



# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The Record of the Beginning of Jesus' Reign

## Chapter Ten

### INTRODUCTION

**NOTE:** The works and purposes of Jesus and his gospel have for the most part been counterfeited by the churches and twisted into a hybrid of the Persian religion of Mithraism. They call it "Christianity," but it is not. The things Jesus taught and died for are not taught in churches. This explains why America is suffering. Her base of morality is built upon the false foundation of church and state. Christ's institution – the ecclesia – has been forgotten.

**A**S WE STUDY the Book of Acts, one thing is clear: what people today commonly do in "churches" bears no resemblance whatsoever to the activities of the apostles and the first-century disciples. Peter and his comrades were introducing the civil concept of the Kingdom of God. They were re-introducing the concept of society based upon Bible. In contrast, the Beast System promotes "church and state" ... neither of which are of Christ. Churchgoers think their society is Christian ... but it isn't.

Jesus taught the disciples, and the disciples taught the world, the truth about government and about civil freedom. These were the works of the ecclesia in the book of Acts. The ecclesial civil system is the Kingdom of God. That Good News stands in contrast to the usual church doctrine that says God has left us on our own until sometime in the distant future when He plans to rescue a few people off the Earth and take them to another place ... and meanwhile we are supposed to just live with disappointment.

However, the Good News of the Kingdom told of a better way of life ... not being slaves under evil priests and governments. Christ was the true King, and his ecclesia (his Kingdom) was alive.

If we accept the definition of a "kingdom" as "a people with a king as their leader," we can clearly see that this "Good News" was undermining the institution of church & state. After all, with Jesus as **The King**, where does that leave all the kings and bureaucracies of central government? They lose their exalted status don't they? For this threat, the disciples were targeted for elimination by those governments and bureaucracies, and the Jewish priesthood.

Churches, on the other hand, present no such threat to government. Churches get along with man's government very well. Churches sweep away vital truths and replace them with faulty, childish, unrealistic concepts that can never succeed in the real world. Those who settle for church games ignore truth and reality – the very essence of the work of the ecclesia.

In chapter ten we'll examine how the churches have misused this section of scripture and confused the kingdom message by substituting an inaccurate version of the theme of Peter's vision at Joppa. The churches have perverted the natural plan of God, and helped to destroy man's ability to reason and find truth. In rejecting God's laws (by misinterpretation), the churches have, in effect, rejected the Creator's "instruction manual." This is not a trivial matter, for in the following chapter (Acts 11) we see a restatement of the same vision, again exposing the lie of the churches regarding Peter's vision and the food laws.

Acts 10 tells of a lesson in symbolism given to Peter concerning his attitude and the state of his Israelite brethren. In the vision God used physical symbols to explain a spiritual concept. This message has been lost to Churchgoers because churches teach the abandonment of God's laws and they have no time for truth and reality.

In Acts 10, Peter is shown that his grasp of the gospel message needed some fine tuning, and that Christ can cleanse a man's heart regardless of his situation or physical location on Earth. This was somewhat of a revelation in his day, especially in Jerusalem, because the people there thought "salvation" was somehow exclusive to Jerusalem and its temple system. The confusion existed because the Babylonian Jews had usurped and twisted the true way of God. Even Peter, to some extent, had been affected by it ... thus, the need for the vision sent to him in Joppa.

### CHANGING THE HEARTS OF MEN

The book of Acts records the beginning effect of the gospel upon the lives of men. Those who heard it and internalized it received new hearts and new lives – a new way to see themselves, God, and the world around them. This change was not the result of an order of churches ... but rather in spite of the churches.

Remember, the churches of that day were called "synagogues." The work of Christ was occurring outside of those synagogues/churches. It was happening on the road to Damascus. It was happening in the streets of Jerusalem and Joppa. It was appearing in Gaza, on the rooftops and in people's houses in Caesarea. It was happening everywhere EXCEPT in churches. In fact, the

evidence indicates that churches are perhaps the hardest place for truth to survive. Maybe that's the place Jesus refers to as "rocky ground" in the parable of the sower. The hardest place to grow anything is in a rocky weed patch. Nothing but weeds can survive. Weeds grow there, but they produce nothing good.

Remember, also that the King James version of the Bible uses the word "church" wrongly. The right word is ECCLESIA – not church! The word "church" was inserted by the translators to replace "ecclesia." An ecclesia is very different from a church.

An ecclesia is a political entity. Therefore, a Christian ecclesia is a Christian body politic. A Christian ecclesia system is built upon the reign of Christ – not the state. A church, on the other hand, is a state-sanctioned holding pen for weak and confused people who are drawn together by their common need for a central power from which they can derive an identity. The state accepts and recognizes churches and their members. This brings all into the church/state system.

The state, as an institution, functions as an alternative (usurper) to the reign of Christ. The church, then, is a state-owned-and-controlled institution for the purpose of grooming citizens to fit into the state's political system. Churches are in league with the state, and both are part of the Beast system.

When the translators of the King James Version of the Bible inserted "church" in the place of "ecclesia" they committed a fraud that has confused and derailed English-speaking people ever since. An ecclesia and a church are entirely different institutions with entirely different purposes. (For more information on "ecclesia" see ACM's *What Is The Ecclesia?*)

**QUESTION:** How can you say all churches are bad? You sound like a person who had one or two bad experiences in churches which happened to be poor examples of what a church should be. Just because there are a few bad churches, that doesn't mean all churches are bad!

**QUESTION:** Even though it may be difficult, shouldn't we be spending our efforts to educate the good people in churches rather than the atheists or other non-Christians? Surely, through persistence, if we could convince a sincere pastor or two, they might be able to turn their entire congregations around to the truth.

## ACTS 10:1-8 CORNELIUS' VISION

There was a certain man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of the Italian band, as it was called,

A devout man, fearing God together with all his house, giving many gifts of mercy to the people, and praying to God unfailingly.

About the ninth hour of the day he saw plainly in a vision a messenger of God coming toward him, and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

And gazing upon him in fear he said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and

your gifts of mercy have come up in remembrance before God."

"And now send men to Joppa and call for one Simon, surnamed Peter;"

"He is the guest of one Simon, a tanner whose house is beside the sea."

And when the messenger that spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among them that were loyal to him;

And having declared all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

**“**CENTURIAN” is a Roman word that means “leader of a band of one hundred men.”

Cornelius was apparently a captain or a leader of Roman soldiers. That was an unlikely position for a devout man who feared God with all his house. Cornelius worked for a government that opposed Christ’s kingdom! Christ sometimes picks unlikely men to use as vessels of his work.

Apparently, Cornelius had been diligent in prayer and was a devout

man. The Lord blessed him by introducing him to Peter ... and no doubt changed his life.

Notice that Cornelius saw a “messenger.” As we have mentioned in previous lessons, the word “angel” simply means “messenger.” This messenger appeared in a vision.

As a result of this vision, Cornelius sent two of his household servants and a trusted soldier to meet Peter.

**QUESTION:** Why did people place trust in visions in Peter’s day, but today, people who have “visions” are considered just some crackpot trying to get attention?

## ACTS 10:9-16 PETER’S VISION

The next day on their journey, as they were nearing the city, Peter went up to the housetop about the sixth hour to pray:

But he became very hungry and wanted to eat. While they were preparing, he fell into a trance,

And he saw the opened heaven, and a descending vessel as a great piece of linen being let down to the earth by its four corners:

Wherein were all the four-footed creatures of the earth, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the heaven.

And there came a voice to him, “Rise, Peter, sacrifice and eat.”

But Peter said, “Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten things that are common and unclean.”

And the voice spoke again to him the second time, “What things God cleansed, call you not common.”

This occurred three times, and then the vessel was taken up again into the heaven.

**T**HE TIMING of these events was carefully planned. God sent a vision to Cornelius in Caesarea. Then He sent a related vision to Peter in Joppa just as three men from Caesarea were arriving to seek him out.

God also timed Peter's vision to occur shortly before meal time. He had gone up on the housetop to pray. Apparently, he was quite hungry as he waited for the meal. Peter's hunger affected his perception of the vision since it had to do with food.

By means of this carefully orchestrated scenario God taught Peter an important lesson. But, today there is great confusion about its meaning. Did God want Peter to tell the world that He had rescinded his food laws (re: Lev. 11; Deut. 14) which clearly describe the clean and unclean, and which animals were good for human consumption?

Most churches use this passage to try and prove just that – that the designation between clean animals and unclean animals had ceased to exist, and that all manner of animals are now acceptable for man to eat. Preachers take particular pleasure in proclaiming that the old-fashioned idea of clean and unclean animals, as defined in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, has been discarded and replaced by a more modern and up to date philosophy ... “and forget law.”

Astoundingly, most so-called Christian churches seem to take pride in saying that God's laws no longer have any effect on Christians. One wonders how they can justify throwing away God's laws when Jesus said, in the New Testament, that none of the law or words of God had changed:

*17. Think not that I came to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I came not come to destroy them, but to accomplish them.*

*18. For truly I say to you, until the*

*heaven and the earth pass away, NOT ONE IOTA OR ONE JOT SHALL PASS FROM THE LAW, UNTIL ALL HAS COME TO PASS.*

*19. Whoever therefore shall do away with one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of the heavens: but whoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens.*

Matthew 5:17-19

Obviously, ALL had not yet come to pass at that time, and ALL has not yet come to pass. This simple fact indicts all churches that teach men to ignore God's law.

Churches only reveal their spiritual void in this matter. The truth is that these very scriptures they use to try to prove the food laws were done away in fact do just the opposite. **THIS ENTIRE PASSAGE ACTUALLY PROVES THAT THE FOOD LAWS ARE INDEED STILL IN EFFECT!**

By analyzing this vision more closely we'll see how it works.

In ancient Israel the common people didn't usually eat at tables like we do today. They didn't pull up a chair and scoot it under a table. Instead, they would spread a linen out on a surface – sometimes the floor or ground – and set the food on the linen. Thus, what Peter saw descending from the heavens in this vision represented a dining surface – or in our day a table cloth.

On this sheet (or dining surface) Peter saw all manner of animals – both clean and unclean. The audible voice said, in effect, “You are hungry. Kill one of the animals and eat it.”

Churches claim that God was telling Peter to break the Bible food laws and eat an unclean animal. But the careful reader will see this is not the case.

Peter protests: “I have never eaten things that are common and unclean.” To which God replies, “What things God cleansed, call you not common.”

This scenario repeats itself three times and then the vision ends. Did Yahweh rescind his law that declared which animals were good for human consumption?

The churches claim these verses prove that Christ had abolished God's laws. But let us look at the key passages to see if what they claim is correct or even makes sense.

Verse 12 tells us that Peter saw all kinds of animals on the linen:

*12. Wherein were all the four-footed creatures of the earth, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the heaven.*

“... all creatures” INCLUDED BOTH CLEAN AND UNCLEAN! But Peter said he couldn't eat any of them. Why?

According to the Judean ritual code, animals used for sacrifices had to be of the kind that were designated “clean.” Not only that, they had to be kept from close proximity to animals designated “unclean.” Such proximity caused it to lose its status of “clean.” When this happened, the clean animal became “common” and unacceptable for sacrificial purposes. Of course, the actual edibility and quality of the meat didn't change. But, it lost its “clean” status ... for purposes of sacrifice and food.

“Common,” according to Peter's use of the term, did not refer to an unclean animal (created unclean). Rather, “common” referred to an animal, or meat, that was created clean but had become “common by association.” The Judean code taught that a clean animal could BECOME defiled (i.e., common) by association with unclean animals. Thus, a “common” animal was one that had been clean before, but had been defiled by contact – being “in common” – with an unclean animal. This was according to the sacrificial laws of Judea ... by which Peter's thinking had been influenced.

The very use of the word

“common” established the fact that there were both clean AND unclean animals on the linen in Peter’s vision. But Peter looked upon the clean animals as defiled (made common) by their physical proximity to the unclean animals sharing the space on the linen.

When you put this all together it offers no indication whatsoever that God canceled his food laws. Peter was a hand-picked apostle of Christ. He had actually accompanied Jesus for three years. He was motivated by holy spirit. Yet, he recognized and kept God’s laws. In fact, at this point in his life, Peter stated clearly that he did not eat unclean meats. Moreover, he didn’t even eat meats that might have lost their “clean” status by becoming “common.”

Also notice that God did NOT say, “kill an unclean animal and eat it.” He just said “kill and eat.” Peter was not told to disobey God’s law of clean and unclean. He could have selected a clean animal to kill and eat. But, this was the one point Peter was unclear about. When Peter protested God’s instruction to kill and eat, he was saying, “There are no animals fit for food on the linen because the clean animals have become common due to their contact with the unclean.” This one point, of which Peter was unclear, was the very point God was going to use to teach Peter a lesson about His work of salvation.

But, before we go on, let us take a moment to consider carefully a vital point that has already been made! This scenario occurred a good while AFTER the death and raising of Jesus – i.e., AFTER the institution of the New Covenant. The Old Covenant had been obsolete since before Israel’s captivity over seven-hundred years earlier ... and Peter certainly knew and understood that. Therefore, Peter’s reaction and statement were truly significant – especially in regard to church claims that Jesus did away with the law ... including the law of the clean and unclean.

When Peter made reference to the animals being clean or unclean, HE ESTABLISHED THE FACT THAT THE LAW WAS STILL IN

EFFECT! According to Peter, some animals were still unclean. Peter obviously did not think the law was done away. If Jesus had canceled God’s law, as churches claim, then certainly Peter would have known it at that time. To suggest that Peter would not have been aware of such a basic principle – had it been true – is to suggest that Peter was unqualified to be an apostle.

Churches today claim that the main feature of the New Covenant is its lack of law and its universal application. Yet, here was Peter – the personal student and Apostle of Christ, undoubtedly aware of the New Covenant – still obeying the food laws. This represents a major conflict between Peter and the churches. Thus, preachers who teach that the law has been done away are attempting to refute Peter.

The vision addressed something beyond the food laws. The food laws were not the point, but were being used to make a point. What had God cleansed? Had God cleansed the unclean animals? No.

Some animals are naturally good for man to eat, and some are not. Those that are unfit (unclean) for food were created that way. Their purposes in God’s creation are other than for food for man. Vultures are perfectly good creatures. And, while they naturally may eat man, the reverse is not acceptable. ... for their flesh is not good for man to eat. It never has been, and it never will be. It is just the nature of a vulture as God created him. The same is true with swine, dogs, snakes, cats, and skunks. These are not for man’s diet. They were created for other purposes.

An unclean animal is classified

unclean because of its physical and biological make-up. It is unclean based upon its general traits: its natural diet, the kind of digestive system it has, the kind of environment it inhabits, the kind of flesh it grows, the kind of diseases and parasites it carries, etc.. In order for God to change an animal’s classification from “unclean” to “clean” it would require that the whole animal be changed. It must, in essence, become another animal altogether. That is the only way an animal of the unclean variety could become clean. But no one claims this was what God did.

So, what had God cleansed? Obviously He did not change lions into deer, and swine into lambs. He did NOT change the biological make-up of his beasts. What, then?

He was cleansing Israelites who had become “common” with the heathen ... not by ritual but by what they believed! The focus of this vision was on the “common” – not the unclean. In the vision, Peter was told that the clean animals on the sheet were not defiled by their proximity with unclean animals.

The food value of meat cannot be affected one way or the other by “ritual defilement.” “Ritualistic purity” had been an important factor in Judea. But the biological make-up of an animal – which makes its flesh either clean or unclean to eat – cannot be physically changed by external ritual as per the Babylonian/Jewish ritual code.

Now we have narrowed the subject down to the specific point God wanted to show Peter. The key was the word “common,” not the word “unclean.”

**QUESTION:** But aren’t you forgetting Genesis 9:3? It states: “EVERY moving thing that lives shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you ALL things.” This seems to verify the idea that all animals were edible at that time.

## ACTS 10:17-24 LED BY THE SPIRIT

But while Peter puzzled in himself as to what was meant by this vision he had seen, behold, the men sent by Cornelius had made inquiry about Simon's house, and were standing at the gate,

And they called out and inquired whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, was a guest there.

But as Peter was going over in his mind about the vision, the spirit said, "Look, three men seek you."

"Arise therefore, and go down and join them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

Then Peter went down to the men and said, "Look, I am he whom you seek: what is the cause that brought you here?"

And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man that fears God, and of good report among the whole nation of the Judeans, was instructed by a holy messenger from God to call you to his house and to hear what you say.

Then he invited them in as guests. And the next day he arose and went together with them, and some of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

And on the following day he entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius was expecting them, having called together his relatives and close friends.

**F**IRST, let us notice that Peter was struggling to figure out the meaning of the vision. However, churches teach that the message was simple: i.e., "Kill an animal – any animal – and eat it. Don't worry about whether it is "clean" or "unclean" ... that law was done away."

If, indeed, this had been the meaning of the vision we would be forced to admit that Peter was rather dense not to have understood it. After all, what would have been so puzzling about such a simple message? In any case, we see that this popularly-held belief of the churches was certainly not obvious to Peter. **VERSE 17 SAYS HE WAS PUZZLED BY THE VISION!** Was Peter incredibly dim-witted? Was he "learning disabled"? Don't you find it rather peculiar that some people today think they can so easily understand the meaning of the vision with only a cursory reading, and with no background study, when in fact Peter found it puzzling? The

preachers assume that God commanded Peter to eat the unclean because the prohibition had been taken away making all animals clean. This cleansing of the unclean animals, it is further assumed, symbolized the cleansing of the Gentiles who were supposedly represented by the unclean animals – thus, showing that salvation was extended to the non-Israelites as well. That is a fairly simple concept to grasp, but that was **NOT** the message Peter was given in this vision. As we are going to see, what the churches claim to be obvious is actually an illusion.

The truth is that salvation was never exclusive to Israel alone. The law, the word of God, and the ecclesia were all introduced **THROUGH** Israel. They were given **TO** Israel, but not exclusively **FOR** Israel. Israel's prime purpose was to receive God's word and be a light to the nations of the world. The law and the word were given to Israel so she could be the conduit to take them to

the world. The nation of Israel came out of Abraham. God told Abraham that through him He would bless all the families of the earth (Gen. 12:2-30). That was the plan even before the nation of Israel existed. It wasn't a new concept with the advent of Christ. All men from the time of creation – Israelite or non-Israelite – have been included somewhere in God's plan. Israel was created to be God's "firstborn"; his vessel to bring his salvation to all nations.

So we see that the churches' theory that God had to change something in order to include the non-Israelites in his plan of salvation is just another fabrication to pervert the word of God and confuse people.

The description of Peter's vision is tied into the entire context of the chapter. Notice how the vision directly ties into what follows – namely, the divine timing of the arrival of the three men sent by Cornelius. They call at Peter's gate just as his vision ends. This is the beginning of the vital second half of

the story ... which will give us the meaning of the vision.

Realizing that the vision was from God, and that an important lesson is in the making, Peter knew that the timing of his visitors' arrival was not just a coincidence.

Peter sensed that these three men had something to do with what God was trying to teach him in the vision, so he proceeded on faith, doubting nothing, realizing that God would eventually reveal His intentions.

When Peter asked the three men why they were there at the front gate, he discovered that a man (Cornelius) in another city had received a message from God. That message was related to the vision Peter had just experienced. He could see the hand of God working in this situation. He thought maybe the answer to the meaning of the vision would be found in Caesarea.

So Peter invited the men in, and the next day they, along with some of Peter's friends, headed for Caesarea where Cornelius was waiting.

**QUESTION:** In traumatic and critical times of decision, when Christians really need an unmistakable sign, an answer, or direction from God, why does He remain aloof and vague? Many Christians pray and struggle over tough decisions, and finally, after receiving no communication from God, make a choice ... all the while not knowing if it is really the correct one. Why doesn't God give more people visions with answers as He did Peter? How can one find out what God would have him do in a particular tough situation?

## **ACTS 10:25-26 WORSHIP JESUS NOT MEN**

And it occurred that as Peter arrived Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshipped him.

But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up! I myself am a man."

**P**ETER corrected Cornelius when he attempted to worship him. He let Cornelius know that we are not to worship men.

Man has always had a natural propensity for idolatry. And in most cases idolatry originates, in one way or another, in the worship of men. This occurs because man tends to see himself as the center of creation. Since "self" is man's ultimate idol, he will generally follow after leaders who exploit "self" and promote selfishness.

To self-worshippers "truth" is seen as "that which benefits me." "Success" becomes "that which glorifies me." "Godliness" is "that which upholds me." And a "leader" is "anyone who justifies me."

Self-centered people tend to seek out "celebrities" or "personalities" to worship. Peter did not allow Cornelius to start on that track. It

continues to happen today, in man's government, civic organizations and especially in churches! People emulate personalities that appear to reflect successful egos. This mistaken reasoning leads them to think that God also is selfish, and that true worship consists of playing to God's ego via the priest (or preacher) of their church.

This philosophy is known as "the Cult of Personality" and constitutes an important facet of the church world. If a group of people make an effort to form a "church," the eventual, inescapable result will be a cult of personality ... because the very spirit of a church foments this mentality.

## **ACTS 10:27-33 THE LESSON REVEALED**

And as he talked with him, he went in and found many that had come together.

And he said to them, "You well know it is forbidden for a Judean man to keep company or approach one of another tribe; but God revealed to me that I should call no man common or unclean.

"Therefore, when I was called I came without objection. Now, I ask, for what word did you call me?"

And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, at the ninth hour, I was praying in my house, and, behold, a man in bright clothing stood in my sight,

"And he said, 'Cornelius, your prayer is heard before God, and your gifts of mercy are remembered.

“Send therefore to Joppa, and call Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is a guest at Simon the tanner’s house beside the sea.’

“Therefore, I immediately sent to you; and you did well in coming here. Now, therefore, we are all here present before God to hear the things that are commanded you by the Lord.”

**A**PPARENTLY, Peter had figured out the meaning of the vision while on his way to Caesarea. Then, upon arriving at Caesarea he entered Cornelius’ house where people were gathered to hear his message from God. This, then, made sense to Peter. God was cleansing the hearts of men, not only in Judea, but in Caesarea as well.

In verse 28, Peter introduces himself by reminding the listeners about the Judean tradition of not associating with anyone of another tribe or nation. Such association, it was believed, would cause the Judean to become “common” (defiled by association). This also caused him to lose his access to the temple in Jerusalem. To a Judaist, this was like being made unclean. A defiled (common) Judaist was forced to suffer temporary disconnection from the temple and its priesthood. To the Judaist, this would have been tantamount to, say, excommunication to a Catholic, or an Anglican being denied burial in holy ground.

Peter continued, “But God revealed to me that I should call no MAN common or unclean.” This, in fact, is why he agreed to come to them at Caesarea even though they weren’t of “the circumcision.”

Peter explained the meaning of the vision. The real subject was MEN – NOT ANIMALS. The point was not about hogs and sheep, but about MEN! God was telling Peter that He was calling and cleansing men in other lands too, and they were not to be rejected as “common.”

Furthermore, it is worth noting here that the ritual code which claimed that Judaists were superior and exclusive was a Jewish tradition – not a Bible law. This Jewish religious ritual code came not from the Old Testament. Rather, it was a Jewish import from Babylon. Judeans

learned doctrines from Babylon which was their mother religion. When Jerusalem was repatriated by King Cyrus, in 536 B.C., approximately forty-thousand to fifty-thousand displaced people (mostly Israelites) moved back to Jerusalem and integrated in with the Assyrians and Babylonians that had repopulated the land of Judah since the time the true Judahites (Israelites) were removed into captivity some 600 years earlier. The Babylonian imports brought with them the Babylonian religion to Judea, and this became the established religion of the day ... now called “Judaism.” The Judahites had already adopted heathen religion even before they were taken captive into Babylon. In fact, this was part of the cause of her national downfall and eventual captivity. Idolatry had ruined the nation, and in captivity her idolatry just increased.

Thus, Babylonian religion had become the established religion in Jerusalem. The Persian religions of Zoroaster and Mithras guided them as they built a temple and formed a priesthood. They published it as a reconstruction of the Old Covenant priesthood ... but it wasn’t. It was the new Babylonianism. This culture came to be called Pharisaism, Rabbinism, Judaism, Jewishness, etc.. No matter what name it takes, or how it masquerades, it is still Babylonianism. Its holy book is the **Babylonian Talmud**.

Jewish culture was an attempt to resurrect “the former glory” of Babylon. Although Jerusalem never rose to Babylon’s greatness she nonetheless was called the “Daughter of Babylon” – see Is. 47 & 48; Jer. 51:33-35; Zech. 2:7. Western churches wrongly teach that first-century Judaism was patterned after Old-Covenant Israel. Jewish culture was Babylonian through-and-through.

The doctrine of exclusive favor of God, and ritual superiority, was a doctrine from Babylonian religion. It did not come from Moses or from the Bible.

After the fall of Babylon, the spirit of “that great city” was reborn in Jerusalem. The rebuilt temple and priesthood were of Babylon – not Israel. The system brought with it all the political and religious tradition of Babylon. These political/religious doctrines were later referred to as “the traditions of the elders,” which were opposed to “God’s word.”

1. *Then scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came to Jesus and asked, “Why do your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they do not (ritually) wash their hands when they eat bread.”*

2. *But he answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?”*

Matthew 15:1-2

5. *Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, “Why is it your disciples do not conduct themselves according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their meals with common (not ritually washed) hands?”*

6. *He said to them, “Isaiah well prophesied about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with the lips, but their heart they hold far from me.’*

7. *“But in vain they worship me teaching as doctrine the commandments of men.”*

8. *“For, setting aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men.”*

9. And he said to them, "Cleverly you set aside the commandment of God that you may observe your tradition."

Mark 7:5-9

The Babylonish-Jewish priesthood had brainwashed the people into believing a whole set of Babylonish rituals (traditions) like the one that taught that God lived and worked exclusively in Jerusalem's Babylonian temples. And, as we will see later on, this Babylonish ritual code required that people worship in Jerusalem and be circumcised to make them "clean" (Acts 11:2-3; 15:5;).

So Peter was learning that the Judeans (himself included) had been duped with wrong concepts and rituals. There must have been many Christians at that time who were still partially duped and afraid to go against Judean tradition. This was the point of the vision. Peter was being told that he should not refuse to talk to his Israelite brethren scattered into other nations. Peter was learning that the Judean temple and priesthood system was not what he had thought. It was the Babylonian Beast System ... built to serve the priesthood instead of God. It was an abomination – like synagogues and churches today.

In the vision, the analogy of the animals made a point about men. The linen sheet represented the world outside Jerusalem and Judea. The animals represented men in the nations of the world. To Peter, the unclean animals represented heathen, and the clean animals represented Israelites who had become "common" because they lived among the heathen and were no longer clean.

The question was: could an Israelite be cleansed in other nations? Were foreigners hopelessly "common" and lost? The point made by the vision was that God was calling-out and cleansing his Israel people in all nations where they had been scattered. Peter learned that Jerusalem and Judea were not unique to the calling and cleansing of Christ's people. Israelites were scattered throughout the nations of the world. But Jesus informed Peter that being a Judean did not make him superior to his Israelite brethren living outside Judea. Israelites in Judea were no different. All Israel needed cleansing in the same way, and for the same reasons.

Peter and his traveling companions lived in Judea. Cornelius and his friends in Caesarea lived in Samaria. Both groups were Israelites by race. A good percentage of both Judeans and Samaritans were Israelite by race. Nonetheless, they maintained separate systems. The label of "Judean" (Jew) was NOT a racial label. It was a RELIGIOUS label. Judeans trained in the Babylonian religion thought of themselves as the religious elite. They thought they had exclusive access to God. But Peter was learning that Judeans were not what they claimed to be.

Also, as we continue, please notice that here again is the confusion of the churches. Typically, the churches teach that this scenario somehow showed that Christ was extending salvation to the non-Israelites. But, the truth is salvation was never exclusive or unique to Israel; it had always been available to any people who earnestly sought

it – including non-Israelites. This was not even the subject of Peter's vision. The vision was about taking the Good News of Christ's Reign to Israelites in other nations. It did not address non-Israelites. God was telling Peter to stop rejecting his called-out Israelite brethren in other lands.

By reading the entire context of chapter ten we see that Peter's vision does not teach that God had a post-creation change-of-mind regarding what to do with the non-Israelite people of the world. Nor was it about the edibility of certain meats. In fact, the vision DID NOT even focus on the subject of non-Israelites! It focused only on the so-called COMMON!

God actually used the very law (clean and unclean) that the churches reject, to make His point about a bogus Judean ritual. The actual point of this vision literally destroys the church doctrine of anti-nomianism (lawlessness). If the law of the clean and unclean foods had been changed in Peter's day, God would not have used this illustration to make the point to Peter. Clean animals were still clean, and unclean were still unclean. Otherwise, the question of whether or not the physical composition of the flesh of a clean animal could be changed (defiled) by merely standing in the vicinity of an unclean animal would have been pointless.

If God had somehow canceled His own law of clean and unclean animals, then the whole lesson would have been nonsense. The vision presupposed the concept of clean and unclean to address the concept of "common."

**CONSIDER THIS:** The wrong teaching of the meaning of Peter's vision (that God's laws were abolished) is in some ways comparable to the argument being used by some against the Apostle Paul. The Paul-bashers claim he taught people that God's law was abolished. For this, they call Paul a fraud and false prophet. But before you swallow this sensational claim, consider the straightforward study this lesson presents about Peter's vision and its meaning ... in contrast to the interpretation the churches have given it.

The Paul-bashers are misreading and misteaching Scripture about Paul just as the churches misread and misteach this passage about Peter.

## ACTS 10:34-36 GOD JUDGES THE HEART, NOT THE FACE.

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, "The truth that I received is that God is not a taker of faces:

But in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness, is acceptable to him.

He sent the word to the sons of Israel, declaring the good news of peace through Jesus Christ: He is Lord of them all:

**I**N VERSE 34, the literal translation is "God is not a taker of faces." This states the concept more clearly than, "God is not a respecter of persons" as the KJV Version has it. God doesn't judge a man on surface values. Instead, He looks under the surface, or beneath the "face" – He looks at the heart of the man.

*4. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Hebrews 4:12

This verse tells us that no one gets a pass based upon exterior ritual amenities. God judges men by the thoughts and intents of their hearts.

It is also important to realize that this is not just a New Testament teaching. God had always judged people by their hearts. The Judeans had wrong ideas; wrong doctrines. It came not from Scripture, but from Babylonian/Jewish tradition.

In 1 Samuel 16 God used this principle in choosing a man to lead Israel. Samuel was called to appoint a king in Israel, and here's how it came down:

*1. And the Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go, I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have selected a king among his sons."*

*3. ... and you shall anoint to me him that I name to you.*

*4. And Samuel did that which the Lord spoke, and came to Bethlehem*

*5. ... And he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.*

*6. And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him."*

*7. But the Lord said to Samuel, "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord sees not as a man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."*

1 Samuel 16:1-7

Eliab was one of Jesse's sons. Evidently he stood out in a crowd. But God warned Samuel not to judge him by his external appearance. Instead, God chose David.

It is important also to understand God's instruction with regard to foreigners. America has been inundated with propaganda promoting interracial mixing of cultures. The churches have taught that there are no differences between the races. As a result, when churchgoers read in the KJV Bible, "God is no respecter of persons," they automatically interpret it to mean that He sees no difference between races. And if there are no differences, then churchgoers think they can intermarry with people of

other races. That is confusion and nonsense.

God is not blind to the differences in races. How could He be? He created them each with their differences. He wanted them different. If God wanted races to be distinctly different, who is man to say they should be all the same? Interracial marriage is wrong because it destroys the differences God built into the races at creation! If He had wanted all mankind blended together He would have created just one brown race at the start. God does not dislike other races. He looks DIFFERENTLY at them – because they are different. And He likes them that way. They should keep their respective gene pools intact, and preserve their races as they were created ... as God willed it.

The Judean problem, on the other hand, was not one of race, per se. The vision did not tell Peter to go to other races. It told him to go to his brethren, "**the sons of Israel,**" in other lands. It did not even address the question of salvation for non-Israelites. That was not the point.

God does not approve of race mixing. Nor does He approve of adopting heathen culture into our own ... as the churches have done. But, in its own setting each race is judged fairly – by the same God that judges Israel. Truth is truth, right is right, and wrong is wrong. This does not change ... regardless of the race of a man. God doesn't take anybody at face value. He looks at the heart. Verse 35 says, "in every nation he that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted with him."

But, to clear the record, let us emphasize that the Kingdom message was sent expressly “to the sons of Israel” because of the Abrahamic covenant. The Good News of the Kingdom had a unique application to Israelites because it related to Israel history and God’s promise to Abraham. It stands to reason, therefore, that it was a special message for Israel. It had no connections to the history of other tribes or nations. Therefore, Jesus told the disciples to take the “good news” to “the lost sheep of the House of Israel.”

Now, that didn’t mean that others could not hear it. If someone of another race or tribe happened to hear and learn from it and believe it, that was no problem. God’s truth and law was good for any people – whether or not they had a covenant history with Yahweh as did Israel.

The kingdom message was tailored expressly, but not exclusively, for Israel who in turn was to share it with others.

*“Neither let the son of the stranger that has joined himself to Yahweh speak saying, ‘Yahweh has utterly separated me from his people ...’*

*“Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer ... for my house shall be called a house of prayer for ALL people.*

*“Yahweh God who gathers the outcasts of Israel says, ‘Yet will I gather others to him beside those that are gathered unto him’” (Isaiah 56:3-8).*

This was not a call for diverse races to intermarry. Rather, it invited all people to hear the word of God through Israel who received it first.

However, the specific message of the Gospel of the Kingdom was of unique application to the Sons of Israel ... plus, it fulfilled a promise. But God’s law (his truth that makes men free) and his ecclesia were, and are, applicable to ANY people anywhere who will live by them.

In all of this, Peter was learning to separate religion from reality. He was learning that external, physical rituals do not necessarily improve the condition of the heart. Reality also shows a great gulf – a huge difference – between Babylonian ritualism, and God’s plan for orderly and healthy community life: the Ecclesia system.

### THE RECURRING THEME OF THE PRESENT KINGDOM

The last part of verse 36 says that Jesus Christ IS Lord of them all. Please make note that it does not say that He will become Lord sometime in the future. It says He IS Lord of them all! That was spoken over 1900 years ago. Again, we should make a note of this fact and not ignore it.

## ACTS 10:37-38 JESUS, GOD, AND THE DEVIL

You know that word which was published throughout all Judea, having started in Galilee after the baptism which John preached:

That God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with holy spirit and power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with him.

**N**OW, there are two points in this passage of which we must take note.

**Point #1:** God did NOT anoint Himself!

When these points occur in our studies – and they keep popping up – we must continue to point out the abundance of Scriptural evidence showing a FATHER (Yahweh) that is distinct and separate from his SON (Jesus). In other words, these are two beings. Verse 38 says that God anointed Jesus. Now, if Jesus and Yahweh had been the same person, as churches claim, that would mean that Yahweh anointed Himself – right? But that is not what it says. It says God (Yahweh) anointed Jesus.

When someone is anointed, it is the greater who anoints the lesser. “*And without any contradiction the lesser is blessed by the greater*” (Heb. 7:7). He who is higher anoints the lower. The senior anoints the junior. To interpret this passage to say that Yahweh anointed himself is to imply that words have no meaning.

But, this passage is clear. It indicates TWO SEPARATE ENTITIES. Yahweh the Father anointed Jesus, His Son. It also says clearly that Yahweh “was with” Jesus. Being “with” Jesus is certainly NOT “being Jesus himself.”

**Point #2:** What exactly was this “devil” that oppressed people? The Greek word here translated “oppressed” means literally “being ruled down.” So, this oppression had to do with being RULED and put DOWN. Thus, given the context and nature of the book of Acts (portraying the battle of two governments – man’s vs. Gods’) the sensible interpretation identifies this “devil” as man’s adversarial Beast government: the age-old serpent conspiracy (leviathan) that epitomizes oppression of human freedom. This “devil” was (and still is) man’s government ... the Beast System.

Jesus freed captives (both physical and mental) from the Beast System. Jesus fought religious and political oppression. He “healed” people by giving them truth – bringing light to a dark world – setting them free from ignorance and confusion about civil structure of society.

**PONDER THIS:** The churches' pagan idea of a supernatural war between "Satan" with his bad angels against God and his good angels leaves us with a problem beyond our ability to address. Since that alleged battle is staged outside our realm we have no way of dealing with it. We cannot even guess what they might be doing or planning there. That leaves us dependent upon sorcerers, priests and churches who claim to have a special power to deal with "the spirit world." People who accept this fantastic theory generally relinquish their responsibility by turning it over to the churches ... where the matter remains out of sight and out of mind. This neutralizing doctrine sidetracks people from the obvious truth that man's problems come from sin – not from intangible demons! But, those who are drugged by the myth of Demonology and Angelology are left hanging in suspense while the real human devils (politicians, bankers, priests) operate at full speed enslaving and exploiting men for fun and gain.

## ACTS 10:39-43 THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

And we are witnesses of all things which He did in Jerusalem and in the country of the Judeans; who lifted Him up by hanging Him on a timber:

But God raised him up the third day, and let Him be revealed;

Not to all the people, but to witnesses appointed before by God: to us, who ate and drank together with Him after his raising from the dead.

And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that this is the One whom God appointed judge of the living and the dead.

To him all the prophets bear witness, that through his name everyone believing in Him receives forgiveness of sins.

**J**ESUS was appointed by his Father to be judge of the living and the dead. Now, what does that mean?

It means He was sent to two classes of people: the "living" who were infused with the spirit of Christ, and the "dead" who were without the spirit of Christ. Both groups, however, were biologically alive, breathing, walking, and moving. Obviously, a man can be biologically alive and still be "dead."

*But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also give life to your mortal bodies by his spirit dwelling in you."*

Romans 8:11

*Buried with him in baptism, in whom you also are raised up through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead. And you, being dead to the trespasses and to the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together (with Christ), having graciously forgiven us all trespasses;*

Colossians 2:12-13

Jesus was sent to judge (i.e., observe and instruct) both classes of people.

For further confirmation, notice verse 43. "Everyone believing in him receives forgiveness of sins." This could not have referred to people who were biologically dead and unable to

hear or think. The biologically dead need a salvation of a different sort – not the salvation we see in this passage. Jesus was sent to two classes of people – both were biologically alive. But, only one group was spiritually alive. The other group was spiritually dead (i.e., without the spirit of Christ).

The difference in these two classes has to do with the "life" we defined in lesson five: "**Eonian Life.**" Although the word "eonian" isn't used in chapter ten, the description makes it obvious. As you remember, "eonian" ("of the age") is incorrectly rendered by the King James Version Bible into "everlasting" ("without end"). But there is a profound difference between "everlasting" and "eonian." "Everlasting" has no end; but ages have beginnings and ends. Eonian life (life of the age) was the new life in Christ which accompanied the New Covenant age. Jesus was sent to "the living" (those with eonian life) to guide them. He was also sent to "the dead" (those without eonian life) to offer them life.

**QUESTION:** How about people of other races? Is it possible that a Black, Mexican, Oriental, etc. can acquire this "life"?

## ACTS 10:44-48 BAPTIZED IN WATER & SPIRIT

While Peter was yet speaking these words, the holy spirit fell on all who were hearing the word.

And the faithful of the circumcision who came with Peter were amazed because

**A**T THE CONCLUSION of Peter's message, and as a final proof that Peter had been shown the non-viability of a Babylonian/Jewish ritual, these Samaritans received holy spirit (motivation from God) in the same manner the Judeans "of the circumcision" had received it. When this news got back home to Judea it must have shocked the Christian Conservatives there. Not only were the non-circumcised receiving the holy spirit, they were also being baptized. These non-Judean Israelites were living up north in Samaria – disconnected from Jerusalem and Judean culture. Considering the Babylonian source of Judean religion, the fact that they were disconnected from Judea was an advantage rather than a disadvantage.

By the way, here is another

the gift of the holy spirit was poured out upon the nations also.

For they were hearing them speak in tongues (their own dialects), and magnifying God. Then answered Peter,

example showing that Jesus wants men to be baptized in water. We read in lesson eight that Jesus told us we would be baptized in holy spirit. Some people try to say that is the only baptism required. But, you see in verses 47 and 48 it clearly says that they received the holy spirit (motivation to be separate) and then they were baptized in water. In fact, Peter insisted on it.

### CONCLUSION

In our study of Acts 10, we exposed some popular errors of the churches. Churches are off-point. The churches portray an inconsistent god who abandons his own law. Some churches, while taking an admirable stand against racial confusion, wrongly seek a god who is elitist and dislikes other races. Neither is right.

Can any man forbid water, that these who have received the holy spirit the same as we, should not be baptized?

And he commanded them, in the name of the Lord, to be baptized. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

We should learn from this lesson that God's law, including his food laws, are still valid and essential for man. Also, we should learn that race separatism is not the same as race hatred or elitism. And, most importantly, we should learn that a man is neither cleansed nor defiled by external rituals – or the lack of them. Only a man's internal state determines whether he is clean or unclean.

*"Nothing from outside a man that enters him can make him common: but the things which come forth out of him are the things that make the man common."*

Mark 7:15

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## END OF LESSON TEN

FOR ANSWERS AND NOTES, SEE ENCLOSED "ANSWER SECTION."

# ANSWERS & COMMENTS

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

### CHAPTER TEN:

#### POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. Christ's ecclesia is the Kingdom of God on Earth. Christ is the reigning King. The good news announced that men were set free and blessed by Christ's reign and by understanding and following God's laws. . . and avoiding the pitfalls of government idolatry.

In contrast to this, the churches teach that Jesus did nothing more than announce a future kingdom and then leave mankind in a holding pattern. In addition, the churches have produced a false impression of the nature of "the kingdom" – teaching that it exists only when Jesus takes over the world by force and eliminates all aspects of evil. This false definition of "the kingdom" has made it hard for churchgoers to recognize the true Kingdom . . . even while it manifests itself before them.

2. Central government and its rulers consider Christ's ecclesia their mortal enemy. Not so with churches. Central governments get along great with churches.

3. The purpose of God's law, and all Scripture, is to explain the workings of his creation and to show man how to function and prosper within that creation. But, churches teach that the purpose of scripture is to show man how to escape this creation.

4. God's diet law of the clean and unclean was given to man to guide his diet. God had purposes in creating different animals. Some were created edible, and some were not.

5. Peter's vision utilized analogies that were pertinent to his day and circumstance. To understand it correctly, we must put ourselves in his shoes and view it from that same perspective.

6. The key to understanding Peter's vision is in the meaning of the word "common." "Common" is not the same as "unclean."

7. Peter, at the time he received this vision, was actively obeying the food laws. He certainly did not teach people to throw away the law.

8. Jerusalem's Babylonian religion claimed that Jews were clean, and non-Jews were unclean. Judeans looked upon fellow Israelites in Samaria as "outsiders" and "unclean" because they were not part of the Judean church/state.

9. The animals on the linen in Peter's vision represented MEN. The theme of the vision was about MEN, not animals. What God had cleansed was MEN, not animals.

10. The traditions and religion of Israel and Jerusalem were different in the days of Moses, Joshua and the Judges. Now they had turned idolatrous and embraced Babylonianism instead of God's word.

11. The concept of ritual defilement from external sources is not a Biblical concept. Nothing external (physical) can defile a man. Only that which is internal (mental/spiritual) can defile a man. Defilement (becoming common) is caused by what a man says and believes.

#### ANSWERS:

##### pg. 2

a) Such statements suggest naivete or possibly illogic. Consider the real evidence:

1. Churches claim to be the institution founded by Christ – and yet Christ never uttered the word "church," nor did He create a church.

2. Churches claim to teach the Bible – but instead they teach Zoroastrianism and Mithraism and call it "Christianity."

3. Churches claim to teach godliness – but they teach men to ignore God's law.

4. Churches misrepresent Scripture in order to con people into supporting them financially.

5. Churches build grand edifices and support priests in luxury while people of the community barely get by.

6. Churches teach their members to support and honor the Beast System.

The institution of "church" is founded upon fraud. A fraud cannot be good. That is not to say that the people in churches are bad. But, the institution itself is a fraud.

b) Anyone who is willing, including people in churches, may search and find truth. However, churches are not fertile ground, but rather rocky ground that will not produce much. Now and again you will find a beautiful flower growing out of a rock. Those flowers are worth seeking. However, fertile ground (away from churches) is where we should concentrate our efforts.

##### pg. 3

Mistrust of people with "visions" is not unique to our age – and for good reason. Religion has proven to be one of the biggest con games in history. "Visions" have been popular tools for con men (or con women) to gather devotees.

Cornelius did not use his vision to try to gain a following, or the confidence of the masses. He used it

to guide his own thinking and planning. His motive was NOT like a preacher trying to build a church.

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**pg. 5**

Those who quote this scripture to justify eating ALL animals must also assume the edibility of ALL plants. Certain animals, like some puffer fish and some toads, if eaten are poisonous and will kill you. Also, there are a number of plants which, if eaten, cause sickness and death ... some very quickly, some more slowly. Therefore, everyone (whether they admit it or not) must discriminate between edible and inedible for health sake.

Obviously, God did not create "all things" for food for man.

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**pg. 7**

This question presumes that God has not provided for hard times. God has

given man the tools with which to find the answers to tough questions. If man ignores those tools, or refuses to use them, then his problems can never be truly addressed and answered – even by a vision from God.

*"They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them.*

*"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."*

Luke 16:29-31

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**pg. 12**

God's word, and Eonian life, was introduced through Israel for the purpose of making it available to all nations.

*"Now Yahweh had said to Abram, Get you out of your land, and from your kindred, and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you;*

*"And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing:*

*"And I will bless them that bless you, and curse him that curses you: and in you shall all families of the earth be blessed."*

Gen. 12:1-3

*"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

Jn. 10:10

*"And the spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."*

Rev. 22:17

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**NOTES:**