

Acts 10:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

Analysis

Peter explained: 'Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.' The vision's meaning became clear - it concerned people, not merely food. God was abolishing ceremonial distinctions between Jews and Gentiles under the new covenant. Reformed theology sees this as the transition from old covenant particularity (Israel) to new covenant universality (all nations). The gospel breaks down all human barriers and divisions.

Historical Context

Jewish oral tradition (later codified in the Talmud) forbade Jews from entering Gentile homes or eating with Gentiles to maintain ceremonial purity. This tradition went beyond Mosaic law but was deeply ingrained. Peter's obedience to enter Cornelius's home marked a revolutionary change.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the gospel abolish ceremonial and ethnic distinctions between peoples?
2. What 'unlawful' cultural barriers might God be calling His church to cross today?
3. Why was the transition from Jewish particularity to universal gospel so difficult for the early church?

Interlinear Text

Ἐφη τε πρὸς αὐτούς Ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε ὡς ἀθέμιτόν
he said And unto them Ye know how an unlawful thing
G5346 G5037 G4314 G846 G5210 G1987 G5613 G111

ἐστιν ἀνδρὶ Ἰουδαίῳ κολλᾶσθαι ἢ προσέρχεσθαι
that it is for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto
G2076 G435 G2453 G2853 G2228 G4334

ἀλλοφύλῳ· καὶ ἐμοὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἔδειξεν μηδένα
one of another nation but me God hath shewed any
G246 G2532 G1698 G3588 G2316 G1166 G3367

κοινὸν ἢ ἀκάθαρτον λέγειν ἄνθρωπον·
common or unclean call man
G2839 G2228 G169 G3004 G444

Additional Cross-References

John 4:9 (Parallel theme): Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Isaiah 65:5 (Parallel theme): Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

Acts 11:9 (References God): But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

John 4:27 (Parallel theme): And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

John 18:28 (Parallel theme): Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

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