

Men's Breakfast Bible Study  
November 14, 2009

**“What G-d has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.”**

Acts 10:15 NASB

We are going to take a look at chapter 10 of the book of Acts, the story of Kefa and Cornelius the Roman Centurion.

Most of you, I am sure, are familiar with this story. In the opening verses of Chapter 10 we are introduced to Cornelius **“...A devout man, and one who feared G-d with all his household.”** Cornelius is a Roman Centurion stationed in Caesarea with what was called the Italian cohort.

When Luke calls Cornelius a man who “feared G-d,” he was using an expression which when applied to gentiles at that time meant that they were adherents to Judaism to a limited extent or **“proselytes of the gate”**.

They attended synagogue worship, acknowledged the G-d of Israel, and complied with some Jewish customs. They were, however, not circumcised and thus were not regarded by the Jewish people as full **“proselytes of righteousness.” Or fully clean I might add.**

Cornelius is praying at about the ninth hour when he clearly sees in a vision an angel of G-d who says to him; **“Cornelius! ... Your prayers and alms have ascended as a memorial before G-d. Now dispatch some men to Joppa, and send for a man named Simon, who is also called Peter, he is staying with a certain tanner named Simon, whose house is by the sea.”**

Meanwhile the Apostle Peter is at the house of Simon the Tanner in Joppa, which is on the Mediterranean coast close to modern day Tel Aviv. Peter goes up onto the rooftop at the sixth hour (noon) to pray and he becomes *very* hungry.

It is interesting to note that the Greek word used here indicates extreme intensity, he wasn't just ‘hungry’ but intensely hungry and yet even so he isn't willing to eat anything ‘unclean’. Kefa is one very orthodox Jew!

While they are preparing his meal he falls into a trance and sees a great sheet being lowered by four corners filled with all kinds of four-footed animals and crawling creatures of the earth and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, “Arise, Peter, kill and eat!” And as we mentioned a minute ago, Kefa, being the orthodox Jew that he was, replied; **“By no means, L-rd, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean.”**

**And again a voice came to him a second time, “What G-d has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.”**

The Greek word used here for unholy is *koinos* meaning common, impure, unclean or unholy.

In verse 17 it goes on to state “Kefa was still puzzling over the meaning of the vision he had seen.” (CJB). Some of the modern commentaries that I read seem to be just as puzzled as Kefa, many have taken it to mean that G-d was discussing the dietary restrictions written in His Torah and that this was about ‘kosher-vs-nonkosher’ food, or at the very least that this was part of the meaning. But we need only to keep reading and the Scripture itself gives us the meaning; “...*But G-d has shown me not to call any person common or unclean.*” Vs 35 (CJB).

G-d was letting Peter know that

*“...in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him.”* (vs 35 NAS).

So this story is about *people*. It is about you and it is about me – if we fear G-d and ‘do what is right’ we are welcomed by Him and in a position to hear his truth.

Cornelius was a man who feared G-d and G-d sent his messenger – Peter – to deliver the gospel message.

-----PAUSE-----

I’d like us to take a closer look at **verse 15**, the title of our study. “*What G-d has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.*”

We have just established that G-d was referring to *people* when He made this particular statement. **How does G-d ‘cleanse’ people?**

**(Group answers / comments).**

<sup>NAS</sup> **John 15:3.** "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Matthew 8:1** And when He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. <sup>2</sup> And behold, a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him, saying, "L-rd, if You are willing, You can make me clean."<sup>3</sup> And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "**I am willing; be cleansed.**" And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

<sup>CJB</sup> **Ezekiel 36:25** Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your uncleanness and from all your idols.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Ephesians 5:25-27** ..., just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; <sup>26</sup> that He might *sanctify* her, having cleansed her by the **washing of water with the word,** <sup>27</sup> that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.

Based upon what we just read was Cornelius cleansed? ... And his entire household? How were they cleansed?

In verses 36 through 44 we get the answer. The gospel message – *the testifying miracles, His death on a cross and His resurrection* - was preached and when Cornelius and his entire household believed, the Holy Spirit fell upon them.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Acts 10:36-44** "The word which He sent to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is L-rd of all) <sup>37</sup> you yourselves know the thing which took place throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed. <sup>38</sup> "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how G-d 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 G-d was with Him.

<sup>39</sup> "And we are witnesses of all the things He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. And they also put Him to death by hanging Him on a cross. <sup>40</sup> "G-d raised Him up on the third day, and granted that He should become visible, <sup>41</sup> not to all the people, but to witnesses who were chosen beforehand by G-d, *that is*, to us, who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. <sup>42</sup> "And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by G-d as Judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup> "Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins."

<sup>44</sup> While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

At that moment they were clean in the eyes of G-d, they were washed in the water of the Word – the Word of His plan for salvation.

**Why is it important to know how G-d cleanses a person? Or, should I ask; is it important to know how G-d cleanses a person!?**

**(Group answers / comments).**

I can tell you what I ‘heard’ while praying about this bible study; **“Know who you are in G-d.”**

**Again, I have to ask you, why is this important?**

**(Group answers / comments).**

**Is it so we can be ‘healthy’; ‘at peace’; ‘walk in power’; or maybe ‘to do good works’?**

One very important reason is so that **YOU WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE CLEAN.** Clean enough to house the Ruach HaKodesh, clean enough to do the work that G-d has set aside for you to do.

<sup>CJB</sup> **Ephesians 2:10** For we are of G-d's making, created in union with the Messiah Yeshua for a life of good actions already prepared by G-d for us to do.

So, if G-d created us “for a life of good actions already prepared by Him for us to do”, then we need to ask ourselves; **are we doing these things - and if not, why not?**

Many of you *are* doing what G-d has called you to do, but there are a few of us that perhaps are holding back, maybe laying quietly in the background, not ‘stepping out in faith’ to do what we are called to do.

----- (PAUSE – EMPHASIZE) -----

There may be a variety of reasons for this but the one on my heart today, the one that I feel G-d led me to talk about is the inner sense that we aren’t good enough or clean enough. It is that ‘**if people only knew**’ type of inner dialog that plagues many of us who have been broken people.

We don’t have enough information in the text to tell us Cornelius’ condition prior to our story. Perhaps being a Roman Citizen and an officer in the Roman Army, a man of obvious power he could have struggled with pride or some other issue but we are not given that detail by Luke.

However for many of us, we know our own story. When we were in the world we were prideful, sinful, fleshy peoples and we needed to be humbled – indeed crushed – in order to be in a condition to receive G-d’s word, we may have heard it before but we wouldn’t receive it.

In Psalm 51 David tells us that G-d is looking for a ‘contrite’ spirit – the Hebrew word for contrite is “dakah” and actually means ‘crushed’ or ‘broken’.

It is in this broken or crushed state that we are finally humbled enough to cry out for Him and in His mercy and grace He allows us to find Him.

But it is never His intention to leave us in this broken state; He cleanses us and sets us apart to be a vessel of His Holy Spirit and to be used by Him.

It may help us if we liken our previous, sinful life as having had leprosy. Leprosy, and sin, begins with just a little spot or in a small way; then it begins to eat away at our life; and finally it separates us completely from those whom we love.

In the Torah we read G-d’s instructions for cleansing a house if the leprosy (or sin) was set into the foundation stones of the house.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Leviticus 14:45** "He shall therefore tear down the house, its stones, and its timbers, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall take *them* outside the city to an unclean place.

That is exactly what has happened with some of us – our foundation was built upon sin, be that pride or lust or some other foundation that was not of G-d, so He had to tear us down to our very foundation and rebuild us into a more fitting home for His Holy Spirit.

For those of us that have experienced this tearing down and rebuilding process I don’t have to tell you how painful and thorough this can be. Having gone from the heights of ‘self-worship’ and then being crushed we are indeed humbled and ready to confess that He is G-d and we are not. But, as I mentioned a few minutes ago; G-d doesn’t leave us with our house torn down and

discarded; He wants to rebuild us into a useful structure and THAT is why it is important to know HOW He cleanses us *and* who we are IN HIM.

When we heard the message of salvation and believed just as Cornelius and his entire household heard the gospel message and believed, having been cleansed by the washing of the word, we were **justified – that is, we were declared innocent** and we were **sanctified –or set apart**

Just so that we are clear about justification and sanctification let me give a brief definition of both.

Justification is both a ‘declarative statement’ and a ‘declarative act.’ **The basic meaning is to declare righteous – or innocent.** It doesn’t mean, “to be righteous” nor does it mean, “to make righteous”. In its theological meaning, justification is the act of G-d by which He declares the sinner righteous on the basis of the perfect righteousness of Yeshua the Messiah. **In other words it is the judicial act of G-d by which He declares that all claims of the Law are satisfied with respect to the sinner on the basis of the righteousness of Yeshua the Messiah.**

If one is on trial, he is either justified or he is condemned, these are the contrasts. (Deut. 25:1; Prov.17:15; Rom 8:33-34).

Our justification is established through the imputation of the obedience and righteousness of Yeshua the Messiah.

There are three great imputations:

The imputation of Adam’s sin to the descendants of Adam;

The imputation of humanity’s sin to Yeshua the Messiah;

And the imputation of the Messiah’s righteousness to the believer.

**It is only on the basis of the imputation of the righteousness of the Messiah to the believer that the believer can be declared righteous, or innocent.**

This is justification.

The second major facet is **sanctification**.

The basic meaning of sanctification is “to be set apart.” It does not necessarily carry the concept of holiness.

But in relation to its being a facet of the believer’s salvation, sanctification has been defined as: **“The work of G-d’s free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of G-d and are enabled more and more to die to sin and live unto righteousness.”**

So sanctification itself can be defined as: **“That gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit by which He purifies the sinner, renews his whole nature in the image of G-d, and enables him to perform good works.”**

This is biblical sanctification as to its meaning and definition.

So, Cornelius, his household, you and me – upon believing in the gospel message have been declared righteous – that is innocent - and are set apart unto G-d.

We ARE clean, (holy, or uncommon). Do not let any voice, be it your internal critic or another person or the voice of the enemy try to tell you otherwise.

You need to KNOW that G-d cleansed you and set you apart and **“What G-d has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.”**

As I prayed about doing this study I earnestly sought G-d’s direction and truly felt that the basic message of knowing who we are in Him was something very important. It goes beyond having a past of rebelliousness and sin, a day is coming when each of us had truly better know in our hearts and minds the Truth of G-d’s promises for us. The end game is on and the enemy is turning up the heat. The world is already becoming an unfriendly place for believers and it is only going to get worse. We had better know who we are and be prepared to take a stand in the days to come.

Several years ago – Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005 at 7:13 a.m. to be exact! The L-rd drove home this point to me – about knowing that I AM clean BECAUSE OF HIM, not through any effort on my part. If you would allow me a personal moment I’ll read you the excerpt from my journal:

-----Read the excerpt on the last page-----

Now go out and walk in power and answer the call of G-d in your life.

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Friday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2005 @ 7:13 a.m.

As I sat here this morning I began to think of things to do today, tasks, distractions etc. I got something in my eye which disrupted me. When I sat back down I sensed the Spirit telling me to put those things aside, it was time to spend time with Jesus. So I put them down and began to pray. I thanked G-d that at this time my life was perfect. It is beautiful and filled with His peace. Again I sensed the Spirit telling me to be quiet... to [“be still and know I am G-d.”](#)

As I allowed myself to be quiet, Jesus began to speak to me and then I saw Him before me (my eyes were closed). He told me to be still while He cleansed me. He began on His Knees at my feet. He told me to watch as His Spirit removed every trace of filth from every pore of my body. I watched my toes go from dirty brown to white. Then the Spirit began to rise in me and as He did I clearly saw my body becoming pure white, clean, stripped of outside dirt and cleansed straight through. It rose slowly and steadily through my body. He washed clean my private areas, my torso, my organs and my heart, then my fingertips and up my arms. At my head, neck and shoulders He paused and said; [“Even your head, your mind, I am cleansing. In the areas where you carry your stress I am peeling it away.”](#) He shaved a path up the back of my head and then pulled the whole top part of me from the filth. I stood there naked, hairless, white, clean and unashamed in His presence. He handed me a white robe to and said; [“Here, put this on.”](#) It was so soft and warm and comfy, I felt like a little kid fresh from his bath ready to curl up and relax with the L-rd.

He said; [“Here, sit. Let’s talk for a moment. You have been trying to scrub yourself clean. You can’t do it. You are sitting in a tub of your own dirty water and just keep putting it back on yourself. Only I can cleanse you – as I have. You are clean. You are free. I know you live in a dirty world and the enemy will try to slime you. He can’t penetrate unless you consciously allow him. If you feel slimed or dirty – call Me! I’ll come remove the dirt anytime you call. You are my brother. You are holy because I am Holy and I dwell within you. I want you to rise and be free. Put away the shame and the guilt and the striving. Turn to Me; I make you clean and holy.”](#)

I was so amazed and pleased to be having such a vision or ‘daydream’ and I said; [“L-rd, I know this is just a vision but you are real and I thank you for loving me. He said: “Yes, this is a vision but it is real. I am real. I am speaking to you.”](#) He told me to open my robe over my heart. He held up His finger which seemed to glow and pulse. He said: [“Do you remember my touching your heart:”](#) I said: [“Oh yes L-rd, I remember. It was incredible.”](#) He said: [“Here, know that I am real.”](#) And He reached out and put His finger on my heart. As He did I felt the jolt here in the physical world, then it pulsed through my body ‘zapping’ me. I was like [“wow L-rd!, whoa!”](#) He said: [“Did you feel that?”](#) I said [“Yes L-rd!”](#) He said: [“I am real. I am here and I am speaking to you.”](#) I said: [“L-rd I can’t wait to write this in my journal, may I do so as a real vision? He said: “You can and you should.”](#)

As I opened my eyes to grab my journal He said: [“Do not worry, I am here with you.”](#)

I sat here for a few moments absorbing what I saw and heard and I sensed the Spirit telling me about Peter’s vision on the rooftop, so I looked it up.

Acts 10:15 NASB – Again a voice came to him a second time. [“What G-d has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.”](#)