

## THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

### Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

#### Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

##### A. Christ's Ministry To Evangelize Segments Of All Mankind, Acts 8:26-11:18

##### 3. Christ's Evangelization In The Line Of Japheth

##### c. Christ's Preparation Of Peter's Testimony To Lead Jewish Believers To Accept Japhethic Believers (Acts 11:1-18)

#### I. Introduction

- A. Christ's sovereignty over His Church is so extensive that even the events He allows a specific Christian to face are preparatory for what he needs so he can be productive in future ministries he will face.
- B. This fact is shown in Peter's having a special vision on eating unclean animals in preparation to being critiqued by other Jewish Christians, and we view these events in Acts 11:1-18 with 10:9-16 as follows:

#### II. Christ's Preparation Of Peter's Testimony To Lead Jewish Believers To Accept Japhethic Believers.

- A. As we learned in this series, Christ used Peter to evangelize Gentiles of the line of Noah's son, Japheth in Acts 9:32-10:48, a completion of His work to use Philip to evangelize the Ethiopian eunuch in the line of Ham in Acts 8:26-40 and also of His work to evangelize Saul in the line of Shem in Acts 9:1-31.
- B. However, the evangelizing of **uncircumcised Gentiles** in Japheth's line (Acts 10:23-48a) was followed by Peter's **associating** and **EATING** with them (Acts 10:48b), and that was highly offensive to Jewish believers: they felt the Gentiles had to be ritually inducted into Judaism by means of circumcision before becoming part of the Church, Acts 11:1-3; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to Acts 11:2.
- C. What was at stake in this matter was the unity of the Church: Jewish believers might understand that God wanted to save Gentiles, but for them to fellowship and thus to eat with uncircumcised Gentiles opposite their Jewish background they found to be intolerable, a violation of Jewish practice, Lk. 15:2; Gal. 2:12.
- D. Yet, Jesus' vision to Peter had **uniquely PREPARED** him to **ANSWER** this **VERY Jewish criticism**:
  - 1. Peter's vision from Christ had come in preparation for his going with Cornelius' men to evangelize his house, and it called for Peter to **EAT unclean** animals **opposite his Jewish background**, Acts 11:4-7.
  - 2. Peter thus reported that vision to His critics, noting his **OWN initial JEWISH objection** to heed the vision and **eat unclean** animals, Acts 11:8! Thus, the Acts 11:1-3 **CRITIQUE** of Peter's **EATING** in violation of *Jewish* rules had been **ANTICIPATED** by Christ, so He had given Peter a **VISION** to make him **CHANGE** his view on **EATING as well as answer this LATER Jewish criticism!**
  - 3. Peter reported how God had directed him in his vision not to call any animal unclean if God had cleansed it, indicating **GOD** was directing him **AWAY FROM Jewish EATING rules**, Acts 11:9.
  - 4. Peter reported to the listening Jews that this vision had been repeated two more times before the sheet with the "**unclean**" animals had been drawn back up into **God's holy heaven**, Acts 11:10.
- E. Peter then relayed the coincidental directing of the Holy Spirit with this vision to meet the three Gentile messengers from Cornelius, doubting nothing about associating with them, Acts 11:11-12.
- F. He then told how upon entering Cornelius' Gentile house with six fellow Jewish believers, and that Cornelius had related his vision of Peter's arrival (Acts 11:13-14), Peter had begun to give the Gospel unto them when they received the Holy Spirit as had the Jewish believers at Pentecost, Acts 11:15.
- G. Peter then cited Jesus' own Acts 1:4-5 prediction that the Holy Spirit would be given by God (Acts 11:16), and concluded before his Jewish Christian critics that since the Holy Spirit had been given by God to these uncircumcised Gentile believers, he as a Jew could not oppose God in the matter, Acts 11:17.
- H. This latter statement revealed Peter's Jewish Christian critics needed to submit to **God** in accepting uncircumcised Gentiles for fellowship; doing otherwise was to oppose **God!**
- I. Accordingly, Peter's critics were convinced that God had granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life so that uncircumcised Gentiles were to be part of their Jewish fellowship in a **unified Church**, Acts 11:18.

***Lesson:*** Christ's **UNIQUE VISION** to **PETER** to prepare him to evangelize and fellowship in **EATING** with uncircumcised Gentile believers **ITSELF** became an **EFFECTIVE TOOL** to silence the **LATER criticism** of **OTHER Jewish believers** who opposed Peter's eating with Gentiles!

***Application:*** May we accept the unusual experiences God lets us have as being essential in His plan!