

Acts 10 notes

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June 6, 2009

Passages are from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

The Vision of Acts 10 has been misinterpreted for millennia, in part because many people reading the text fail to see the vision of the animals in the context of Peter's later meeting with Cornelius and the conversion of Cornelius household to the Gospel and God's gift of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius. Many Christians see the vision of the animals on the sheet as simply a change in dietary laws. The focus on physical food rather than upon the spiritual reality of God's call of both Jews and Gentiles to believe in the one and only Messiah Yeshua becomes lost when this vision is interpreted out of context.

How much of an impact did this vision on early believers?

- Peter recounted this vision in chapter 11 and 15 as the basis for:
 - Taking the good news of Yeshua as Lord and Messiah to the nations.
 - Setting the bar for salvation and admission into the congregation of believers.
- Paul repeatedly counseled in his letters about the unity of believers and the danger of requiring circumcision for inclusion into Israel.

Is Acts 10 an example of the P'rushim influence on early believers, as is seen pointedly in Acts 15?

- The Hebrew word for Pharisee, *P'rushim*, comes from the verb פָּרַשׁ *parash*, from which we get פָּרָשָׁה *parashah*, commonly seen for the weekly portion of the Torah read in the synagogue.
 - 5330. Φαρισαῖος *Pharisaaios*; of Heb. or., cf. [6567a]¹
 - 6567 I. פָּרַשׁ vb. *make distinct, declare* (NH *separate oneself*, Pi. *separate, explain*, so Aram. פָּרַשׁ esp. Pa.; Syr. ܦܪܫܐ *separate, distinguish, explain*, cf. Mand., Nö:M 221);—**Qal Inf. cstr.** י' לְפָרֵשׁ לָהֶם עַל־פִּי י' Lv 24:12 (P) *to declare distinctly to them*. **Niph.** Pt. נִפְרָשׁוּת Ez 34:12 read prob. שֹׁת־, v. פָּרַשׁ. Pu. Pf. 3 ms. פָּרַשׁ Nu 15:34 (P) *what should be done to him had not been distinctly declared*; Pt. מִפְרָשׁ Ne 8:8 *made distinct* (cf. B Aram Ezr 4:18), v. Be-Ry Kö:Einl. 99, > interpreted, Ke al., Berliner:T. Onk ii. 74.²
 - 6575 פָּרָשָׁה n.f. *exact statement*;—cstr. פְּרָשֶׁת הַכֶּסֶף Est 4:7 גְּדֻלַּת מְרֻדְכֵי פ' 10:2.³
- The P'rushim came from the Chasidim that rose to prominence with the Maccabean victory over the Seleucid empire in regaining control of Israel.⁴
 - They were described at those who didn't "mingle with the Gentiles" (2nd Maccabees 14).
 - Among the other teachings of the P'rushim, a recurring theme was religious democracy and progress.⁵
 - They interpreted the "kingdom of priests" in Ex. 19:6 to mean that "God gave all the people the heritage, the kingdom, the priesthood, and the holiness (2nd Macc. 2:17, Greek).
 - From that interpretation came the transference of the Law itself was from the sphere of the priesthood to every man in Israel (Ex. 19:24; Deut. 6:7, 11:19, 31:9; Jer. 2:8, 18:18).
 - Seeing that the Torah is "the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob" (Deut. 33:3), they created a system of schools and synagogues (Yer. Ket. vii. 32c; Ḳid. 29a; Sifre, Deut. 46) that influenced the different parts of the planet (see R.Meir in Sifra, Aḥare Mot, 13; Matt. 23:15; comp. Gen. R. 28; Jellinek, "B. H." vi., p. xlvi.).
 - "A true Pharisee observed the same degree of purity in his daily meals as did the priest in the Temple (Tosef., Dem. 2:2; so did Abraham, according to B.M. 87a).
 - "Temple benedictions (1st Sam. 9:13) and symbolic washing established for their meals, which were partaken of in holy assemblies after purifications and amidst benedictions (Geiger, "Urschrift," pp. 121-124).
 - "The Sabbath and holy days made the means of sanctification (hence the name *kiddush*), and, as at the sacrifices, wine was used in honor of the day. Therefore, It it was necessary that he should avoid contact with the עַם הָאָרֶץ *'am ha-arets* 'people of the land' (Chag 2:7)," i.e. Gentiles.
 - Relevant to our discussion is the extension of the Pharisaical teaching on "clean" and "unclean" meat,

1 Thomas, Robert L., Th.D., gen. ed. *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Greek Dictionary*. Lockman Foundation: 1981.

2 Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Scribe Inc., Dania Beach, Florida.

3 Thomas.

4 Kohler, Kaufmann, Ph.D. "Perushim." *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. 1901-1906. JewishEncyclopedia.com. Web. June 5, 2009. <www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=252&letter=P>.

5 *Ibid.*

some thought originally for the priests only (Eze. 44:14,31; Samson's mother was instructed to abstain from "unclean meat," Judges 13:4), to the whole people (Leviticus 19; Deut. 14:3-21).

Were the distinctions of "clean" and "unclean" in this chapter and in P'rushim teaching unbiblically conflating cleanliness before God with godliness?

- The teaching on "holiness," literally a distinction God makes between what He sets aside for a certain purpose and what is "common," appears early in the Bible.
 - Clean and unclean animals are noted at the time of the Flood, with many more of each clean "kind" than of the unclean (Gen. 6:19-20; 7:2-3).
 - Was the LORD's statement after the Flood — "Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant" (Gen. 9:3) — an indication that all clean and unclean meat were allowed to be eaten?⁶
 - This is part of a discussion of food that allowable for offerings to God, food allowable for human consumption and the importance to avoid eating blood and the need to safeguard the sanctity of human life, as it is "in the image of God" (Gen. 8:20-9:7).
 - The prohibition against eating blood is one of the seven "Noachide laws" and is mentioned in Acts 15.
 - That Yerushalayim Council was concerned with setting a high bar of behavior — circumcision — for new believers (Acts 15:5).
 - Ya'akov decided to set the bar to the Noachide level for new believers, so as not to "not trouble [παρενοχλεῖν *parenochlein*, "to annoy," Strong's 3926] those who are turning [ἐπιστρέφουσιν *epistrefousin*, "to return," Strong's 1994] to God from among the Gentiles" (Acts 15:19-20).
 - New believers weren't to stay Noachides, "For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath" (Acts 15:21).
 - The first step was to learn God's teaching that the life is in the blood (Gen. 9:4).
 - The next step was to join God's kingdom of priests — the commonwealth of Israel — by behaving like a people set apart for God's service, being holy as He is holy (Ex. 19:1-6; Lev. 20:26; Rom. 11:13-32; Eph. 2:11-22).
 - God made Abraham "holy" by calling him out of his ancestral land for the purpose of blessing all nations through his descendants (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - The LORD defined what He meant by "clean" and "unclean" meat in Leviticus 11 — and the reason, "For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus you shall be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:45).
 - Just after the "holiness chapter" of Leviticus 19, the LORD further explains the purpose of "cleanliness":

"You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. 'Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. 'Hence I have said to you, "You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the LORD your God, who has separated you from the peoples. 'You are therefore to make a distinction between the clean animal and the unclean, and between the unclean bird and the clean; and you shall not make yourselves detestable by animal or by bird or by anything that creeps on the ground, which I have separated for you as unclean. "Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine."' (Lev. 20:22-26)
 - Israel was not "chosen" as the LORD's nation of priests because of righteousness.
 - Rather, the surrounding nations were worse.
 - God was keeping His promise to do something great through Abraham.

"Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you. But thus you shall do to them: you shall tear down their altars, and smash their sacred pillars, and hew down their Asherim, and burn their graven images with fire. For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments; but repays those who hate Him to their faces, to destroy them; He will not delay with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face.'" (Deut. 7:3-10)

⁶ Deffinbaugh, Th.M., Robert. "The Conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10:36-48)." *Bible.org*. 1997. Community Bible Chapel, Richardson, TX. June 20, 2009 <http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=2138>.

- Some commentators assert that since the LORD was breaking down the barriers between Jew and Gentile in the commonwealth of Israel, He also was doing away with distinctions of “clean” and “unclean,” because that discrimination had been necessary to keep Israel together socially and religiously and avoid idolatrous corruption.

Is Acts 10 teaching that the dietary commands in the Torah are abolished? Do Yeshua’s words in Mark 7:1-23 about hand washing also teach that?⁷

“The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, *thus observing the traditions of the elders*; and *when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves*; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) The Pharisees and the scribes *asked Him, ‘Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?’

And He said to them, ‘Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. ‘BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN’ [Isa. 29:13]. ‘Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.’ He was also saying to them, ‘You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. For Moses said, ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER’ [Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16]; and, ‘HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH’ [Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9]; but you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),’ you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.’

After He called the crowd to Him again, He *began* saying to them, ‘Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. [‘If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.’]

When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. And He *said to them, ‘Are you so lacking in understanding also? **Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?**’ (Thus He declared all foods clean.) And He was saying, ‘That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.’” (Mark 7:1–23, italics indicating words not in the Greek text)

- Most translations translate Mark 7:18–19 with phrases similar to “thus He declared all foods clean.” Have some translators assumed abrogation of the Torah in rendering this phrase?
 - The words *Thus He* in the New American Standard version of verse 19 were added to the literal Greek καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα *katharizon panta ta bromata*, or “cleansing all the/that’s foods.”
 - By adding words that connect this phrase with a declaration from the Messiah, the translators seemed to have changed Yeshua’s graphic illustration from the “cleansing” digestive process that takes the best and excretes the rest into some bold new *halacha* (Hebrew for “official determination”) about abrogation of the Leviticus 11 dietary laws.
 - Was the point of Mark 7 the food laws of Leviticus 11, which the LORD connects with the holiness (distinctiveness) of Himself and of Israel, or was it the enforcement of nonbiblical tradition and custom, in this case hand washing, as if it were mandatory?
 - The P’rushim had extended the practices of cleansing with water from the Temple to the dinner table, which as we’ve seen above, wasn’t without biblical foundation. However, considering anything an “unwashed” person touches or anywhere he lives as “unclean.”
 - Yeshua at least four times in Mark 7 said the P’rushim by some of their interpretations of Torah were “neglecting,” “setting aside” and “invalidating” God’s commandments for the sake of their traditions.
 - As one example, He cited the interpretation of Temple donations as a higher duty than honoring father and mother.
 - As the other example, He offers the illustration of eating and digestion, juxtaposing something that goes into the stomach rather than the heart.
 - Yeshua was not creating a bold, different *halacha* but restoring the original *halacha* to His people: “defilement” is a matter of the heart, not a matter of ritual.
 - He Himself said that His purpose was not to change God’s law and that it wouldn’t change until after His crucifixion, resurrection and return on the Day of the LORD:

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do

⁷ See also Hegg, Tim. “Did God Change His Mind About Food?: Understanding Mark 7:19 and Acts 10 (Peter’s Vision) from an Historical, Grammatical Interpretation.” TorahResource.com. 2002.

the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:17-20)

- Had Yeshua made such a change to the Torah, He would have created a valid warning to Israel against Himself, based on the LORD’s words to Moshe about a prophet like him to come (Deuteronomy 18).
- The United States started with the promise of “all men created equal” but has had to struggle with the that principle God taught and bigotry based on culture, religion and skin color. But Martin Luther King Jr. expressed in his historic “I Have a Dream” speech a yearning for a return to seeing people based on “internals” and not externals:

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”⁸

- The P’rushim established rules to encourage an extreme separation between Jews and Gentiles. The need to be wary of idolatry and apostasy — to “make a fence for the Torah” (Mishna Avot 1:1) — was the lesson that they took away from the Exile. Robert Deffinbaugh in commenting on Peter’s vision of the animals, notes that the teaching to shun Gentile contact was missing the point of the Torah and prophets:

“But to God, it was not being near pagans which made one unholy, but in being like pagans which defiled one. Thus, Jesus could come to the earth in human flesh and associate with sinners but remain sinless, because He did not think and act as sinners did. The self-righteous Jews, on the other hand, may have kept themselves separate from the Gentiles and other ‘sinners’ but in their thinking and actions they sinned, for sin comes from within a man, and not from without.”⁹

- More than a few commentators came to the conclusion that Acts 10 refers to a setting aside of the dietary laws the LORD defined in Leviticus 11 because of the interpretation of Mark 7, even though they note that Peter’s vision was not about food but about believing Jews having contact with God-fearers who weren’t Jews:

“Now the report of this incident in Mark chapter 7, along with Jesus’ response, was very possibly conveyed to Mark by Peter. One thing is for certain: Peter was there when these words were spoken by the Lord. At some point in time in the Lord’s process of changing Peter’s thinking about ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ Peter must have remembered this incident and Jesus’ teaching. Jesus had already indicated that the ‘food laws’ of the Old Testament, and the distinctions which they created between ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ were set aside.”¹⁰

- Something else to consider in looking at whether the God was abrogating His commandments on “clean” and “unclean” with Peter’s vision is what could be called “prophetic paradox,” or a command from God that on its face would directly contradict one of His earlier commands and His statements that about His unchanging nature.
 - God commanded Abraham to kill his only son, Yitzkhak, as a sacrifice to Him.
 - We see later in Israel’s history that the LORD wiped out the peoples of Canaan because they were sacrificing their children to the false god Molech.
 - Yitzkhak also was Abraham and Sarah’s long-awaited “child of the promise,” from whom would come a great nation and ultimately a blessing for the whole Earth, i.e. Messiah.
 - God commanded Moses to erect a bronze serpent — think the Garden of Eden — on a pole, to which the dying Israelites had to look for salvation.
 - The serpent was a symbol of deviousness (Genesis 3).
 - The serpent on a pole seems a lot like an idol like those worshipped by pagan nations surrounding Israel.
 - The idol-like nature of the “sign” a long time later led to its worship as a symbol of power. It was destroyed for that reason.
 - God commands the prophet Yekhezq’el to act out a prophecy that includes baking food over human excrement (Ezekiel 4)
 - Human excrement was “indecent” in the camp of Israel (Deut. 23:12-13), no less cooking over it.
 - The shocking command (v. 12) led Yekhezq’el to respond in almost an identical fashion to Peter’s to his command to “kill and eat”:

“Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I have never been defiled; for from my youth until now I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has any unclean meat ever entered my mouth.” (v. 14)
 - The LORD allowed the prophet to use cow dung instead, but the utter “uncleanliness” Israel would be exposed to in Exile was underscored (v. 13).
 - In a vision God commanded Peter to “kill and eat” animals from a sheet that came down from Heaven three times. The sheet contained both clean and unclean animals.
 - God’s character — His name — is not to make commands and promises and later rescind them (see Deuteronomy 18).
 - Contact with things unclean made what would normally be clean unclean (see Haggai 2, discussed below).
 - The mingling of clean and unclean animals in the same vessel could have led to the conclusion that the

8 King, Martin L., Jr. “I Have a Dream.” March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The Mall, Washington, D.C. Aug. 28, 1963. Speech. *USConstitution.net*. Web. June 7, 2009 <www.usconstitution.net/dream.html>

9 Deffinbaugh. “Is Cleanliness Next to Godliness? (Acts 9:32 – 10:23).” June 5, 2009 <www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=2137>.

10 *Ibid*.

clean animals were made unclean by contact with unclean animals.

- Therefore, God’s command to Peter to “kill and eat” presumably “clean” meat considered “unclean” by contact with unclean animals was an intentional paradox.
 - The appearance of three God-fearing Gentiles at his door just after the vision and the Spirit’s instruction to go with them helped Peter figure out the meaning of the vision.
 - What had been seen as “unclean” — God-fearers of the nations — was to be considered “clean.”
 - As one author put it, salvation was “of the Jews” not “for the Jews.”
 - The God-fearers were cleansed — elevated what was common — by hearing and obeying the words of God in faith.
 - If God were to be rescinding the distinction between “cleansed” and “uncleansed,” would nothing need cleansing? By extension, would anyone need a Savior?

As Acts 10 is thematically connected to the important Yerushalayim Council hearing recorded in Acts 15, is the council’s ruling that the Torah commandment for circumcision is not required for salvation hint at a need to dismantle the Torah for believers?

- Yeshua’s teaching in Matthew 5 and 7, Mark 7 as well as Peter’s vision in Acts 10 are perfectly consistent in light of Yeshua’s teaching that His teaching — His “yoke” — is simple enough for infants to understand. “At that time Iesous said, ‘I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.’” (Matt. 11:25-30)
- The Yerushalayim Council’s recommendations for new believers later in Acts 15 applies Yeshua’s “light yoke” upon newcomers rather than the “heavy yoke” of the Pharisees.
- Maybe it’s easier to separate ourselves from “sinners” than to actually deal with the sin in our own hearts.

Is Acts 10 and 15 teaching a “separate but equal” principle for congregations of believers, with Christians following the “law of Christ” and Jews following the “custom of Moses” and the law of Christ? If “there is neither ... Jew nor Gentile,” then do Jewish believers have to become like Gentile believers, considering the teaching that circumcision is not connected with salvation?

- George Santayana said, “Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it.” The Jewish people rightly didn’t want to repeat the mistakes which lead to the Exile of the kingdoms of Israel and of Yehudah.
- The lesson of the Exile was driven home by the prophet Haggai, who conveyed a message to the priests rebuilding temple (a.k.a. Zerubbabel’s temple) that though the people’s deeds had been “unclean” the LORD would “cleanse” their work — the new temple — on a certain “appointed time” on God’s calendar.¹¹ “On the 24th of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Haggai the prophet, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, ‘Ask now the priests for a ruling: If a man carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and touches bread with this fold, or cooked food, wine, oil, or any other food, will it become holy?’” And the priests answered, ‘No.’ Then Haggai said, ‘If one who is unclean from a corpse touches any of these, will the latter become unclean?’ And the priests answered, ‘It will become unclean.’ Then Haggai said, ‘“So is this people. And so is this nation before Me,” declares the LORD, “and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean. But now, do consider from this day onward: before one stone was placed on another in the temple of the LORD ... Yet from this day on I will bless you.”’” (Hag. 2:10-15, 19)
 - That “blessing,” as hinted at earlier in Haggai 2, ultimately was Messiah Yeshua.¹²
- Those who returned to the Land from exile in Mesopotamia looked back on their history of idolatry and practicing pagan ways and decided the best way to avoid repeating those old mistakes was to practice extreme separation between themselves and the Gentiles around them.
 - They made little effort to distinguish between those who were practicing paganism versus those who following God’s light out of that darkness.
 - Cornelius wasn’t a pagan. He was a Gentile, but he was a God-fearer as well.
 - Yet, Jewish *halacha* of the time made no distinction between the two groups of Gentiles. This was also true in Messiah’s community of that time.
 - This is why God showed Peter this vision: so that Peter, as Yeshua’s lead Apostle, would understand that it is not the circumstances of one’s birth that made one clean or unclean — we are all sons and daughters of Adam.
 - However, the content of our characters and what is in our hearts makes us clean or unclean and

¹¹ See Hallel Fellowship discussions on lessons in Chanukah about Messiah Yeshua <hallel.info/category/appointments-with-god/appointments-chanukah/>.

¹² *Ibid.*

that God does the cleaning, not us.

- Peter's ultimate interpretation of his vision and his acceptance of Cornelius and his household into the family of believers without circumcision, made a powerful impression on the early believers.
- The Jewish people made that wall of separation as broad as possible so that only the most worthy Gentiles would bother to come into their fellowship.
 - A key example of that is the divider erected in the Temple, creating a Court of the Gentles.
 - This is one of the reasons they used the painful rite of adult circumcision as the ritual by which they would extend full fellowship to a Gentile.
 - But this is not the light "yoke" Yeshua and the Torah itself demand of God-fearers.
- Paul argued against circumcision as the primary rite of passage for adult converts in many of his letters (Rom. 2:25-3:1; Rom. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:2-15; Col. 3:2-3; Col. 2:11).
- For nearly 2,000 years, Jews who wanted to follow their own Messiah were commanded to cast aside their cultural traditions, many of which are commanded directly in Torah, before they would be welcomed into direct fellowship with other believers in Messiah.
 - This burden of throwing away cultural connections was not laid upon any Gentile people groups to nearly the extent it was required of Jewish believers in the Messiah.
 - It's sad how the Christian church, which was called to make the "yoke" light, actually placed a greater yoke on Messiah's own people than upon other Gentile ethnic groups who received the Gospel.
- On other hand, it is natural for people to desire to fellowship with people who are as much like themselves as possible. It has become common wisdom that 11 a.m. Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week.

How do we reach people who are "unclean" without ourselves becoming "unclean"?

- The Corinthians faced this issue and they dealt with the issue to the opposite extreme of the Jewish tradition of extreme separation. You could say the Corinthians were extremely tolerant, way too tolerant. Paul had to remind them what kind of sin is more dangerous—the sins of the pagans or sin committed by those who claim to be fellow believers and brethren.

"It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler — not even to eat with such a one. For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? But those who are outside, God judges. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES." (1st Cor. 5:1-13)
- When we remember that sin is not a disease that is caught like the flu, but a condition of our own hearts, then we can better apply Yeshua's teaching of going out into the world and calling those who don't know Him into His fellowship.
 - However, we should "guard" our hearts against being swayed by those who distort the word of God and the testimony of His apostles, including Paul (2nd Pet. 3:13-18).
- We should be far more concerned about those in our midst who are committing open sin, those who should "know better" than those who don't understand what they are doing.

The Spirit of God certainly was being poured out on all men, as had been foretold by the ancient prophets, and that was partly a sign that God was at work with the Gentiles.

- Messiah said He would send "prophets, wise men and scribes" to congregations, and that their message that Messiah had come would be rejected (Matt. 23:34).
- The falling of the Spirit on the 120 in the temple on Shavu'ot was a sign that God was at work in their message.
- The falling of the Spirit on the Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17) and then household of Cornelius was a sign God was at work in opening the door of His "tent" for believers among the nations too (Acts 10:44-47; Acts 15:16 cf. Amos 9:1).
- Spontaneous speaking in different languages of men and "messengers" was a sign of divine intervention:
 - God created the "kinds" of languages at the tower of Babel from one language, because those building the

- tower had replaced the LORD as Lord with themselves as Lord (Gen. 11:1-9).
- God's Spirit gathers people by allowing the good news of reconciliation of mankind with God through Messiah Yeshua to span languages (Acts 2).
- Yet, superceding prophecy, language and even knowledge is *agape*, or unselfish love (1st Corinthians 13).

Some claim that the Holy Spirit is the same as the Father because of verses that say the “Father is spirit” and “the father, which is the Holy Spirit.” What then do we do with Acts 10:38?

“You know of Iesous of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” (Acts 10:38)