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Acts 10

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Acts 10.

Topics.

- An angel of God appears to Cornelius in a vision.
- Peter has a vision of a great sheet descending.
- The interpretation of unclean animals descending in the sheet.
- The Holy Spirit falls on Jews and Gentiles in Cornelius house.
- Can water baptism be held from people who have received the Holy Spirit?

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul while travelling to Damascus to drag disciples of the Lord out of the synagogues and take them captive to Jerusalem sees a flash of light and heard the voice of Jesus. Paul arrives in Damascus and instead of taking disciples captive he preaches Christ in Damascus and Jerusalem. Hellenists seek to murder him so he goes to Tarsus and the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and multiplied. The chapter ended with Peter staying in Joppa with Simon a tanner after healing a paralysed man and raising Tabitha from the dead.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

ACTS 10:1-8

1

An Angel of God appears to Cornelius in a Vision.

- **Acts 10:1-8:** At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ²a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. ³About the ninth hour (3pm) of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, "Cornelius." ⁴And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God. ⁵And now send men to Joppa and bring one Simon who is called Peter. ⁶He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside." ⁷When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, ⁸and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Caesarea: Caesarea was built by Herod the Great (37-4 BC) in a coastal plain it became the Roman capital of Palestine during the New Testament Caesarea was a main seaport and the home of Herod and Felix, Philip and Cornelius.

Joppa: is a Judean Port on the Mediterranean Sea coast just north of Jerusalem, timber logs for the first and second Temples were shipped to its port from Lebanon.

Cohort: (Band in KJV) refers to a mass of men.

Cornelius: was a Gentile Roman centurion, he was an upright and God-fearing man who was well spoken of by the entire Jewish nation (v22).

Cornelius has a vision: Cornelius a godly man was praying around 3pm one afternoon when an angel of God came to him in a vision and told him to send men to Peter in Joppa so he sends two servants and a devout soldier.

Visions: can relate to a spectacle gazed at by the eyes or a movie played out in the mind. In most cases God gives the picture or vision then the prophet speaks or writes it in their own words. Sometimes the same biblical event or experience is spoken of as an actual and real event, while at other times the same event maybe recorded as a vision (an image or mental experience within the mind).

A biblical vision is always under God's control and can appear as a movie played out on the screen of the imagination of the mind (similar to a dream) or it may appear as a hologram appearing in the air that is actually seen by the eyes of the prophet or to whoever God chooses to give the vision to.

The vision communicates the LORD'S will or future events to the prophet who then proceeds to tell the vision to the people, sometimes in their own words and at other times in the exact words the LORD has spoken to them in the vision.

NOTICE: not only did Cornelius prayers ascend into heaven before God, but also his generous help that he and his household gave to the poor it is also interesting to note that this vision struck terror into Cornelius.

ACTS 10:9-16

Peter has a Vision of a Great Sheet Descending.

- **Acts 10:9-16:** The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour (12pm) to pray. ¹⁰And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance ¹¹and saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. ¹²In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." ¹⁴But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." ¹⁵And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common." ¹⁶This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

2

Trance: means a displacement of the mind in the form of bewilderment or an ecstasy of the mind. It carries the idea of a wonder and of being astounded, amazed or astonished, but the trance can have either a positive or negative effect. If the trance is negative it drives the person out of their wits end or even insane and sometime to harming themselves or even to murder, but when the trance is positive it fills a person with excitement, wonder and joy and motivates them to do good.

Peter falls into a trance: about noon the next day as the two servants and the soldier sent by Cornelius were travelling to Peter at Joppa (v7-8). Peter was praying on the housetop of Simon (the tanner) house and fell into a trance. In the trance he saw a great sheet descending by its four corners from heaven full of all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air and a voice tells him to eat, but Peter having never eaten anything unclean was not going to start now, but he is told, "What God has made clean, do not call common." At this time the Jews saw themselves as the holy race with God and the Gentiles as the unclean race without God.

NOTICE: in verse 14 and 15 unclean and common carry the same meaning which in this context is separated from God. This is an absolutely fabulous period of time, in the history of God, many Old Testament prophecies are being fulfilled and God is now about to show Peter that He is pouring His Spirit out on all flesh, meaning Jews and Gentiles alike.

ACTS 10:17-23

The men Cornelius sent arrive at Peter's House.

- **Acts 10:17-23:** Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate ¹⁸and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. ¹⁹And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. ²⁰Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them." ²¹And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" ²²And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say." ²³So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him.

While Peter ponders what the vision meant the Spirit said to him, "Go with the three men standing at his door." The three men stayed with Peter for the night and in the morning travel with some friends back to Cornelius home.

NOTICE: the exact detail of the angels words to Cornelius and the Spirit's words to Peter, this should not surprise us when we consider that God is doing something totally new on earth and is about to show not only Peter and Cornelius, but also all Jews and Gentiles in a miraculous fashion as he did in Acts chapter two.

ACTS 10:24-33

Peter meets Cornelius His Relatives and Close Friends.

- **Acts 10:24-33:** And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ²⁵When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. ²⁶But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." ²⁷And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. ²⁸And 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. ²⁹So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me." ³⁰And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth (3pm) hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing ³¹and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. ³²Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.' ³³So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

Imagine the tremendous excitement and anticipation of Cornelius his relatives and close friends meeting Peter and Peters' overwhelming eagerness to see Cornelius. The two men meet and Cornelius falls down at Peters' feet and worshiped him, Peter of course immediately says he is only a man and tells him to stand up. Peters' words, "You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation," Clearly shows the attitude the Jews had toward the Gentile nations.

The interpretation of unclean animals descending in the sheet: God through lowering a sheet from heaven full of unclean animals symbolising the Gentiles is showing Peter that from now on there is no division between the Jews and the Gentiles and therefore no Jew can ever again refer to any Gentiles as being unclean simply because they are not of Hebrew or Jewish descent.

Presence of God (being in the presence of God).

NOTICE: the words, "We are all here in the presence of God" (v33), this statement simply means they are all disciples of the Lord gathered for the sole purpose of hearing his word. Whenever a group of brothers and

sisters in Christ met to share the words of Christ it can be spoken of as being in the presence of God it is an expression that contrasts being in a righteous atmosphere and talking about the things of God to being in an atmosphere that is worldly and talking about worldly things.

ACTS 10:34-43

Peter begins to share his vision with Cornelius household

- **Acts 10:34-43:** So, Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), ³⁷you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us (the apostles) who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

God shows no partiality means it matters not if a person is born a direct descendant of Abraham, a Levite priest, rich or poor, noble or lowly it makes no difference in regards to God's acceptance of them. This is because God will accept whoever humbles themselves in honest repentance and accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as their eternal Saviour and their King and does what is right.

The fear of the LORD: the fear of the LORD is having a hatred of everything that harms another human physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally, or spiritually and having a strong dislike of those who deliberately destroys the planet (i.e., arsonists who set forests on fire, companies who pour their toxic poisonous waste into rivers and such like things and having a strong dislike toward whoever deliberately treats animals cruelly and a fear of doing any of these things, because they are all destructive and bring pain, hurt and harm to others.

- Jesus said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

These words of Jesus shine a brilliant spotlight on the truth that God loves humans so much so that He gave his only Son to die for them. The fear of the LORD is about protecting and preventing harm to other humans. It is about knowing we are all going to stand before God one day and give an account of our actions, thus the fear of this judgment should motivate a person to do the right thing and treat others with respect.

The fear of the LORD and salvation: the reason a person is told to fear the LORD is because all humans have sinned and will one-day be judged by God. This fear should motivate all of us to seek God and his eternal salvation and forgiveness. That is why the Bible says the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom it motivates a person to seek God and His forgiveness. The apostle John says:

- If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness and if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10).

But once a person finds the LORD and His forgiveness and knows His grace and salvation the human heart is transformed and the mind and passions are changed in such a way that they now consider God's

testimonies more wonderful than fine gold. Added to this they now understand that God's laws are about protecting them and other humans from harm and impart wisdom and understanding to even the lowest in rank. The motivation to follow and continually seek God is not from fear anymore, but from love because they now know and experience the love God's has for them.

THE FEAR OF THE LORD HAS TWO ASPECTS

1. **An eternal aspect:** wisdom teaches that mankind is separated from God because of sin and without God a person has no hope of eternal life and will be judged accordingly. The fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because it motivates a person to seek God and eternal life.
2. **An aspect for the present moment:** the fear of the LORD in the present moment motivates mankind to obey God's Ten Commandments which are all designed to protect the innocent from harm, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally and spiritually. Thus, the fear of the LORD in this context is wisdom because if everyone feared the LORD humanity would live in harmony with each other. Sadly, there is very little fear of the LORD in the world today and so we see rampant rebellion, crime and wars in most countries.

Everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ receives forgiveness of sins through his name (v43) this is why it is called the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ because those in Christ do not need to strive to attain perfect righteousness because in Christ God imputes it to them as a free gift.

NOTE: the words, "He is Lord of all" (v36) does not mean that Jesus is God, but that God has appointed Jesus to be Lord over all, meaning over eternal life and all judgment (v42).

5

The apostles called to be witnesses: the words, "God raised Christ and made him to appear, not to all the people but to the apostles who had been chosen by God as witnesses" (40-41) shows that the twelve apostles were chosen to witness all the events that led up to Christ's death, the crucifixion and his resurrection so that they could testify to his life, his death and his resurrection from first-hand experience contrasted to someone else's testimony or text book knowledge. These verses show us that the twelve apostles were chosen to witness all the events that led up to Christ's death, the crucifixion and his resurrection so that they could testify to his life, his death and his resurrection from first-hand experience contrasted to someone else's testimony or text book head knowledge.

NOTICE: Jesus has been appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead this can carry the following two ideas:

1. To the dead who have died in Christ and to those who will be alive when the Lord returns to gather those in his Kingdom to himself in the first resurrection (Rev. 19:11-16).
 2. To all-the world since those who deny the words of Christ are already judged by his words.
- Jesus said, "If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day" (John 12:47-48).

For further information see the title:

- Resurrection (Second or White Throne Judgment).
- In Resurrection, (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Holy Spirit falls on Jews and Gentiles in Cornelius House.

- **Acts 10:44-48:** While Peter was still saying these things the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers from among the circumcised (Jews) who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷"Can anyone withhold water for baptising these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

While Peter speaking the Holy Spirit fell on both the Jews and the Gentiles in Cornelius house and the Jews who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles.

NOTICE: everyone understood what these people were saying while they were speaking in tongues clearly showing that the word tongues simply means another language other than their own native language. It is interesting to note that they were not teaching anything while speaking in this other language but praising and glorifying God. The words, "Who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (v47) refer to the day of Pentecost when God poured out the Holy Spirit on the one hundred and twenty in the upper room (Acts 2:1-5).

Tongues: means a language different from their own native language or previously unknown to the speaker. It was a common expression during the earlier ages for the introduction to many older Bibles to begin by saying:

Translated out of the Original Tongues and with the former
Translations diligently compared and revised by
His Majesty's special command A.D 1611

Both the Greek and the English words tongue and language can refer either to the organ of speech in our mouths or the language that is spoken thus the reason languages is often referred to as tongues, i.e., it is the organ (the tongue) that is speaking the language. The following two verses show that the Bible uses the word tongues and languages interchangeably showing that the word tongues simply means language, Luke writes:

- Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his *own language* (Acts 2:6 KJV).

Then in verse eight Luke states:

- And we hear every man in our *own tongue*, wherein we were born?

Clearly showing that those listening understood what those speaking in tongues were saying and that it was a proper language.

Can water baptism be held from people who have received the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit in this context has nothing to do with eternal salvation, it was a gift God gave to Jews and Gentiles alike to show unbelieving Jews that God was pouring out His Spirit on all flesh (meaning Jew and Gentile) in fact these people have not even been water baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Water baptism today: many religious people today say that since the death and resurrection of Christ water baptism is not important to God, but even though those in Cornelius house were godly people and God found them worthy to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit Peter still commands them to be water baptised (v48) clearly showing that the apostle Peter never considered for a moment that water baptism had been done away with no matter how spiritual a person feels or how gifted in God they are.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.

Bible House of Grace