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Acts 10: Peter’s Vision

I remember speaking to a Sunday school teacher one morning about the vision Peter had in Acts 10. This is the vision where Peter saw all kinds of animals coming down from Heaven in a sheet and heard a voice saying to kill and eat. Yet, Peter refused. When the man told him that this was about the Gentiles, he looked at me with a blank face and said, "I've never thought of that before." His whole premise of understanding Acts 10 was on the basis of food, and food only. The sad part of this is that the purpose of the vision has NOTHING to do with food. Let's read the text.

Acts 10:9-17

And on the next day, as they were on their way, and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. And he became hungry, and was desiring to eat; but while they were making preparations, he fell into a trance; and he beheld the sky opened up, and a certain object like a great sheet coming down, lowered by four corners to the ground, and there were in it all *kinds of* four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, “Arise, Peter, kill and eat!” But Peter said, “By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.” And again a voice *came* to him a second time, “What God has cleansed, no *longer* consider unholy.” And this happened three times; and immediately the object was taken up into the sky. Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be, behold, the men who had been sent by Cornelius, having asked directions for Simon’s house, appeared at the gate;

I've heard some say, *"If God didn't want Peter to eat the unclean animals in that sheet, then why did he tell him to?"* With this in mind, then why did God tell Abraham to kill Isaac? Did He REALLY want Abraham to kill his son? Of course not. Consider the fact how even Peter was curious as to the meaning of the vision.

Acts 10:17

Now while Peter was greatly perplexed in mind as to what the vision which he had seen might be...

Now, why couldn't he just accept it at face value? Why was he perplexed for the meaning? If you were given a vision of a sheet coming down from heaven filled with innocent people and a gun, then you heard a voice say, *"Take the gun. Shoot and murder,"* would your response not be the same as Peter's? Why? - because you consider that a basic command of the Lord to abide by. Would you not be

disturbed by the vision knowing that He commanded you to do something that you KNOW is contrary to His Word? Likewise for Peter, this was a basic and elementary command for a Hebrew. And if unclean animals were **now** clean for food, why all these years later after Christ was Peter **STILL** not eating unclean animals?

Peter made it very clear that he had **NEVER** eaten such an animal and had no intention to eat those that were in the sheet. He saw the vision three times, and funny...three gentiles came to the door. Verse 28 shows Peter's conclusion to the meaning of the vision.

Acts 10:28 ... But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.

Food was never mentioned as a part of the interpretation as to what God was showing him - *never*. Peter had not eaten **ANY** of these unclean animals all this time since Yeshua. Doesn't it only make sense that **IF** the vision was to include the cleansing of unclean animals for food that Peter would have made mention of this?

Like Peter, we need to stay grounded in the Word so we do not allow ourselves to be carried away by error. The vision of the unclean animals representing Gentiles and then becoming holy/set apart is not unique. The prophets already spoke of this using the same exact language!

Hosea 2:18

And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

Then five verses later.

Hosea 2:23

And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

In the time of Hosea, did they believe the vision to be about unclean animals becoming clean? No. Of course not. God reveals His plan to the prophets *first* according to Amos 3:7. Peter was not receiving anything new, just something that was already established *as true*. Even when Peter explains it all to the brothers in Jerusalem as found in chapter 11:1-18, nothing is mentioned regarding food. Again...never. Peter even informed the brothers of his refusal to eat the unclean animals in the vision he had from Yahweh.

Acts 11:8

“But I said, ‘By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.’

If the other brothers were eating unclean animals under the belief of the Lord calling them clean, wouldn't Peter's confession to refuse the Lord be an embarrassment to him? As it is, Peter uses it for his defense to the brothers that he was being obedient to the written Word of God. Look at the conclusion decided by the brothers in Jerusalem.

Acts 11:18

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has

granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

Not one thing mentioned about unclean animals as food here - not one. This is one of the few visions where we actually receive the interpretation in the text itself, not once but twice. What sense does it make to inject our own interpretation of the vision and ignore the interpretation given to us? Twice. Not only this, the implication *is clear* through it all that Peter and the disciples continued in the dietary instructions found in the law.

Think about it. It would have been equally HUGE news to the Jews to hear that unclean animals were now considered "food." So, why is it not made mention of? *Because that wasn't the purpose of the vision.* The whole purpose of the vision was to get the Jews out from under the influence of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. Look at what Peter said when he arrived at the house of Cornelius.

Acts 10:28

He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.

Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find this to be true. This was NOT Yahweh's law. It was man's law. This was an oral law passed down from the Pharisees, also known today as the Talmud.

In the Talmud, it says

Schabbath, (145b)

Why are the Goyim unclean? Because they eat abominable things and animals that crawl on their belly.

Abhodah Zarah, 22b

"Why are the Goyim unclean? Because they were not present at Mount Sinai. For when the serpent entered into Eve, he infused her with uncleanness. But the Jews were cleansed from this when they stood on Mount Sinai; the Goyim, however, who were not on Mount Sinai, were not cleansed."

It was the Pharisees law that commanded the Gentiles were to be considered unclean, *not* God's Law.

And so, the Father brought this vision to bring His people back to the true meaning of who Israel is to be, as stated in the book of Numbers.

Numbers 15:15-16

The community is to have the same rules for you and for the alien living among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the alien shall be the same before the LORD (YHWH). The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and the alien living among you.

Peter's understanding of this vision corrects this false, Talmudic understanding about Gentiles being unclean. So, if there is any question as to what the true interpretation of the vision of Acts 10 might be, let's remember to allow Scripture to directly tell us.

Acts 10:28

And he said to them, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or

unclean.”

The correct interpretation of Acts 10 is again repeated in Acts chapter 11.

Acts 11:18

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.”

Again, Peter’s vision is one of the few visions in Scripture in which we are literally told the correct interpretation. Not just once, but actually twice. Despite that, many today mistakenly think that Peter’s vision is about food. The reality is that the Father was simply teaching Peter that it’s okay to associate with Gentiles despite what the Pharisees might think and teach.

Some other teachings by 119 Ministries we would recommend on this subject are:

- “Are All Things Clean” (Covering Mark 7)
- “Can We Eat All Things” (Covering 1 Timothy 4)
- And “The Pauline Paradox Series: Romans” (Covering Romans 14)

We hope you have enjoyed this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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