

Acts Week 34

Peter's vision

Peter's Vision 10:9-16

9 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. **10** Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance **11** and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. **12** In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. **13** And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." **16** This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

We left off last week with Cornelius sending his servants to Joppa to find Peter. It would be around the sixth hour which would be close to noon. Jewish hours are different from ours and are not always the same due to the reason they begin and end at sunset in ancient times, and as we know during the year these times change. It would not be until the middle of the 4th century A.D. that the day became static, this would be called the civil calendar. In the older calendar referred to as the Jewish calendar, the day begins and ends at sunset. Since we are reading Peter in the first century we are using the Jewish calendar.

Peter became hungry; apparently, he had also been traveling and was hungry and decided to go up and rest on the roof. Waiting for the meal to be fixed he fell into a trance.¹ We find he has a vision and observes different types of animals and creatures and birds on a sheet. Dietary regulations are spelled out in chapter eleven of Leviticus, surely Peter knew of these, and when he was told to rise, kill, and eat, he must have known of those things that were forbidden. I have put chapter 11 here so we can briefly look at it but I wanted you to have it for your study. We are better able to understand Peter's perplexity when he is told to kill and eat.

¹ a throwing of the mind out of its normal state, alienation of mind, whether such as makes a lunatic or that of a man who by some sudden emotion is transported as it were out of himself, so that in this rapt condition, although he is awake, his mind is drawn off from all surrounding objects and wholly fixed on things divine that he sees nothing but the forms and images lying within, and thinks that he perceives with his bodily eyes and ears realities shown him by God.

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The Law and Things Permitted to Eat.

11 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 2 “Say to the Israelites: ‘Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: 3 You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud. 4 ““There are some that only chew the cud or only have a divided hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. 5 The hyrax, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. 6 The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof it is unclean for you. 7 And the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. 8 You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.

9 ““Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams you may eat any that have fins and scales. 10 But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales—whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water—you are to regard as unclean. 11 And since you are to regard them as unclean, you must not eat their meat; you must regard their carcasses as unclean. 12 Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be regarded as unclean by you.

13 ““These are the birds you are to regard as unclean and not eat because they are unclean: the eagle,[a] the vulture, the black vulture, 14 the red kite, any kind of black kite, 15 any kind of raven, 16 the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, 17 the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, 18 the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, 19 the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.

20 ““All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be regarded as unclean by you. 21 There are, however, some flying insects that walk on all fours that you may eat: those that have jointed legs for hopping on the ground. 22 Of these you may eat any kind of locust, katydid, cricket or grasshopper. 23 But all other flying insects that have four legs you are to regard as unclean.

24 ““You will make yourselves unclean by these; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. 25 Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening.

26 ““Every animal that does not have a divided hoof or that does not chew the cud is unclean for you; whoever touches the carcass of any of them will be unclean. 27 Of all the animals that walk on all fours, those that walk on their paws are

unclean for you; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. 28 Anyone who picks up their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. These animals are unclean for you.

29 “Of the animals that move along the ground, these are unclean for you: the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, 30 the gecko, the monitor lizard, the wall lizard, the skink and the chameleon. 31 Of all those that move along the ground, these are unclean for you. Whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean till evening. 32 When one of them dies and falls on something, that article, whatever its use, will be unclean, whether it is made of wood, cloth, hide or sackcloth. Put it in water; it will be unclean till evening, and then it will be clean. 33 If one of them falls into a clay pot, everything in it will be unclean, and you must break the pot. 34 Any food you are allowed to eat that has come into contact with water from any such pot is unclean, and any liquid that is drunk from such a pot is unclean. 35 Anything that one of their carcasses falls on becomes unclean; an oven or cooking pot must be broken up. They are unclean, and you are to regard them as unclean. 36 A spring, however, or a cistern for collecting water remains clean, but anyone who touches one of these carcasses is unclean. 37 If a carcass falls on any seeds that are to be planted, they remain clean. 38 But if water has been put on the seed and a carcass falls on it, it is unclean for you.

39 “If an animal that you are allowed to eat dies, anyone who touches its carcass will be unclean till evening. 40 Anyone who eats some of its carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. Anyone who picks up the carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening.

41 “Every creature that moves along the ground is to be regarded as unclean; it is not to be eaten. 42 You are not to eat any creature that moves along the ground, whether it moves on its belly or walks on all fours or on many feet; it is unclean. 43 Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. 44 I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground. 45 I am the Lord, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

46 “These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves about in the water and every creature that moves along the ground. **47 You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.**”

The question here becomes why God presented these animals to Peter. What is the reason? Peter rejects God’s order to kill and eat, in a sense God is ordering Peter to do something that runs against the rules of things that you could or could not eat making

Peter feel as though he would be sinning. What kind of lesson was Peter to learn from this? What does it teach us about listening to God? Three times God tells Peter to kill and eat, verse 16, was Peter disobedient?

Listening to a teaching this week the teacher made excellent points about how it had to have been to be a Jew and live under the law and now under grace. The pastor according to Isaiah chapter 53 taught how the Jews would have not realized then that it was about the anticipated Messiah, they had a vision of someone completely different, Jesus was not Him. He drew other verses out and how the early Christian church struggled with the old and the new way. We have discussed this several times and yet as much as we know, because we do not live only to the New Testament but look back upon the Old Testament to get the full picture we can only try to understand all they went through. I can positively say that I wish today the word would spread again as it did in the early centuries A.D.

We will see later that Peter struggled with the Gentiles and circumcision to the point that Paul comes to correct him. But what does this have to do with the food Peter will not eat? Paul rebukes Peter in **Galatians 2:11-12**: **“Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision.”** Peter was afraid to be seen eating with the Gentiles, and this is where we find the reason for the animals on the sheet in **verse 15**; **“What God has cleansed you must not call common.”**

We learn from Verses 17-18; Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate. And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. Cornelius’s men reached their destination but not yet their purpose. Peter was still waiting for a reason why he had the experience he did.

Peter was resting on the roof when he received the vision of the sheet and the animals. He was awakened and told some men had come to see him, as the angel had just told him. The men were from Joppa and sent from Cornelius to bring Peter back. Cornelius had received a vision, 10:5, and Peter had received a vision, verse 10:10. As we review the verses we see that God has recognized Cornelius’s devotion toward Him and how he treated others, and the Holy Spirit had cleansed Cornelius, this is witnessed in the compliments the angel told him. The cleansing, although not stated verbatim, is exemplified in Cornelius’s life of devotion, yet the argument still goes on, was he saved yet or not? Some think because of verses **11:13-14**; **“And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, ‘Send men to Joppa, and**

call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 'who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' that salvation had not yet been fully accomplished.

Verses 15-17; And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

Peter was about to now begin preaching to the Gentiles, it would be for this reason he was given the sign of the animals and clean things. Peter would struggle to address the Gentiles as we find in Galatians, but here God is training him, getting him ready for the task ahead.

The comment here by Peter, "Who was I that I could withstand God?" demonstrates that Peter still has some questions as to what lies ahead of him. He acknowledges that Cornelius knows the truth of Jesus, **Verse 18; When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."**

We struggle often to understand who in the name of Jesus has been baptized in the Holy Spirit and who has been only with the water. I look for the new life in a person after I baptize them, some I can see it, but others go right back to life as usual. We teach baptism in its fullest understanding and implications, although at the time the emotions of people well up and we see a joy found no other place they still do not open the door for the Holy Spirit to work in their lives. However, it will prayerfully one day, still come.