

Acts Chapter 10b

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if you will look at your sheet, even though it's duplicated the same on both sides, we only need the one side anyway. And we are in Acts chapter 10 and the remainder of verse 25.

So let me bring you up to speed that when Cornelius had seen this great sheet let down from heaven with all manner of four-footed beasts and refused to rise, kill, and eat, it was because of his Jewish background that required only the intake of kosher food and unclean animals were not included.

So what is being depicted here in this dramatic scene is the fact that God is putting those whom the Jews considered clean and unclean together in one body and was going to provide a commonality for making them one simply by their faith in Jesus Christ.

So that whether you were Jew or Gentile, whether you were slave or free, whether you were male or female, made no difference. There was a commonality if your faith is in Jesus Christ.

That put you into the body. That was a totally new thing. It was cataclysmic in the effect that it had upon the community in the first century, particularly the Jewish community.

[1 : 3 0] And many of them, of course, fought the whole concept tooth and nail. Because if there was anything that characterized the Jew from the very outset, it was his separation.

And you shall be a peculiar people unto me, different from everybody else in the world. And the Jew really prided himself in that separation.

He was not to be like the Gentiles. He was to have a different diet. Everything about him was different. And now it is as if that's all passe.

What is this? If you have any appreciation for how steeped the Jew was in the law of Moses and in Judaism and the sacrificial system and everything, this was like a kick in the gut that you just cannot imagine.

It's saying that that's all set aside? And you'll recall one of the things that they accused Paul, the apostle of, was he teaches against the law of Moses.

[2 : 3 6] He is an enemy of Judaism. And in reality, the Jews should have known this all along. Because a large part of his erroneous thinking was in that the law, as God gave it through Moses, was to be permanent, eternal, never rescinded, always in force.

The law of Moses was as eternal as the God who gave it, as far as many of them were concerned. But there they erred, and erred greatly.

Because in their own writings, in Jeremiah 31, the prophet Jeremiah, through inspiration, made it very, very clear, that, Behold, the days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant which my servant Moses gave them, which they broke.

But this will be a new covenant, and I will write my law on their hearts and minds, and they will be obedient unto me, and so on and so on. This is all about the new covenant.

Now, if there's going to be a new covenant, and Hebrews makes this so very clear, if there's going to be a new covenant, that's going to make the old covenant outdated.

[3 : 57] And the prophet made that very clear, that the second new covenant is going to replace the old covenant. And the reason for that is, of course, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

That's what the Savior meant the night before he was betrayed, when he took the cup and said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

As often as you drink of this cup and eat of this bread, you just show the Lord's death until he comes. That was astronomical. And I'm sure that the apostles gathered around that table with our Lord, looked at each other and said, wow, this is the new covenant, new covenant, new covenant.

This is what Jeremiah was talking about, the new covenant. And remember the old covenant, Mosaic covenant, was ratified with animal blood. The new covenant was ratified with the blood of Christ.

That's going to be the permanent covenant. So the old will be displaced. That does not mean that the old was wrong and the new is right.

[5 : 07] It means the old was instituted for a particular people at a particular time and it served a particular purpose. And now that was over. And installed with that old covenant, the Mosaic covenant, was the whole principle and system of sacrifice, animal sacrifice.

It was a whole picture of the innocent dying for the guilty. And fellas, that's the essence of biblical Christianity. It's all about substitution.

It's all about sacrifice. And God instituted this system of animal sacrifice for the nation of Israel so that real meaning would accrue to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ when it was made.

And if you want to see the real skinny on that, read the book of Hebrews. Matter of fact, I'm thinking about taking Hebrews next because it is so incredibly enlightening.

Well, that means that the old covenant is going to be passé. But it was never intended to be permanent like so many of the Jews thought it was.

[6 : 23] It was always intended to be instituted until that which would be the fulfillment of all sacrifices was made.

And that would be with Jesus Christ. And that, by the way, ties in with the significance of the veil in the temple between the holy place and the most holy place being torn from top to bottom.

And it happened in connection with the death of Christ when he said it is finished. Matthew, I believe it is, tells us that the veil in the temple was rent.

It was, in effect, God saying, with the sacrificial system, the holy place, the most holy place, all of that, God was saying, I'm finished with that.

I'm finished with that. The veil in the temple was rent. And the writer of Hebrews makes it clear that Christ himself has become the new and living way that his flesh is the veil now.

[7 : 25] It is the new veil. So now you enter into the presence of God, not through that veil in the temple that the high priest entered just once a year, not without blood to atone for the sins of the people.

But now you enter the holy place, the very presence of God, through the new and living way, which is Jesus Christ, which means you come to the Father through the Son.

That's what Christ meant in John 14 when he said, no man comes unto the Father but by me. Tremendously significant. Roger? Is it not true in the tribulation that Israel will be sacrificing again?

That's entirely possible. I don't know about the tribulation, but I think it is reinstalled in the millennium. And there will be a sacrificial system established in the millennium.

And I do not know the purpose of it. I know it cannot be for atonement because the final atonement has been made. So most scholars are of the opinion that, yes, there will be sacrifice in the millennium and it will be a memorial to that which went before.

[8 : 30] So rebuilding the temple in the first three and a half years, right? Yes. And in fact, you're right, right. There will be a rebuilding of the temple. And if you read the last eight chapters of Ezekiel, I think it's the last eight chapters.

Eight whole chapters are given to the description of the dimensions of the millennial temple. And that's very significant, too. And that's different from the temple that the Jews are going to rebuild during the tribulation time or even before the tribulation begins.

So what we've got here is Peter. Peter is the catalyst in this for the movement of the divine program that was for Jews only to an inclusion of everybody who comes through this new and living way.

And Peter is going to be the lead instrument or the catalyst for this taking place. And you can understand how much of an upheaval this involved because of Peter's reluctance to get on board with this, with this sheet let down with all manner of four-footed beast.

Peter says, no, no, nothing. That just can't be. I can't do it. I can't have anything to do it. And three times this was let down. And Peter finally says, what is this?

[10 : 02] What's going on here? And then these three men were at the door knocking. And they go to the door and they tell Peter that their master, Cornelius, has sent them.

And that they are to escort Peter from Joppa, where they were located, down the coast, or up the coast rather, to Caesarea.

Caesarea was the seat of Roman government in the land of Israel. And that's where headquarters was for the Roman army.

And that's where Cornelius was. So now Peter is going to go, reluctantly, has no idea what this is all about, but he has been instructed to go.

So he is accompanying these three men. And Peter takes several Jewish brothers with him. So here they go, somewhere, a group somewhere between the number of nine and twelve.

[11 : 12] And they are all walking, probably on foot, down to, down to, let me get my geography mixed up, Joppa, Caesarea, I think up to Caesarea.

Down from Joppa up to Caesarea. And both of these are on the coast. They're just going up the road, that's a coastal road, to the house of Cornelius. And Peter has no idea what this is all about or why he is being told to go there.

He is just dumbfounded by it all. And he's just blindly following this divine order that he is to go with these men. And he will find out what it's all about.

And we read then at the top of our page in Acts chapter 10. And I'm on page, it doesn't make any difference which side you're on. They're both alike. But anyway, when Peter entered the house, and Moffat says Peter was just going into the house, and he fell down at his feet.

This is Cornelius. Cornelius fell down at his feet. That's Peter's feet. And worshipped him in a worshipful kind of, well, look at the other translations.

[12 : 20] Deep reverence, made obeisance to him, bowed to the ground, did homage. And you have to understand what a tremendous act this was for a proud Roman army officer.

These men are not accustomed to bowing before anybody except Caesar. And now, here is this not only common, ordinary human being, but a Jew.

And this Jew is a member of a country that these Romans are occupying. So, the Jewish people are under the heel of the Roman boot.

It is the Romans who are top dog. And it is the Jew who is oppressed by the Romans, guarded over by the Romans, taxed by the Romans, occupied by the Romans.

And no Jew in his right mind was happy about that. And here, I mean, here a Roman army officer is bowing down at the feet of Peter. And he is worshipped.

[13 : 31] He is in a worshipful stance. He is adoring Peter. And the reason, of course, is obvious when you read the context that goes before. Because this angel told Cornelius, Send men and get this man, Peter.

He is lodging in Joppa with a man named Simon the Tanner. And you bring him back here. And when he comes, he will tell you what you need to know.

And this is in answer to Cornelius' prayers. The angel says, Your prayers have come up before God. Cornelius had to have been asking for light, for truth.

And now, this man, this truth, this light that Cornelius is looking for, is embodied in this Jew by the name of Peter. And Cornelius doesn't really know about Peter, about his apostleship or anything else.

We have no reason to believe that. But he is looked upon as a divine messenger. And out of just sheer gratitude and thanksgiving, He humbly bows at his feet in a worshipful-like pose.

[14 : 45] He is so grateful that this man has come. And he is just beside himself. And what is Peter's response? Verse 26. Peter took him up, raised him up, lifted him to his feet, made him stand up, and said, Stand up!

I myself also am a man. You can appreciate how uncomfortable Peter must have been with this Roman army officer down on his knees, bowing before him.

And, fellas, any man, any mere human, should be somewhat embarrassed and uncomfortable for another human being to bow at his feet in a worshipful-like posture.

But there are some who relish that. And it ought not to be so, because we are all equals. In Christ, there is no superiority.

There is no inferiority. But, you know, man has an insatiable appetite to lord it over his fellow man, to establish himself as supreme, to establish himself as better than thou, or holier than thou.

[16 : 09] But there is none of that in the body of Christ. Someone has said the cross is the great equalizer. It sees all men. And the text says that God does not receive the person of any man.

That means God does not play favorites. And literally, it's a beautiful thing. The expression is given. I can't even think of where the reference is now. But the Greek word has to do with God does not accept or receive the face.

You say, well, what's that all about? It means that when men stand before God, he does not take into consideration who you are.

In other words, he is not impressed by the face, by your position, by your contributions, etc. He weighs and evaluates each person on the basis of the deeds done in the body, whether they are good or evil, Romans 14.

And it means that God looks upon the heart. Every man could stand before God with a sack over his face. Theoretically speaking, so that God wouldn't even know who was behind the sack.

[17 : 25] But God reads the heart. And it doesn't make any difference that you were a president, or a governor, or a priest, or a preacher, or a rabbi. Makes no difference.

God reads the heart. And the cross is the great equalizer. So, Peter is rightfully uncomfortable with a mere human being, or himself being a human being.

And he says, Stand up. I myself also am a man. It's a beautiful expression of humility. Humility on the part of Peter.

And you know, fellas, humility is a virtue that you cannot help but have if you know and understand who you really are.

Now, if you don't know and understand who you really are, you may very well be lifted up with pride. You may think you are really somebody. You are God's gift to whomever or whatever.

[18 : 31] And if you feel that way, anybody who feels that way does so because they really don't understand who they really are. Because once you get a handle on that, you can't be anything but humbled by it.

And those who don't know and understand who they are are those who are proud and lifted up. And if there's anything the Scriptures really come down hard on, it's pride.

Because we know pride goes before the fall. So somebody who is humble, somebody who has a humble spirit, is somebody who really understands the pit from which they were digged.

And they know they have nothing to be proud about. Paul the Apostle says, I am what I am by the grace of God. And he would not allow his so-called accomplishments to accrue to his credit at all.

He knew that he was what he was by the grace of God. Stand up. I myself also am a man. And as he talked with him, he went in and he said unto them, I just love this.

[19 : 40] I just love this. I can just see old Peter with a kind of a trembling voice. First of all, you've got to remember, he doesn't know why he's here. All he knows is, this is foreign territory and I am really uncomfortable.

And we could translate that into modern language by saying something like this, what's a nice Jewish boy like you doing in a setting like this? I mean, if anybody is out of this element, it's Peter.

And he says, verse 28, and he said unto them, you know how that it is an unlawful thing. Unlawful according to what?

According to the law of Moses. But in fact, fellas, listen, listen, it really wasn't unlawful for a Jew to have anything to do with a Gentile.

That's not true. That's not true. They were not to separate themselves from Gentiles in the sense that, ooh, don't touch me. Don't get near me.

[20 : 43] You could contaminate me and remove themselves completely. No, no, no. That was never the intent of the law. Because, if you will recall, one of the principal reasons that God raised up Israel was to be a light.

To who? To the Gentiles. But they weren't. And they hadn't been. And they had abused and misused their calling.

They were not a light to the Gentiles. God did tell them, don't be like them. Don't intermarry with them. Don't give them your sons and daughters.

But He never said, don't have anything to do with them. Don't speak to them. Don't communicate with them. He never said that. The law never said that. That was their interpretation of it.

And it was a misinterpretation. So, when Peter says what he's saying here, he's really not speaking authoritatively at all from the law, but he's speaking from the typical, accepted, Jewish interpretation of the law.

[21 : 54] And this is something that Christ continually confronted the scribes and Pharisees about. Because they had taken the law of Moses and had so twisted and distorted it that it was virtually unrecognizable.

And the law, which was intended to be for Israel's protection and for their blessing and for their prosperity, they turned it into a burden with all of their nitpicking and all of their distortion of it.

And Christ said to them, you, you neutralize, you make none effect of the law of God by your traditions.

And they had elevated their traditions and their interpretation of the law over the law itself. And that got them into a lot of trouble. And Peter here is just falling in line with the party line, and he is exhibiting a kind of separation that the law never intended.

You know how that it is unlawful for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation. 20th century says, you are aware that it is forbidden for a Jew to be on intimate or even visiting terms with a foreigner.

[23 : 18] Well, that's a stretch. But, God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

You see what he is saying here. Peter is saying, you know that sheet let down from heaven? All manner of four-footed beasts, clean and unclean.

I rejected that the first time. I rejected it the second time. And when God did it the third time, I got it.

I got it. And these who were standing there at the door to escort me to the place that I didn't know were Gentiles. And it begins to fit together.

All manner of beasts, what were they conveying? Clean and unclean? It was conveying Jew and Gentile. And Peter got it. And he indicates that when he says, God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

[24 : 25] That was only because of the vision that he had gotten. And he says, therefore, came I unto you without gainsaying. That is, without raising any objection.

As soon as I was sent for. And I asked therefore. Now, this is Peter still speaking here in verse 20. And I asked therefore, for what intent you have sent for me.

Oh, this is priceless. I cannot help, but in my mind, in my imagination, I can construe this whole scene. I can see the whole layout.

I can see the house they're in. I can see the people gathered there. I can see Cornelius. I can see Peter there at the doorway explaining himself. I can see Cornelius bowing down to him. You just, you just can't help but develop a picture of all of this.

Make a great movie, wouldn't it? Sure would. And Peter, Peter goes through his little thing and he's saying, I'm, I'm, I'm really not supposed to be here. I'm, I'm uncomfortable being here.

[25 : 29] But God has showed me that something is going on. I don't understand. I can't put this together. Now, Cornelius, please tell me, why is it that you sent for me?

I got the message. I've responded. I'm here. Please bring me up to speed. What is this all about? Why did you send for me? And Cornelius said, four days ago, I was fasting until this hour.

And at the ninth hour, I prayed in my house. The ninth hour would be about three o'clock in the afternoon. And behold, a man, he wasn't a man.

He was an angel. But angels almost always take on the appearance of a man, a human being. Goes all the way back to Genesis.

Virtually every time angels appear to someone, they appear as a fellow human being. They obviously have the ability to transform themselves from a spirit being into a human-like form.

[26 : 42] Doesn't mean the angel becomes human, but it means that he assumes a human form. And I'm satisfied that this is done for communication purposes. And to be able to relate to the human that he is talking to.

And he says, a man stood before me in bright clothing, dazzling clothing, shining raiment, dazzling attire. Well, that set him aside as being something very unusual, even though he appeared to be a man, but not an ordinary man.

The way this angel was decked out, it really grabbed Cornelius' attention. And this man said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

These alms are charitable gifts. This was part and parcel of the welfare program that existed in this day. Because this was the only way that the poor had of sustaining themselves.

They were dependent upon their ability to glean from the fields, and upon the generosity of others. So, there's no social security, there are no kind of programs, and it's all dependent upon contributions from the individuals.

[28 : 07] And this angel said, Cornelius, your prayer has been heard. Verse 32, Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter.

He is lodged in the house of one Simon, a tanner, by the seaside, who, when he comes, shall speak unto thee.

And that is what this is all about. That's why I sent for you. Now, Peter is hearing Cornelius say this, and Cornelius is saying, this man, this angel, told me your name, told me where you were, and told me who you were living with.

And Peter is saying, wow, how else in the world could he have known that? And there was, of course, no other way that he could have known that.

And he says, it's a beautiful, this is one of my very favorite passages. Can you tell? And immediately, 33, immediately, therefore, 203, immediately, therefore, 214, 214, 121, now, his first started FR■■ American, 217, 227, 271, tradition, ■■■ pinned, 211, 2022, 203,