpunished, especially in a legalistic religious setting. Those entrenched in religion that had in many ways gone far beyond what God commanded and fell far short in other ways of what God commanded are now going to judge their fellow Apostle on the religious legal aspects, not on how God was working in the lives of gentile, non-Jews in this New Age of Grace.

We could spend days studying the idea behind gentile uncleanness but to my knowledge nowhere in the law is that declared by God. It is however implied that anyone who worships idols among a long list of other things is “unclean” according to rabbinical teaching. The fact that the term “heathens” and “pagans” were often included in the identification of gentiles anyone regardless of the type of person they were, were lumped in with pagan and heathens simply because they were not “Jews”.

This type of stereotyping continues this day in the middle east. When I was in Lebanon in 1982, it became clear that if you were not a Muslim then you were called a Christian.

I mean no defense of the evil that the pagans et. al committed, it was just a prejudiced manner that the Jews lit on to include all people as evil who were not Jews contrary to God’s teaching.

3Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

Ephesians 2: 11Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; 12That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: 13But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. 14For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between

us; **15**Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, **even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;** for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; **16**And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: **17**And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. **18**For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. (Emphasis mine)

From Got Questions

“The word Gentile is an English translation of the Hebrew word goyim (“people, nations”) and the Greek word ethne (“nations, people groups, people”). The Latin Vulgate translated these words as gentilis, and this word was then carried over into English as “Gentile.” The term refers to a person who is not a Jew.”

4But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

Rehearsed in our vernacular seems to indicate that Peter knew he was going to be challenged by those of the “circumcision”.

Looking at the original Greek what he did was he “explained” from the beginning in order what had taken place.

Strong’s Concordance

“Transliteration: ektithémi

Phonetic Spelling: (ek-tith'-ay-mee)

Definition: to set forth, to declare

Usage: (a) I put out or expose a child, (b) mid: I set forth, expound, explain.”

5I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a

great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me: **6** Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. **7** And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. **8** But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. **9** But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common. **10** And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

Recounting the events Peter had experienced in the order in which they happened. Nothing different here, Peter was simply telling those who challenged him as to the order of things that happened. This was to answer the question from vs 3 above. Did you go in and eat with these common unclean gentiles?

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. **12** And the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

By saying, “these six brethren accompanied me”, indicates that there were six other believing Jews that had gone with Peter from Jerusalem to Joppa and from Joppa to Caesarea and from Caesarea back to Jerusalem and were standing there with Peter as he repeated what had happened in Caesarea to those that were questioning him.

13And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; 14Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. 15And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

Fellas, the same thing that happened to us at Pentecost happened again in Caesarea but this time to a group of gentiles.

As a side note here, notice when the Holy Spirit fell on these gentiles. When Peter began to speak the Word of God to these gentiles what happened? The Holy Spirit fell on these gentiles. What are we told by God about His Word?

Isaiah 55:11 11So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Isaiah 45:23 By Myself I have sworn; truth has gone out from My mouth, a word that will not be revoked: Every knee will bow before Me, every tongue will swear allegiance.

Isaiah 46:10 I declare the end from the beginning, and ancient times from what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and all My good pleasure I will accomplish.'

It is beyond contestation that the Will of God is to SAVE sinners, that is HIS GOOD PLEASURE.

16Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

Simon Peter remembers the Word that John the Baptist spoke on this very subject of Spiritual Baptism. The Baptism of the Holy Ghost is a Spiritual Baptism unlike the water baptism that is of the flesh. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit comes by the Word of God and creates Faith in all who Believe.

Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

17Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

These Jewish Believers were sounding like the Pharisees. Simon Peter was telling them if they wanted to contend with God, knock themselves out but he was not going to challenge God.

Luke 15:2 And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

18When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Bullseye, they got it quickly and knew that what God had called clean, they had better get on board. This issue is not over, and we will see in other books that Peter and others even fall back to the legal understanding and is chastised by Paul. When they do so it appears due to peer pressure.

Acts 15: [1](#)And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.[2](#) When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

Galatians 2: [11](#)But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. [12](#)For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. [13](#)And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. [14](#)But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

The Church at Antioch

[19](#)Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

If you recall, when Stephen was stoned to death, Saul of Tarsus was the one holding the cloaks of those stoning Stephen. Saul and those who wanted to kill people of the “Way” scared all Believe and many fled to those cities cited above. However, as this was very early in the preaching of the Gospel, it caused the gospel to reach further out. That was the plan all along, to move the Gospel to the world.

20And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

In reviewing a number of commentaries, the term “Cyprus and Cyrene” is a reference to being either Hellenists or Greek gentiles. Hellenists were Greek speaking Jews for the most part and of course Greek speaking gentiles were like any other gentile, simply not Jewish. In either case the common language was Greek so either the Believing Hellenists or Believing Greeks would bring the Good News of Jesus Christ in the Greek language.

21And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Again God’s Word does not return void.

Isaiah 55:11 11So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall

accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Romans 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

22Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

Barnabas a longtime friend of Saul of Tarsus (Paul) was the likely choice.

Acts 9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

This area where Barnabas was going was where he was raised so he would fit well with what God was doing there.

23Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord. **24**For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

Sometimes we are told by Jesus that a prophet was not accepted in his hometown.

Luke 4:24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

People that know us, know our past and many of our indiscretions have a hard time overlooking what they know when we try to tell them the Good News. However, strangers, who don't know us seem more willing to hear from strangers than from those they know so well.

**25Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:
26And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**

According to this verse, the term “the way” was replaced for the first time with the term “Christian” “s”.

Acts 26:8 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

Galatians 1:21 21Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. 22I was still unknown by sight to the churches of Judea which were in Christ; 23but only, they kept hearing, “He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.” 24And they were glorifying God because of me.

27And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. 28And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

30Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

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